Analysis of disaster risk reduction-related requests to the NDC Partnership

Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

ABOUT INSIGHT BRIEFS

Insight Briefs are a series of discussion papers developed by the NDC Partnership through its members and Support Unit to share insights into thematic issues based on requests received by countries and the support provided by the NDC Partnership. The following Insight Brief provides an analysis of requests related to disaster risk reduction and gives recommendations on how the Partnership can maximize efficacy in responding to such requests.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Analysis of DRR-related requests from 19 countries and requests received through the Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP) in 26 countries show that most DRR-related requests are for technical (80%) rather than project (20%) support.** This includes, for instance, vulnerability assessments and research rather than a direct investment in systems.
- Altogether, **60% of DRR-related implementation requests were supported—** comparable to an average of 66% of requests from the Partnership funded overall. **Strikingly, 88% of DRR-related requests within CAEP** were supported, with indicative and partial support included as support.
- **Most DRR-related requests focus on adaptation activities rather than cross-cutting or mitigation efforts.** Adaptation requests include support for developing risk maps and building health and disaster management capacity.
- **There are significant gaps in supported requests related to health, and for policy, strategies, and legislation.** Other DRR-related activities with lower rates of support include raising awareness and public education, integrating NDCs into national planning and budgets and revenue streams, supporting gender balance, and sharing lessons and best practices.
- **The funding gaps in health and policy mainstreaming are suggestive of the longstanding "humanitarian-development divide,"** wherein humanitarian actors are perceived to focus on immediate, basic needs, such as emergency health, while development actors focus on long-term disaster recovery and systems building. However, many unsupported DRR-related requests in the health sector are for capacity-building and governance support in the face of rising climate risks and therefore do not address shorter-term needs.
- **Recommendations for the Partnership to better anticipate and respond to DRR-related requests include** identifying and approaching humanitarian partners, such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, and the START Network, to join the Partnership; raising awareness and strengthening capacity of governments and partners to support mainstreaming humanitarian, development, and governance efforts within DRR; issuing specific calls for requests on cross-cutting issues and compound risks; and conducting qualitative research with partners and countries—at both the national and subnational levels—to learn more about their DRR needs and interests and how these can overlap with climate change adaptation needs.

INTRODUCTION

As global temperatures continue to rise, climate and weather-related extreme events, such as floods, droughts, and heat waves, are becoming more frequent and severe.[1] There is growing recognition of the need to work with communities and governments around the world to improve peoples' capacities to anticipate, prepare for and respond to climate-related shocks and stresses. To effectively manage rising and increasingly complex risks in the short, medium, and long term, linking disaster risk reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) is essential. Harnessing synergies between DRR and CCA generates greater efficiencies with regard to the use of human, technical, and financial resources. It can also facilitate a more holistic understanding of risk and uncertainty, aid in addressing causes of vulnerability, and can reduce the likelihood of potential maladaptation.

More and more countries are committing to addressing climate change and reducing risks, from mainstreaming resilience into policy to reducing vulnerability and exposure to climate impacts in communities. NDC Partnership member countries identify priorities and request support from the Partnership to design and implement activities. The Partnership streamlines assistance by offering support together with Partners to scale up actions. Many countries now include disaster risks in their NDCs, highlighting the importance of the NDC Partnership in providing guidance and support for DRR efforts.

This study provides insights on the nature of DRR-related requests submitted to the NDC Partnership and highlights existing gaps in support. It analyzes DRR-related activities in requests for NDC implementation from 19 countries from May 2018 to July 2021 and through the Climate Action Enhancement Package in 26 countries from October 2019 to January 2021. It considers why DRR-related requests may go unsupported and explores emerging trends around integrating DRR into climate and COVID-19 recovery plans. Practical recommendations are provided to NDC Partnership members and the Support Unit to further strengthen support provision for DRR-related requests.

Important note: This analysis used kNook data but refined the tagging in order to consider requests that are related to DRR but not necessarily tagged as such.

1 IPCC, 2021. The Summary for Policymakers of the Working Group I Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) as well as additional materials and information are available at https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 outlines global targets to be reached by 2030, including increasing the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies.

AN OVERVIEW OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

DRR is commonly defined as the systematic assessment, identification, and mitigation of natural hazards to reduce vulnerability to disasters. There are a variety of elements to reducing risk, including disaster mitigation, early warning and early action, disaster preparedness and recovery interventions, including support for livelihoods.[2]

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' definition of DRR refers to three main DRR components: **to strengthen the preparedness and capacities of communities** to more effectively respond to disasters, **to promote activities and actions that mitigate the adverse effects of hazards and to protect development projects,** such as health facilities, from the impact of disasters.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 outlines global targets to be reached by 2030, including increasing the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies. States are recognized as having the primary role in DRR and are supported by stakeholders, including local governments, the private sector, and the international community. The adoption of the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement in 2015 provides a clear mandate for countries to increase coordination and coherence between DRR and climate adaptation plans to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. NDCs are an important vehicle to communicate countries' plans on adaptation and mitigation and to demonstrate how links to DRR planning are being articulated and implemented.

At the same time, there is often a disconnect at the donor level between humanitarian departments, which often address immediate humanitarian needs arising from disasters, and development departments, which are traditionally tasked with reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development in the long term. At the national government level, this divide is often mirrored between ministries of civil defense, which are often responsible for disaster risk management, and ministries of environment, where climate and adaptation planning and decision making traditionally occur. NDCs offer an opportunity to bridge these divides and encourage these actors to recognize that reducing and preparing for disaster risk now is an integral part of effective planning and finance for climate change adaptation in the short, medium, and long term.

2 IFRC, 2021. Reducing Risk. Webpage. Available at: https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/20201113_WorldDisasters_4.pdf

FINDINGS

A range of themes emerges from the analysis of DRR requests received through the NDC Partnership.

THEMES OF REQUESTS

Primary focus on adaptation. DRR-related requests focused primarily on adaptation activities rather than mitigation or cross-cutting activities, with 81% of DRR-related implementation requests and 65% of DRR-related CAEP requests focusing on adaptation. Adaptation requests include support for improving early warning systems, strengthening the resilience of health systems to deal with climatic shocks and stresses via capacity building of the workforce and frontline health workers, and improving weather-resistant crop varieties.

Lack of focus on mitigation. Merely 2% of DRR-related requests focus on mitigation, although some cross-cutting requests included mitigation efforts (see below). The only mitigation-focused requests came from São Tomé and Príncipe, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Africa. Activities included operationalizing a national mitigation registry system in Uganda and undertaking a risk and vulnerability assessment across economic sectors linked to mitigation scenarios in South Africa. Promisingly, these requests were all supported except Zimbabwe's request to assess industrial-sector emissions-reductions potential.

Limited requests on cross-cutting focus areas that combine elements on both adaptation and mitigation. 16% of DRR-related Partnership Plans (PPs) and 33% of DRR-related CAEP requests focused on cross-cutting areas, such as requests for integrated climate action or the development of climate policy or laws addressing both adaptation and mitigation, such as improving climate hazard databases in Armenia, Grenada, Jordan, and Mozambique. Despite the relevance of such cross-cutting issues to NDC objectives, few cross-cutting requests were made compared to adaptation. However, the support rate was quite low: 44% of DRR-related PP requests were fully funded, 2% had indicative funding, 3% were partially funded, and 51% were not funded.

Emphasis on technical rather than project support. 83% of the CAEP requests and 80% of other DRR-related requests were for technical assistance rather than project support. Technical support refers to support or activities that are not a physical tangible investment. Burkina Faso, for example, sought to train 100 specialists to strengthen medical staff skills on diseases sensitive to climate change. In contrast, project support refers to direct investment, such as one project request in Armenia that requested support for the development of a new anti-hail system.

Uneven geographic distribution of requests. The number of DRR-related requests for activities is unevenly distributed across regions and countries, with the sub-Saharan region appearing as having the highest number of requests, with up to three-fourths of the total DRR implementation requests submitted to the Partnership. However, this prevalence may be due to the fact that close to half of the total requests submitted to the Partnership are coming from this region.

Gaps in supporting requests that focus on improving human resilience and preparedness. There is a significant gap in support for requests to improve human resilience and preparedness to extreme hazards and changing climatic conditions. This includes activities that promote and reduce risk and climate-related impacts on human health, human settlements, and gender and other vulnerable groups. Notably, plans related to health were rarely supported, with only one partially funded activity from Benin, which focused on reducing mortality due to malaria and other diseases related to climate risks. As discussed in more depth below, this may be because health is traditionally seen as a sector unrelated to DRR. Unsupported CAEP requests involve finance and investments in projects that build resilience and capacity to implement countries' NDC ambitions or to increase education on climate risks through assessment or training. These gaps are presented in more detail in the section below.

TRENDS IN SUPPORT FOR DRR-RELATED REQUESTS

FUNDED DRR-RELATED ACTIVITIES

DRR-related activities that have attracted more support from partners include:

- **Developing studies and analysis**. Thirteen out of 19 countries received support for investigating or analyzing a subject pertaining to climate change disasters and technical projections with direct implications for policy reform or investment plan development.
- **Preparing bankable projects and pipelines**. Thirteen out of 19 countries received support for activities that identify pipeline projects, assess feasibility, and develop specific projects related to DRR. This positive figure may be representative of the growing awareness of the need to support countries in developing bankable projects to access climate finance (Ellis & Pillay 2017).
- **Developing capacity**. Twelve out of 19 countries received support for enhancing capacity to develop and implement climate-related projects to build resilience. This includes conducting training to enhance technical capacity to prepare for disasters.

- **Enacting and revising national strategies and plans**. Twelve out of 19 countries received support for creating, revising, and implementing national strategies and plans, which refer to national agreements to address national climate change needs that will in turn improve resilience.
- **Developing or updating Measuring, Reporting & Verification/Monitoring & Evaluation systems and collecting data**. Eleven out of 19 countries received support to develop systems to track changes over time and analyze information systematically to better meet their NDC goals related to DRR. This includes creating hazard maps and spatial planning to improve "flood-proof" roads and buildings.
- **Financing projects and programs and mobilizing resources**. Seven out of 10 countries made requests for support for activities such as improving roads and forests.

Sectors with the highest number of DRR-related requests received:

- **Disaster management** (64 total requests, 45% supported)
- **Water** (45 total requests, 45% supported)
- **Agriculture** (38 total requests, 55% supported)
- **Forestry and Other Land-Uses** (25 total requests, 60% supported)

GAPS IN SUPPORT BASED ON ACTIVITY TYPES

The following Partnership Plan (PP) activities had lower support rates:

- **Raising awareness and public education.** Eight countries made requests and five of those countries (Jordan, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin, Mozambique, and Rwanda) did not receive support for these activities. Unfunded requests included giving tools for farmers, strengthening health system climate resilience, and climate information dissemination.
- **Integrating NDCs into national planning and budgets and revenue streams.** Four countries made requests and two of those countries (Grenada and São Tomé and Príncipe) did not receive support for, respectively, regulation of risk-based spatial planning and understanding economic consequences of risk.
- **Supporting gender balance.** Three countries (Republic of the Marshall Islands, Zimbabwe, and Burkina Faso) made requests and none of them received support for activities that train and prepare women for disasters.
- **Sharing lessons and best practices.** Three countries made requests and two of those countries (Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso) did not receive support for activities that share information on resilient housing infrastructure and agricultural practices, as well as databases for community risk management activities.

POST-COVID-19 SUPPORT NEEDS

Post-COVID-19, the Republic of Congo and Zambia requested Economic Advisors (EA) related to DRR, both of which were funded.[3] The Republic of Congo's EA focused on analyzing the economic impacts of COVID-19 about the operationalization of a climate commission and fund and strengthening climate resilience measures for the environment and populations. Zambia's Terms of Reference (TOR) centered on strengthening early warning systems, including implementing adaptation and DRR measures.

It should also be noted that some countries may be focused on receiving support from other sources and do not view the NDC Partnership as an option, while others may have spent the past year updating NDCs, which requires putting implementation plans on hold until an NDC is finalized. Lastly, while too small a sample to draw conclusions, the funding of two EAs for DRR-related COVID-19 recovery may illustrate a recognition of how fostering climate resilience relates to economic recovery. This suggests an intersection for the Partnership to advocate for the intersection between climate resilience and eco recovery. This in turn could further the case for NDCs to address both short- and long-term needs simultaneously.

EXAMPLES OF PARTNERS PROVIDING SUPPORT

Partner	Countries Supported	Example of Support
The World Bank	• **Burkina Faso** • **São Tomé and Príncipe** • **Zimbabwe**	Building the resilience of the agriculture sector in Zimbabwe
The European Commission	• **São Tomé and Príncipe** • **Uganda**	Adapting policy strategies and integrating climate and disaster resilience into sectors in São Tomé and Príncipe
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	• **Burkina Faso**	Strengthening national capacities to plan and manage recovery processes sustainably and inclusively (gender focused)
The African Risk Capacity (ARC)	• **Zimbabwe**	Developing Knowledge products on climate change and disaster risk management study for local authorities, as well as policy support for urban climate change response in 2020

3 As part of its Economic Advisor Initiative, the NDC Partnership provided economic advisors to support the preparation of economic recovery plans to countries who requested them. More information can be found at https://ndcpartnership.org/economic-advisory-support.

ANALYSIS OF DRR-RELATED REQUESTS

Altogether, 60% of DRR-related implementation requests were supported—comparable to an average of 66% of requests from the Partnership funded overall. Strikingly, 88% of DRR-related requests within CAEP were supported, with indicative and partial support included as support. While these are positive figures, an analysis of unsupported DRR-related requests reveals two main areas significantly lacking support, the first relating to preparing for and addressing health-related impacts of climate change and the second to policies and legislation.

The lack of supported health-focused requests represents a key gap in achieving health-promoting NDCs (14 out of 17 unsupported, and one partially supported). Unsupported health requests ranged from the provision of training for health workers to address the consequences of climate change-induced extreme weather events in Armenia to establishing a database for climate-sensitive disease in Jordan. The only partially funded request focused on reducing morbidity and mortality from malaria and other climate-related diseases in Benin. This lack of support may be due in part to the fact that the health sector is often seen as separate and unrelated to other areas, such as DRR, although the COVID-19 pandemic has led to wider awareness of the complex relationship between health and climate change.

Other unsupported projects aiming to reduce the vulnerability of women and children and increase the capacity of health workers to address climate-induced disease outbreaks suggest that some of the humanitarian elements of DRR are being left behind. When we consider some of the main partners of funded projects—including the World Bank, United National Development Programme (UNDP), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)—we see that these are often main traditional development partners whose focus and expertise may be perceived to lie beyond these areas. As NDC Partnership partners are largely from the development side, elements of DRR or even DRR itself may appear too humanitarian for such partners to respond to. A list of potentially relevant partners is mentioned in the Recommendations section.

A similar gap in funding is found in requests for policy, strategies, and legislation for value chain services, which is the least supported value chain service of DRR implementation requests. According to the NDC Partnership, these value chain services can be broken down into the following elements: policy, strategies, and legislation (making up 42% unsupported requests), which were the least supported relative to other value chain services, such as knowledge products (making up 26% of unsupported requests), monitoring and evaluation (making up 18% of unsupported requests), and budgeting and investment (making up 14% of unsupported requests). Overall, policy, strategies and legislation requests have a 55% rate of unsupported requests—41 requests are unsupported compared to 33 requests supported.

Analyzing policy requests by sector, 48% of DRR-related requests in the policy sector are unsupported—13 out of 27 DRR policy requests are unsupported. Often identified as cross-cutting requests, and falling under one of the unidentified sectors, policy requests include policy analysis and legal framework building activities, prioritization exercises, sectoral strategies and the integration and mainstreaming of NDC goals into planning processes. On one hand, this data illustrates an interest at the national level in mainstreaming DRR policy, yet many countries require more support to do so. On the other, the lack of support raises questions of whether this arises out of limited contact between the NDC Partnership with departments focusing on these areas, a lack of expertise by NDC Partnership partners themselves or whether it is not recognized as sufficiently relevant to partner priorities. The time horizon of such projects is also important, as policy mainstreaming and drafting implementable legal frameworks is a long and complicated process. The question remains of whether short donor funding cycles or interest in achieving quick impact may deter some partners from funding such requests.

The funding gaps in health and policy mainstreaming are suggestive of the longstanding humanitarian-climate development divide, wherein DRR seeks to address underlying, short-term risks while climate change adaptation seeks to address underlying vulnerabilities and both seek to reduce risk over the long term and build resilience. More specifically, there is an overlap between the need for short-term risk reduction and the need for medium- to long-term planning for climate action, particularly in managing risk across timescales. There is also much to be learned from the first-responder experience and expertise of the humanitarian sector in risk reduction. The lack of support for DRR policy, strategies, and legislation for value chain services may arise out of a similar gap, wherein neither climate nor development partners identify their role in this area or may feel that a lack of DRR expertise does not align with request objectives.

However, the climate crisis necessitates that siloes be ruptured. While humanitarian funding is needed to scale up disaster response, there must equally be investment by climate and development donors in disaster preparedness, such as in the development of early action protocols and strengthening local capacity for early warning, and early action. Both at the donor level and within national government agencies, humanitarian and development departments often do not connect, and consequently, measures to reduce disaster risk in the short, medium, and long terms are not reflected in NDCs or National Action Plans (NAPs). Siloed humanitarian, climate, and development finance streams can further highlight this disconnect and reveal a lack of understanding or incentives for considering disaster risk management across timescales as an integral part of climate adaptation. Policy and legal support are needed to create frameworks for action and set precedents to bridge this gap.

This suggests a need for discussions at the donor level—perhaps facilitated by the NDC Partnership Support Unit—on the need to harmonize investment in both disaster risk reduction to prepare for current risks and in climate adaptation toward development of systems and capacities to prepare for and reduce risk over the longer term, particularly at the local level, where disasters unfold firsthand. Improving partners' awareness of the need for complementary funding

may lead to more funded DRR-related requests and ultimately to stronger frameworks and action in the face of climate disasters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify and approach more prospective humanitarian partners that may be interested in supporting often-unsupported requests related to the human resilience component of DRR. These might include the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), World Food Programme (WFP), Save the Children, CARE, and MercyCorps. Partners may be looking for a match with their existing frameworks for support including geography and other specific focuses. A donor scan could be undertaken, with high-interest countries encouraged to submit requests matching both country needs and donor funding streams.

Raise awareness and strengthen the capacity of governments from local to national levels and partners alike on the intersection of humanitarian, development and governance efforts within DRR, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of the most vulnerable to climate change. This could take place through specific calls for requests, webinars and articles on the NDC Partnership website.

Conduct qualitative research with partners and countries—at both the national and subnational levels—to learn more about their DRR needs and interests. In some cases, the fact that countries consistently requested technical support for specific activities may shed light on their specific needs or priorities. However, other countries may simply need technical expertise in more areas or have many priorities, hence the diverse requests for support. One relevant question is whether countries that requested specific support for one sector or type of activities had recourse to different bodies of funding for other types of DRR activities. Interviews or surveys could help shed light on whether countries are looking for additional support on DRR through the Partnership, or whether they typically turn to other sources of support.

Collect information from subnational level actors, ranging from local municipalities to affected communities themselves, in any research conducted, as this is where the practical implementation and outcomes of policies and plans occur. Research with such local actors would be valuable to inform discussions on DRR needs and interests to ensure that interventions support and build on indigenous knowledge and truly address the needs of the most vulnerable.

CREDITS

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