

ADB and Disaster Management



ADB's Integrated Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy

ADB's new, integrated disaster and emergency assistance policy (DEAP), adopted in May 2004, aims at enhancing ADB's capacity and improving its effectiveness in assisting developing member countries (DMCs) struck by disaster. The new policy shifts the emphasis from only responding after disaster strikes to also supporting activities that anticipate and mitigate the likely impact of disasters that might occur. The new policy adopts a systematic approach to disaster management, including emergency prevention and post-conflict reconstruction; mainstreaming disaster risk management as an integral part of the development process; strengthening partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of emergency aid to DMCs; using resources more efficiently and effectively to better support pre- and post-disaster activities; and improving organizational arrangements in ADB for planning, implementing, and communicating effectively on disaster and emergency-related assistance.

Many scientists are predicting a higher probability of natural disasters in the near future because of climate change. ADB recognizes the need to forge strong partnerships to prepare for possible future needs. Partnership among development partner agencies, governments, research institutes, and local communities will be critical in reducing the impact of future disasters.



Disaster Risk Management

DEAP sets out objectives that are designed to strengthen support for reducing disaster risk in ADB's member countries in the Asia and Pacific region, as well as provide rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance following a disaster. A new action plan is being prepared to further embed disaster risk management into ADB's operational practices, and to develop additional risk reduction measures to further enhance reconstruction projects and climate adaptation projects.

A component of disaster risk reduction ADB undertook following the Indian Ocean tsunami is providing technical assistance with the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen the Tsunami Development Assistance Database, which tracks tsunami aid and provides analytical products to support decision making and resource allocation in four affected member countries (Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand). ADB's technical assistance provides capacity development to assist national aid coordination teams, establishes national web portals to provide access to coordinate data, allows regional analysis of tsunami assistance, and collates lessons from the four member countries. Moreover, three of these member countries (Indonesia, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka) have adapted the Development Assistance Database to enable them to manage all development cooperation activities or to use it as a monitoring and planning tool. These are some examples that highlight the various ways in which ADB is actively involved in disaster risk reduction.

DEAP helps strengthen efforts to reduce disaster risk. ADB has utilized several approaches for implementing disaster and emergency assistance. The most obvious is the provision of financial grants and loans following disaster impact. In addition to financing rehabilitation loans, ADB has provided hazard mitigation loans, national and regional technical assistance to reduce natural hazard risk and, in exceptional circumstances, grants to help overcome the impact of major disasters.

DEAP is a partnership between ADB and DMCs that is designed to mainstream disaster risk reduction as an integral part of the development process by ADB:

- Adopting a systematic approach to reducing disaster risk,
- Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction as an integral part of development,
- Working more closely with DMCs to help them adopt an approach that emphasizes preventive measures,
- Strengthening other partnerships to maximize synergies among development and specialized relief organizations,
- Using resources more efficiently and effectively to better support pre- and post-disaster activities, and
- Improving organizational arrangements in ADB for planning, implementing, and communicating effectively about disaster and emergency-related assistance.

In the context of country strategy and programming, the evaluation of disaster risk and its review with country authorities is the most important tool ADB has to enhance awareness of this threat to development and to encourage countries to allocate scarce resources to improve their risk management. It is also a critical step for improving the effectiveness of ADB's development assistance, especially in high-risk countries. Incorporating appropriate risk management in country programming and portfolio management is the cornerstone of ADB's shift to a proactive stance to improving risk management and enhancing development. Moving the focus from responding to disaster losses through reconstruction to mitigation and pre-disaster preparedness activities is an important dimension of ADB's poverty reduction agenda.

ADB's policy emphasizes longer-term activities for rehabilitating high-priority physical and social infrastructure; revitalizing basic services, particularly education and health care; and jump-starting economic productivity. This includes retroactive financing of emergency and relief activities carried out by governments.

ADB considers multi-stakeholder consultation, popular participation, and local ownership in the reconstruction and development process as essential.

NGO, civil society, and relief and humanitarian agencies represent significant partners who help bridge the gap between relief and longer-term development programming.