

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan National Incident Management System (PAK-NIMS)

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COE	Center of Excellence
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority
DEOC	District Emergency Operations Center
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IO	International Organization
ISA	Incident Staging Area
IT	Information Technology
MCP	Mobile Command Post
Mol&B	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
MPG	Multiagency Policy Group
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NDMP	National Disaster Management Plan
NEOC	National Emergencies Operation Center
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIDM	National Institute of Disaster Management
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PCO	Public Communication Officer
PEOC	Provincial Emergency Operations Center
SITREP	Situation Report
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations

PREFACE

Pakistan is in one of the highest geographic risk locations, and the intensity and frequency of disasters is expected to increase due to climate change leading to increased social-economic pressures and placing vulnerable populations at greater risk.

In the last decade, the country has made significant efforts to move from a reactive to a proactive approach focusing on comprehensive emergency preparedness and response capability. After evaluating past disasters and conducting a gap analysis, it was validated that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has a strong organizational foundation that was further expanded with the establishment of the state-of-the-art National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) in October 2023. The NEOC and the supporting system and capabilities of the NDMA wings have proven to be very good, especially in coordination at the federal level.

However, the analysis identified certain horizontal gaps that need to be improved and major gaps in the vertical aspects of the national disaster management system, especially at the district level, including institutional capacity for gender-responsive and inclusive disaster management.

To address those gaps, NDMA is adapting a holistic, inclusive, and integrated system based on the best global practices that will help enhance the existing disaster management structure. Doing so will make the NEOC function even more effectively and provide transformational change to provincial and district disaster management capabilities.

I INTRODUCTION

The Pakistan National Incident Management System (PAK-NIMS) is established to build on the advances and strong national-level foundation provided by NDMA to enable the provinces and districts to improve their capabilities and capacity to a shared vision of effective disaster management across the nation.

Like other National Incident Management Systems used in other countries, PAK-NIMS is a standardized, nationwide approach for coordinating disaster management across all levels of government, the private sector, communities, and non-governmental organizations to work together effectively to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents of any size or type and is applicable to all hazards and affected population groups. Several countries, such as the United States, Australia and use their own versions of NIMS and Canada and the U.N. use the Incident Command System (ICS) structure of NIMS as their standard approach to emergency management.¹

PAK-NIMS draws from more than 50 years of global disaster management improvement efforts that started in the 1970s with the creation of the ICS approach for fighting wildfires in California in the United States and continued to the development of the broader NIMS approach in the early 2000's. It will help the NDMA through the NEOC improve integration and joint effectiveness across the federal, provincial and district levels in disaster management. It does so by establishing common guiding principles, standardized terminology, and standard organizational structures to ensure that responders from diverse agencies at any level can integrate quickly and operate efficiently, equitably, and effectively in response to emergencies. To clarify however, the PAK-NIMS approach is not just response focused but supports efforts during all four phases of the disaster cycle from mitigation/prevention to preparedness to response to recovery. It is resource and coordination focused and is centered on unity of effort and improving how NDMA through the NEOC can integrate the resources and capabilities across all jurisdictions and all levels of government to prepare for and respond to disasters from all hazards. It also better organizes the transition to recovery (and reconstruction). Essential to effective nationwide disaster management are standardization and inclusive capacity building to ensure the entire disaster management ecosystem follows the same approach, understands the components of the system and can readily integrate resources when needed.

As the national disaster policy setting authority, the NDMA is already a strong institution and has the organizational set-up and professional and diverse staffing needed to guide the adaptation and implementation of PAK-NIMS across the nation to allow Pakistan to continue to improve its entire disaster management system.

The benefits of adaptation of the system will be felt most at the district level where disaster response support is needed most urgently. Improved district-level coordination, clarity for integration of multi-agency response operations, improved federal-provincial and provincial-district coordination and cooperation, improved

¹ For reference, established incident management systems include:

The US National Incident Management System (FEMA, <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims>);

The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AFAC, <https://www.afac.com.au/AIIMS>);

The Coordinated Incident Management System, Third Edition, New Zealand (NEMA, <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/strategy-capability/cims>);

The Incident Command System Canada (ICS Canada, <https://icscanada.ca/>);

The UNISDR Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, Working Group 4 Report (https://web.archive.org/web/20070625153901/http://www.unisdr.org/eng/task%20force/tf-meetings/8th%20TF%20mtg/WG4_report_8th_IATF_meeting.pdf).

interoperability and faster, more integrated Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and international support are all areas that will benefit from this approach.

2 VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF PAK-NIMS

NDMA's vision for the adaptation of PAK-NIMS is:

A consistent, inclusive, integrated, standardized and advanced systematic approach to disaster management system for all levels across Pakistan.

The three guiding principles of PAK-NIMS are:

Unity of Effort and Coordination – PAK-NIMS fosters the ability through its defined operational systems to allow a wide range of organizations at various levels to coordinate their efforts in an inclusive manner to achieve common disaster management objectives in any phase of the disaster cycle. This allows organizations with specific authorities and responsibilities to support other organizations while maintaining their own authorities.

Standardization and Adaptability – PAK-NIMS mandates standard terminology and common organizational structures, standard processes and standard personnel qualifications across all stakeholders that are gender-responsive but which still allows flexibility to adapt to local contexts, needs, and vulnerabilities. These shared structures and standard procedures help disaster management teams from various organizations to work together more effectively before, during, and after an incident. The standardization and consistency allow for seamless integration of teams and resources from across all stakeholder organizations.

All-Hazards Approach – PAK-NIMS can be used with incidents caused by natural hazards, industrial or technological incidents, public health emergencies, and intentional and man-made issues that require the involvement of multiple organizations and are beyond the scope of any single organization. So, there is one system, not many different systems. The specific response plans are customized to different hazards, but the system and approach to preparing and responding are the same.

The strength of using the PAK-NIMS approach is that it is a comprehensive system that provides a clear guide for the Whole-of-Society on how to work together effectively in all phases of disaster management. Whole-of-Society is a global best practice that includes all levels of government, NGOs, International Organizations (IOs) and the private sector. PAK-NIMS guides stakeholders to use the same system when preparing for, preventing, responding to and recovering from incidents of all hazards, sizes, location, complexity, and scope.

One of the biggest values of the PAK-NIMS approach is that it allows the integration of efforts from the federal level down to the provincial level, and down to the local level using a unified and standardized all-hazards approach. All parts of the system are consistent and aligned with each other following the processes and procedures put in place to provide the appropriate function. From NDMA strategic guidance and the NEOC's coordination of national resource support to Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), to PDMA operational management of incident response and coordination of provincial resource support to District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), to DDMA tactical incident command and coordination of local assets responding to disasters. NDMA should include the full adoption of the PAK-NIMS approach in future editions of the National Disaster Management Plan which focuses on not just policy but the “comprehensive and forward-looking strategy” for disaster management in Pakistan that “emphasizes collaboration and coordination

among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners to enable a unified and effective disaster response.” (National Disaster Management Plan 2025, Message from the NDMA Chairman). PAK-NIMS fully supports that forward-looking strategy.

Based on the best global practices and supporting the three guiding principles, some of the key characteristics of the system that allow it to strengthen the national disaster management system overall include:

- **Scalable and Flexible** - PAK-NIMS is scalable and flexible, allowing it to be adapted to incidents of any size, scope, complexity, cause, or location.
- **Interoperability** - by working toward full national interoperability, PAK-NIMS improves the ability of diverse stakeholders from many different organizations and jurisdictions to integrate their efforts and work seamlessly together. This is accomplished through standardization and a common approach to Command and Control, Resource Management, and Communication and Information Management.
- **Disaster Lifecycle Oriented** – PAK-NIMS supports inclusive disaster management across all phases of the disaster cycle – preparedness, prevention/mitigation, response and recovery. By using the same system at all levels, effectiveness and efficiency are improved for the entire disaster cycle.
- **Resource and Coordination Focused Efficiency** - the system emphasizes efficient, effective, equitable, and accountable management of disaster management resources across all stakeholders. It enables many organizations to collaborate and coordinate in a systematic way to manage needed resources – personnel (and teams), facilities, equipment and vehicles, and supplies (including survivor commodities). It also allows economy of scale when things are standardized and every location uses similar equipment, has the same training and stockpiles of similar commodities.
- **Whole-of-Society Approach** – PAK-NIMS integrates the disaster management capabilities of the Whole-of-Society, which includes all stakeholders at all levels including government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, IOs, community organizations and representatives of vulnerable groups². Each part of society including women, community groups, and vulnerable populations plays an important role and has a shared responsibility when it comes to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters.

² “**Vulnerable Groups**” "vulnerable groups" refers to individuals and population groups who, due to social, economic, physical, environmental, geographic, institutional, or other circumstances, may experience disproportionate disaster impacts or face greater barriers in accessing preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction support. Vulnerability may arise from characteristics such as age, gender, disability, health status, poverty, displacement, geographic isolation, or social exclusion. Depending on the disaster context, vulnerable groups may include women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, people living in poverty, displaced populations, indigenous peoples, minority groups, marginalized communities, and other at-risk populations identified through context-specific assessments.

3 PAK-NIMS COMPONENTS

Pak-NIMS is organized around three core components and four supporting components. Together they provide the overall structure for inclusive disaster management that covers all hazards and all levels from national to provincial to district. These components have roles and functions to play during all phases of the disaster cycle (preparedness, prevention/mitigation, response, and recovery), while promoting equitable outcomes for affected populations.

3.1 Core Components

The three core components of PAK-NIMS provide an integrated and inclusive operational structure for use in disaster response, and actions to put all three in place and operationalized will successfully implement the system nationally. NDMA has ownership of PAK-NIMS and is responsible for initiating and completing the development of standardized terminology, organizational structures, standard operating procedures, gender-responsive disaster management training supporting PAK-NIMS and the qualification and credentialing of diverse disaster management staff at all levels across the nation. NDMA should use input and support from the PDMA's and relevant sectorial stakeholders to strengthen coordination, accountability, and the use of sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based and inclusive disaster risk management in accomplishing these key tasks.

The core components are:

- Command and Coordination
- Resource Management
- Communication and Information Management

These components will be more fully explained in the following sections.

3.2 Supporting Components

The four supporting components within PAK-NIMS cover key action areas that strengthen and enhance the overall effectiveness and inclusiveness of the core system components.

The supporting components are:

- Planning and Preparedness
- Supporting Technologies
- Ongoing Management and Maintenance (of the PAK-NIMS)
- Awareness and Understanding of PAK-NIMS

These components will be more fully explained in the following sections.

3.3 NDMA Wings Mapped to NIMS

The various wings and functions of NDMA correlate to the core and supporting PAK-NIMS components in this way, while the NDMA Gender and Child Cell (GCC), and equivalent GESI coordination mechanisms at provincial and district levels, where established, provide cross-cutting technical support to the implementation of PAK-NIMS across all core and supporting components.

Core Components	NDMA Wing
Command and Coordination	NEOC, Operations Wing, Regional Military Collaboration Wing, Media Directorate

Core Components	NDMA Wing
Resource Management	Logistics Directorate, Response Directorate (Operations Wing), National Resources and Risk Financing Wing, International Collaboration Wing. Administration and Finance Wing
Communication and Information Management	Tech E&M Wing, Media Directorate
Support Components	
Planning and Preparedness	Plans Wing, Operations Wing, Regional Military Collaboration Wing, Disaster Risk Reduction Wing, Infrastructure Advisory and Project Development Wing
Supporting Technologies	Tech E&M Wing, Tech Early Warning Wing
Ongoing Management and Maintenance	All
Awareness of PAK-NIMS	NIDM, Media Directorate, COE

4 PAK-NIMS COMMAND AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

4.1 Command and Coordination

Competent and results-driven command and coordination of operational incident management and incident support are essential to achieving the best outcomes for disaster response. It includes the roles, processes and organizational structures needed to effectively and efficiently integrate all involved entities in preparing for and responding to incidents of all hazards and sizes while addressing the needs of all affected population groups, particularly vulnerable populations. PAK-NIMS provides an explanation and guidance on how operational responses are directed and coordinated, tactically at the incident site, and supported by higher levels. Operational responses are directed and coordinated primarily through the use of a standard Incident Command System (ICS) at all levels, including the local response level. This ICS was introduced in some areas of the country during the 2025 Monsoon Season and is now a key part of the National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP, pages 45-47) for 2026.

NDMA must develop comprehensive gender-responsive training programs on the components of PAK-NIMS that explain their main elements, how various organizations coordinate and integrate their efforts, how this approach will be implemented at all levels and how they work together. It is essential that the training should include covering gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) principles in disaster management, differential disaster impacts, inclusive planning and decision-making, the collection and use of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), effective engagement with vulnerable and marginalized groups, and protection considerations relevant to disaster management.

Leadership roles, lines of authority, and decision-making processes in the lead up to and during disaster response operations (Sections 4.2 – 4.4) as well as the transition to recovery operations (Section 5.10) are clearly defined in PAK-NIMS. Standard Operating Procedures for the actual response operations that cover all aspects of disaster management, including declaration of incidents (at any level), establishment of command structures and staffing, gender-responsive operational procedures, and processes for requesting support as well as for demobilization will be developed by NDMA in consultation with PDMAs. These will be implemented as part of the overall PAK-NIMS approach. All future National Disaster Response Plans and documents will be developed consistent with these SOPs. These SOPs should also include processes for the other phases of the disaster cycle, especially the preparedness phase.

The component also includes public information and media engagement efforts to ensure critical information is given to the public through accessible and inclusive communication channels to help them make the right decisions before, during, and after a disaster. The NDMA Media Directorate will continue to expand and improve its public awareness and education campaigns, expand the reach of the NDMA App, and work closely with the media and others to ensure maximum reach of key information to the public, specifically to women, persons with disabilities, remote communities, and other vulnerable groups. NDMA will coordinate with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoI&B) to ensure broadest engagement and reach of all public awareness campaigns and public information regarding disasters, public alert and warning, and operations.

For larger disasters there are PAK-NIMS standardized structures (Unified Command and Multiagency Policy Groups [MPGs]) that enable multiple agencies and jurisdictions to work together effectively to efficiently prioritize efforts and scarce resources based on operational needs and the needs of vulnerable populations across larger geographical regions. These structures focus on supporting overall resourcing for disaster response while ICS manages the specific tactical response operation at incident locations.

NDMA has the responsibility to develop training on ICS and the other components of PAK-NIMS and will coordinate with Provincial and District DMAs on a nationwide training campaign including gender-responsive disaster management training, and the development of a train-the-trainer program within all provinces to help speed up the effort. The goal is to complete training at the federal and provincial level in the first year followed by completion of training at all levels in the next few years. After that, an annual training cycle will ensure the continuous qualification and certification of the disaster management workforce is maintained.

The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) will take the lead in developing and implementing the gender-inclusive training program with the support of the NEOC, the Operations Wing, and the Military Collaboration Wing, other wings as required, and in coordination with the provinces.

The PAK-NIMS framework's Command and Coordination component aligns with the principles, systems and organizational units that make up Pakistan's current approach to disaster management. Listed below are the four main areas of disaster response incident command and coordination and the PAK-NIMS elements that already exist at the national, provincial and district levels that correspond to those four main mechanisms. Since these command and coordination mechanisms already exist or are in the process of being introduced it makes rapid adaptation and operationalization of PAK-NIMS very achievable within a few years. It will take training and awareness, development of key tools and processes such as standardizing terminology and improving communication interoperability as well as other efforts to create a consistent operational approach that is used at all levels and across Pakistan.

1. Senior level policy guidance and decision-making.

- a. NDMA strategic national coordination, facilitation and policy guidance
- b. Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) - coordination and implementation within the provincial jurisdiction
- c. Inter-Agency Forums – coordination meetings held regularly among NDMA, PDMA, military units, NGOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, private sector, donors, etc.
- d. The GESI coordination mechanisms must participate in policy coordination and decision-making processes to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion considerations are integrated into disaster preparedness, response, and early recovery

2. Tactical action planning and implementation at the disaster location.

- a. ICS. This standardized approach will be introduced and trained across all levels to ensure nationwide consistency and enable interoperability and scalable response while promoting inclusive incident management practices.

3. Support coordination to the operational response.

- a. EOCs – NEOC, Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC), District Emergency Operations Center (DEOC) plus support entity operational centers (Rescue Services, Civil Defense, Law Enforcement, Military, others) tied into the EOCs.
- b. Mobile EOCs – for deployment to hard hit areas for support from NDMA.

4. Communication with the public and other key stakeholders.

- a. Public Information units who work with media, social media and communities directly to provide lifesaving/life sustaining and other critical information through accessible and inclusive communication approaches.
- b. Stakeholder engagement teams

- c. Community Liaison Platforms – community disaster management committees with women in the membership, public feedback mechanisms, local exercises and engagement with women-led organizations and representatives of vulnerable groups.

4.2 Senior Level Policy Guidance and Decision-making

For larger disasters that involve multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, NDMA (through its Operations Wing in coordination with the Regional Military Collaboration Wing and the NEOC) must establish an MPG which includes senior leaders from response and support agencies or their designated representatives. This MPG will provide higher level policy guidance to the Incident Commander (IC) and their team, review resource availability and assist by prioritizing resources and their allocation and provide advice to enable decision-making by elected and appointed officials as well as senior executives in other organizations who do so in support of the disaster response. The MPG will ensure that operational decision-making considers the differentiated needs of affected populations and is informed by available sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), with technical input from relevant GESI coordination mechanisms.

4.3 Incident Command System

For most typical incidents, the response entities in a local jurisdiction handle the response using their own first responders and equipment. Larger disasters tend to be more complex and require more resources and support from outside the local jurisdiction. When a disaster involves more than one agency in a jurisdiction or more than one jurisdiction it will require using a standard ICS to ensure all the additional resources and responders are efficiently, equitably, and effectively integrated to successfully respond to the disaster. ICS uses the organizational structure shown below. The ICS approach is already being introduced by NDMA at the national level in their NDRP 2026 (pages 45-47), and other elements of PAK-NIMS will also be introduced quickly with its establishment as national disaster management policy. The next steps are for provincial DM staff to be trained then district DM staff to be trained in its operational set up and use including personnel responsible for gender equality and social inclusion, where established. The ICS structure (and PAK-NIMS) should be used during all four parts of the disaster cycle, from prevention/mitigation to preparedness to response to recovery.

This basic organizational structure is usually the baseline for any ICS organization and must be adapted to specific local needs, contexts, and vulnerabilities. The modular nature of it allows for easy expansion and addition of specialized functional staff and technical advisors, as required, under the main pillars. Additionally, the Command Staff set up allows for expansion as well, especially the addition of more liaison officers to support and advise the IC. Incident Command structures must include qualified female personnel and ensure access to technical GESI expertise to support inclusive operational planning, coordination, and decision-making.

Unlike the national or provincial levels which have larger numbers of staff, for a local disaster at the district level, the ICS organizational structure will be staffed by a smaller number of emergency management officials from the DDMA who must be augmented temporarily by staff from other District government organizations including relevant social sector departments where appropriate. With such small staff, the district may choose to have several functions handled by one person or may not have someone handling one of the functions for a short period of time until more staff can be added.

At smaller Incidents and certain Command Staff functions may be covered by city officials outside of the DDMA. A city spokesperson or other Public Communication Officer (PCO) from another organization should perform

the function of a Public Communication Officer (PCO) who may not be appointed at smaller incidents. These alternate arrangements can get “cleared for release” information and messages from the IC’s team.

4.3.1 Incident Commander

The IC is responsible for directing on-scene disaster response activities. They do this by developing operational response objectives that consider the needs of affected and vulnerable populations, ordering and releasing resources, and approving timely, accurate and inclusive information release to key stakeholders and the public. The IC is also responsible for requesting resources and capabilities from other jurisdictions (could be a neighboring District or from the Provincial DMA).

Most ICs should be appointed in DDMA. They should be trained in PAK-NIMS and in general disaster management principles by NDMA. The IC can also come from one of the response agencies, such as I122 or the police. For larger disasters that cover a broader geographic area, the IC needs to be someone very experienced and should be appointed from the PDMA or local I122.

PDMA should provide support to local ICs by augmenting their staff or deploying PDMA’s mobile Emergency Operations Center (EOC) units and capabilities. NDMA, upon request, can deploy the NDMA Mobile EOC where required, to support federal coordination in accordance with the provincial autonomy envisaged under NDMA Act, 2010.

To operationalize the ICS structure across Pakistan, extensive basic training including gender-responsive incident management practices, will be provided and completed by PDMA and DDMA and response organization staff within the first two years after the introduction of PAK-NIMS. NDMA should develop and provide the required training through the NIDM and COE and supported by provinces establishing train-the-trainer teams to speed up the process. After the broad completion of basic (introductory) training is completed, intermediate, advanced and specialized courses will be developed and delivered at all levels.

4.3.2 Command Staff

To support the IC, the following organizational structure should be established in the DDMA (or district governments):

- **Public Communication Officer (and team)** –is responsible for engaging with and informing the public about the disaster, disaster operations, and assistance to disaster survivors, including advice on what they should do to remain safe, where they can go for shelter and food and other lifesaving and life-sustaining information. They also work with media and other organizations that need information about disaster and disaster operations. Functions include media and social media monitoring, analyzing and reporting on stories, developing a consistent communication plan and coordinating with the entire General Staff and Liaison Officers to prepare, clear, and release accurate and timely information. Communicators from other organizations including women-led and community-based organizations, where appropriate, may be integrated into the PCO’s team and be under their lead and supervision. Support for the PCO will be provided by NDMA’s Media Directorate in the form of national-level talking points, pre-disaster training, development of templated responses for tailoring to local situations and amplifying the local PCO’s messaging at the national level. Additionally, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoI&B) provides support particularly for nationwide public awareness campaigns, dissemination of verified information, strategic communications, media coordination and countering misinformation during disasters. Support will also be provided by the PDMA’s media team.

- **Safety Officer** – is designated by the concerned PDMA or DDMA and is responsible for the Incident Safety Plan including protection and accessibility considerations for responders and affected populations, monitoring the safety aspects of incident operations, coordinating multiagency safety efforts and advising the IC (who has the ultimate responsibility for safe operations) on any issues with the health and safety of incident personnel. Support for this role from NDMA is limited to safety policy development at the national level to maintain consistency nationwide, and professional training guidelines developed to ensure anyone in the role is capable and understands their duties.
- **Liaison Officer(s)** – is/(are) the point of contact for the IC to representatives from other organizations (e.g. military, UN, I I 22, police) who provide input on the policies, resource availability, and capabilities to support the disaster response operations. The Liaison Officer can be assigned a staff to assist in this effort. For larger disasters, NDMA will assign an NDMA liaison officer in the NEOC to provide greater awareness at the national level for unmet needs and operational assistance that requires national level coordination (e.g. with the military or with international aid organizations). This role focuses on ensuring direct communication is possible between the local IC and supporting organizations including the PDMAs and NDMA. Additionally, there may be a liaison role to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Crisis Management Unit which plays a key role in coordinating international assistance, consular matters and diplomatic liaison during major emergencies involving foreign governments and international organizations.
- **Additional Command Staff** – the IC can appoint additional staff as subject matter experts including GESI advisors and technical advisors who only advise but do not have the authority to direct response operations and activities. PDMAs and NDMA will have the ability to deploy staff to assist with larger or more complex disasters.

4.3.3 General Staff

The General Staff is responsible for the operational functions of the incident command structure and can start with as few as one or two people who handle multiple functions. Then, depending on the disaster, the General Staff can expand to whatever size the IC requires to effectively handle operations. For larger disasters, additional support can come from neighboring jurisdiction, from the PDMAs and other response organizations involved in the operations. NDMA should deploy its mobile EOC and staff to very large or hard-hit disaster locations to enhance communication and coordination of support from the national level.

- **Operations Section Chief (and staff)** – responsible for planning and implementing tactical activities that support safe and inclusive response operations, to achieve the IC's objectives and priorities. Supports the development of Incident Action Plans (IAP) by the Planning Section for the response activities during given operational periods of response (could be daily, weekly or longer).
- **Planning Section Chief (and staff)** – responsible for helping maintain the IC and the Command Staff's situational awareness. This is done by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating critical information on the disaster including the sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) of impacted populations, the status of assigned resources, details of the incident, running the planning process, and developing the IAP using input from other sections including available risk, vulnerability, and operational information and direction from the IC. Planning is also required for the expansion and demobilization of incident resources and ensuring complete documentation of the incident. This section may be expanded to include Intelligence or Investigation functions depending on the type of incident.

- **Logistics Section Chief (and staff)** – responsible for providing services including sourcing, ordering, and storing required resources (including facilities, providing security, transportation, life support, communication, information technology (IT) support, and medical services including support requirements for vulnerable populations, among other needs). They set up the facilities and demobilize them, as well as develop and maintain a Communications Plan that covers all aspects of communications and IT including issuing equipment, maintaining it, and accounting for it.
- **Finance and Administration Section Chief (and staff)** – responsible for all financial and administrative support to the command and general staff, including personnel time accounting, negotiation of leases and vendor contracts, and tracking and analyzing all incident related costs and resource utilization to help the IC in forecasting future needs and identifying sources of funding to cover those costs.

4.4 Managing Simultaneous Incidents

At any given time, there can be multiple incidents occurring simultaneously. Some may be caused by the same hazard, such as multiple flooding incidents in separate locations due to severe rain during the monsoon season, or they may be totally unrelated such as an earthquake happening in one location and a major forest fire in another. They may also be in very different stages with one just beginning while the other nearing the end of the response operational period.

With the growing impacts of climate change and other risk factors, it is even more imperative that the national disaster management system be improved through the adaptation of PAK-NIMS so the nation can handle any number of incidents simultaneously using the same inclusive approach, organizational structures and incident management practices. Doing so makes it much easier for staff and equipment to be sent from one location to another and plugged right into the incident command organization without the need to take time to learn a different system.

PAK-NIMS allows for more easily managing simultaneous incidents through the consistent use of the system's core components and the operational relationships between the national (NDMA) and provincial (PDMAs) levels which provide higher level support and coordination of resources (including from national and international sources) and critical disaster related information.

This support translates down to the next levels, to the PDMA to DDMA relationships in which provinces manage operational support to the districts and help adjudicate distribution of limited resources. NDMA should include the integration, set up and use of PAK-NIMS components into all exercises to ensure disaster management staff at all levels learn how to function together under this national system.

The normal initial operational setup for a disaster is at the local district (lowest) level. A locally assigned IC will set up the initial Incident Command Post (ICP) (which should be at the DEOC or district government offices where DDMA's do not exist) and start coordinating immediate response operations. If the scope and impact of the disaster is very large or is growing larger, the district should request support from neighboring jurisdictions or from the PDMAs. As mentioned above, there might be multiple ICPs being set up at any given time during a large disaster event spread over a wide geographic area. Should the PDMA get stretched thin by many separate incidents, it can decide to merge several operations into a larger one under a single IC and combine response operations into one bigger operation. The PDMA can also request additional operational support and resources from the national level through the NEOC at NDMA. Prior to known major disaster seasons (such as monsoon

season), NDMA and the PDMA's will preposition resources including essential relief items for vulnerable populations and assign staff to be on stand-by to deploy to hard hit areas.

The increasing number and size of disasters drives the need for a larger number of qualified and diverse emergency management staff, especially at the district level. This means that NDMA must accelerate its training and professional development programs to meet the needs. (Training is covered in section 6.3.1)

For all disasters, both small and big, as well as periods when there are multiple incidents occurring simultaneously, the NEOC plays a huge role in helping the provinces (and through them the districts) prepare, respond to and recover from them. The NEOC ensures that regardless of the number of separate incidents, NDMA maintains situational awareness and can see the combined big picture of how response operations are going, where resource levels are getting low and using AI and impact-based forecasting can project future needs based on historical data and current conditions across the nation.

5 PAK-NIMS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The PAK-NIMS approach for managing incidents includes the practices described below that will be added to the current disaster management system through policy updates, training, exercises, revision of planning, operational field assistance coordinated through the PDMAs and development and issuance of gender-responsive field operating manuals explaining the PAK-NIMS approach. To achieve this, NDMA should develop a full implementation campaign to cover the adaptation, training, and operationalization of the system nationally.

As a first step to implementation of PAK-NIMS after conducting a national awareness campaign, it is critical that NDMA concurrently begins the development of the common approaches and standards for all the components. This includes standardized terminology, standardized and interoperable equipment, gender-responsive standard operating procedures, guides to PAK-NIMS organizational structures, standardized training, standard qualifications and credentialling of disaster management staff and a common approach to managing response operations.

5.1 Use of Common Terminology

For PAK-NIMS, NDMA should develop standardized command terminology and a shared disaster management lexicon across Pakistan's disaster management ecosystem to enable a diverse and broad range of organizations to collaborate and integrate their activities to response to any size or type of disaster. The common terminology covers organizational functions and elements; descriptions of main resources such as personnel types, equipment and vehicles, functional teams, facilities and essential services; and types of operational disaster management facilities and types of facilities for evacuees and refugees that specifically consider the needs of the vulnerable population groups. Having a common terminology ensures clearer communication and understanding of what is being said. Standard operating procedures for developing the common terminology and lexicon for all aspects of PAK-NIMS will be developed by NDMA. This characteristic of PAK-NIMS is inherent in all three core components and is further discussed in other sections below.

5.2 Use of Modular Organizational Structures

PAK-NIMS use of ICS and EOC organizational structures, which are modular in design, is what allows easy scalability depending on the size and scope of the disaster. The Incident Command can easily expand the organization from an initial smaller compact entity if the situation needs more staff or representatives from additional organizations including relevant GESI coordination mechanisms, to integrate into the disaster response effort. The overall organizational setup remains the same, just the number of staff and additional levels of supervision increase to ensure effective management of the operations. By using the same modular organizational structures at all levels and across the nation, it ensures better collaboration between jurisdictions and between levels since all will be set up the same. NDMA should develop guides to standardize the ICS and organizational structures as well as training for them, including inclusive incident management practices.

5.3 Managing by Objectives

The IC drives incident operations by establishing clear, specific and measurable and inclusive objectives to address both the immediate requirements of the incident as well as the successful completion of response operations and a shift into recovery efforts. Based on these objectives, the ICS staff help develop strategies, tasks (tactics and actions) designed to achieve the objectives, while addressing the priority needs of affected populations, in the most effective and efficient manner. These are assigned to specific functional units/elements, plans are

developed to accomplish the tasks and PAK-NIMS procedures and protocols are followed when doing so. The results of the actions are documented, and performance is measured against the objectives to determine if they have been achieved, or if additional tasks need to be assigned to do so, or if the objectives need to be modified.

The development of IAPs is the result of the planning done based on achieving operational objectives. The larger and more complex the disaster is the greater the need to ensure IAPs are written, especially if the response operations will last longer than one operational period (determined by the IC, could be one day, one week or longer), involves more than one entity or jurisdiction or there is a legal requirement. The IAP helps maintain unity of effort, clarity of actions, and effective, safe operations while ensuring that operational priorities reflect the needs of vulnerable populations where relevant. Most large operations have phased strategic planning that covers specific time periods, so the IAP needs to align consistently with that planning. There is no set time period the IAP must cover, but larger operations use daily IAPs to keep the focus on critical daily tasks. NDMA should develop inclusive guides and training on managing-by-objectives and the development of Incident Action Plans that include gender-responsive elements.

5.4 Incident Facilities and Locations

Incident Commanders can direct the setup of operational facilities in or near the disaster location for the incident management staff or specific functions. The facilities are set up by disaster management staff supported by staff from other agencies as required. The IC gets advice on locations from their own staff as well as other local government staff. Safety, ease of access, availability of power and telecommunication connections are some of the factors that help in decision making for locations. NDMA should develop a guide and standards for each ICS facility type including the operational processes for establishing them and demobilizing them.

Selection of Incident Command System (ICS) facility locations should consider both operational and inclusion requirements. In addition to safety, accessibility, power supply, and telecommunications, site selection should take into account the needs of women and any staff with disabilities. Where feasible, Incident Commanders should seek technical advice from relevant specialists, including GESI expertise, and consider inputs from local authorities and community representatives to support inclusive operational planning.

5.4.1 ICS Facility Types

ICS facility types include the following:

- **Incident Command Post (ICP):** The ICP is an on-scene and tactical operations level facility that usually houses the IC and their Command and General Staffs and any other designated incident personnel. It may also include an Incident Communications center. Depending on the disaster and its location, the ICP can also be set up at the nearest EOC, government facility or a private sector facility if required.
- **Incident Staging Area (ISA):** An ISA is established to push resources (commodities, equipment and people) forward closer to the disaster location where it is ready for assigning and deploying resources needed for response operations as directed by the ICP staff. All resources are tracked and documented. Each staging area has a manager who reports to the Operations Section Chief at the ICP.
- **Incident Base Site:** The Incident Base Site is where the IC places key equipment and houses response staff. This site may be collocated with the ICP or at another physical location that meets the needs of the operations.

- **Joint Information Center (JIC):** As part of the public communication function, a JIC is where public communication officers and other government communication teams work to gather, produce and disseminate disaster related information through accessible and inclusive communication approaches, that the public and key stakeholders need to make informed decisions on actions they should take to remain safe or to depart the area near a disaster location. It is usually near the ICP or collocated with an EOC. Many times, there will be a separate area used for press conferences and meetings with the media. The public communication staff are responsible for setting up the JIC.
- **Incident Satellite Site:** The IC may decide to establish a satellite site closer to the disaster location for specific staff supporting functions that may require that proximity. This can be a temporary distribution area, a smaller version of the Joint Information Center to handle large numbers of press who may be located at the disaster area or any other smaller site necessary. ICP staff are responsible for setting up satellite sites and should get support from other Provincial or District staff to do so.
- **Mobile Command Post (MCP):** An MCP is a rapidly deployable vehicle that has a range of communication capabilities (real-time voice, imagery, data sharing; satellite and internet connectivity to the main ICP or EOC, small conference area and individual workstations. Some are larger vans that even include sleeping areas and shower/toilet facilities. They are used to provide on-scene management of disasters, tactical situations or special events. The organization that owns the MCP is responsible for deploying it in support of an IC's request. NDMA can deploy its MCP to support NEOC operations and does so through coordination with the PDMA/PEOC.

5.4.2 Emergency Operations Centers

Emergency operations centers (EOC) are the foundations for incident management in the PAK-NIMS approach. For many incidents the ICP will be formed and operate out of the nearest EOC. From the advanced capabilities of NDMA's NEOC to the PEOCs at the provinces to the DEOCs at district level, EOCs are where the various response organizations and other stakeholders (NGOs, INGOs, UN, private sector, military liaisons, GESI coordination mechanisms, etc.) can meet to develop plans, discuss existing and imminent threats and hazards, coordinate and integrate their support to on-scene incident commands and responders or to other EOCs they have a mutual support agreement with. Usually, the EOC staff are not the same as the staff at an ICP or other IC facilities, but for some smaller operations (especially at the district level) they might be. Otherwise, they are there to support the IC and incident personnel through their main coordination function to get them the resources, information, or policy guidance they need.

Many government departments and private sector organizations have their own Operations Centers, but these are more internally focused and do not usually include representatives from other organizations. EOCs are specifically about coordination of information, resources, plans, and operational activities between multiple entities and jurisdictions before, during and after disaster response operations. EOCs are set up and run by government jurisdictions. They should be located in a stable area (not prone to disaster issues such as flooding) and have strong communication, power and utility connections.

NDMA should develop a guide that includes standards for EOCs, including best practices for determining their locations, designing their floorplans, and listing both a minimum level of capability along with expanded lists of capabilities for more advanced EOCs.

The primary functions of EOCs are:

- Information gathering, analysis and sharing, including approved release of public information

- Resource coordination, allocation and tracking
- Plan coordination: including both current and future requirements
- Operational coordination: between entities, jurisdictions and policy/decision-makers

EOC organizational structures very closely align with the Incident Command structure. There is an EOC Director and the following four key sections in an EOC:

- Operations Coordination Section
- Planning Coordination Section (including a Situational Awareness function that covers a SADDD analysis and a Gender and Child Cell)
- Logistics Coordination Section
- Finance and Administrative Coordination Section

Additionally, there is a Public Communication Officer (and staff) who directly reports to the EOC Director and who may manage a Joint Information Center (where organizational media staff work together to ensure coordinated, timely, accurate, accessible, inclusive and consistent information is prepared and cleared for release) and a Press Center adjacent to the EOC where press conferences may be held.

The EOC Director can reconfigure the organizational structure to more closely directly support the incident's response efforts by combining the Operational and Logistics Coordination Sections into one (becoming a Resources Support Section that combines resource sourcing, procurement and tracking) and can also pull the Situational Awareness function from the Planning Coordination Section and create a stand-alone section to have direct contact with this function.

The EOC Director shall ensure that the NDMA Gender and Child Cell (GCC), or equivalent GESI coordination mechanism at the respective level, is engaged to provide technical support on inclusive planning, information management, operational coordination, public communication, and operational decision-making throughout disaster preparedness, response, and the transition to recovery.

EOCs can maintain the four key functions and use a Departmental Structure to coordinate between departments to integrate support for operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration.

NDMA, through the PAK-NIMS approach, in addition to developing guidelines for the location and layout of EOCs, will establish standard operational terminology and practices for:

- Activation and Deactivation of EOCs,
- Clear definitions of Steady State Operations,
- 24/7 Watch functions
- Activation levels including what triggers an elevation and what functions are active at each level
- Standard Operating Procedures for all EOC functions

5.5 Integrated Communications

Effective use of a communication plan covering interoperable systems, processes, and media links (e.g., voice, data, video, imagery) enables continuous and rapid communication across all functions of the incident command, along with connectivity with other levels of the disaster management framework and supporting organizations and entities. It facilitates information sharing, consistent situational awareness, and real-time operational coordination and control. The planning for the integrated communication capability starts well before an incident

and will include procedures to quickly establish operational capabilities and include backup and alternate channels, in case of challenges like power outages, damage to cell towers or landlines, or other issues.

NDMA should take the lead and coordinate with federal disaster response agencies as well as PDMA, DDMA, the private sector and others to determine what is required to institute integrated and interoperable communications nationally and to set both the policy and the standards to achieve it. A national strategy developed from this coordinated effort should be prepared by NDMA and it should include a proposed timeline and approach to request approval for the funding of the equipment and systems.

5.6 Proactive and Comprehensive Resource Management

Resource management means effectively maintaining comprehensive, accurate and current accounting of resources (personnel, teams, equipment, gender-responsive supplies and facilities) involved in the incident operations as well as those available resources that can be requested to augment current resources. Working closely with the Planning and Operations functions, the Resource Management function will analyze the operational data to forecast increasing or decreasing resource requirements and then plan and take action accordingly to avoid running out of any resource or ending up with an overabundance of unneeded resources.

NDMA's Logistics Directorate in its Operations Wing should take the lead in coordination with NDMA's Provincial Coordination Cell and key stakeholders such as PDMA Resource Management to develop standardized resource terminology, definitions of categories and types of resources and the standard operating procedures for storing, requesting, documenting and distributing resources equitably based on operational priorities and identified needs, required for disaster response operations.

5.7 Information and Intelligence Management

This component involves effectively managing the processes to gather, analyze, share and document essential incident related information including sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) of the impacted populations, where available.

NDMA's Technology Equipment and Maintenance Wing in coordination with the NEOC, PEOCs and other key stakeholders, should develop standard operating procedures for the management of information and intelligence related to disaster response operations. These SOPs and standards will be used by all DM organizations at all levels.

5.8 Unity of Command

In addition to integrating various organizations under a Unified Command structure, the Unity of Command principle covers the need for a clear chain of command that outlines the lines of authority within and across the incident management organization and the need to ensure that each member of the staff only reports to a single official above them. Doing so will clarify reporting chains, prevent confusion caused when there are conflicting directives given by multiple authorities, and improve the effective management of staff under each supervising official. There will be processes to establish command functions and appoint the IC either before (predesignating) or at the beginning of an incident. There will also be a process for transferring command that includes a full briefing about the operations up to that point and what the next steps will be, and that ensures all incident personnel are notified of the transfer of command.

NDMA should develop policy and standard processes for identifying the chain of command and the lines of authority for disaster response. These policies and standards should be used at all levels.

5.9 Accountability for Disaster Operations

This principle is an essential part of all aspects of disaster management, from knowing where all the incident staff are, accounting for resources (what is available, what has been deployed and when and where), developing IAPs, ensuring clear understanding of unity of command across all personnel and documenting the operations (including situation on the ground, decisions taken, actions taken, issues that may arise and results of the operations including impacts on vulnerable populations).

NDMA should develop standard accountability processes and formatting for key reports used in disaster response operations to ensure consistency across all levels of disaster management in Pakistan.

5.10 Transition to Recovery Operations

Best global practice for the transition from response to recovery has recovery operations (especially planning) beginning early in the incident and running concurrently including sharing information including gender-responsive assessments and helping identify key needs including early consideration of social recovery needs of vulnerable groups. Pakistan has developed an ex-ante Disaster Recovery Framework that guides the recovery effort from its inception even before a disaster through full recovery and reconstruction.

The PAK-NIMS approach allows a smooth transition from response to recovery operations because many of the same organization structures will be present in the recovery organization. Things like planning, logistics, recovery operations, finance, and administration. Liaison officers, PCOs, and Safety Officers will also be present. So, there are natural alignments that make for easier handover of information and activities. Many times, recovery staff are housed in the same facilities as the response staff or are nearby.

The focus of response operations is on lifesaving, life-sustaining efforts and critical infrastructure, and essential services stabilization. Once key services are stabilized and threats and risk to the public and property have ended, the response operations can start to scale back as recovery operations start to ramp up to permanent restoration of full services, reconstruction and rehabilitation that promotes equitable recovery outcomes.

The transition process needs to be planned using inclusive recovery planning approaches with recovery actions and operations identified, organized, prioritized, and resourced to be completed or started while the EOC and ICP are scaled down and demobilized. The plan ensures continuity of planning and efforts from response to recovery.

NDMA should develop policies, standard processes, and a guidebook including gender-responsive transition procedures on transitioning operations from response to recovery. Additionally, training should be developed and provided as part of the overall training strategy for implementing PAK-NIMS.

Transition planning should ensure that information on vulnerable populations, protection concerns, and sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), where available, is systematically transferred from response coordination mechanisms to recovery teams to support equitable recovery planning.

6 PAK-NIMS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Resource Management

The PAK-NIMS Resource Management component provides a standardized terminology and approach to identifying, requesting, deploying, tracking and demobilizing resources to support inclusive and equitable disaster response such as personnel (and teams), equipment (including vehicles), supplies, commodities, and facilities. It also includes guidance on management of funding (including sourcing of funds). It ensures resources are used efficiently and can be most effectively shared across jurisdictions where and when they are needed and it helps in prioritizing the allocation and use of scarce resources based on operational priorities and identified needs of affected populations. The system ensures accountability for resource use and replacement.

NDMA's Logistics Directorate, Response Directorate (Operations Wing), National Resources and Risk Financing Wing, International Collaboration Wing, Administration and Finance Wing have the responsibility of working together with representatives from the PDMA's and selected DDMA's to develop the national standardized terminology based on current stocking planning efforts and to also develop digital systems for resource management that can support real-time resource tracking and informed decision-making at all levels. In particular, the Response Directorate is responsible for coordinating disaster response operations and facilitates the mobilization, allocation, and deployment of resources during emergencies. These groups need to complete an initial set up of the system and expand and improve it each year, including supporting requests to fund it at all levels.

The PAK-NIMS approach for Resource Management Preparedness includes the components described below.

6.2 Use of Common Terminology

As with all parts of PAK-NIMS, NDMA will work with PDMA's to develop common terminology and a shared disaster resource management lexicon across Pakistan's disaster management ecosystem. Some of the standardization will include resource typing, standard role descriptions, and common terminology for processes.

6.3 Resource Typing

NDMA will develop resource typing that will define and categorize disaster operations resources by capability. Doing so will ensure organizations at all levels and across functions will use a common language when discussing resources. The resources need to be widely used and shareable (not some unique piece of equipment, for example). This common language will use definitions of minimum capabilities for any resource. This allows any organization to request resources and know they will get resources with the capability they require. The typing for each resource includes the following elements:

- Capability – what the resource does
- Category - the function the resource is used for (e.g. search and rescue, medical, security)
- Kind – includes categories for people, teams, equipment, vehicles, supplies, and facilities
- Type – the level of minimum capability when performing a function. Type reflects a numbering system that indicates performance – usually with Type 1 the highest, Type 2 next etc. An example is a Type 2 truck will be able to haul certain weights of debris or other cargo; for people and teams the typing is based on experience and validated qualifications

- Where applicable, resource typing should include specialized resources required to support the needs of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable populations during disaster response

6.4 Standardizing Incident Staff Requirements

NDMA, through the NIDM, will develop a standard set of core incident management position descriptions and a training program tied to each position. This is the crucial requirement for a standard approach to incident staffing. When assessing the readiness of any jurisdiction, it requires starting with reviewing the training, experience, gender-responsive competencies, physical fitness, and capability of all staff members. Certification of training completion, incident experience, and other qualification criteria need to be developed and implemented. The next step is setting up a credentialing process that reviews the certification documentation and provides an official identification card that allows others to know they are qualified for a particular incident management role or position.

6.4.1 Standardization of Training

NDMA, through NIDM and the COE will develop a full gender-responsive set of training for all roles and functions including GESI within disaster management, including leadership roles and functional support roles. The development of the training will be based on the development of standard qualifications for each job type and function.

There will be a tiered approach that goes from introductory training to intermediate to advanced training including gender-responsive incident management practices. They will also create a train-the-trainer program with each PDMA providing a cadre of staff to train DDMA staff about PAK-NIMS. The train-the-trainer cadres will be used for key courses such as an introduction to PAK-NIMS, implementation of ICS, disaster recourse management, inclusive communication, protection considerations, and the use of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) etc. Intermediate, advanced and specialized courses will be conducted by NDMA's NIDM and COE with support from subject matter experts from within NDMA, as well as from academia and the private sector.

This set of training (per job type and function) will be mandatory for anyone in disaster management roles across the nation at all levels.

6.4.2 Standardization of Qualifications and Certifications

Just as training needs to be standardized, NDMA, through NIDM and the COE will develop clear qualification guidelines including gender-responsive competencies appropriate for each job type and function and also develop a process to document training and experience to provide nationally approved and controlled certifications for disaster management staff to confirm they are qualified to be assigned specific roles within the PAK-NIMS system. NDMA should promote the recruitment, retention, and professional development of qualified female disaster management personnel, supported by gender-responsive workplace policies and facilities, to strengthen operational capacity across all levels of the disaster management system.

6.5 Resource Management Approaches

There are several approaches to resource management. NDMA will develop policies and standards for each approach.

- **Resource inventory** - keeping a validated accounting of all organizational resources that are on hand and in the pipeline to arrive (and when), where they are stored or reside, when they need to be replaced (for things like commodities and medical supplies this relates to shelf-life), what the sources for replacement are and current costs, manufacturers model number, etc. There will be a very complete set of information for each resource. This will be set up in a standard data format, so all organizations use and have access to the same inventory form. Lifecycle monitoring of all resources will be part of the inventory process.
- **Resource tracking** - during incidents is used to account for all resources assigned to a specific incident management team, including the number and status of each type of resource, where they are assigned.
- **Technical support for inventorying** – more organizations, both public and private sector, are using existing and newer technologies to improve and speed up inventory efforts. These include the use of bar codes on packaging, Radio Frequency Identification tags, or Internet of Things technology.
- **Additional best practices** – use of the First-in First-out method to ensure older stock is used first. Automate reordering based on stock level triggers, and demand prediction and resupply lead time. Organize stock by level of high usage and historical demand trends. Pre-position essential relief items required by women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable populations in disaster-prone areas based on risk assessments and contingency planning.

6.6 Interorganizational Aid Agreements

Interorganizational Aid Agreements are legally based upon agreements for two or more organizations to share resources including specialized technical expertise where required, under specific circumstances and for specific amounts of time. They can be between organizations at the same level of government that are in close proximity to each other or are in widely dispersed locations (which is best when a large disaster hits multiple jurisdictions in a certain area which would prevent them from being able to send resources to another jurisdiction because they also were impacted and need the resources themselves).

Currently, resource sharing and mutual assistance among disaster management authorities are already provided under NDMA Act, 2010. Therefore, separate interorganizational aid agreements may not be necessary, except where specifically required with external or non-government stakeholders. For these instances, NDMA and the PDMA's will work together to develop a standard process and standard language that facilitates timely and equitable resource sharing during disasters, for mutual aid agreements at any level.

7 PAK-NIMS COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

7.1 Communication and Information Management

PAK-NIMS establishes systems, processes, channels, and methods of gathering, sharing, and protecting the means and information/data that decision-makers, leaders, and incident response staff need to support timely, inclusive, and evidence-based decision-making. It includes the establishment of standards for interoperable (compatible) communications, integrated communications, information sharing, and situational awareness. It ensures disaster responders use common terminology, clear language, and reliable communication systems to exchange timely, accurate and accessible information so that disaster responders and decision-makers have the information they need to make and communicate decisions. It encourages backup and alternate communication systems to ensure communication reaches all affected populations, including vulnerable groups, and continuity of operations during disaster response, which may, at times, be in very unstable environments.

NDMA's Technology, Equipment and Maintenance Wing will work closely with the military, I 122 service, police and the private sector as well as representatives from the PDMA's and selected DDMA's to develop standards for interoperable communications and the equipment required to achieve that goal. Once that is set up and agreed upon, the next effort will be to support and coordinate funding for the acquisition of the equipment through national, provincial, and international sources.

Processes and protocols for disaster operational information security, assurance and sharing will also be developed for adoption by all organizations in the disaster management ecosystem. This needs to be in place within the next few years to ensure improved outcomes for disaster response operations.

Communication and information management under the PAK-NIMS include the components described below.

7.2 Interoperability

PAK-NIMS requires the development and acquisition of interoperable communication systems at all levels and across all organizations. This will allow real-time communication between organizations using voice, data, and video systems. This will require national governance structures, an integrated technology acquisition plan, standard operating procedures for communication, training, and exercising of the system.

7.3 Reliable, Scalable, Portable

The communication and information system must be functional and effective in any type of disaster and any location in the nation. It must be reliable (tested to function well in expected situations) and scalable (able to expand from a small, single jurisdiction to a multi-jurisdictional incident with many agencies involved). The system's equipment must be portable (easily transported and deployed) and usable in any jurisdiction without the need for special local systems. This also included the ability to assign specific radio channels for use by all response agencies across the incident.

7.4 Resilient and Redundant Systems

The equipment and system must be resilient and able to handle heavy use and continue to work even if supporting infrastructure is damaged. Redundancy is achieved through duplication of services whether by having similar

backup equipment or services or having an alternate system that can take on the communication function if needed.

7.5 Information Security and Assurance

The system must be able to provide secure channels for sensitive information, and the incident command communication system needs to adhere to the best practices used for ensuring Information Security and Information Assurance.

7.6 Standard Terminology and Plain Language

The PAK-NIMS approach increases in its effectiveness and efficiency with the development and use of standard terminology and a common disaster management lexicon across all levels and stakeholders in the disaster management ecosystem. This allows members from different organizations, functions, expertise, and jurisdictions to understand each other when communication and coordinating efforts. Using plain language and culturally appropriate communication (not using codes, acronyms, overly technical jargon, specialized terms used by only a few organizations) increases clarity and understanding by the recipients and ensures misunderstanding and miscommunication is minimized. As with other PAK-NIMS standards, NDMA should develop the policies and standards for plain language, accessible communication, and the common disaster management lexicon to be used in Pakistan.

7.7 Data Interoperability Protocols

It is best practice to establish standard communication protocols for the collection, integration and sharing and dissemination of data and information. The specific channels to use, the standards for geolocation, formatting databases to enable sharing and integration and the use of standardized encryption protocols to ensure the security of information is maintained when communicating across organizations. NDMA should develop the standards for these protocols. The standards should include protocols for the collection, analysis, and reporting of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), where feasible, to support inclusive operational planning and decision-making.

7.8 Incident Information Types

There are many types of incident information outputs, from reports to plans to databases. The following are two key types of incident information that will be used. NDMA should set the standard formats and processes for all Incident Information Types.

- **Incident Reports** – produced to provide situational awareness and essential information for incident personnel. These are usually Situation Reports (SITREPs) which are standardized reports from any level that are produced regularly that provide validated and confirmed information on the incident operational status during a defined period of time. Standard SITREP formats should include reporting on vulnerable populations, protection concerns, and sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), where available. Augmenting those are **Specific Status Reports** that provide critical or time-sensitive information related to specific functions outside of the regular SITREP reporting schedule. Standardizing the information, formatting, language and transmission speeds up the integration of reports from many field sources and allows organizations to quickly find the information they might need across many reports.

- **Incident Action Plans (IAPs)** – these documents outline the incident objectives established by the IC and the tactics and activities planned to achieve them. The IAP addresses a specific operational period and depending on the size, complexity and duration of the incident response could be for a little as 12 hours on up to a week or more. The IC determines what would work best for their operational needs and uses the IAP to ensure situational awareness and inclusive operational coordination for all incident personnel and a consistent understanding of the objectives and tactics scheduled to be done. Understanding what all parts of the incident command are doing each day, increases integration of efforts, opens opportunities for cross functional support, and minimizes misunderstandings and the accidental disruption of another function's activities.

7.9 Data Collection Planning

A data collection and process plan that covers all aspects of data collection and use is required for all major incidents. From clearly listing and describing the key data elements (including sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), for related data), required, how it is formatted, requiring use of standard terminology and common lexicon, clearly defining units of measure and finally, covering information security and information assurance aspects. NDMA should set the policies and standards for incident and disaster data collection and planning.

Once data is collected, it needs to be reviewed and validated for accuracy, timeliness, and completeness. Next, it is analyzed and the data is turned into useful information that provides situational awareness, aid leadership decision-making and uses techniques such as data visualization to help present the key points of the data more quickly. This should include the identification of the differential impacts and priority needs of affected populations. Next, the data and information need to be shared across the organization and with appropriate supporting organizations. There needs to be a clear protocol on how to determine who needs to have the information to improve and provide consistent situational awareness and enable effective, inclusive, and efficient coordination. Finally, disaster responses move rapidly, and the situation can change dramatically as well, so it is important to ensure data and information are updated regularly and in a timely manner.

For information being released to the public, the role of Mol&B should be incorporated, particularly for dissemination of verified public information, strategic risk communications, media coordination and countering misinformation during disasters.

8 SUPPORTING COMPONENTS

8.1 Planning and Preparedness

This supporting component covers how the system focuses on building and sustaining inclusive and gender-responsive capabilities before an incident occurs. It includes planning, training, exercises, credentialing, mutual aid agreements, and continuous assessments to ensure organizations are ready to operate within the PAK-NIMS framework. Planning processes should integrate gender analyses and sex-disaggregated data, while training and simulation exercises should build the capacity of personnel to respond to gender-based risks, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence in emergencies.

NDMA's Plans Wing (in coordination with other NDMA wings, the NIDM and COE, federal response agencies, the military, PDMAs and DDMA's) has the lead in this aspect of the PAK-NIMS approach working closely with the NDMA Gender and Child Cell (GCC), and equivalent GESI coordination mechanisms where established, to strengthen inclusive disaster preparedness.

8.2 Supporting Technologies

As the frequency, scope, and impact of disasters continue to increase, especially climate-related severe weather events, technology plays a decisive role in improving disaster management before, during and after an incident. Planning is essential for capabilities required to facilitate voice and data communications (e.g., interoperability), information management and recordkeeping, and visualizing data including analysis of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD), where available, to assist decision making including recommendations on leading edge technology integration (big data analysis, AI and drones) that will help with increasing situational awareness and enabling proactive and data-driven actions.

NDMA's Technology Equipment and Maintenance Wing and the Technology Early Warning (Tech EW) Wing in coordination with the NEOC, the Operations Wing and other key stakeholders will take the lead on identifying, testing and integrating emerging and new technologies that can support improving and enhancing inclusive disaster management capabilities at all levels. In specific, the Tech EW has the lead role in early warning systems, hazard monitoring, forecasting, risk analysis and dissemination of early warnings to support disaster preparedness and response. These two wings should also be responsible for benchmarking with other national disaster management organizations and coordinating with academia and leading technology companies to speed up the identification and integration of the most leading edge and effective new technology. Development of a long-range disaster management technology strategy that supports equitable access to disaster information and decision-support systems, would help keep the effort focused and tied to the overall NDMA mission and strategy.

8.3 Ongoing Management and Maintenance

It is essential that PAK-NIMS itself is regularly reviewed and managed. This support component ensures the system continuously improves and remains current and effective. This is done through regular planning updates, after action reviews and lessons learned reporting, stakeholder engagement, and planning and capability alignment with evolving hazards, risks and threats, technologies, and policies.

NDMA will hold annual reviews of PAK-NIMS including assessment of gender equality and social inclusion integration, to document successes and gain input on areas for improvement. After action review processes for disaster responses will be standardized for all levels and a common format developed for lessons learned reports

including good practices and operational challenges related to GESI integration, which will also be centrally available on the NIDM website as part of its professional development programming. All of the findings will be used to update PAK-NIMS training each year.

Periodic reviews of PAK-NIMS should assess the effectiveness of gender equality and social inclusion integration across all core and supporting components, and use the findings to inform updates to policies, operational procedures, training, and guidance.

8.4 Awareness and Understanding of PAK-NIMS

To ensure full and consistent adaptation of PAK-NIMS across Pakistan, it is necessary to have strategies and requirements for socializing and institutionalizing it across all levels of emergency preparedness and response personnel and with other key stakeholders. As part of the comprehensive implementation plan, including identification of required training and awareness efforts, will be developed by NDMA, through NIDM and Center of Excellence (COE), with support from the Media Directorate for communication planning and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoI&B) particularly for nationwide public awareness campaigns, dissemination of verified information, strategic communications, media coordination and countering misinformation during disasters. This awareness training will be completed nationally within two years and the actual training on key PAK-NIMS concepts such as ICS will begin quickly and be offered regularly each year until all of the PDMA and DDMA staff have been trained and staff from supporting organizations get the opportunity to train as well.

9 IMPLEMENTATION OF PAK-NIMS

NDMA, in consultation with the PDMA's, will develop an implementation strategy that outlines the major steps required and proposed including a phased timeline for implementation of PAK-NIMS across the nation. Based on that implementation plan, more detailed action plans will be developed for each year and progress reviewed quarterly to ensure effective implementation including tracking gender-responsive indicators such as, incorporation of sex-disaggregated data, and the inclusion of gender-sensitive preparedness and response measures is being achieved.