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**DRAFT
MID TERM REVIEW**

**DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
KYRGYZSTAN 2005-2010**



Village Rescue Team Member explaining risk map, Osh Province

AUGUST 2007

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List of Acronyms:

ADB	Asian Development Bank
A.O.	Ayil Okmotu (sub-district Kyrgyzstan)
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CAMP	Central Asian Mountain Partnership
CBO	Community Based Organization
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
DEX	Direct Execution
ERC	Emergency Response Center
DGTTF	Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness Program of the European Community
DRM	Disaster Risk Management (overriding term, covers preparedness and mitigation/ risk reduction)
GEF	Global Environment Fund
MoES	Ministry of Emergency Situation (Kyrgyzstan)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRAC	Target for Resource Assessment from the Core (UNDP)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Executive Summary

The report reviews UNDP's Disaster Risk Management Program in Kyrgyzstan 2005-2010. Findings and recommendations are based on interviews and site visits conducted in Kyrgyzstan from June 19 – June 25th 2007. In addition the consultant undertook a review of program documentation and researched further information on the web.

After 2, 5 years of implementation the review focuses upon the following questions:

- a) Relevance of the program's approach
- b) Effectiveness of project activities in contributing to overall outcomes and change objectives
- c) Preliminary results of linking up with the democratic governance program
- d) Relations and partnerships with other actors and stakeholders
- e) UNDP's role and comparative advantage in disaster risk management

The program is pursuing an impressive and creative variety of activities based upon the realization that risk management requires the building of capacities of communities and government organizations and institutions at various levels. The program is appreciated by government counterparts at the national, provincial and sub-district level as well as by communities. Given its limited financial dimension¹ the level of awareness of its existence and main aims is impressive particularly at the national level (even the Minister is well aware of it). This provides a good basis for the future of the program and follow-up.

Overall the program is currently leaning more towards work at the community level. It has defined a step-by-step process for community level interventions (Annex IV). The work with (local) governments is less systematic and not entirely synchronized with community level work. This is at least partly related to the ongoing decentralization process which has yet to result in clear policies and guidelines for the role of Ayil Okmets in disaster risk management. These questions require follow-up at the national level and involvement in relevant policy debates.

Having worked at the very community level has allowed UNDP to identify core issues that require consideration in the national policy development process. The report argues that it is now time to rise above the level of project implementation at the community level and identify a program strategy² to address the needs of local government capacity building within the context of decentralization. This requires a stock-taking and analytical process of "lessons learnt" and the development of a "vision" what kind of capacities are required (and feasible) at the Ayil Okmotu level in order to deliver disaster risk management services to high risk communities (see Annex V for a sample list of questions in this context).

Disaster risk management projects can be a bit inward-looking and we are positively impressed with the initial progress of "mainstreaming" it into the democratic governance area. The programs are slowly moving from a stage of sharing of information and

¹ Which is not to say that fundraising has not been successful, quite on the contrary (see 3.1).

² And an explicit program document up to 2010.

resources into joint planning and implementation. It is important to maintain a sense of realism and perceive disaster risk management as one responsibility of local governments: not their *raison d'être*. The careful integration of disaster risk management into local development plans (so far piloted in a few locations) and future work on budget indicators will allow the disaster risk management program to work within a broader framework of local development needs rather than working on isolated plans and projects (that run the risk of overburdening local capacities). Mainstreaming also benefits the democratic governance program by making it more relevant to disaster prone Ayil Okmets and villages in the South.

Given its mandate and program objective UNDP has an interest in identifying and disseminating best practice and experience to other actors and in strengthening/ widening its impact and effectiveness by influencing others but also by learning from their experience. NGOs see UNDP as perfectly equipped to deal and cooperate with governments, particularly with agencies at the national and provincial levels. UNDP does not yet fully use the comparative advantage of this privileged relationship in its disaster risk management program.

The report recommends that UNDP explores the feasibility of initiating/ supporting policy-coordination of various community-based disaster risk management projects at the local level currently implemented by different agencies³. This would be done with a view to extract and disseminate best practice that emerges from this work both horizontally (between agencies and different provinces) and vertically (upward policy advice based on solid evidence and experience). An appropriate mechanism for such work needs yet to be identified but the de-centralized REAKT model from Tajikistan (that includes branches in disaster-prone provinces) could be modified and adapted in order to serve such objectives (i.e. by expanding it beyond a preparedness and response coordination role).⁴

At the national level it is recommended that UNDP finds a way to interact more closely with the World Bank's hazard management project (and ADB), that does important work on the formulation of national strategies and policies. This requires the "buy in" from the Ministry and its support to such policy coordination. It also requires walking a fine line in discussions with the World Bank which demonstrated a slightly "territorial" attitude in the area of disaster risk management. Again, a sub-group on disaster risk management capacity building could eventually be attached to the Kyrgyz version of the "REAKT" group.

In addition to the more "strategic" discussion summarized here the report analyzes the various components of the program and makes detailed recommendations on specific questions and issues.

³ In discussions with different NGOs and bilateral agencies we heard repeatedly that they had interest in substantive exchange and coordination. So doors seem to be open. DIPECHO has also expressed repeatedly that it wants more coordination between the local initiatives it funds.

⁴ Eventually coordination forums could be attached to the Governor's office some of which maintain development assistance coordination bodies (interview with the Governor in Jalalabad).

1. Introduction/ Purpose of the review

The current “mid-term-review” of UNDP’s disaster risk management program in Kyrgyzstan has been conducted as a “by-product” of reviewing the regional “Natural Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction for Communities in high-risk districts in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan”, 2006-2007. As time spent in Kyrgyzstan was very short (all in all only 6.5 days from June 19th to June 26th involving considerable travel by plane and car) the following report does not claim to be exhaustive but summarizes some major observations and findings from an intense mission and densely packed schedule (please see Annex I, Agenda). Findings are based upon preliminary evidence and should be seen as a basis for further discussion.

An initially foreseen joint Terms of Reference between UNDP Kyrgyzstan and UNDP Bratislava did not materialize leaving the purpose of this review initially a little vague. However based upon discussions with the UN disaster reduction advisor and the Resident Representative the following areas of interests could be determined:

- a) Relevance of the program’s approach
- b) Effectiveness of project activities in contributing to overall outcomes and change objectives
- c) Preliminary results of linking up with the democratic governance program
- d) Relations and partnerships with other actors and stakeholders
- e) UNDP’s role and comparative advantage in disaster risk management⁵

The review serves substantive lesson-learning and recommendations feed into developing future strategies and directions of UNDP’s disaster risk management program in Kyrgyzstan.

The review was conducted using a combination of processes including a desk study of relevant documentation (see Annex II), site visits and individual as well as group interviews (see Annex III, list of interviews) with multiple stakeholders. Thanks are due to the entire program team for its commitment to the exercise, the thoughtful preparation of the agenda and for the constructive, problem-solving attitude.

2. The program and its development context

2.1 The development context⁶

Kyrgyzstan continues to grapple with the economic and political challenges of transition. While the overall percentage of population living below the poverty line has decreased since 2000, income and consumption inequalities have increased significantly. Poverty is concentrated in the rural areas and of these particularly in the South of the country. The South is also particularly exposed to frequent floods, mud-and landslides and other

⁵ The review does not – or only in passing – deal with operations management. Time did not permit to deal with the intricacies of administration, financial and resource management.

⁶ Information condensed from Country Development Strategy 2007-2010, UNDAF 2005-2010, UNDP’s Country Program Action Plan and National Indicative Disaster Reduction Plan (draft), 1999

natural hazards. Annual damage from natural disasters amounts to 35mln USD. The poor are particularly vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by these events.

Disaster Risk Management is a core function of local and national government entities. In Kyrgyzstan these functions and capacities are de facto concentrated within the Ministry of Emergencies and its branches at the inter-regional (Southern, Eastern, Northern branches), provincial (oblast') and district (rayon) levels. With the ongoing democratization and decentralization process the sub-district level ("Ayil Okmotu") has been turned from a merely administrative unit into a self-governance body. The Ayil Okmotu is becoming the core provider of services to the public and in particular of social services to the poor. This includes disaster risk management. Given the fact that decentralization is relatively recent and ongoing (with administrative-territorial and fiscal reforms underway) there is currently a gap between "de jure" functions and actual capacities.

In the country development strategy 2007-2010 Kyrgyzstan has included the objective of providing "complex safety of the population and territory in the case of natural disasters and in Central Asian region." The country is committed to increasing its systemic and structural capacities in Disaster Risk Management seeking the support from bi-lateral and international partners.

2.2 UNDP's Disaster Risk Management Program

From 1998-2000 UNDP implemented a disaster risk management program that mainly focused upon the national level. The longer term impact from this initiative was modest due to frequent changes in government but also due to too much emphasis on products and outputs (plans, provision of equipment etc.) rather than due process and outcomes⁷. In 2004/2005 UNDP therefore considerably re-formulated its approach to disaster risk management and decided to focus more upon the local level while integrating disaster risk management into the democratic governance program area.

In its Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) 2005 – 2010 UNDP allocates significant importance to disaster risk management. Disaster risk management is one of seven program components and feeds into two Country Program outcomes: outcome A 5.1.: *"Enhanced response to, and mitigation of, natural disasters improves living conditions for the poor"* and outcome B 1.5: *"Quality of and access to public services at the local level increased and management of essential resources for local communities improved"*. The latter outcome is related to the democratic governance area thus ensuring conceptual and practical linkages between the two program components.

Two outputs reflect the community and governance-orientation of the program outcomes: 1. *Capacity of communities for disaster management strengthened* and 2. *Capacity of local self-governments for disaster management strengthened*. Under these outputs the program pursues a mix of activities that take place directly at the village/ community level (such as vulnerability and capacity assessments, disaster response planning, training and the establishment of village rescue teams, simulations exercises, mitigation projects

⁷ See ILS Review in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, 2004

etc.) and activities that are directed towards the strengthening of local self-government capacity (establishment of a training curriculum for civil servants; risk and hazard mapping; inclusion of disaster risk management into Ayil Okmotu annual development and strategic plans). Both outputs are inter-dependent.

In 2006 UNDP also provided support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan with preparing for a possible Avian Influenza pandemic. In connection with the Resident Coordinator function UNDP is also critical in facilitating support to strengthening the overall preparedness and response capacity of the UN Country Team and overall response coordination in Kyrgyzstan (*this function is however not in the center of this review*).

2.3 Program Management and Implementation Set-Up

The program is managed by a relatively lean team that includes 40% of the time of the UN Disaster Reduction Adviser who provides overall managerial support whereas the UNDP Disaster Management Adviser allocates 30% of his time to the technical support of the initiative. Both are supported by a disaster component assistant and a finance/administrative assistant. At the provincial (or “oblast”) level three disaster experts facilitate and manage the implementation of the program. Three administrative and finance assistants are cost-shared with other UNDP programmes (Poverty Reduction, Democratic Governance, Conflict Prevention).

The program has been implemented in a sequence of (sometimes parallel) projects funded by various donors. Even though projects and activities are guided by a discernible “programmatic” approach there is - in line with UNDP’s revised planning guidelines - no program or strategy document.⁸

2.4 Main stakeholders, funding and implementation modalities

The program is officially nationally executed but due to capacity constraints UNDP plays de facto the role of the main implementing partner entering into further sub-contracting arrangements with civil society partners and the private sector.

In its disaster risk management program UNDP works with the Ministry of Emergency Situations and its branches, with civil servants and elected officials at the Ayil Okmotu level and with communities. The Academy of Management (situated within the President’s Office) has been a partner in developing a disaster management training curriculum and course for local government civil servants. In addition NGOs such as the Central Asian Mountain partnership (CAMP) and the Red Crescent have been involved in the delivery of training to communities. Private contractors have assisted with hazard and risk assessments.

Funding comes from a variety of sources: TRAC 1.1.1. and 1.1.2, the Regional Center in Bratislava (through the regional environmental and security initiative), the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF) and lately the Disaster Preparedness Program of the European Community (DIPECHO). Collectively funding from these

⁸ According to UNDP’s revised planning guidelines strategy is covered by the overall CPAP 2005-2010 and individual projects develop annual work-plans.

sources amounts to approximately 798.352,00 USD for the UNDP program (including the Avian Influenza component).⁹

The program is in its third year of implementation and thus more or less half through its life-span.

2.5 Major international and bi-lateral actors in disaster risk management

Operationally (both financially and in terms of the breadth of its engagement) the World Bank is the major “player” in disaster risk management in Kyrgyzstan. Within its “disaster hazard mitigation” project 2004-2009 the World Bank supports two major components:

- a) Uranium mining waste dump isolation and protection (in the Mailuu Suu area)
- b) Disaster preparedness and landslide monitoring. This includes the formulation of a national emergency and response plan; legislation review; the establishment of an emergency response center (ERC) in Bishkek with branches in three Southern provinces; a training component targeting the Ministry; pilot landslide monitoring and early warning projects and community outreach activities in various locations. The overall funds provided amount so far to 11 million USD (further substantial funds are being sought).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) provides 1 mio USD to three projects:

- a) Socioeconomic assessment of natural disasters impact on national economy of Kyrgyzstan
- b) Drafting of a national program and population resettlement plan
- c) Community based disaster risk management activities in 10 locations.

Under the funding framework of the Disaster Preparedness Program of the European Community (DIPECHO IV) various NGOs and bi-lateral agencies (Red Crescent Society, ACTED etc.) are implementing community based disaster risk management projects at the community level. In addition some limited capacity building support is provided to the Osh Inter-Regional Branch of the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The Swiss Development Cooperation Agency also funds various local, Swiss and multi-lateral agencies to implement local and national-level disaster risk management activities in Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan this has mainly focused upon community level work. Both DIPECHO and the Swiss also fund or (in the case of the Swiss) have voiced interest in funding the UN/UNDP.

3. Key Findings related to Planning and Management

3.1 Program planning and fund-raising

The disaster risk management program in Kyrgyzstan has been given a prominent and - as we will argue later on - appropriate place in UNDP’s Country’s Program Action Plan (CPAP). Different from many similarly disaster-prone countries the CPAP allocates an entire outcome to disaster risk management plus has elevated the importance of disaster

⁹ The UN disaster management portfolio has attracted another 110000 USD to this date with further funding being raised for the enhancement of coordination of disaster response.

risk management by linking it up to the outcome of one of its flagship programs: “democratic governance”. This has been a bold move since it was far from obvious back in 2005 that UNDP would be so successful in fund-raising for disaster risk management.

While the overall funding of 798.352,00 USD may seem modest in comparison with other program areas funding for disaster risk management is notoriously difficult to come by and – ironically - often only available after a major calamity. UNDP Kyrgyzstan has done very well for a country that has not recently been affected by disasters. This has been achieved by a pro-active and creative approach to fund-raising tackling multiple possible sources and “packaging” proposals appropriately without sacrificing the major aims and orientation of the program. Working with multiple funding agencies and sources has also allowed navigating the far too short cycles for disaster risk management funding which – mostly – originate from emergency budgets.

3.2. Program implementation arrangements

In correspondence with its mostly local objectives the program concentrates its human resources at the local level. Three specialists work in UNDP’s local program offices under the Democratic Governance program, which facilitates a more efficient use of common resources as well as joint planning. At the national level the project is very lean and equally integrated into the democratic governance area. Management practices are enabling and provide sufficient visibility and operational space for the program where it needs it.

Different “sub-projects” of the program that are funded by various donors have resulted in slightly different mixes of components and activities with some more leaning towards the strengthening of communities (Environment and Security Initiative) and some more towards the strengthening of local governments (DGTTF).

3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The identification of meaningful indicators of vulnerability/ capacity, risk and risk reduction is a challenge that has attracted a wealth of attention and academic literature yet resulted in limited practical instruments. This is mainly related to the fact that risk is deeply contextual and its manifestations vary from area to area (even within one country or region). In addition reliable base-line data on vulnerabilities and capacities is often difficult to come by. Programs such as the one under review therefore often resort to “proxy” indicators (such as the number of communities in an at-risk area covered by program activities).

The program has made a conscious effort to measure the progress of activities and also to elucidate feedback from communities and their leaders through surveys. However there is room for improvement and we noticed that a) more use could have been made of the detailed vulnerability and capacity assessment processes at the beginning of project activities to identify and widely agree upon meaningful (yet practical) indicators and b) the technical monitoring of the quality of mitigation project planning and implementation was not always optimal and was strongly dependent upon the available local expertise in geo- and bio-engineering. Furthermore annual reporting refers mostly to the progress of

individual projects (funded by different donors) that have been implemented under the program. This review therefore represents a first consolidated effort to review these projects from a “programmatic” perspective taking the overall outputs and outcomes specified in the CPAP as the major point of reference.

4 - 8. Key Findings related to Program Performance/ Status of Outputs

The following section will discuss preliminary results from engagement with local governments and communities which are inter-dependent and a pre-requisite in order to achieve the outcomes of the program.

4.1 Strengthening of communities capacities in disaster management

It is fair to say that the bulk of UNDP’s disaster risk management program has been devoted to immediate interventions at the village and community level. The following reviews the main components of these interventions and their effectiveness as well as some preliminary lessons learnt¹⁰ (see also Annex IV flow-chart of the community based process).

4.2 Selection of high-risk communities through hazard/ risk assessment and round tables

In order to identify the most disaster-prone communities relatively formal hazard and risk assessments were conducted by private sub-contractors in Osh, Jalalabad and Batken. Particularly the Batken report strikes the reader as making a considerable effort to combine qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analyze not only the physical but also social and economic aspects of vulnerability. This is still a new approach in Central Asia and the Batken report is particularly informative (see also discussion of these assessments under 5.1).

The reports provide a good source of information for the technical specialist. The versions the consultant has reviewed however lack an easily accessible summary and a simplified ranking of locations according to indicators of risk which combine characteristics of the hazard (severity, frequency, duration...) and vulnerability (physical, social, economic). Since round -table meetings with non-specialists i.e. representatives of relevant sub-districts, district as well as community leaders discussed results from these assessments and made the final selection of sub-districts and communities, a more “user”-friendly product might have facilitated the selection process. In conclusion the conducted studies just indicated the right direction and further work is needed to translate hazard maps and risk assessments into useful tools (in the form of guidelines, templates and references).

4.3 Training of selected communities/ Village Rescue Teams

¹⁰ Please note that the practice has evolved over 2,5 years of implementation and that this discussion refers to a summary of activities and components that have taken place under individual “projects” funded by various agencies. Approaches under individual projects have varied and evolved over time since 2005. This report discusses the most recent “state of the art” approach and methodology as discussed with the technical program advisor. See also Annex IV

Introductory training of communities was initially performed by the Central Asian Mountain Partnership, an NGO registered in Kyrgyzstan (and Tajikistan) that uses a participatory methodology striving to involve community members and outside specialists in a common dialogue and learning experience. Originally elaborated for Tajikistan, the program team has adapted the training materials to Kyrgyz conditions. The feedback from various site visits and discussions with community members is that these training events were a crucial step in the generation of community confidence in their own abilities, interest and engagement in the disaster risk management process.

In more concrete terms training has resulted in the establishment of Village Rescue Teams who became the organized core of village capacities in disaster risk management and an important mechanism for the implementation of follow-up activities. Depending upon circumstance and need these rescue teams received further training on First Aid/Gender and the preparation of mitigation proposals. Some also were instructed in the preparation of village preparedness and response plans. Rescue Teams have been equipped and equipment has been officially handed over to the Head of Ayil Okmets.

Village rescue teams made national head-lines this spring when one of them successfully intervened in a flood situation and managed evacuation, first response and clean-up activities. On the downside a lot remains to be done to turn these teams into a sustainable capacity (please see discussion under 5.). In one location the question emerged to what degree the establishment of teams had been guided by clear criteria (including the frequency of hazards and disaster situations that would require their mobilization).

4.4 Mitigation projects

Mitigation projects have been selected in a competitive process by a grant selection committee that involves important stakeholders such as the Ministry of Emergencies, the Department of Construction and Ministry of Agriculture. As mitigation projects fall into the spheres of competence and responsibility of various actors this has been a good mechanism to increase transparency and technical credibility of the selection process as well as facilitate the arrangement of follow-up activities and maintenance.¹¹

Mitigation projects have played a role in raising the awareness and commitment of communities and their leaders to disaster risk management: they are a tangible and visible output of their efforts. All communities visited during the course of this review had benefited from such projects. The question is how communities that have been unsuccessful in the competition fared in comparison with the winners. This will allow drawing more solid conclusions on the role mitigation projects have played in local disaster risk management processes. There is also need to clarify whether competition may have led to the “elimination” of some high risk locations (with low capacities).

¹¹ The idea of grant selection committee creation has been adapted from UNDP’s GEF/SGP (The Global Environment Facility/Small Grant Programme) Kyrgyzstan practice, where National Steering Committee and its members serve as a main structure to run the whole programme. A good example of cross-fertilization between programmes.

In terms of actual risk reduction these small-scale interventions have had a limited impact because the spatial extent of hazards, their severity and frequency requires often more comprehensive solutions (and bigger investment). For instance a few hundred meters of gabions do not provide full riverbank protection, they are patchwork that - if ill designed- can even lead to more problems downstream. Risk reduction therefore often exceeds “local” possibilities and requires the strengthening of government capacities and performance at higher administrative levels. Within this context land-use management and settlement planning are key tasks that need to be performed with a “risk reduction” orientation. Realizing these necessary inter-dependencies between community and government roles the program also tackled government capacity at the Ayil Okmotu level and above.

5. Strengthening of government capacities

5.1 Hazard and risk assessments/ hazard maps

The hazard and risk assessment and mapping exercises established credibility of the program in the eyes of local government representatives and in particular of the Ministry of Emergency Situations staff at district and regional levels. However we were not really able to gather much evidence that the risk assessment reports have been widely read or used, which is not really astounding considering their length. Local government representatives were usually more aware of the hazard maps. People particularly valued the inventory of past disasters that gives some indication on the likelihood of future events but seem not yet ready to maintain and update this inventory. Lately the program has experimented with satellite images that provide a more three-dimensional image of the hazard environment and is easier to interpret for the lay-person.

5.2 Training

In cooperation with the Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic the program designed a training curriculum and 24 hr program for local civil servants on disaster risk management. The “Central Courses” of the Ministry of Emergency Situations have also been involved in the design and MoES staff has participated in Training of Trainers events. The training initiative has thus potential for sustainability.

The training program is addressed at elected heads of Ayil Okmets and their staff, leaders of village rescues teams as well as regional level officials from line departments. From an outline that has been shared with the consultant¹² it is at an introductory level and covers mostly disaster preparedness and response. The curriculum/ program has been officially approved by the technical and academic councils of the Academy of Management and been integrated into the program of its branch, the southern training center for municipal servants. However both institutions face ongoing changes in the institutional landscape of the country and resource challenges so careful follow-up is required. The mission was able to meet only one participant of these courses so it is difficult to judge its impact but exposure of local government staff seems to have been limited up to date.

¹² No copy of the training handbook was received

5.3 Local planning

The program has spearheaded the development of a format for village and Ayil Okmotu disaster preparedness and response plans which have been piloted in selected locations. Village preparedness and response plans follow a simple, action-oriented outline that specifies alert and evacuation arrangements. The Ayil Okmotu plan was prepared with the active involvement of national level Ministry of Emergency Staff from the operations department. It is based upon a) so-called “safety-passports”, a mechanism for the assessment and documentation of hazards and existing capacities imported from the Russian Federation and b) hazard maps that were produced under the risk assessment and hazard mapping component discussed under 1.1 and 2.1. Results are so far encouraging but preliminary. Particularly the question of operational responsibilities (“who does what with what resources”) and a chain of command (involving village rescue teams) seem insufficiently addressed in the current drafts. This is at least partly related to some overall lack of clarity on institutional and legal mandates in the context of an ongoing decentralization process. Consequently central level institutions (such as the Ministry of Emergency Situations) need to adapt their policies and guidelines.

As one of the benefits of working alongside the democratic governance program in the field the program has also embarked upon piloting the integration of disaster risk management issues into local strategic and development plans. These are elaborated with the assistance of UNDP in selected sub-districts and contain a section on ecological sustainability covering disaster risk management. It is as of yet too early (and the consultant did not have a chance to explore this issue with a local government where this has been piloted) to comment on this process. However based upon information received from the UNDP Disaster Management Adviser, there are examples of simply copying some parts of disaster preparedness plans (hazard maps, aerial photos) into local strategic and development plans without defining risks and establishing linkages to the local development strategy. This would be ineffective and demonstrates the need for additional expertise and clear guidance to be provided to local governments.

Support to local governments by the democratic governance program includes work on facilitating the transparency of local budgeting processes and linking these to indicators and statistical data. In the future i.e. in 2008 there will be interesting opportunities to do some joint work on the identification and use of vulnerability indicators (as part of socio-economic indicators) for budgeting forecasts at the Ayil Okmotu levels. These forecasts will be fed into the national budgeting process in order to justify/ facilitate transfers to A.O.s in special need.

6. Cross-cutting issues: Gender

Gender issues reportedly present a challenge in the rather traditional South of the country. Reportedly women are not included in decision-making processes regarding disaster preparedness and response. Their representation in village rescue teams is negligible (surprisingly the situation on the other side of the border in Tajikistan is fundamentally different). The program has not yet defined indicators of gender-related vulnerabilities and/ or capacities. These would help to define what it is the program needs to focus upon to address the gender-dimension of disaster risk.

7. Summary: Results achieved to this date

The main result under output 1 is the identification of a process for the implementation of community-level activities (see Annex IV). A “critical” mass of project activities funded by different agencies and donors and implemented under this program has allowed identifying this step-by-step process. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the capacity of individual communities that participated in the program and followed up with the creation of village rescue-teams (and the submission of successful mitigation projects) has been strengthened. A couple of Ayil Okmotus acquired skills that helped them to attract additional funding for disaster risk reduction from external sources.

Community-level activities require the parallel building of capacities at the local government level. Maybe not surprisingly the program has not yet identified a well sequenced and systematic process to synchronize these two outputs (both topically and sequentially or chronologically). However promising (but preliminary) activities have been conducted such as the development of a format for Ayil Okmotu preparedness and response plans and the introduction of disaster risk management into local model strategic and development plans. Overall the process of improving the capacities of local governments has only started.

8. Key Findings continued: Strategic issues

8.1 Linkages with UNDP’s democratic governance program

The strategic relevance of mainstreaming disaster risk management into the democratic governance area is **the need to create local risk management capacities at the local level that keep pace with and correspond to arrangements in the decentralization process**. Both program areas have started to value and benefit from each other’s expertise. Disaster risk management is an acute concern for local administrations in the South and the democratic governance program is thus able to address an additional demand for capacity building. On the part of the disaster risk management program local level risk management cannot be pursued without an up-to-date understanding of the challenges and opportunities that present itself within the course of the decentralization process.

As already highlighted in section 3.3 first concrete examples of “mainstreaming” are emerging. These include the integration of disaster risk management into local strategic and development plans as well as plans to work on budget indicators that reflect vulnerability, an effort that would be innovative and could inform other Country Offices working on similar issues. More opportunities present themselves in the tackling of natural resource and land management.

Joint outcomes and managerial linkages with another programming area do not automatically result in the “operationalization” of such linkages. Program areas need to get to know each other’s approaches and methodologies before opportunities for joint initiatives can be identified. This takes time. We therefore consider that the process of “mainstreaming” has made satisfactory progress, particularly given the fact that this is

relatively new and innovative practice for UNDP (not only in Kyrgyzstan but world-wide) and that limited experience can be drawn in from other UNDP offices.

8.2 UNDP's partnership strategies/ comparative advantage

UNDP has in a way fitted its intervention at the local level to the fact that the national level (and absorption capacity) is “covered” by a comprehensive World Bank/ Asian Development Bank Program in support of the Ministry of Emergency Situations. While there are differing opinions with regard to the effectiveness of this program¹³ it pursues a broad package of components including policy and strategy advice but also activities at the local level. With an increasing need to address policy and legal issues at the national level UNDP's program finds itself in a position where it needs to harmonize its activities more pro-actively with the World Bank and analyze and share the lessons it is learning “in the field” with World Bank and Ministry counterparts.

The institutional mechanisms for increased policy coordination and mutual exchange of lessons learnt are currently inexistent. One reason is the fact that UNDP and the World Bank work through and partner with different departments in the Ministry. This creates an unfortunate impression of “competition” for the time and attention of Ministry counterparts and could be interpreted as “withholding” information from each other. While there may be many reasons for this set-up that the consultant ignores it does not serve the development objectives of UNDP's program. The fact that the World Bank and its sub-contractors seem to be interested in UNDP's experience regarding local level implementation approaches and methods may provide an important “incentive” for a more open dialogue and partnership.

At the local level UNDP has found ways to sub-contract to partners that are stakeholders in the disaster risk management process. These include the Red Crescent Society and CAMP. Both are important (particularly the Red Crescent Society with its nation-wide local net-work) because they represent a more sustainable capacity than international NGOs and bilateral agencies active at the local level.

In comparison with the situation back in 2005 there is now an increasing number of agencies active in local disaster risk management programs at the local level. Some of these projects (see ACTED for instance) are very similar to UNDP's program and funded by the same donor (DIPECHO). Individually each agency can only implement a limited number of projects and cover a small number of communities. Coordination is currently restricted to territorial division of project areas: lessons therefore remain behind closed territorial and organizational doors.

Given its mandate and program objective UNDP has an interest in identifying and disseminating best practice and experience to other actors and in strengthening/ widening its impact and effectiveness by influencing others but also by learning from their experience. NGOs see UNDP as perfectly equipped to deal and cooperate with governments, particularly with agencies at the national and provincial levels. UNDP does

¹³ The consultant is in no position to provide an opinion on such assertions.

not yet fully use the comparative advantage of this privileged relationship in its disaster risk management program.

8.3 Participation of stakeholders, ownership and sustainability

We witnessed a rather high degree of ownership of the initiative at the community level (with the reservation that we have only been to communities that were overall successful in creating rescue teams and winning mitigation projects)¹⁴. This is related to the active role communities in general and the village rescue teams in particular were allowed to play in program activities: most prominently in the planning and implementation of mitigation projects. A sense of pride and accomplishment was obvious from all field visits and interviews. We also saw that a majority of heads of A.O. demonstrated genuine interest in the initiative even though we only rarely witnessed a deeper understanding of their particular role in disaster risk management. This may to some degree be related to language and cultural differences, however it is reflective of the overwhelmingly community-oriented nature of the program.

The sustainability of the capacity building of communities (and local governments) depends upon more work on the institutional and policy framework of disaster risk management in Kyrgyzstan. This is highlighted in more detail under the conclusions of this report.

9. Conclusions

The program is pursuing an impressive and creative variety of activities based upon the realization that risk management requires the building of capacities of communities and government organizations and institutions at various levels. The program is appreciated by government counterparts at the national, provincial and sub-district level as well as by communities. Given its limited financial dimension (in comparison to other agencies active in disaster risk management) the level of awareness of its existence and main aims is impressive particularly at the national level (even the Minister is well aware of it). This provides a good basis for the future of the program and follow-up.

Project documents and proposals have been drafted for various funding agencies but there is no overall program document. The program therefore currently lacks a consolidated strategy on how it is going to achieve its overall outcomes until the year 2010. This is a gap that has not yet led to serious consequences (since a “programmatic approach” has been pursued by both advisors of the initiative in addressing the CPAP outcomes/ outputs) however it is time to close this gap.

Overall the program is currently leaning more towards work at the community level. It has defined a step-by-step process for community level interventions (Annex IV). The work with (local) governments is less systematic and not entirely synchronized with

¹⁴ It would be interesting to see the overall ratio of such success stories and communities that did not manage to follow up on initial training events: this would be the job for a much more in-depth review or evaluation

community level work. We therefore consider that some progress has been made towards outcome 1 of the program in selected communities (*“Enhanced response to, and mitigation of, natural disasters improves living conditions for the poor”*). As for outcome 2 *“Quality of and access to public services at the local level increased and management of essential resources for local communities improved”* some interesting initiatives have been started but progress is as of yet limited. The program has not yet been able to define a clear approach towards strengthening disaster risk management services at the local government level.

The difficulties of defining a local government capacity development strategy are at least to some degree related to the fact that the program is still learning what interventions need to be taken to ensure a supportive institutional and policy framework for community level risk management within a dynamic context of ongoing decentralization. It is as of yet not entirely clear what role and responsibilities the Ayil Okmotu will have in the future and what capacities are required at this level (and realistic). There are an increasing number of issues emanating from community-level work performed within the program that cannot be sufficiently addressed by working with local governments and district representatives of the Ministry of Emergency Situations alone but require overall policy and regulatory work at the national level such as:

- a) Criteria and minimum standards for provincial/district/local hazard and risk assessments
- b) Responsibilities for conducting provincial/district/local hazard and risk assessments
- c) Rules and Responsibilities for following up upon provincial/district/local hazard and risk assessments
- d) “Risk conscious” development planning policies and guidelines for the A.O. level
- e) “Risk conscious” budgeting at the A.O. level: assessing the socio-economic impact of local risk/ disasters
- f) Minimum standards for the planning and implementation of (local) mitigation works
- g) Roles and responsibilities of various actors at the local, A.O., district, provincial, national level in initiating, supporting, maintaining mitigation works
- h) Minimum standards for community based risk management training
- i) Legal status and mandate of voluntary rescue-teams; etc.

While it would be illusionary that all of these issues can be tackled by the same agency and/or addressed within a short time they illustrate the fact that engagement at the community and Ayil Okmotu level and the mainstreaming of disaster risk management into the democratic governance program has generated concrete insights into issues that require to be taken up within an adapted national policy framework and regulations. **UNDP can now speak with confidence about some of these issues based upon the experience it has gathered at the local level.** Unfortunately there is currently no forum for such a policy- dialogue neither with other actors that are learning similar lessons at the local level nor with actors at the national level such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank that provide support to the formulation of national-level strategies, policies and guidelines.

While concrete results are only starting to come in we consider that the “mainstreaming” of disaster risk management into the democratic governance area has made a good start. There are further perspectives of doing joint and innovative work on the local development planning and budgeting guidelines that would translate “the integration of disaster risk management into development” into concrete and innovative practice.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Strategic level: Policy-formulation and -coordination

UNDP needs to slowly move from the current “hands on” (that was important in order to learn lessons) to **a more strategic approach** that puts more emphasis on the capacity building of local governments and feeds into a related (national) policy and institutional development dimension. This would make full use of UNDP’s comparative advantage as a trusted advisor of governments in development.

Based on the experience gathered so far at the community level UNDP together with its partners should take stock and analyze what a) the disaster risk management mandate of the Ayil Okmotu “should be” (based upon current legislation and lessons learnt so far in the program and the decentralization process) and b) the capacities that Ayil Okmets require in order to fulfill this mandate.. Annex V contains a check-list of concrete issues that may be worth considering. The analysis needs to specifically look into MES plans with regard to what kinds of powers and responsibilities shall be delegated to Ayil Okmets and what implication this will have on its own structures at the district (rayon) level offices (and possibly below).

This process should be undertaken in close partnership with communities, Ayil Okmets where the program has been implemented, the Ministry of Emergencies and relevant/interested implementing agencies (NGOs, bilateral and multi-lateral institutions). Given its considerable expertise in decentralization UNDP’s democratic governance program should also participate in this process. **The outcome will be an agreed “vision” of the role and capacities required in Ayil Okmets in high risk areas.** This will guide further implementation of UNDP’s program and provide an input for necessary work on policy and guidelines at the national level.

UNDP needs to forge **a more active partnership with other agencies active in disaster risk management.** A good start has been made with the Red Crescent and CAMP. In its relations with other agencies active at the local level UNDP should freely disseminate “best practice” and products: training programs and materials, assessments etc. For instance the existing vulnerability and capacity assessments would have been more useful (in terms of feeding into appropriate risk reduction strategies and activities) if they has been shared with NGO and bilateral partners (ACTED etc.). This will feed into the much needed coordination of disaster risk management of local disaster risk management activities.

Furthermore **UNDP needs to explore the feasibility to initiate/ support policy-coordination of various community-based disaster risk management projects at the**

local level implemented by different agencies. This would be done with a view to extract and disseminate best practice that emerges from this work both horizontally (between agencies and different provinces) and vertically (upward policy advice based on solid evidence and experience). An appropriate mechanism for such work needs yet to be identified but the de-centralized REAKT model from Tajikistan (that includes branches in disaster-prone provinces) could be modified and adapted in order to serve such objectives (i.e. expanded beyond a preparedness and response coordination role).¹⁵

At the national level it is recommended that **UNDP finds a way to interact more closely on national policy and strategy development with the World Bank’s hazard management project** (and ADB), that does important work on the formulation of national strategies and policies. This requires the “buy in” from the Ministry and its support to and participation in such policy coordination. While trying to establish a new quality of relations the project needs to avoid the impression of competition at all cost.¹⁶ This has to be done diplomatically and – eventually – with the involvement of more senior UNDP managers in negotiations with the WB/ Ministry. As a matter of fact closer coordination and exchange of lessons learnt should be a “win-win” situation for both partners and the WB and its sub-contractors professed quite a keen interest in the implementation arrangements of UNDP’s local risk management program.

10.2 Output-level recommendations

As already emphasized the project has raised many questions that need to be addressed in order to create sustainable capacities at the government and community level (see list on pages 12-13 and also Annex V).

Hazard/ risk assessments

Tasks and goals of hazard mapping and risk assessments be should more clear defined. There is a question-mark behind the usefulness and effectiveness of current hazard and risk assessments for the identification of high risk communities: these are usually known anyway and much more valid information is often extracted during community training processes (see below). However the more “scientific” assessments are of great importance to local development planners and are therefore not to be dismissed. Hazard mapping and risk assessments at various levels serve different purposes, however these need to be clearly spelled out.

This does not mean that community-level risk assessments that emphasize local knowledge are to be treated strictly separately from broader risk assessments : quite on the contrary. The challenge is to local knowledge and transform datum clear for local

¹⁵ Eventually coordination forums could be attached to the Governor’s office some of which maintain development assistance coordination bodies (interview with the Governor in Jalalabad).

¹⁶ We recommend for instance that UNDP stays away from the Mailuu Suu issue. This is very much a “baby” of the World Bank who has initiated activities there in 2004 and hopes to raise more funds for their continuation. In addition Mailuu Suu does not fit the mandate of UNDP as it requires heavy investment in physical structures, equipment etc.

population only to information understandable for others and usable for planning and taking decision processes.

If we speak about comparative analyses, what aiyl okmet, district, province more risky or less such type of hazard mapping and risk assessment is very useful because it gives measurable indicators (susceptibility parameters) allowing to compare administrative unites by figures instead of words.

It is possible to say, that MES is more interested in the comparison analyses rather than Aiyl Okmets because, as mentioned above hazards are usually known anyway. But for MES this tool allows, for some extent, to justify and explain geography of activities and resource allocation policy, without saying, that ranking is a necessary step in any planning process.

Nevertheless, we could not witnessed indicators that ranking procedure will receive support from MES. May be, ranking procedure and susceptibility parameters are needed in better promotion, simplification and visualization.

Hazard mapping and risk assessment revealed the problem related to data validity, reliability, quality, comparability, absence of approved formats, collection, and processing, retrieval and etc.

Actual MES information system directed to collection of operational data only. There are no systemized horizontal information flows between different structures of MES on permanent base in case of absence of emergency. The same situation with horizontal information flows between MES itself and other governmental structures like State Mapping Agency or National Statistic Committee.

Systemized disaster data collection is absent on Ayil Okmet level at all.

Hazard and risk assessments would provide a clearer benefit if they were used to identify and agree upon indicators of vulnerability and capacity. These include gender-related vulnerability and capacity indicators. If widely consulted these can then be used to monitor and evaluate the progress of the program in a participatory mode with the involvement of communities.

Assessment reports – considering their costs – should be translated into more useful documents including short and concise executive summaries that include tables with consolidated information on risk, vulnerabilities and capacities. In addition location-specific summaries should be prepared (for use in disaster planning/ development planning etc.).

Community based training

If hazard and risk assessments are undertaken they should be synchronized with community based training events that also involve local hazard mapping and risk

identification processes. This will help to avoid unnecessary duplication of community consultations and increase the relevance of studies to local context and needs.

Rescue Teams

There need to be clear criteria for setting up village rescue teams such as the frequency of hazards and disaster situations and the willingness and interest of local governments to support them.

The relationship between rescue-teams, district and provincial Ministries of Emergency branches and Ayil Okmets needs to be clarified. This includes a clear definition of the geographical scope of their work: is it strictly local, can they work in neighboring villages or even Ayil Okmets? What are the legal ramifications of this?

It is very important to distinguish between “community self help groups” and formalized teams. Both are options for the future of the village rescue teams however all consequences need to be soberly analyzed (legal status; liability issues; costs of maintenance including training etc.). *It will be beneficial to consult the Kyrgyz Red Crescent in this process who have opted for a less operational capacity at the community level in their program.*

Mitigation projects

Community-based mitigation projects need to serve a clear objective and need to be monitored and evaluated against this objective. These will rarely be concrete risk reduction objectives since hazards and risk exceed purely local solutions. Alternative objectives can for instance be related to a) community mobilization, b) piloting and demonstrating a risk reduction method for further dissemination and adoption etc.

The program needs to get a better grasp of the role mitigation projects have played in generating community interest and commitment to the disaster risk management process. This requires a systematic comparison of communities where only training activities took place and communities where training was followed up by a mitigation project.

Structural mitigation projects require an objective “third party” expertise in engineering.

Local Government/ Ayil Okmotu training

The current training curriculum and program should be perceived as a preliminary version that requires review and updating as the decentralization progress proceeds and as it becomes clearer what the roles and responsibilities of the A.O. will be.

All local government/ heads of Ayil Okmets and relevant staff participating in UNDP’s disaster risk management program should receive parallel coaching and training on disaster risk management.

There is need to also envisage specific coaching/ training to district level Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) staff (not just as trainers). This needs to be more technical and specific than the training for A.O. staff.

Planning at the local level

More work needs to be done, to arrive at a solid format and process for the “passports” and preparedness and response plans at the Ayil Okmet level. While continuously building local capacity local stakeholders should take over a more active role in their formulation with district level MoES staff capacitated to provide advisory services.

In terms of the work on local development plans and budget indicators we suggest more work on the socio-economic impact of disasters on local communities and the poor (considering work currently conducted by the Asian Development Bank on national level impact).

At a later stage we also suggest to explore (together with the democratic governance program) the integration of disaster risk management into a “risk-conscious” methodology for local level “cost/benefit” analysis of development alternatives at the A.O. level. **However these are preliminary ideas and should be reviewed against results from the overall stock-taking and analytical exercise suggested under 10.1**

10. 3 Programming and Implementation

Should the policy coordination at the provincial level and a policy dialogue at the national level be added to the program we recommend a review of current staffing arrangements with a view to increase capacity at an advisory level. This means that at least one advisor needs to devote 100% of his/her time to the program. Taking into account that UNDP has an interest in identifying and disseminating best practice to other actors the TOR for 100% advisor should contain knowledge management tasks.

Based upon the stock-taking and analytical exercise recommended we suggest that a program document with a clear strategy until 2010 is drafted.