

**2006 ASIAN REGIONAL FORUM ON AID EFFECTIVENESS:  
IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION  
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**What methods have proved most effective for establishing country leadership of relief and reconstruction following natural disasters?**

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The opinions expressed in this case study are the authors' alone, and do not represent the official views of the organisers of the Asian Regional Forum on Aid Effectiveness

## Executive summary

1. This thematic study considers the applicability of the Paris Declaration in improving the effectiveness of responses to major emergencies. It covers the range of aid-effectiveness principles, with a focus on country leadership. It is based on case studies of the responses to the December 2004 tsunami in Indonesia and the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.
2. International responses to disasters are becoming more strategic in nature, as governments and donors focus on 'building back better' and achieving long-term, sustainable outcomes. There is no longer a strict separation between relief, reconstruction and development. As disaster response has become more ambitious in scope, the relevance of the Paris Declaration principles and commitments has been increasingly recognised, in particular the importance of country leadership.
3. In both Pakistan and Indonesia, government established a strong lead in responding to the disasters. They created dedicated agencies to manage the response, with the authority to coordinate activities across government and the donor community. Strong country leadership and donor harmonisation proved to be mutually reinforcing. Joint needs assessments provided a solid basis for policy dialogue and coordination.
4. Two different mechanisms were used to facilitate coordination. Pakistan used a 'cluster approach' to facilitate division of labour among donors, appointing lead donors in particular sectors and thematic areas. This improved harmonisation among donors and created a structure for interacting with government counterparts. However, participation in the sectoral coordinating bodies by donors and international NGOs was inconsistent, and fell away after the emergency phase was complete.
5. In Indonesia, a group of 15 donors established a multi-donor trust fund, which proved an effective tool for advancing harmonisation and alignment. It achieved standardisation of procedures among the participating donors, facilitating quick disbursement of funds. The Steering Committee became the main forum for policy dialogue and coordination, with even non-financing donors participating in its meetings.
6. A key lesson emerging from the case studies is that disaster response is more effective when beneficiary communities are incorporated into all aspect of the process. This is one area where the experience of disaster response can inform the broader aid-effectiveness agenda. The case studies suggest that the involvement of communities, local government and civil society should be given higher priority in realising the Paris objectives.
7. Managing for results is traditionally weak in disaster situations, with monitoring limited to inputs and activities at project level. Donors need to work closely with government to develop common monitoring frameworks and procedures for the reconstruction effort as a whole.