

Inter-Agency Rapid Needs Assessment Concept Note

Background

The Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) is an inter-agency tool that provides an overview of the immediate needs at the community level of a given population as a result of either a significant increase of newly arrived refugees, secondary displacement of refugees within Lebanon, or internal displacement of Lebanese due to conflict or a natural disaster. The RNA will offer humanitarian agencies a quick snapshot of the situation on the ground, map cross-sectoral needs, identify humanitarian priorities, and initiate sector specific assessments.

The RNA, composed of a multi-sectoral questionnaire developed through a comprehensive inter-agency process that originated at field level, is based on lessons learned during the events in Aarsal of August 2014 which resulted in the displacement of Syrian and Lebanese households. It is important to note the RNA process serves as a stand-alone assessment tool, applicable to a wide range of situations.

Process

The RNA is a community-level assessment which uses primary and secondary data as its main sources of information. The RNA Secretariat, composed of MoSA, UNDP and UNHCR, will first review secondary data available, gathered from a multitude of sources, before deciding launching the assessment that will focus on the collection of primary data through interviews with key informants, complemented by direct observations on site.

Primary data is collected by teams of enumerators through two separate assessment questionnaires, digitized for use on mobile devices and available in Arabic and English: (a) a refugee-specific questionnaire tailored for an influx, secondary or internal displacement scenario, and (b) a questionnaire tailored for Lebanese who have been internally displaced. As of April 2016, over 533 staff from almost 68 agencies have been trained on its use.

The form is divided into 17 sections and takes on average 30 minutes to complete. Assessment results are uploaded onto the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) database where site profiles and factsheets providing an overall summary are produced. Data is accessible to all participating agencies. Further in-depth technical assessments are arranged at the sector level. Key figures and substantial changes to the initial RNA results are collected through follow-up phone interviews with key informants (such as local authorities, representatives of the communities affected, service providers, etc.).

Analysis is conducted by the Rapid Assessment Coordination Groups (RACG) to achieve a common understanding of the situation, define strategic humanitarian priorities and agree on a response plan. RACGs have been established at the field level and are composed of sector coordinators and agency assessment focal points. Secretariat and RACG members will have full access to the RNA portion of RAIS.

General Coordination Structure

- **RNA Secretariat:** Composed of the LCRP Inter-Agency Coordinators - MoSA, UNHCR, and UNDP and supported by OCHA. Established in all field locations. Responsible for provision of initial secondary data analysis; activates and chairs the RACGs.
- **Rapid Assessment Coordination Group (RACG):** An Inter-agency body established at field level and composed of field and national sector coordinators and agency assessment focal points. Responsible for analyzing secondary data, agreeing on priorities and recommending initial sector response plans.
- **Assessment Coordinators:** Composed of dedicated UNHCR and OCHA staff at the national level. Support the RACG's in the field and liaise with central level.

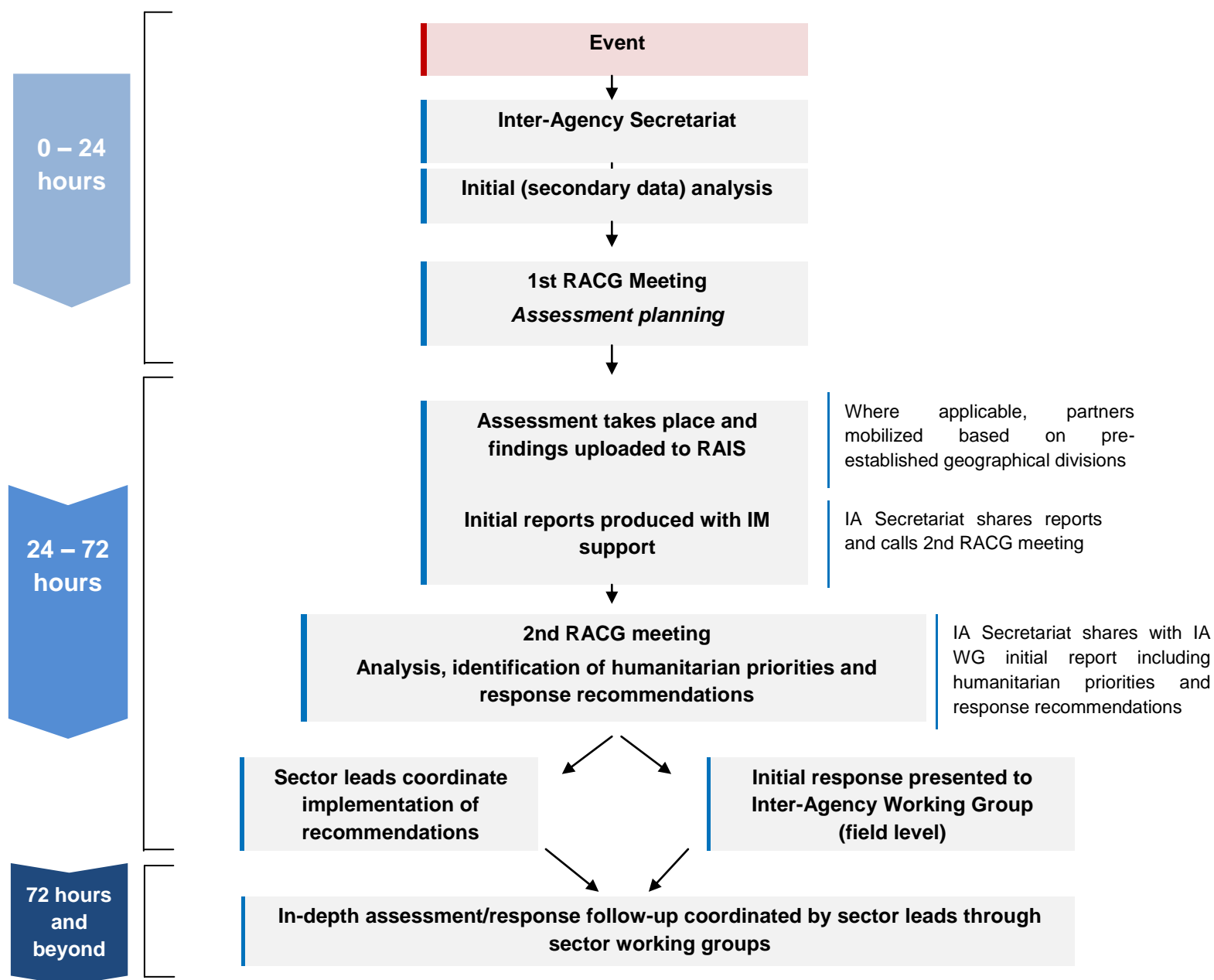
The above RNA coordination structures feed into existing structures at the field level, namely:

- **Inter-Agency Working Group:** Coordinates the response implemented through sector working groups and responsible for ensuring that all partners are kept informed of developments.
- **Sector Working Groups:** Sector specific coordination bodies where response is mobilized and coordinated following recommendation of the RACG.

RNA Stages: Mobilization, Assessments, Population Stabilization

0 – 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st meeting of RACG convened by Inter-Agency Secretariat based on pre-established triggers - Preliminary analysis of secondary data - Assessment action plan finalized based on pre-established geographical divisions
24 – 72 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments take place through key informant interviews and direct observation. Results uploaded to RAIS - 2nd RACG meeting takes place to analyze RAIS data (consisting of (a) situation report, (b) site profiles, (c) questionnaire summary) - Initial key sectoral humanitarian priorities and response recommendations agreed upon - Situation report and summary of actions presented to Inter-Agency Working Group where follow-up actions are decided with sector leads (through Sector Working Groups)
72 hours and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further in-depth sectoral assessments/response with a view to develop a longer term response coordinated through sector working groups

Rapid Needs Assessment Detailed Timeline



The full methodology and questionnaires are available on the Lebanon Information Hub of the Inter-Agency portal: <http://data.unhcr.org/lebanon/>

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