

Improving Disaster Recovery in Tajikistan

UNDP Support to the Government of Tajikistan and the Humanitarian Community

Context

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported post disaster recovery efforts in Tajikistan for over a decade. The experiences of collaborating with Government and humanitarian partners on a series of recovery efforts, including the floods in the city of Kulyab, mudflows in Khuroson District and an earthquake in Vanj District, over a four year period indicated a need to more effectively formalize recovery mechanisms. Major concerns were that, with the country regularly experiencing a range of disasters (e.g., floods, mudflow, avalanches, landslides, earthquakes, etc.), making a fresh start and largely relearning how to effectively achieve recovery after each disaster slowed the recovery process and prolonged the suffering of disaster survivors. To improve overall recovery in Tajikistan, UNDP has been collaborating with the Government and REACT, the coordinating structure for humanitarian assistance in Tajikistan, to develop and formalize recovery guidance. An integrated package of Government and REACT-focused guidance will enable better pre-disaster planning for recovery as well as facilitate the development and implementation of post-disaster recovery plans and operations.

REACT Recovery Framework

Disasters in Tajikistan usually cause severe damage or destruction to shelter, infrastructure and productive assets in multiple locations at the same time. Responding to disasters in recent years led to the awareness that most of the assistance needs and modalities were similar across different disaster events. Based on this understanding, REACT partners agreed to establish a unified mechanism for recovery efforts to aid in pre and post disaster recovery planning as well as to assist in prioritizing recovery needs. UNDP in Tajikistan, with support of UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and through its role as the REACT Secretariat, led a collaborative process to establish a framework for recovery from small and medium scale disasters for use by REACT partners. The resulting **REACT Recovery Framework Small Scale Disasters in Tajikistan**¹ was issued in May, 2011.

The objective of the **Recovery Framework** is to provide sufficient guidance, in terms of plans, procedures and specifications, to enable the rapid implementation of recovery activities following a disaster. The **Recovery Framework** is based on a disaster scenario affecting up to 10,000 persons and destroying up to 600 housing units within a two month period at different locations.

While the materials in the **Recovery Framework** may need adjustment to reflect the specifics of a particular disaster, the availability of framework recovery plans and guidance will enable this process to proceed quickly and with more detail than if pre-disaster plans did not exist. Further, the materials in the Recovery Framework can serve as the basis for responding to larger disasters.

The **Recovery Framework** includes:

- An overview of the recovery process, including the legal structure and role of REACT, in Tajikistan.
- Key elements to be considered in planning and implementing recovery programs and projects.
- Sector-specific recovery project design frameworks for the main recovery sectors, including health, shelter, WASH, infrastructure, education and food security.
- Identification of how cross-cutting issues (e.g., protection, gender, etc.) should be integrated into sector-specific recovery activities.

It is important to note that the **Recovery Framework** includes pre-disaster recovery planning as well as plans and activities following a disaster and has a companion training module.



Recovery works in progress following Kulyab city floods, 2010.

¹ http://www.untj.org/docs/Disaster_Management/Resources%20Page/Recovery%20Framework%20Ver%202%2030%20April%202011.pdf

UNDP in Tajikistan supported REACT partners on the use of the **Recovery Framework** through dissemination (including a Russian-language version)², awareness raising events such as trainings, exercises and seminars and in advocacy with the Government on a coordinated approach to recovery. Since May 2011, Tajikistan has faced a number of small scale disasters such as mudflows, avalanches and an earthquake in Rasht Valley in May, 2012. REACT members as well as Government used materials from the Framework for recovery planning and operations. UNDP in Tajikistan is optimistic that the **Recovery Framework** provides a model for the international community in establishing a unified, pre-planned and coordinated recovery process following disasters.

National Recovery Guidance

The experience of developing the **REACT Recovery Framework** and consultations with the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, led to UNDP and Government of Tajikistan, to identify a need to develop similar recovery materials by the Government itself. While regulatory guidance exists in Tajikistan covering recovery-related tasks, these materials are spread over numerous laws and regulations and are difficult to apply in a unified approach. Further, recovery experiences in Japan, Chile, Haiti, Italy and other recent disasters highlighted a need to develop a comprehensive approach to recovery before a disaster occurs if the recovery is to be rapid and effective.

Analysis of past disaster recovery indicated that the Government (and REACT with the **Recovery Framework**) did not face extremely unusual challenges in defining recovery needs or planning and implementing recovery assistance. However, Tajikistan has not experienced larger disaster recovery programs in the past decade. It was decided that the Government's recovery guidance would focus on recovery planning for events which would cost at least 7.5% of the Government's budget (approximately \$150 million USD), and render up to 20% of the affected population unable to perform their normal functions. Such recovery efforts would require two to three years to complete and necessitate significant external financial and material assistance. The recovery process itself, given the monetary values involved, would significantly impact the national economy and the ability of the Government to fund and implement normal functions and public services.

The **National Recovery Guide**, currently under review by the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, provides a clear structure and essential guidance that will enable Government and non-government parties define recovery needs and plans and develop a coordinated and effective recovery response. In accordance with existing disaster planning requirements all parts of the Government, as well as REACT partners, are to develop specific recovery plans based on the **National Recovery Guide**. The **REACT Recovery Framework** is a supporting, and integral, part of the **National Recovery Guide**.

It is important to note that the **Recovery Guidance** does not replace existing Government structures, laws and instructions. Rather, this document supplements and updates the existing system to implement a unified, coordinated and efficient recovery efforts following medium to large-scale disasters. However, in developing the **Recovery Guidance** a number of critical gaps were identified in the disaster-related legal framework in Tajikistan. These gaps have been brought to the attention of the National Platform and are the expected to be addressed as the **Recovery Guidance** is finalized.

As many aspects of the Recovery Guidance are linked to development, the draft guidance will be shared with both developmental agencies, REACT partners in Tajikistan and interested parties internationally. The work with the Government and REACT on recovery planning, initiated in March 2012, has been supported by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

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² http://untj.org/docs/Disaster_Management/Resources%20Page/Recovery%20Framework%20Ver%20202%2030%20April%202011%20rus.pdf