



COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY

Afghanistan is recurrently hit by natural disasters causing losses to lives, livelihoods and property. In recent decades, this has led to massive problems of food insecurity and population exodus from the worst-hit areas. Between 1970 and 1998, the country experienced 57 large-scale disasters. Vulnerability to disaster risk has increased significantly as coping capacities have been reduced due to prolonged conflict.

Since 2003, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in partnership with the UN and other development organizations has developed key policy documents such as the Disaster Management Framework, National Strategy for Disaster Management, National Disaster Management Plan etc. The National Disaster Management Commission, under the leadership of the President, has been established. Work is under progress for the development and implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. While much progress has been made towards policy formulation, the implementation has been weak due to lack of capacity to effectively implement these policies and plans.

To address this capacity gap, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with assistance from UNDP, formulated a five-year Comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction Project. The project's goal is, "*to reduce the level of community vulnerability to natural and human induced hazards down to manageable and humanitarian levels*". The project seeks to achieve this goal by strengthening the capacity of the Afghanistan disaster management system to reduce risks and improve response and recovery management at the national, provincial and community level.

Project Duration: *January 2007 – December 2011*

Total Indicative Budget: *USD 9,811,515*

Budget committed/received: *UNDP (USD 1,250,500); ECHO (USD 475,556)*

Unfunded Budget: *USD 8,085,459*

RATIONALE

Afghanistan is a land-locked country with a high frequency of natural hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, sandstorms and floods. Secondary or social impacts of the creeping effects of drought also take a sustained toll in large parts of the country, with a prolonged seven year drought just ending in 2005/2006. Extreme winter is another phenomenon having a large scale impact. The ability of communities to cope with the impact of

such hazards would have been problematic at best in most circumstances, but the events of the last thirty years on Afghanistan has left the population with extremely low coping capacities and skills. The prolonged war has not only left the nation with direct casualties, but it has also destroyed the coping capacity of the government as well as the communities.

Direct and secondary effects of disasters include loss of life and injuries, destruction or damage to property and crops, disruption of production and loss of livelihood, disruption of essential community services, damage to national infrastructure, national economic loss, sociological and psychological after-effects and importantly, delays in reconstruction and diversion of scarce national development funds to emergencies. **Communities will continue to remain vulnerable, and the effectiveness and sustainability of development aid programs will continue to be threatened, until such time that disaster risk management practices are accepted as an integral component of development planning.**

The National Disaster Management Commission has responsibility for coordinating and guiding the strengthening of disaster management capacities and processes, using the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) as its “executive arm”. Members of the Commission represent key sectors and have been active in dealing with a range of emergency responses, but the risk reduction thinking and capacity across government is still quite limited. The National Disaster Management Plan advocates a comprehensive risk management approach, and states that ANDMA “coordinates disaster management activities at the national level”. The recently passed Decree by the President (May 2007), empowers ANDMA as a nodal agency responsible for coordinating all disaster related intervention in the country. However, the ANDMA lacks capacity to undertake this responsibility in an effective manner.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes policy development, and direct implementation of risk reduction measures at the national, provincial and community level. The project’s objective is to strengthen national capacity for disaster risk reduction, improved response, and recovery management. The project includes the following four main components:

Component 1: Capacity building and professional/organizational development

This component will support the review of ANDMA structure and work procedures, review the existing disaster management “Law”, review and update of National Disaster Management Plan, and develop Business Plan that reflects ANDMA’s core business. A comprehensive human resource development programme for ANDMA and key ministries will be developed and implemented. The national development planning process will be reviewed, and disaster risk reduction integrated into development policies and plans.

Component 2: Strengthening community capacity

This component will focus on building community resilience through identifying and expanding indigenous coping capacities and strengthening traditional early warning systems. This component will specifically target marginalized groups (women, children, disabled persons and the extreme poor) with the aim of strengthening their capacity and confidence to access a range of support services, and minimizing their vulnerability to negative impacts associated with disaster situations. Part of this strategy will be to assist communities to establish community emergency response teams, and community-based disaster mitigation projects. This

component will also focus on integration of disaster risk management in school curriculum, and public awareness and education.

Component 3: Strengthening risk information management system

Identifying hazards and vulnerabilities is crucial in understanding and reducing disaster risks. The Disaster Management Information System (DMIS), piloted in two provinces, will be extended to all provinces to assist with: GIS mapping of hazards and vulnerabilities; establishing local early warning systems; strengthening regional information networks; and, establishing partnerships with institutions/universities in the region.

Component 4: Development of response systems

This component is aimed at strengthening disaster response system and coordination mechanism at all levels. It will commence with a pilot project in Khunduz, and assist with the following: i) develop provincial disaster response management plan and procedures; ii) establish emergency operation centre for response management; and, iii) establish coordination mechanism for national and international assistance for effective disaster response.