



Managing disasters. Mitigating risks. Strengthening resilience.

How transitional development assistance contributes to disaster risk management

The goal of transitional development assistance is to strengthen the resilience of people and local structures to the impacts and consequences of crises. This requires a multi-sectoral approach spanning the four fields of action of food and nutrition security, rebuilding basic infrastructure and services, disaster risk management and peaceful and inclusive communities.



The purpose of this factsheet is to support the implementation partners of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to plan and implement projects of the funding line crisis management, reconstruction, infrastructure in the field of disaster risk management and to provide information for a wider specialist readership. It complements the BMZ's [Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance](#).

Why is disaster risk management an important element of crisis management?

A **disaster** happens when a hazardous event, such as an earthquake, a highly infectious disease or a flood, takes place in a society that is vulnerable to such hazards and unable to cope with the disaster on its own. These disasters disrupt the functioning of a society, causing high human, economic and environmental losses.

Risk refers to the **likelihood of crises occurring, and the negative impacts** should they do so. According to the United Nations **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030**, risks may be climatic, geological, biological, technological, or social in nature.

People living in fragile countries, in particular, have limited capacity to protect themselves adequately against disasters. Moreover, they are often exposed to **multiple risks at the same time**, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. For instance, climate change is increasingly causing droughts in some places, which in turn reduce agricultural and livestock yields and may lead to conflicts over scarce resources such as water and grazing land.

The disastrous impacts of droughts, flooding and storms have **risen sharply** in recent decades, leading to more and more victims and damage. Climate change, environmental destruction and population growth are driving forces. Disasters caused by earthquakes, industrial accidents or pandemics, such as COVID-19, also put livelihoods at risk and can swiftly jeopardize development gains.

How does transitional development assistance strengthen disaster risk management?

Transitional development assistance helps to cope with crises through disaster risk management, which reduces existing risks and their potential impacts. It also counteracts the underlying causes and drivers. In addition, **prevention** aims to avoid new risks from emerging. Disaster risk management strengthens the resilience of individuals, households and communities and reduces their exposure and vulnerability.

Disaster risk management projects are based on comprehensive **risk and resilience** analyses. Moreover, gender analyses and, if necessary, peace and conflict analyses also inform the development of measures. A project will receive a DRM-1 or DRM-2 policy marker depending on whether disaster risk management is its secondary or primary objective.

The close involvement of local administrations and civil society promotes participatory and decentralised ways of working. **Local communities** play a key role in successful risk management, too. The local population is directly affected by disasters and must be able to respond quickly. For this reason, establishing and strengthening groups that plan and implement risk mitigation strategies and activities are key transitional development assistance approaches.

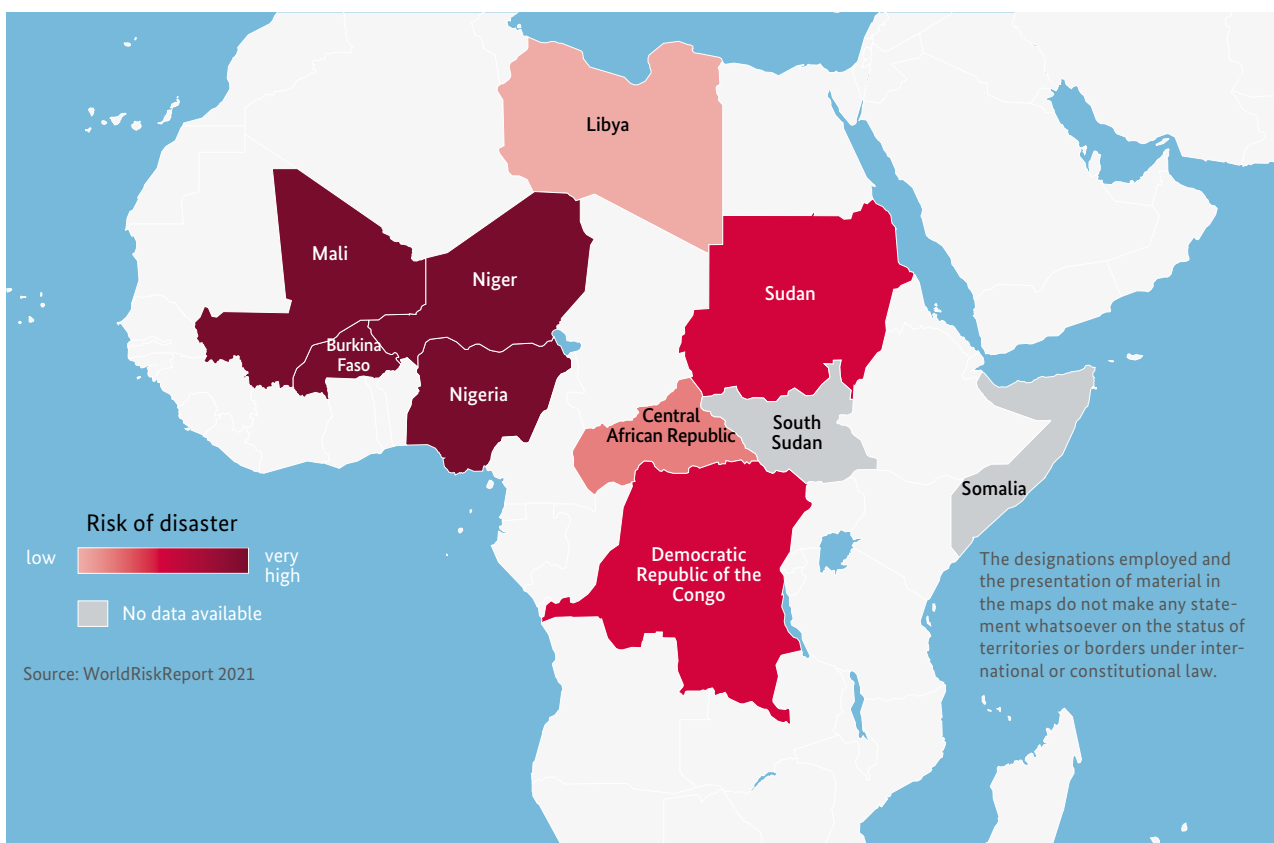
Where possible, these groups should include representatives of different population groups, local authorities, and the private sector in order to take account of the wide variety of interests within a society. Moreover, disaster risk management projects should explicitly involve people who are particularly at risk from disasters either because of physical restrictions, such as disabilities, or because of discrimination.

Within transitional development assistance, disaster risk management projects strengthen resilience and promote prevention. In line with the **humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus**, they connect with, and/or complement humanitarian assistance. At the same time, they allow local structures or subsequent projects to continue disaster risk management work. Moreover, conflict-sensitive and participatory project planning and implementation help to foster peaceful and inclusive communities.

What does transitional development assistance promote?

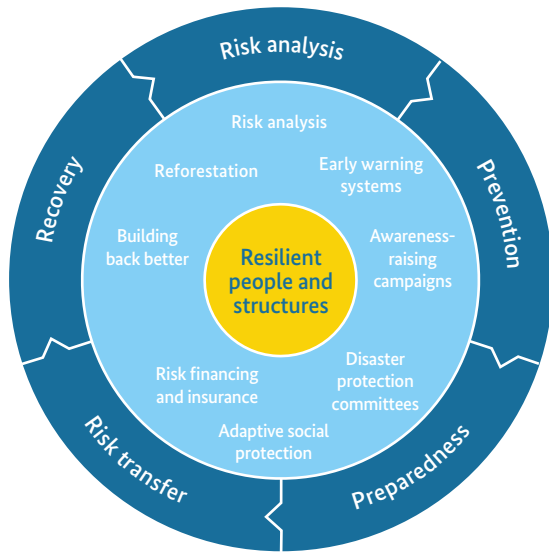
Disaster risk management can draw on a series of proven **instruments for physical and non-physical measures** that can be combined with one another. Ideally, they should strengthen all three resilience capacities.

The risk of disaster in African countries receiving transitional development assistance



Disaster management cycle

Instruments and approaches



Stabilisation capacity

Following a disaster, transitional development assistance strengthens the **stabilisation capacity** of the affected community. These efforts involve safeguarding and building basic infrastructure back.

By following the build back better principle, transitional development assistance protects the food, water and power supply, basic health care infrastructure, education facilities and transport routes against future or additional shocks. Social protection systems also help to safeguard the livelihoods of the people affected, for instance through cash transfers. Adaptive social protection systems that actively respond to risks have **proved effective in coping with crises**. If a disaster occurs, social protection systems can be adapted, for instance by

expanding the group of beneficiaries or by changing the amount and type of transfer. An additional stabilisation measure are community-based risk funds that are tailored to local conditions. This transfer of risk allows those affected to quickly cushion the impact of financial losses and damage and secure their livelihoods in the event of a disaster.

Adaptation capacity

Since disasters are becoming more and more frequent and intense, not least due to climate change, it is important to strengthen the local population's **adaptation capacity**. Working together with local communities and administrations, transitional development assistance draws up strategies and emergency plans, puts in place local early warning systems and conducts emergency simulations and training courses. For instance, establishing early warning systems has proved to be a highly effective way of minimising **flood risks** and **mitigating damage** in many local contexts.

Transformation capacity

Disaster risk management measures tackle the root causes of vulnerability. Integrating these measures into projects on rural development, decentralisation, basic education, economic promotion or climate change adaptation contributes to a communities or peoples longer-term **transformation capacity**. For instance, providing improved seed has proved to be an extremely cost-effective measure with **substantial potential to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable population groups in rural regions**. Ecosystem-based approaches such as reforestation measures are



Start-up capital after flooding in Bangladesh: fishers are able to cast their nets again

another example. They help to protect against flooding and erosion, for example by creating natural buffer zones. Planting mangrove forests in coastal areas for instance protects against the impacts of cyclones, while offering [alternative sources of income, such as sustainable forestry, aquaculture and fishing](#) and hence also diversify food security.

The following examples demonstrate the broad range of disaster risk management approaches taken by transitional development assistance:

Working with the **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**, BMZ supports multilateral partnerships that facilitate dialogue on disaster risk management in development forums. Within the World Bank, the **Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)** also makes investments around the globe to enhance disaster and climate resilience. For instance, the [Disaster Risk Management-Fragility, Conflict and Violence \(DRM-FCV\) Nexus programme](#) supports systematic cooperation by stakeholders on disaster risk management and conflict prevention in countries affected by recurring disasters and enduring crises connected to fragility, conflict and violence.

Somaliland is especially vulnerable to extreme weather events, such as droughts and flooding, and resulting shortages of natural resources, such as water, arable and grazing land and health risks caused by poor water quality. Violent conflicts over scarcer resources are therefore a frequent occurrence. To this end, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH works in Somaliland to strengthen the rural population's resilience to disasters, food insecurity and health risks. Disaster protection committees are being established in many villages, and wide-ranging erosion protection measures are being implemented with the general public to preserve valuable arable land.

BMZ is also using transitional development assistance to promote **efforts to strengthen the health care sector** to reduce the impacts of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. For instance, KfW Development Bank is building five more hospitals in **Iraq** together with the recovery fund. As a result, up to 9,000 patients taken ill with COVID-19 can be treated in the short term. In the long term, the hospital can serve up to 7,000 patients. Right after the outbreak of the pandemic, Save the Children provided training for young people in **Somalia**, for example in making protective equipment, and conducted campaigns to raise awareness about infection protection.

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Published by Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Division 502: Crisis Management, Transitional Development Assistance, Reconstruction, Infrastructure in Crisis Situations

Last updated May 2022

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Photo p. 3 © NETZ Partnerschaft für Entwicklung und Gerechtigkeit e.V./Noor Ahmed Gelal

Layout www.schumacher-design.de, Darmstadt

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