

# Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into Development Planning Processes in Nepal



A Priority Implementation Partnership (PIP) between the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Local Development and the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Government of Nepal

Under the Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC) Program on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into Development in Asia.

Implemented by



Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
National Planning Commission  
Ministry of Local Development  
Ministry of Physical Planning and Works

Supported by





## Development and Disaster in Nepal

Very often countries spend large amounts of money on responding to the impacts of disasters. In Nepal, the economic loss due to the earthquake in 1988 amounted to 64.69 percent of the development budget for that year. Similarly, the loss due to the flood in the year 1993 was about 26.73 percent of the development budget of that year. The Government of Nepal had to heavily finance the reconstruction and recovery, which would have cost significantly less, had the country invested in risk reduction activities beforehand.

Even after the occurrence of these large scale disasters, and having enough lessons learnt during those critical periods of rescue, relief, recovery and reconstruction; disaster risk reduction (DRR) has not attracted sufficient attention and support from the stakeholders and decision making authorities until recently.

An inbuilt mechanism to address the important issues of risk reduction and development has always been a low priority, until recently when the **Tenth Five Year Plan** (2002-2007) was noteworthy in introducing the concept of disaster management as a priority in the national planning document. It was included in the Chapter entitled **'Population, Environment and Natural Disaster Risk Management'**. The objectives outlined in the document were to increase safety in public life by:

- managing the natural and the human induced hazards systematically and effectively, and
- making development and construction related programs in the country sustainable, reliable and highly gainful.

In addition, the Tenth Five Year Plan also outlined strategies,

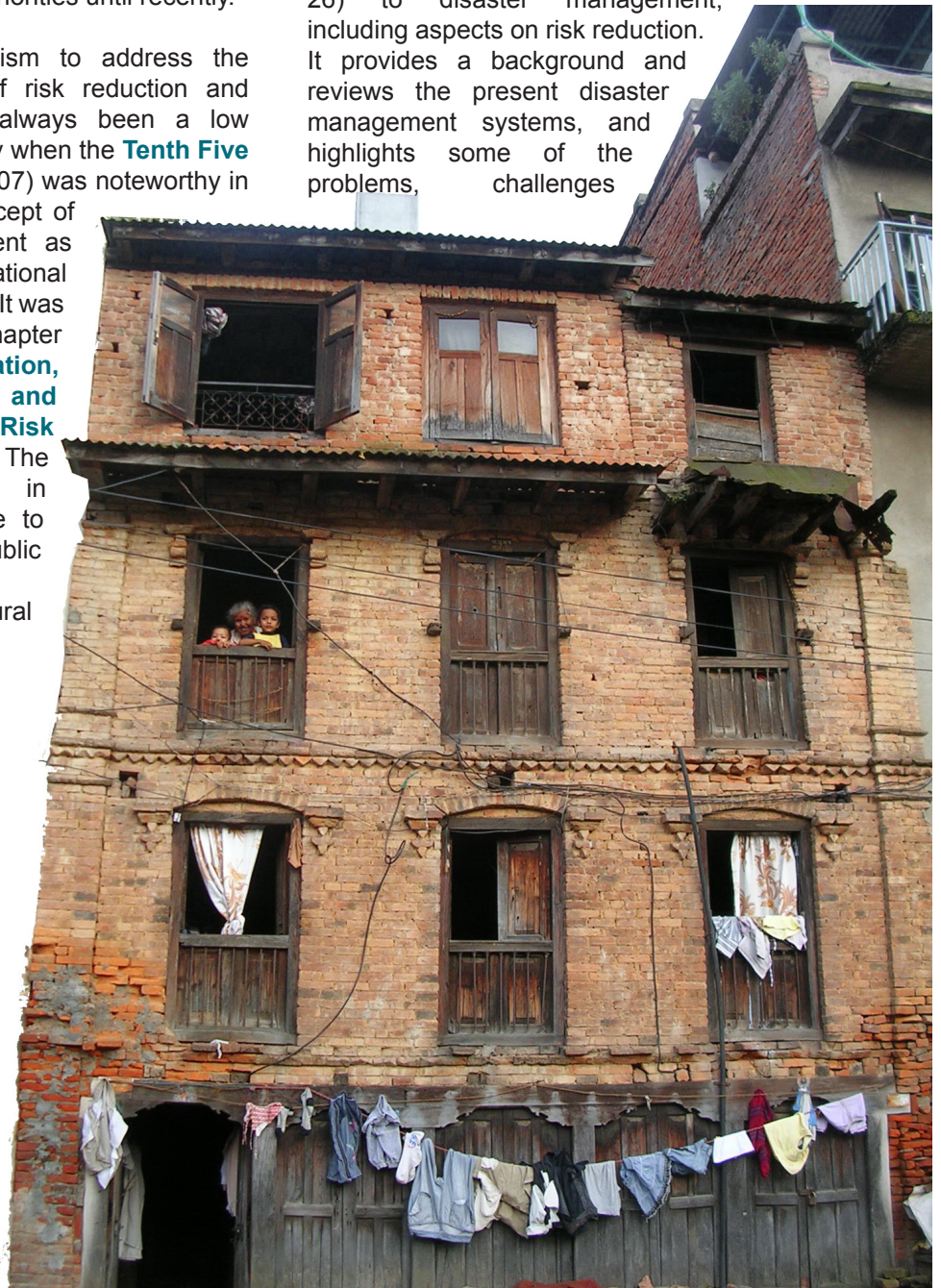
which primarily focused on the areas of preparedness and included:

- the strengthening of the natural and human-induced disaster-related management, and
- the exchange of information among concerned international organizations related to disasters.

The subsequent programs consisted of:

- the mapping of the high risk areas,
- the development of environmentally friendly technologies,
- transparency in the distribution of relief materials, and
- the strengthening of the National Seismological Center.

The latest of all planning documents, the **Three Year Interim Plan (2007-2010)** (TYIP) has devoted a full chapter (Chapter 26) to disaster management, including aspects on risk reduction. It provides a background and reviews the present disaster management systems, and highlights some of the problems, challenges





and opportunities. It outlines the vision to minimize the social and economic losses occurring due to disasters, and sets the objective of promoting safe life and property from disaster risks through sustainable, environmentally friendly and high return development works. The Plan has also put forth strategies such as:

- environmentally friendly development works,
- appropriate information flow for risk reduction of disasters, and
- strengthening partnerships between GOs, NGOs and private sectors working in disaster management.

Some of the policies mentioned in the TYIP include:

- Requirement of undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for construction works,
- Timely reform of the policy and institutional machinery related to DRR,
- Development of an appropriate machinery for strengthening the partnership between GOs, NGOs and private sectors related to rescue, relief, reconstruction and recovery,
- Organization of awareness programs to increase participation of community based organizations for reducing the disaster risk,
- Emphasis on disaster preparedness through mapping of highly vulnerable areas,
- Capacity building of the Ministry of Home Affairs as the central coordinator of disaster management,
- Use of suitable technology for early warning systems, and
- Effective implementation of land erosion, landslide, floods and river control works.

The Plan also outlined following programs:

- Formulation of national strategy and its implementation,
- Awareness program,
- Capacity building program for disaster management,
- Preparedness works for rescue, relief and rehabilitation,
- Study and research program,
- Identification and mapping of vulnerable areas to disasters,
- Storage of rescue and relief materials, and
- Increase the number of local institutions and communities involved in river and landslide control and management land erosion.

Mobilization of Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Department of Soil Conservation, Department of Mines and Geology, and local institutions to improve the safety of life and property have also been mentioned.

Even at the local level, the **Local Self Governance Act (LSGA)** and Regulations, with an objective to empower the local bodies, recognizes the local people and the local bodies, elected through them, as the entry point of all development processes at the local level be it a district, municipality or village. The main aim is to involve the sovereign people through a decentralized scheme and carry out local level activities with full responsibility and authority with the District Development Committee (DDC), Municipality, and Village Development Committee (VDC). Development and empowerment of these responsive institutions is expected to enhance the local leadership and the capability to take appropriate decisions on the matters affecting the day-to-day needs and lives of the people.

Apart from many other developmental works, the Act has also provisioned for the disaster-related management works under the domain of the VDCs, Municipalities and the DDCs. However, the duties and responsibilities are stated in such general terms that the authority of the institutions mentioned in LSGA is not clear for the local level offices of administration and other developmental offices of the government.

According to the Act, all three levels of the local bodies, VDC, Municipality and the DDC are vested with the authority to carry out necessary works in respect of mitigating disasters.

Based on the guidance of decentralization and local self governance, the recently approved **National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal (NSDRMN)** attempts to facilitate the required changes in order to achieve a disaster resilient Nepal. It suggests an institutional reorganization and development, and strategic improvement in the existing policy and legal environment for creating an enabling atmosphere for encouraging preparedness planning at all levels, and mainstreaming DRR into the national development and poverty alleviation agenda along the spirit of the Tenth Five Year Plan and Three Year Interim Plan. The globally accepted



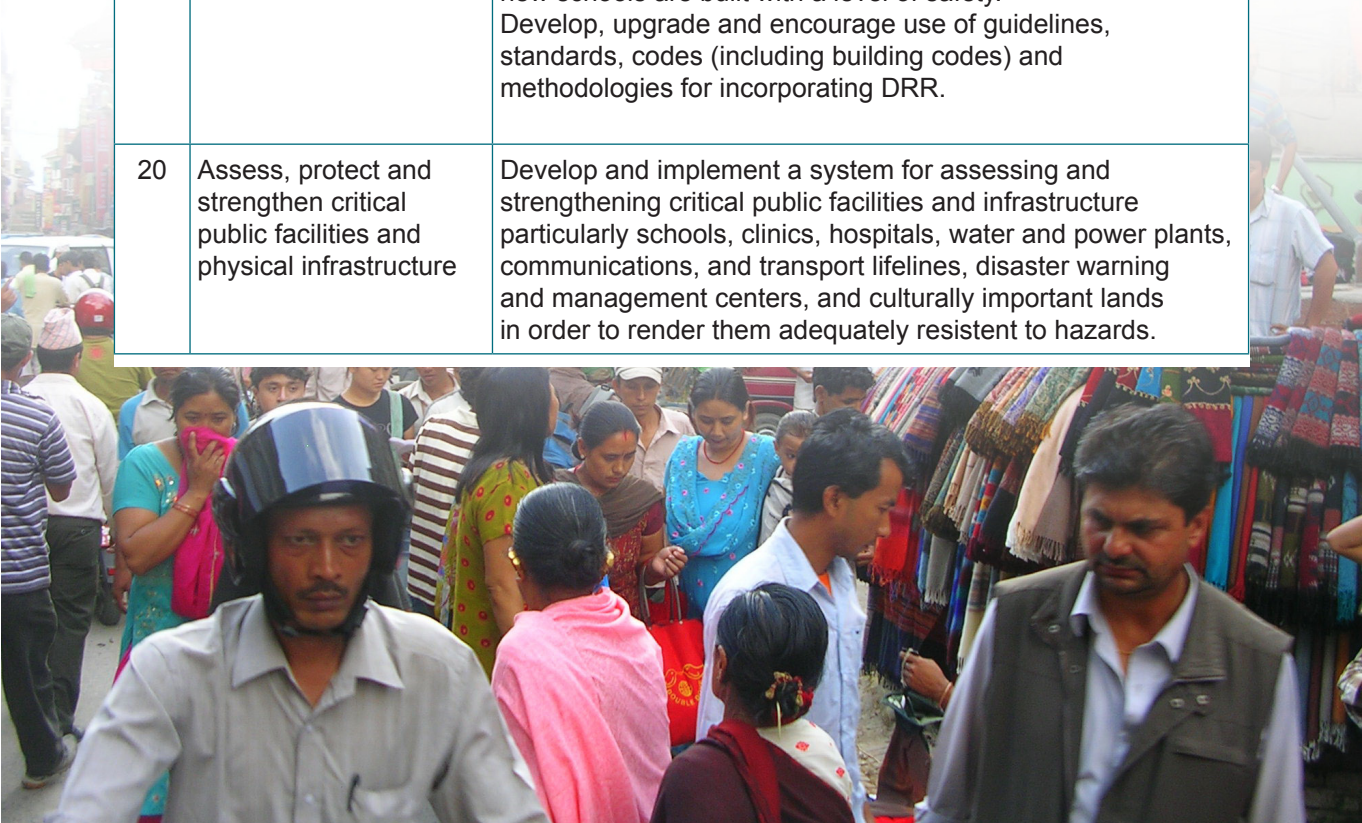


principles of cross-cutting issues such as Human Rights and Protection, Gender and Social Inclusion, Decentralization and Local Self-governance, and Humanitarian security are also considered under it. The following table describes the strategic activities identified by the NSDRMN in relation to mainstreaming DRR into development.

The Strategy recommends implementation of disaster risk reduction by mainstreaming

- in each sectoral plan and program and identifies the following sectors:
- Agriculture and food security,
  - Health,
  - Education,
  - Shelter, infrastructure and physical planning,
  - Livelihood protection,
  - Water and sanitation,
  - Information, communication, coordination and logistics, and
  - Search and rescue, and damage and needs assessment.

National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal		
No.	Strategic Activity	Indicative Activities and Outcomes
3	Mainstream DRR into national development	Incorporate DRR in existing national development strategies and policies such as PRSP, MDGs and periodic development plans. Develop systems for mandatory hazard and risk assessment for major infrastructure development projects. Establish DRM Focal Points in each ministry with designated roles and responsibilities for planning and implementing DRR and preparedness.
4	Integrate DRR and preparedness for better response in the development plans, programs and regular activities of local development institutions	DDCs, Municipalities and VDCs to incorporate DRR and preparedness into their development plans, programs and regular activities
19	Integrate DRR consideration into infrastructure development planning and implementation	Develop system and mechanism to include Disaster Impact Assessment along with EIA in all major projects; and incorporate disaster consideration in environmental and natural resource management Develop and implement systems to ensure that all new hospitals are built with a level of safety Develop and implement systems to ensure all new schools are built with a level of safety. Develop, upgrade and encourage use of guidelines, standards, codes (including building codes) and methodologies for incorporating DRR.
20	Assess, protect and strengthen critical public facilities and physical infrastructure	Develop and implement a system for assessing and strengthening critical public facilities and infrastructure particularly schools, clinics, hospitals, water and power plants, communications, and transport lifelines, disaster warning and management centers, and culturally important lands in order to render them adequately resistant to hazards.





# Priority Implementation Partnership (PIP)

## A PROCESS TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

As described earlier, DRR is a new entry in the national development planning process, and there are several aspects, which still need to be incorporated in the development planning system. In this regard, the Priority Implementation Partnership (PIP) was initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs under the Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC) Program on Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development. The PIP aimed at bringing together the national agencies involved in preparing development plans at various levels and strengthening the partnership amongst them in regard to mainstream DRR into the development plans.

A multi-agency technical working group was formed under the leadership of the Ministry of Home Affairs and with the following membership:

- Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs,

- Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission,
- Joint Secretary, Ministry of Local Development, and
- Joint Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works.

Based on the priorities identified by the NSDRMN, the PIP in its first phase (October 2008-July 2009) aimed to understand the process of preparation of development plans at various levels in the country, and initiate the process of integrating DRR in these processes.

### The PIP looked into the following

At the central level, the National Planning Commission (NPC), issues a guideline to all potential government agencies seeking approval of annual programs. The annual programs are approved by NPC only on the basis of demands that are submitted by the implementing agencies based on the guideline and the annual ceiling of budget issued by the NPC for that particular year. The guideline does not talk categorically about issues related to disasters and thus, disaster risk reduction is not prioritized for





funding, unless the implementing agencies have already built in this component in the programs.

At the local level, the national plans are followed up by district, municipal and village level plans prepared through wider consultation of the local level stakeholders. The identification of activities, needs assessment of the budget, financing sources, and responsible authorities for implementation are all drafted on a time bound manner. Such plans are formulated normally for five years along with a perspective plan for a longer period. Currently not all districts, municipalities and VDCs have such local level periodic plans developed according to the guideline issued by the NPC as well as by MoLD. However, no activities take place in those areas without an approved program and the budget by the respective Councils.

There is a system provisioned in the Local Self Governance Act, for each local body to abide by certain procedures while proposing a budget along with the plan of activities for the next year. The Act also spells out the approval procedure and other matters related to the financial management, procurement and audit. The district and the VDCs propose a budget every year which has to be approved by the respective Councils. The budget is broken down under two categories; regular and development. The former refers to administration, management and logistics purposes, and the latter to developmental works.

The developmental works are carried out following the periodic plans that are prepared beforehand. Most of these periodic plans have not incorporated DRR related issues, which leads to omission of these crucial components in the annual program and budget. Thus, the local areas normally do not have separate disaster related programs and the consideration of the disaster component on other programs is also seriously overlooked.

Since the guidelines issued by the NPC for developing the periodic as well as yearly plans by the DDCs, VDCs and Municipalities do not outline the issues related to DRR sufficiently, which contributes to aspects pertaining to disaster being lopsided in the annual programs of these local bodies, the PIP attempted to look into these existing documents of the Government of



Nepal which guides the formulation and approval process of annual development programs and produce recommendations for the integration of DRR in the guideline documents.

The document of NPC on the annual program and budget, and another two documents of DDC and Municipalities were revisited, and revised incorporating issues relating to DRR. While revisiting these documents core issues such as disaster impact assessment, risk reduction measures, preparedness, rescue, relief, recovery, reconstruction, disaster-resistant infrastructure, retrofitting of physical infrastructures, inventory management, hazard and vulnerability maps, land use, climate change, awareness raising, education and training, emergency health services and facilities, communication, and special attention to vulnerable population were raised. The documents that were revised are:

- a 'Guidelines for the formulation of regular administrative and annual development program and budget (recurrent and capital) for the respective fiscal year' prepared by NPC
- b 'Guidelines for the formulation of periodic district development plan', and
- c 'Guidelines for the formulation of periodic Municipality development plan'.





## Recommendations

At the end of the first phase of the PIP, a national workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs which presented the outputs as well as discussing the next steps. The recommendations for continuing the initiative primarily included institutionalisation of the outputs developed under this phase of the PIP as well as capacity building of government officials (both center to bottom level) on the use of these modified guidelines. Following are the specific suggestions in relation to the revised Guidelines:

- Circulation of revised Guidelines with various Ministries and technical experts in the country for further input prior to finalization,
- Directive to be issued by NPC to various sectoral Ministries for use of the Guidelines in the next planning cycle,
- Capacity building of officials within NPC responsible for developing, revising and using the Guidelines, and
- Capacity building of officials from key line agencies in charge of development of annual development programs on use of these revised Guidelines.

These follow up activities are essential for transforming the actions taken in the first phase to actual implementation.

Moreover, in the first phase, the PIP has incorporated only the sectors related to the development of proposals for annual program and budget by the concerned Ministries. There remains a wide range of other sectors that also need to be streamlined in order to ensure the tangible outcomes of this phase of the PIP.







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#### Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC)

The RCC comprises of members who are working in key government positions in the National Disaster Management offices of countries of the Asian region. To date, 26 countries are represented by 30 RCC members from the Asia and Pacific regions, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.

#### RCC Program on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into development Policy, Planning and Implementation in Asia (RCC MDRD)

A key priority identified by the RCC is the integration of DRR into the development process. To initiate action on this agreed direction, the RCC program on Mainstreaming DRR into development policy, planning and implementation (MDRD) was launched at the 4th RCC meeting in Bangladesh in March 2004. The RCC 5 adopted the Hanoi RCC 5 statement on Mainstreaming DRR into Development in Asian countries which prioritizes mainstreaming of DRR to be initiated in national development planning process as well as sectoral development. It identified priority sectors namely Agriculture, Education, Health, Housing and Infrastructure for mainstreaming of DRR. The program has five components for implementation:

1. Partnerships for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into National Development Planning processes;
2. Priority Implementation Partnerships (PIP) on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into sector development;
3. Advocacy for Building awareness and political support for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policy and planning;
4. Knowledge management platform for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: Showcasing good practice and lessons learned; and
5. Capacity development for mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development of national and sectoral ministries, technical institutes, private sector and NGOs in RCC member countries.

This case study highlights the experience of undertaking a Priority Implementation Partnership (PIP) on mainstreaming DRR into development planning process in Nepal, implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs with support from the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and AusAID.

