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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Over the last three years 98% of the ECHO funding for disaster preparedness in Central Asia has been allocated to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This report reflects an evaluation of the implementation of Dipecho disaster preparedness strategies in this region; and, measures relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Dipecho supported disaster preparedness programmes in the abovementioned countries.

2. This report also identifies the level of preparedness in the most disaster prone locations and the mitigation activities supported by Dipecho to reduce the impact of hazards. The evaluation was not intended as a programme audit of each of the 14 present recipient organisations and their local partners. Some of Dipecho's non-governmental partners have as many as 9 local partners in some locations and some cover all 5 countries. A thorough evaluation of each NGO requires a minimum timeframe of three months and a multidisciplinary team with at least four members for adequate technical and geographical coverage.

Analysis and conclusions with recommendations in order of priority

3. Mandate 1257/96

Dipecho is fully in line with DG ECHO mandate 1257/96, specifically that the funding is allocated to support preparedness and mitigation activities.

Dipecho actions are appropriate by supporting preventive actions that reduce/eliminate hazard impact, ensure preparedness to respond to disasters and the establishment and continued support of early warning/intervention systems.

► **Recommendation**

Continue support for disaster preparedness in Central Asia through until at least 2012. If that is the time to phase out planning should start 3 years in advance following a programmatic audit type evaluation. Any recommendations for phase out or continuation should be given at that time.

4. Regional Risk reduction plan

There is no regional Risk reduction plan and no country wide plans at this time. It would take up to 5 years for the Ministries of Emergency Situations of each of the countries of Central Asia to compile an effective regional risk reduction plan. Based on hazards, vulnerabilities, poverty and coping mechanisms first community Rayon and then Oblast wide plans can be evolved and these plans combined to give the country plans.

Such plans should consider the best methods and options for availing disaster preparedness and mitigation information to targeted communities. Active and interested organisations would work as part of this plan whereby their specific directions are measured against the longer term directional objectives for each country and their plans elaborated accordingly.

The Organisations activities should also specifically direct exit strategies from a community. Ideally, an exit strategy would ensure that the work carried out by non-local organisations is handed over to a local authorities or a local partner following specific criteria and a written agreement.

► **Recommendation**

To clarify roles and responsibilities, hand-over requirements and ultimate goals ECHO should assist with the compilation of disaster preparedness plans at Community, Rayon and Oblast levels through its partners and require all of the partners to feed into such plans.

8. Long term planning

Disaster preparedness planning for the majority of partners is for the period of Dipecho funding. There is no master plan that all of the organisations feed into and little co-ordination of activities between organisations and authorities.

Notwithstanding the European Commission's fiscal policies, ECHO in collaboration with experienced implementation partners can assist the governmental authorities, in particular Ministry of Emergency Situations, to develop a long term disaster reduction strategic plan. Such a plan would ultimately provide the long-term framework for disaster preparedness and response interventions carried out by any and all organisations. The topics covered in the Hyogo Framework for Action should be brought into these plans. Only two organisations cover the whole region: ISDR with UNOCHA support and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. They would be natural partners for ECHO in its promotion of such a plan and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

► **Recommendation**

Dipecho should encourage authorities to publish oblast level disaster preparedness and mitigation plans. Dipecho could then support their partners to feed into these plans to improve sustainability and co-ordination

9. Dipecho funding cycle

Due to gaps between Dipecho contracts and partners not knowing even if there will be more funding for disaster preparedness there is a lack of continuity and long term planning.

Most of the implementation partners plan on the basis of ECHO funding cycle. Their plans follow the fiscal calendar of ECHO and do not fit into a master plan for long-term considerations of the organisations or the relevant governmental authorities. This planning approach together with the short-term nature of ECHO financial support can lead to non-sustainability of interventions as well as a significant loss of experienced human resources. Not only is this a loss of institutional knowledge but requires the training of replacement staff which slows project implementation. In summary, the necessity to keep financial commitments in line with ECHO policies is not constructive for engaging in long term disaster preparedness planning at the country and regional levels.

► **Recommendation**

Dipecho should explore all internal administrative ways to ensure a better continuity between successive contracts, to the extent possible, based on the established budget definition process. Additionally there should be a commitment to fund DP and Mitigation activities in a specific location for a minimum period of time even if the funding levels may vary between contracts.

10. Co-ordination of the implementation of longer term plans

The monthly REACT meetings in Tajikistan chaired by the Ministry of Emergency Situations is an ideal forum for managing a coherent road map for any longer term planning that is evolved.

ECHO through its Dipecho partners can take a proactive role in assisting the MES develop a management and output strategy for REACT. As a forum, REACT can guide disaster preparedness intervention work by the various organisations and serve as an information clearing house. The MES of Kyrgyzstan is interested to import a REACT type system from Tajikistan. If the role of REACT was to include a management and output strategy prior to that it could move Kyrgyzstan forward considerably. This system could then be promoted for the other countries of the region.

Formalised agreements are a coordination basis for Organisations supporting specific locations with disaster preparedness activities and are a key to working towards viable results and effective exit strategies. These agreements can provide clarity on collective goals, roles, responsibilities and hand-over requirements. ECHO should consider this as a requirement for its funding considerations.

► **Recommendation**

ECHO could take a proactive role in assisting the MES to use the REACT meetings more effectively with a road map for implementation of disaster preparedness activities. If found to be successful this could be exported to other countries in the region

11. What constitutes disaster preparedness

Not all partners have an understanding of all the various elements that make up disaster preparedness. Where some organisations focus on preparing to respond and awareness others take a more balanced view of also trying to reduce the effects of hazards.

Disaster preparedness is a relatively new subject for some organisations who are based more firmly in disaster response or development activities. Although it is not ECHO's role to help these organisations evolve their disaster preparedness capability ECHO could consider ensuring that all of its potential partners have a clear understanding of what ECHO means in its Dipecho approach.

► **Recommendation**

There should be an annual 2/3 day workshop to promote all aspects of disaster preparedness with potential partners run by the ECHO office of Tajikistan. ECHO could take this opportunity to support its vision of disaster preparedness and response in Central Asia in line with country disaster preparedness plans. Best practices and lessons learnt could be topics in the same workshop.

12. Cascade effects to improve effect and efficiency.

Disaster preparedness activities being carried out by Dipecho are highly relevant and necessary. The reduction of risk and vulnerabilities in communities and particularly in remote locations is appropriate. However the impact of the awareness part of the programme could be improved by training trainers in communities who train others in adjacent communities. Some Organisations

prefer to use external consultants for all training; such consultants could be used for annual refresher training for the training of trainers.

► **Recommendation**

The work should continue for the next 5 or 6 years but improve the domino or cascade effect of awareness and training in communities to widen the effect.

13. Learning lessons and best practices

There is no forum for Dipecho partners to learn lessons from others and there is no real idea of what constitutes Dipecho best practices.

While some NGOs apply learning from previous projects and consider new approaches, generally speaking, most of the organisations do not have a systematic way of integrating learning into their new plans. It is mainly individual employees who gather knowledge and when the person moves on so does the learning.

► **Recommendation**

There should be an annual workshop to promote all aspects of disaster preparedness with partners run by the ECHO office of Tajikistan. This should include Dipecho best practices and give the opportunity for partners to express lessons they have learnt for the benefit of others.

14. Linking Disaster preparedness with relief, recovery and development

Some, but not all partners have been able to consider linking disaster preparedness and mitigation activities as a cross cutting issue to relief, recovery and development activities.

Linking disaster preparedness activities to relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) is carried out by some Dipecho partners. In particular those partners who have been active in the region for a long period and are involved in development activities where LRRD is taken into account at the planning stage. The majority of partners, particularly those who are only involved in disaster preparedness activities, don't have a vision of how linking their activities into the community development can also protect livelihoods, decrease dependency and address poverty.

► **Recommendation**

There should be an annual workshop to promote all aspects of disaster preparedness with partners run by the ECHO office of Tajikistan. This would include how disaster preparedness links to relief, recovery and development in the disaster management cycle.

15. Coherence and complementarity between EU elements

The level of coherence and complementarities between various elements of the European Unions instruments and donors is low. There were a lot of kind words about how much the other EU Organisations were needed but no specifics or technical support.

Although donor meetings take place, attendance is not consistent and the agenda lacks an in-depth approach to action coordination. Interviewees from within EC organisations were not sufficiently clear on what ECHO, Dipecho or Tacis were other than being other donors whose support is needed within the region.

► Recommendation

Knowledge sharing is key to coherence and complementarity of programmes being run by different parts of the same organisation. ECHO could improve knowledge sharing by taking on a role of information broker to help improve this and require coordination and understanding from its various elements.

16. Impact

The impact of the Dipecho programme is very positive and is expanding. There are reductions of rock falls and debris flows into inhabited areas due to mitigation activities. There are reductions to flood risk due to repairs of river banks in many locations. New and better bridges across rivers gives safe access for isolated communities to health support, schools and other facilities in the periods when rivers are running high.

Awareness of the potential for disasters in the communities is being approached in a much more systematic way which is increasing the confidence of the population to deal with the effects of hazards.

Training of rescue and first aid teams is also being approached in a systematic way which is also having a positive effect on the communities. People have already had their lives saved in some locations by these rescue teams.

17. Sustainability

The sustainability of the programme promises to be high with a bottom up approach to planning and the involvement of the communities in mitigation and training activities.

More support is required for local authorities to empower them to be able to take on more fully their responsibilities for co-ordination and support with disaster preparedness and response.

18. Efficiency and effectiveness

Most projects have good qualities leading to efficiency and effectiveness. However one area in particular could be improved which is the production of information leaflets for the communities. Generally each Organisation produces its own with an ECHO and their own logo but the amount and quality of information varies. Ideally there should be one MoES approved leaflet for each set of information with the logo of each of the Organisations involved on it.

19. Radio active contamination

There are a lot of stories/information within the region concerning the contamination of water supplies and agricultural land by radio active waste deposits that this evaluation had neither the time nor the expertise to properly take into consideration. This problem is being dealt with in Kyrgyzstan with World Bank and others funding in some areas. However information in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan seems to be less available.

To either put such stories to rest or ensure that any such problems are effectively solved ECHO should use its position and voice to advocate for more open information from the Government authorities. If there are found to be such contamination then actions need to be taken to ensure that land and water supplies are safe and information made openly available.

1. MAIN REPORT INTRODUCTION

Central Asia is a disaster-prone region at risk of both natural and man-made calamities. Government and local authorities have low disaster response capacities throughout the region which increase the vulnerability rate for at-risk populations. Disasters are frequent in this region and albeit that they do not claim large number of lives, they do regularly kill small numbers and continuously destroy livelihoods and homes. Frequent tremors provoke landslides and avalanches. Debris flows from steep-sided mountain and landslides block mountain passes, resulting in water build-up which then causes mudslides or flash flooding. Tajikistan is especially drought-prone and faces recurrent risks of food insecurities.

One of the highest risks facing this region is poor management of old uranium mines and burial sites of radioactive waste. These sites are close to rivers which run through a number of the countries. During the snow melt and rainy seasons these sites have the potential to deposit radioactive waste and water into rivers which are used for irrigation, household consumption and recreation purposes. At other times radioactive dust can be blown in any direction affecting soil and living conditions.

Given the above context, Dipeccho action plans for Central Asia are necessary and relevant. Strengthening capacities at the community-level is certainly a major key in achieving sustainable development. However, to effectively reduce disaster-related vulnerabilities and risks, it is important to invest in the development of a knowledge sharing platform, a regional strategic plan as well in increasing real-time feedback to implementing partners on how to improve their methods.

Equally important to long term disaster risk reduction is investing in building preparedness and response capacities of Ministry of Emergency Situations and local authorities who must ultimately assume responsibility for addressing the shared risks of their citizens. This report provides the necessary elements which can assist ECHO and its partners to expand their joint disaster preparedness objectives in Central Asia and to adjust methodologies and strategies where necessary.

2. PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of Dipeccho actions in Central Asia. In line with the Terms of Reference for this evaluation (please see annex), the evaluators have focused on assessing the following—

- The level of coverage of financed interventions
- The impact and results of the interventions
- The level of efficiency of implementation methodologies
- The sustainability factor

This report also provides a review of best practices of Dipeccho and lessons learnt by participating organisations.

It is equally important to note what this report is not. This report is not a programmatic audit of the fourteen organisations funded by Dipecho over the last three years. These organisations have collectively received thirty-six funding allocations, are located thousands of kilometres apart and some are using as many as nine local NGOs as their implementing partners. A thorough programmatic audit requires a minimum of three months with a four-member multidisciplinary team due to the vast distances, the programmatic scope and the large number of involved partners.

Initially, a three-member team was identified to carry out the evaluation. Due to unavailability of one consultant, the team was reduced to two and the number of days allocated for the exercise was extended from 25 to 36 days. The team participated in briefings in Brussels with officers of Relex desks and ECHO. A meeting with the ECHO evaluation department was not possible due to unforeseen absences. ECHO regional officers briefed the consultants for each location. Entrance meetings were held with ECHO partners in Central Asia in order to establish a clear understanding of the evaluation's intended focus. The timetable for field visits was compiled by ECHO officers and their organisational partners.

The timing for this mission was justified as it coincided with the end of Dipecho 3 and in time to use the findings for Dipecho 4. However, it did create two constraints. First, many rural people were either away harvesting or were involved in taking animals to summer pastures so were not available for consultations. And second, schools were closed and often teachers and children were away which did not allow the team to review the effects of the training.

Upon arrival in each location, the consultants held briefings with involved organisations and proceeded to conduct site visits in order to:

- a) meeting with project teams,
- b) assess the project outcome,
- c) discuss with village disaster preparedness committees,
- d) witness demonstrations of rescue and first aid teams,
- e) discuss with community and women groups,
- f) visit schools and training facilities,
- g) review mitigation work,
- h) witness community maintenance work on previous projects, and
- i) discuss with beneficiaries the effectiveness of the interventions and future plans

Discussions and briefings also took place with Ministry of Emergency Situations and local authorities in each location. The team prepared and conducted an exit meeting in the form of an interactive workshop where the participants were presented with the consultants observations following the exercise and then split into four feedback working groups (please see annexes for the presentation and feedback details.)

3. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES FOR CENTRAL ASIA

3.1. DG ECHO Mandate

Dipecho are fully in line with DG ECHO mandate 1257/96. Specifically, the funding is appropriately allocated to support mitigation actions which—

- a) reduce/avoid negative impact of disasters
- b) raise awareness of the potential for disasters
- c) assist with the establishment and support of early warning systems
- d) ensure preparedness to respond to disasters

Although there has always been an awareness of the hazards which affect the communities in the more mountainous regions there is a much more systematic way that this is now approached. Schools have brought disaster awareness into their curriculum and teach children what to do in an earthquake, flood etc. Often a room or a part of the entrance to the school is lined with hazard warning maps and information concerning disaster preparedness.

In some locations classes are taught first aid as young as 8 or 9 years of age and are encouraged to form teams. Although this is a little young to really give responsibility to children it does have the effect of creating an interest which is able to be used at a later date.

Early warning systems were established for flood during the Soviet period but have been poorly supported since 1990. A great deal of data is available from these sources on flow rates and water heights at times of the year and in some places there are 50 years of daily information available. This information is invaluable when planning mitigation projects on river banks.

Preparedness to respond activities with first aid and rescue teams have already saved lives in some locations, pulling people alive from avalanches, rescuing people from floods.

Without exception all Ministry of Emergency Situations representatives met with in all 3 countries clearly indicated that they felt that Dipecho support was needed with disaster preparedness for at least the next 5 to 10 years. Clearly better planning and coordination is required for activities to be more effective and for systems to be sustainable.

► Recommendation

Dipecho should continue its support for Central Asia through until at least 2012 and not consider phasing out prior to a thorough evaluation in 2009 which would include a programmatic audit. If following this exercise a decision is made to phase out, ECHO should engage in developing a coordinated exit strategy together with its implementation partners and governmental authorities over a number of years.

3.2. Regional Risk Reduction Plan

Five years should be considered as the minimum starting point for development of a viable regional risk reduction plan. The most vulnerable regions can be identified through the levels of risk in each of the oblasts within the region, with due consideration to poverty as a key factor in increased risk. Plans for communities should be compiled to build up to a Rayon plan, Rayon plans can then be combined to produce Oblast plans and these combined for a national plan.

These plans should consider the best methods and options for availing disaster preparedness, mitigation and disaster response information to all communities. Active and interested organisations should work as part of this plan whereby their specific directions are measured against the longer term directional objectives for the region and implemented accordingly. Co-

ordination of these plans should be in the hands of the local authorities who are able to monitor activities and standards.

The plan should also specifically direct implementing partners exit strategies from a community. Ideally, an exit strategy would ensure that the work carried out by non-local organisations is handed over to a local authorities or a local partner following a written agreement. At this time, there is a low level of formal agreements (such as MoUs) that detail roles and responsibilities of all concerned parties. Therefore, it deemed unrealistic to study any current exist strategies apart from projects coming to a halt because of a lack of funding.

► **Recommendation**

To clarify roles and responsibilities, hand-over requirements and ultimate goals ECHO should assist with the compilation of community, Rayon and Oblast wide plans through its partners and require all of the partners to feed into such plans.

Beyond legal considerations, formalised agreements are a key to working towards sustainable results. These can provide clarity on roles, responsibilities, hand-over requirements and ultimate goals including the time frame. ECHO should consider this as a requirement for its funding considerations.

3.3. Funding Cycle

Dipecho partners tend to plan their DP activities based on the funding cycle. The problem is that without good long term plans owned by the communities and the Rayon and Oblast civil administration authorities the Dipecho partners are filling that gap. However without an effective planning and co-ordinating authority each of the Dipecho partners tend to do what they think is appropriate with the communities they are assisting. Many of the Dipecho partners have a small amount of their own funding with the bulk of the disaster preparedness funding coming from the one donor. Therefore they plan for just the period that the Dipecho funding is available.

Although it is unlikely that the current 12-15-month funding cycle can be changed to cover a longer implementation period, it is necessary to envisage that Dipecho can, in principle, institutionally commit to a partner's long term disaster preparedness programmatic goals by giving a period of time where funding will be available. Ideally at the beginning of 2007 a statement could be made that "some level of funding will be available each year until the year 2012 without any time periods between contracts."

► **Recommendation**

Ideally, ECHO should reconsider its funding cycles and expand its existing policies to fit with realistic development cycles. In the meantime, ECHO can consider making an institutional commitment to a partner's long term disaster preparedness strategies and agree, in principle to fund each phase as per its existing cycle.

3.4. Planning

Planning for Dipecho partners can and should be long term with a topic such as disaster preparedness. The plans of the Dipecho partners should fit into a strategic plan managed by

local authorities as indicated in Para 3.2. In the absence of such plans partners should still plan on a 3 to 5 year period based on the community needs. The communities being supported should be empowered to take responsibility and be fully involved in all activities within the own communities. The present short term planning approach together with the short-term nature of ECHO financial support can lead to non-sustainability of interventions, as well as loss of human resources with institutional knowledge which requires replacement at the start of each new contract.

Strengthening local authorities so that they are able to fulfil their role of planning, co-ordination, monitoring of activities and guardians of standards should be a part of the long term role of Dipecho partners.

In summary, the necessity to keep financial commitments in line with ECHO policies is not constructive in engaging in long term disaster preparedness planning at the community, Rayon, Oblast levels.

► **Recommendation**

Notwithstanding the European Commission's fiscal policies, ECHO in collaboration with experienced implementation partners can assist the governmental authorities, namely Ministry of Emergency Situations with other appropriate Ministries, to develop a five-year disaster preparedness strategic plan. Such a plan would ultimately provide the long-term framework for disaster preparedness interventions carried out by any and all organisations.

3.5. Coordination

There are monthly REACT meetings of ministries, organisations and donors in Tajikistan. However, these meetings lack a strategic orientation and have not reached their potential for issuing a coherent road map for longer term planning in disaster management.

With no long term community, Rayon or Oblast plans it is impossible to have an effective National strategy which can be co-ordinated by any unit. Once longer term plans have been developed the methodology of implementation, the appropriate systems and procedures and standards of implementing those plans have to be devised and agreed. The REACT meetings, both nationally and within the country regions are the ideal place for such levels of co-ordination.

► **Recommendation**

ECHO can take a proactive role in assisting the Ministry of Emergency Situations in developing a management and output strategy for REACT in Tajikistan. As a forum, REACT can guide disaster preparedness and response intervention work implemented by the various organisations and serve as an information clearing house. Other countries in the region could import REACT as a working system which would help them with Co-ordination of partners in disaster preparedness and response activities.

3.6 Dipecho partner Objectives

While the objective of each Dipecho partner is to strengthen communities in disaster preparedness, they employ different implementation methodologies and their approach varies and can include any of the following—

- Community awareness information and campaigns
- Practical mitigation work for small scale disasters
- Community mobilisation for disaster preparedness and response through training and stockpiling
- Supporting civil society
- Providing communication equipment and logistics support
- Early warning systems

not all organisations take all of these possibilities into account.

Needs from one community to another can vary and a flexible approach is necessary to accommodate these variations. However, at the design stage of community based projects the communities do not receive a full scope of their options in considering their needs. A Dipecho partner should not tell a community what they are prepared to do for them in a top down approach. In order to strengthen civil society and expand community-based considerations, it is necessary to provide existing and potential Dipecho partners with a map of different options in designing and conducting disaster preparedness and response work prior to writing projects and signing contracts. This is done to a certain extent in the EC document “Instructions and guidelines for ECHO potential partners wishing to submit proposals for Dipecho action plans,” however these documents need to be interpreted. Clearly not all partners have interpreted these texts in the same way and ECHOs objectives need to be clarified.

► Recommendation

Prior to launching Dipecho 4, a two to three-day workshop on disaster preparedness programming and implementation methodologies should be provided to existing and potential partners. The workshop should aim to avail to participants the full scope of relevant DP interventions and make clear what ECHOs strategic objectives are in the long term.

3.7 Cascade effects to improve effect and efficiency

The work being carried out by Dipecho activities is highly relevant and necessary. The reduction of risk and vulnerabilities in communities and particularly in remote locations is appropriate. However the impact of the awareness part of the programme could be improved by training trainers in communities who train others in adjacent communities.

Where some Organisations prefer at this time to pay external consultants to run training workshops others have trained communities in a “Training of the Trainer’s” approach. After 3 years of implementation of a community disaster preparedness programme there has been ample time for trainers within the communities to be identified. Some partners have taken this approach where each trainer has to help deliver 10 other training sessions in adjacent communities. This inexpensive approach not only widens the circles of community awareness information but also helps to strengthen communities to work effectively together.

Refresher or second level training may still require the use of external consultants, ideally this type of training can be co-ordinated between all Dipecho partners working in the same region of intervention.

► **Recommendation**

Disaster prevention activities should continue for the next 5 or 6 years but improve the domino or cascade effect of awareness and training in communities to widen the effect.

3.7 Learning lessons and best practices

There is no forum for Dipecho partners to learn lessons from others and there is no real idea of what constitutes Dipecho best practices.

While some Organisations apply learning from previous projects and consider new approaches, generally speaking, most of the organisations do not have a systematic way of integrating learning into their new plans. It is mostly individual employees who gather knowledge and when the person moves on so does the learning.

Ideally all Dipecho partners should have written systems and procedures that they follow in the implementation of their disaster preparedness programmes. These systems and procedures should be constantly revised and improved with the inclusions of best practices taking account of lessons learnt. Without such a base document to work from each programme rests on the whim of the person responsible for its implementation. The risk is that as a partners personnel changes so does the programme. Written systems and procedures along with memorandums of understanding for the hand over of programmes to local organisations helps avoid this situation and ensures that systems and procedures consistently and permanently advance.

► **Recommendation**

There should be an annual workshop to promote all aspects of disaster preparedness with partners run by the ECHO office of Tajikistan. This should include Dipecho best practices and give the opportunity for partners to express lessons they have learnt for the benefit of others.

3.9 Linking Disaster preparedness with relief, recovery and development

Some, but not all partners have been able to consider linking disaster preparedness and mitigation activities as a cross cutting issue to relief, recovery and development activities.

Not all Organisations use the terminology of “Linking Relief, Recovery and Development” (LRRD) as it is a natural part of the Disaster Management cycle¹. Many of the Dipecho partners

¹ The Disaster Management cycle that many organisations use starts with Risk Analysis and goes on to Mitigation activities and Disaster Preparedness including preparing to respond to disasters. Then when a disaster occurs relief response programmes are followed by a period of stabilisation before moving into recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Development activities are able to be based on these programmes. In this DM cycle organisations link disaster preparedness with Response, Recovery and Development without considering it LRRD.

work on disaster response and are automatically looking to stabilise a disaster situation and lead programmes into the recovery phase. Disaster preparedness ideally is being practiced prior to the disaster where there are known hazards and weak coping capacities.

Linking disaster preparedness activities to relief, rehabilitation and development is carried out by some Dipecho partners. In particular those partners who have been active in the region for a long period and are involved in development activities where LRRD is taken into account at the planning stage.

Many partners, particularly those who are only involved in disaster preparedness activities, don't have a vision of how linking their activities into the community development can also protect livelihoods, decrease dependency and address poverty.

► **Recommendation**

There should be an annual workshop to promote all aspects of disaster preparedness with partners run by the ECHO office of Tajikistan. This would include how disaster preparedness links to RRD in the disaster management cycle and how disaster preparedness programmes can serve as a cross cutting support to protect development activities.

3.10 Coherence and Complementarities

The level of coherence and complementarities through coordination of actions with other EC instruments and donors is limited. Although donor meetings take place, the attendance is not consistent and the agenda does not address thoroughly action coordination. Interviewees were not sufficiently clear on what ECHO or Dipecho were other than being donors whose support is needed within the region.

Some of the more positive comments made concerning ECHO and Dipecho concerned the stability of country regions where activities had seen a lot of funding spent in wages and procurement. This funding has helped with economic stability and has helped some regions to progress more quickly. Care needs to be taken that programme funding does not create a dependency or an expectation that cannot be met in the long term. Ideally all elements of the EC working within the same region should be aware of the objectives and activities of its lateral elements to help ensure a harmonised approach.

► **Recommendation**

Knowledge sharing is a key to ensuring coherence and complementarities in response, recovery, risk reduction and development interventions. ECHO offices are ideal for developing and managing a knowledge sharing platform for donors in the sector of disaster preparedness in Central Asia.

4. COUNTRY LEVEL REVIEW

During the course of the three years of DIPECHO funding, 98% was allocated to interventions in the following three countries where the evaluation took place: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The related analyses, conclusions and main recommendations follow. It should be noted that the team also went to Kazakhstan for discussions purposes only with regional offices of UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent and the European Commission. Turkmenistan was not part of this evaluation exercise.

5.1. KYRGYZSTAN (Recipient of 11 % of EC funding)

Kyrgyzstan Evaluation factor: Relevance of work being carried out under DIPECHO
Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASHG (Adult Self Help Groups) are well structured have been divided into sub-components according to specialisations such as early warning systems and meteorology, communication, first aid and logistics to best use the skills available in the communities and ensure focus.• Project proposals for mitigation construction in Dipecho 3 have selected the most vulnerable villages based on hazard mapping and levels of vulnerability taking into account a cost/benefit ratio.• Neighbouring communities will also be trained by the Adult Response Group (new initiative) as TOT has taken place. One trained ARG members should train 10 other people from communities. There is so far no product from this system as it has yet to start but will be monitored by the Dipecho partner to ensure the system functions.• MES and the NGO chose new communities to be involved in Dipecho 3 with clear criteria for selection which is the number of hazards and the level of vulnerability to those hazards taking coping mechanisms into account.• Modules of training appropriate to the needs are standardised by some NGOs, 18 modules for new communities (2-4 hour modules).
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mitigation activities are selected only to consider the response process, to rehabilitate mitigation infrastructure and to decrease further damage.• Some project designs are for disaster preparedness, not for the reduction of the effects of the hazard. It does not easily open doors for LRRD and cross-cutting issues and giving planned livelihood side effects. Ideally there should always be a balance of mitigation and preparedness to respond activities.• Groups created under Dipecho 1 and 2 do not benefit from mitigation activities due to budget constraints.• Low cost mitigation activities have not been designed and there is no consideration for school tree nurseries or environmental education.• In some locations the selection of communities for mitigation projects is made according to absence of other community projects. Therefore Dipecho funding cannot link to other development programmes.• In general Dipecho as an entry point for training did not effectively link to LRRD under Dipecho 1 and 2. Dipecho 3 mitigation projects are able to link to LRRD. There is very

<p>little sharing of best practices or problem solving other than summer camp and competition events</p>
<p>Kyrgyzstan Evaluation factor: Efficiency of the work being carried out under DIPECHO</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some projects rapidly mobilised the CBOs which allowed for a bottom up community driven approach to disaster preparedness.. • Planning disaster preparedness for the whole area was effectively carried out by organising a cascade effect amongst communities. • Coordination with other partners takes place for training activities. • Good degree of flexibility and adaptability to respond to different circumstances. • Appropriate cost/benefit ratio. • Regular coordination with MES with some officials being regularly trained and used as trainers in some of the programmes. • Timing for training is determined according to the schedule of the beneficiaries such as evening time training sessions. • Most people seem satisfied with their level of psychological preparedness. Communities are less scared once ARG and YRG have been trained which has effectively increased the level of being able to respond to the effects of a disaster. • In one community of Osh oblast, an ecological group was created some years prior and has helped facilitate the mobilisation of the A/YRGs.
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area of intervention of the local NGO partner DCCA is very large as it covers 2 oblasts. This NGO is based in the same town as the partner. There is a loss of added value for contracting a local NGO being based at the same place as the International NGO. It results in a weaker cost/benefit ratio due to high transportation costs to reach the communities (up to 7 hours of car from Osh). • Mitigation activities are only for Dipecho 3 new communities. This means that people trained under Dipecho 1 and 2 were not trained on project proposals and management. One of the effects of this is that some of the project cycle management activities cannot be implemented in these Dipecho 1 and 2 locations. • Dipecho employees of one NGO had to work without salary during months bridging periods covering Dipecho 1 to 2 and 2 to 3. Meanwhile the NGO has given back €5,000 of unspent budget because these funds have not been used. The NGO could have requested for an extension of its project to reschedule and improve activities to help with the retention of key local staff and improve their disaster preparedness work.
<p>Kyrgyzstan Evaluation factor: Effectiveness of the work being carried out under DIPECHO</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASHG are very active to implement mitigation activities. Some ASHG have already implemented several mitigation constructions without any project funding. The mitigation constructions look solid, useful for the whole community and for several adjacent villages. • Young Rescue Groups have been partly trained and will attend summer camp where

<p>further training and competitions will be conducted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities visited have been mobilised and feel confident and ready to respond to disasters. • Monthly bulletins detailing activities and locations are being published and sent to the Ministry of Emergency Situations, communities and other organisations to promote transparency and awareness and to help avoid duplication of actions.
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a few mitigation activities were addressed under Dipecho 1 and 2 such as activities related to environmental education. In some locations preparedness is seemingly viewed as a reaction to a disaster event as it takes a disaster event to provoke the preparedness activity. • Apart from international summer camp and competition, addressing a regional programme in disaster preparedness where lessons are learnt from country to country is not emphasised. • Only one NGO has been contracted to implement the project activities which may indicate that others are too weak. However it is only by taking on more local NGOs and helping them evolve in the local community that they will become more effective in disaster preparedness. Therefore engaging a local NGO as an implementation partner cannot be merely appreciated as a “low cost mechanism” but also as strengthening disaster preparedness.
<p>Kyrgyzstan Evaluation factor: Impact of the work being carried out under DIPECHO</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation activities have taken into account linking disaster preparedness to recovery and development issues and takes into account poverty related impact. They protect human life and their livelihoods. They are also linked to other development projects. • Training has led to a decentralised and village level planning exercise. • A multiplying effect can be expected as some groups start to train new groups in neighbouring villages and some ARGs create new ARGs in other villages
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender seems to not be considered enough as ASHG are only men, improving the gender balance of these groups should be encouraged. • Only €12'000 of one Dipecho partners funding has been allocated under Dipecho 3 for financing small scale mitigation constructions within new communities in one region. This is a small percentage of the partners funding which gives an imbalance between the various elements that make up disaster preparedness. The NGO+DCCA+MES will select around 6 among 20 proposals. • Disaster Preparedness as a cross-cutting issue has not been integrated into existing Development programmes in some regions.
<p>Kyrgyzstan Evaluation factor: Sustainability of the work being carried out under DIPECHO</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation has been considered through taking into account how projects can support on-going development activities. This provides a higher sustainability of the

constructions as communities are also willing to maintain them to protect their community development.

- The ASHG will be nominated as volunteers certified by the MES.
- The local partner NGO can be considered as a local development agency based in the area of the Project
- New Adult Rescue Groups are trained on project proposals and project management. It is a good entry point to build on LRRD. These groups will present their projects to other donors and the MES as only a percentage of them will be financed by the Dipecho partner NGO.
- Building a regional participatory disaster preparedness strategy and plan should be more easily accomplished and supported if other donors are involved.

Weakness

- There is no mechanism to guarantee the activities of CBOs after the end of the project as there is no exit strategy.
- In some locations as new training modules are developed the communities covered by Dipecho 1 and 2 are asking for this additional training making it difficult for the NGO to phase out.
- The existence of Dipecho trained Adult and Young Rescue Groups is dependent on their mobilisation for disaster simulation activities. They can lose motivation as finding a financial income would appear to be their primary objective. Therefore ARG may disintegrate quickly after disaster response training. There is no mechanism to guarantee the continuity of the YRG as members will become adults and leave the schools and villages also seeking employment. Both groups are created from a services demand driven process more than a participatory process of community mobilisation. It has created dependency more than sustainability.

► Recommendations for Kyrgyzstan

1. The MES should be encouraged to finalise and publish to all interested parties a disaster preparedness plan which will allow potential partners to work more effectively together in achieving a common goal.
2. Agreements between partners and the MES of the country and/or local authorities should be considered and signed showing goals, roles, responsibilities and time frames. This in effect helps the partners to establish exit strategies for their programmes and makes it easier to leave when the time comes having handed over responsibilities to the appropriate authorities.
3. Awareness materials and training modules should be standardised in agreement with the MES for the use of all partners.
4. As with the other countries agreements should be made with schools to guarantee the existence of YRG after the project ends, members leaving the group should be replaced and new members systematically trained.

5. Consider the possibility to replicate the Tajikistan REACT system throughout the region. As Kyrgyzstan is already interested they could become a model for duplication to other countries using lessons learnt from the Tajikistan model.

6. Apply lessons learnt through Dipecho action plans in other countries on all aspects of disaster preparedness. In particular promote a better environment for coordinated activities based on a MES managed disaster preparedness plan to harmonise ways of working between partners.

7. See `also the recommendations pages 11 to 14.

6.1. TAJKISTAN (Recipient of 75 % in EC funding)

Tajikistan Evaluation factor: Relevance of work being carried out under DIPECHO
Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilisation and creation of active and involved community groups with decision making abilities. • Partners and community groups link disaster preparedness to relief, recovery and development when they identify and realise mitigation projects. • Training of trainers is a part of the programme methodology as is training and awareness raising amongst children • Early warning systems for potential natural disasters are considered • In many cases, DP interventions address community development • Some projects which cross the 3 countries face similar problems. The community approach through training is a point of entry for changing behaviour from waiting for the authorities to intervene to the community taking on an active part in addressing their own needs. • Mitigation projects invest appropriately in local participation resulting in communities preparing proposals and in working closely with government to realise their projects • The design strategy is for each action plan to be realised in each district with an exit strategy. It shows a clear strategy in following ECHO directives (“<i>earliest possible exit, combined with co-ordinated and progressive transition from humanitarian aid to normal co-operation instruments [where necessary].</i>”)
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of systematic knowledge sharing resulting in lessons learnt not being shared amongst organisations • The design of “Gabions” in some Dipecho 1 projects was poor and was washed out by floods in July 2004. • There are no considerations for exit strategies in some programmes and not all strategies emphasise sustainability. Local authorities are not able to take over projects in many areas due to low capacities and some organisations employ a top-down approach in their implementation work. Training and institutional support are required to enable the local authorities to take over the responsibility of supporting communities.

- Some programmes focus solely on preparedness for response and ignore mitigation possibilities.
- At the project design phase, some partners did not consider lessons learnt from ongoing projects. Linking disaster preparedness programmes to development activities was not considered in many communities.
- A top-down approach is practiced by some partners resulting in limited community participation in project design and implementation. There is no training on the project management cycle for community organisations, necessary for development of mitigation project proposals.
- There is a lack of low cost mitigation activities in some communities which could have an additional effect of giving families an additional means for their livelihood.
- As old uranium mines in Khojand city are situated a few hundred metres from the Syr Daria River. Radioactive releases (dust, gravels, and metals) could flow into the river with rainfall. The underground water may be contaminated as well. Many people speak of radioactivity in Khojand city. It is already said that a lot of people die at an early age and we were told that up to 30% of women suffer from breast cancer in Khojand. Land slides could easily take place in these slopes bringing the uranium storages into the Syr Daria River itself causing contamination of the water of the whole valley up to the Aral Sea. This would affect strong healthy people as well as their livelihoods. An earthquake in Khojand could have dramatic consequences on radioactive burials. These cross border issues are not considered in project designs. There should be an additional assessment of these risks.

Tajikistan Evaluation factor: Efficiency of work being carried out under DIPECHO

Strength

- Trained CBOs are able to propose projects to other donors. They are well structured in 5 specific areas of intervention allowing for rapid response.
- In some locations, Ministry of Emergency Situations is strong and takes an active interest in co-ordination and output of disaster preparedness projects.
- Some DP projects build on structures that were developed through previous projects.
- There are many examples of a bottom-up approach and investing in development of community interest groups or committees. These groups progressively generate confidence and are able to realise more activities (LRRD). There is a strong mobilisation of communities approach in order to change the “sit and wait” attitude. Training of children is of particular importance. Children participate in their own awareness raising process through theatre, drawing and designing booklets. They can also be considered as a source of information for their families.
- Some projects make good use of available resources. Low cost technology is used for activities such as dam reparation and drainage of canals. The methodology is based on a participatory approach.
- The use of data is emphasized for Early Warning System, for instance, average temperature has increased by 3 degree since 1950; river flow is recorded from 1928.
- In some locations staff are interested to learn lessons from other organisation and other DIPECHO projects.
- Low cost activities result in mass public education: free advertising on local TV,

discounts for Dipecho participation in events, free participation of LCS, free equipment and participation of MES engineers, free participation of doctors and engineers, free training by local Red Cross/Crescent societies and marketing through brand sport clothes donations are motivation factors for Young Rescue Groups.

- In some locations Dipecho 3 training design includes project proposal and management. This improves capacities to identify and implement mitigation activities through a competitive process.

Weakness

- Some mitigation projects which failed during the July 2004 floods have not been reconstructed in subsequent Dipecho projects. There has been a lack of community involvement.
- The emphasis on preparing to respond is strong leaving out mitigation interventions.
- Some NGOs do not take LRRD into account at the project planning phase.
- Some communities lean too heavily on their supporting NGO which leads to a paternalistic approach to mitigation and construction project selection.
- Some community groups receive no training on project preparation and management.
- In some locations NGO staff are employed based on their ability to speak English and recruitment does not consider actual DP-oriented skills.

Tajikistan Evaluation factor: Effectiveness of work being carried out under DIPECHO

Strength

- In most locations there is a participatory approach. Many CBOs appear to be well trained for rapid response. Some local communities have started to carry out their own disaster preparedness activities without financial support from Dipecho (cleaning of irrigation canals and awareness campaigns with neighbours).
- Some projects strengthen local institutions and the MES at district and sub-district levels and support the local Red Crescent/Red Cross in training delivery. On sub-district level a Community Disaster Rescue Team is made up of volunteers from surrounding villages and Jamoat. When made up of people operating at a professional level they should be approved by the government. At sub-district level a Community disaster planning team builds on LRRD issues as it is a point of entry for local development planning through a participatory process.
- Many communities have evacuation plans and raising awareness through schools has resulted in formation of Young Rescue Groups trained for rapid intervention.
- The regional REACT training and awareness building centre provides services for TOT, radio EWS, meetings and data management thanks to a combined intervention by many donors and programmes.
- In some communities small scale mitigation activities have been realised appropriately with a clear consideration for LRRD. Some initiatives may protect some villages for a number of years and drainage of canals may also reduce tuberculosis in some strongly affected villages.
- EWS through a radio communication system including a continuous monitoring of river flood upstream is operative to inform the villages 5 to 6 hours prior to the flood arrival.
- There are some national agreements allowing rapid cross border interventions between

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. (these need to be tested)
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some CBOs appear less concerned with medium to long term participatory mitigation work. Some villages could face strong landslides and no activity was planned under Dipecho 3 to mitigate impact. Planting trees has been mentioned several times by CBOs to control erosion but the evaluation team did not see trees planted in some crucial places prone to high erosion. In some villages, no mitigation activity has been realized to reduce severe risk of landslide despite being beneficiary of Dipecho 3 action plans. Possibly within Dipecho 4 and any subsequent period's further mitigation activities can help to reduce these risks further. • Some expected results of Dipecho 1 such as small-scale disaster mitigation activities via reforestation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure have not been implemented successfully. • Mitigation constructions prioritising mainly human safety may have a negative effect on a community's livelihoods as protection of agricultural land is not considered. • Tree plantation on river banks will have no protection effect in the case of heavy flood and this protective measure should be linked to other bank reinforcement techniques as it takes year for trees to root sufficiently in order to have of use in protecting against flood bank aggression.
Tajikistan Evaluation factor: Impact of work being carried out under DIPECHO
Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are more confident to respond to natural disasters due to training. • In some cases mitigation constructions are selected in order to deliver a high rate of services for the community as they are analysed through a LRRD cross-cutting screen. Small scale mitigation activities adequately protect communities from small to medium scale natural disasters and provide income generating opportunities. • As the community groups and committees work with various sources of funding, their field of expertise increases. This is an unplanned benefit. • In some locations community groups are subcontracted to realise activities for communities outside their own project area. • Training of trainers is promoted in the REACT training and Early Warning System centres in some areas. Exchange of good lessons learnt with new communities is therefore possible. Centres like these can train trainers of new communities. • Some problems in disaster preparedness are addressed regionally when shared.
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 3 years of Dipecho funding, the multiplier effect is still weak. Few CBOs train new other communities. The TOT process is not sufficiently emphasised, resulting in a weak cost/benefit ratio and a strong dependency on Dipecho.. • Some projects do not build enough on LRRD and current activities are not integrated within a Village Development Plan. • In some cases CBO confidence is related to the presence and intervention of a donor/NGO rather than an independent capacity to respond/mitigate natural disasters. • Most projects focus on saving of lives and structures and do not consider protection of productive assets such as agricultural lands when both actions are possible.

Tajikistan Evaluation factor: Sustainability of work being carried out under DIPECHO

Strength

- CBOs are mainly created through a participatory process rather than through a services demand-driven process.
- Some CBOs have the capacity to develop project proposals to present to other donors. Those trained on project proposals and management will be able to realise more activities linked to the development of their community. Many trained CBO members are confident to make decisions and to organise their own training. They can identify and solve their local problems.
- Some Dipecho partners base their exit strategies on improved capacities of CBOs to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. The process is self-sustained as these CBOs can integrate LRRD. Successful partners view themselves as facilitators rather than operators.
- Some of the Community Interest Groups are likely to be sustainable as they take into consideration LRRD issues within their DP and mitigation work. Some already have community investment projects in their portfolio financed by other donors.
- Some local groups are to be regrouped into an overarching structure which includes local authorities. This approach helps enhance intervention capacities to include standardised training and cost sharing.
- District MES teams are involved in early warning exercises. This ensures the viability of the data monitoring at meteorological stations as well as the radio EWS in villages.
- Institutional capacity building of some MES teams is carried out through training of officers and with radio Early Warning Systems. Training of teachers and children in some schools has been systematised and is monitored by Dipecho partners.

Weakness

- Some villages still face flood risks despite Dipecho 3 action plans which seek to reduce this.
- The capacities of Young Rescue Groups are related to rapid intervention after a disaster rather than ongoing involvement with mitigation activities. Also, they are often too young to take decisions during emergency or to be able to competently deliver first aid in which they are trained. In an area of high unemployment volunteers queue up to become members of a community rescue team many of whom want to become professionals and become salaried.
- In many locations the training process at schools is not systematised, it is not clear who will train new students after the end of Dipecho activities.
- Some of the exit strategies do not guarantee the maintenance of mitigation construction or the continuous training of CBOs or Young Rescue Groups after the project period. There are no contracts for project maintenance or formalised agreements with local authorities.
- Some CBOs will disintegrate without disasters resulting in a loss of large training investments. Therefore, many of project benefits will not be sustained once Dipecho ends its intervention.
- Some of the trained CBOs are more concerned with response to an emergency situation

and less focused on prevention. A priority to save lives during a disaster should not be mutually exclusive to proactive measures to protect people's livelihoods against disasters.

- Some Dipecho partners still follow a paternalistic approach in their project design and planning.
- Some regional REACT centres are consultative bodies but the exchange of lessons learnt is poor.
- In some cases community groups were formed following a services demand driven process which continues to reinforce dependency. Many community groups are not yet trained as a development group and face the risk to disappear when Dipecho ends.
- Training in some locations does not consider linking disaster mitigation activities to development goals as a cross cutting protection issue.
- There is no exit strategy in some locations where empowering a community to be self supporting or an agreement to hand over projects to authorities is envisaged or agreed. Some Dipecho partners have a strategy of intervention which is more related to coverage, for example increasing the number of communities that benefit from its services (Dipecho 1 = 12 communities, Dipecho 2 = 12 + 4 = 16 communities, Dipecho 3 = 12 + 4 + 4 = 20 communities). Although there may be a different level of coverage with time there needs to be a planned period when the communities are left to take responsibility for their own needs after the structures for doing so are completed.
- Some Dipecho partners want to hand over projects to district administration and specialised governmental bodies. The commitment to support community-based teams is not guaranteed due to a top-down approach for decision making, priorities and finance allocations. Public institutions like the Ministry of Emergency Services have minimal capacities to support these teams. Public institutions are generally good in owning project benefits but weak in sustain the process. The hand-over will face difficulties.
- Gender issues are not considered enough in some projects as most members of community preparedness and response teams are men (at least 2 on 3 districts).

► Conclusions for Tajikistan

1. Local community strengthening is the bottom up methodology used by most Dipecho partners for mobilisation of people and awareness building. This increases local absorption and implementing capacities on DP. Training of village communities on DP and prevention is a good entry point for local development (LRRD). The process of identifying mitigation construction proposals reinforces the mobilisation of the community for defining their own needs, priorities and solutions. This process supports the sustainability of the groups by encouraging them to find the solutions to their problems for themselves. Consequently a group will be able to identify other mitigation or development projects, build up proposals and present them to other organisations for support.
2. Many CBOs remain weak because their activities are not diversified. They do not have the necessary capacities to allow them access to regular information or funding. Geographical areas covered by some partners are quite large making each part an

isolated piece of the overall project. It also makes it more difficult for local organisations to communicate and learn from each other.

3. In some cases there is a paternalistic approach in proposing projects to communities and in other cases there is a participatory approach through a competitive process of community proposals for mitigation constructions.
4. The selection process of mitigation construction varies from one partner to another. Not all Dipecho partners take into account how mitigation projects can help serve local development plans in their selection criteria. Some other partners will take into consideration percentage of local participation, relevance and total costs which doesn't always address the most important needs.
5. In some locations Dipecho strengthens institutional development of local beneficiaries groups to become community organisations. The sustainability of the results of the projects depends on the level of ownership by these groups. Mitigation construction projects are implemented through a competitive and consultative participatory process that enhances the ownership by the beneficiaries.
6. Some partners did not demonstrate a clear understanding of sustainability factors such as:
 - a. exit strategy,
 - b. continuous training system for refreshment of communities on DP,
 - c. how to mitigate hazard risks,
 - d. knowledge of Project Cycle Management,
 - e. how to link mitigation activities as cross cutting issues to ongoing development
 - f. disaster preparedness planning, and
 - g. cross cutting issues.
7. An international partner contracting local NGOs for project implementation does not increase sustainability if these NGOs are only service deliverers. Their services will disappear as soon as a project is finished.
8. CBOs require regular refreshment DP training. The projects do not address systematising training to ensure continuity beyond Dipecho contracts. The MES has no mandate to conduct training (MES is also a beneficiary of Dipecho training).
9. Due to a high turn over new staff have a limited understanding of planning as they are poorly trained on disaster preparedness and links to relief, recovery and development cross-cutting and other Dipecho issues. Due to this there is scope for improvement in the project cycle management of the Dipecho action plans.
10. Disaster preparedness is a good entry point for strengthening communities as long as LRRD is taken into consideration from the beginning of the intervention.
11. There is a lack of overall vision for an exit strategy because Dipecho partners seem not to know of a sustainable exit process. An exit strategy is required to sustain the results

achieved. Many partners are confronted with the risk of low sustainability of their project results and the process of disaster preparedness.

12. In most of the cases it does not seem that Dipecho action plans follow the ECHO recommendation that the “earliest possible exit, combined with co-ordinated and progressive transition from humanitarian aid to normal co-operation instruments (where necessary).” Although Dipecho does not technically cover humanitarian aid, the work it does with preparedness to respond is a fore-runner for humanitarian aid and therefore should possibly be considered in the same light.
13. There is not enough systematisation of low cost technologies and mitigation methodologies to be applied in DP, for instance, standards for river bank protection constructions or the way to effectively plant trees to reduce top soil erosion. Training on mitigation activities is often limited to Project Cycle Management and does not go into how to use low cost technologies or the methodology of how to mitigate the effects of hazards.
14. There is usually a lack of viability for the Young Rescue Groups (YRG).
15. The cost/benefit ratio of some partners action plans are often limited due to the lack of a disaster preparedness plan at local level (district, region, and local community).
16. Participation of local communities varies from 20% to 60 % of costs of mitigation constructions. Local participation includes fees of community engineers, local manpower for construction, and utilisation of local inert material. The contribution of the Dipecho financial participation in a mitigation construction in the projects visited varies from €200 to €12,000.
17. The MES is an appropriate partner for disaster preparedness but although other state agencies are partners this area of partnership could be further evolved to further combat epidemics, contamination of water, forest exploitation and soil erosion.
18. The multiplier effect can only take place when a community group is strong enough. A minimum period of 6 months is necessary to effectively mobilise a new group. 12 to 15 months is enough to train a group and finalise mitigation activities, but it is too short to allow any replication within adjacent communities. In a short time frame training operations always need external financial support. In some cases a sustainable process to guarantee training after the project seems difficult to foresee at the actual stage of the action plan.

► Recommendations

1. Dipecho partners should develop long term and sustainable plans and process's to train Community Based Organisations on disaster preparedness and mitigation.
2. Dipecho contracted partners should be regularly informed on Dipecho best practices and ways of working by the Dushambe ECHO office. The local staff of Dipecho partners can

then be up-dated and trained on these processes as they are introduced and as soon as a staff replacement takes place.

3. Dipecho action plans should include a requirement for a clear exit strategy which follows a grassroots approach, involving all stakeholders. Exit strategies are ideally integrated into a larger community development strategy. Therefore, Dipecho partners should help communities express their development vision where one is not in existence.
4. Training should be delegated to a local development organisation where one exists. In close coordination with the MES, the project can create a consortium of beneficiary groups that will have the mandate to maintain the preparedness capacity of its own members.
5. Training tools for improving disaster preparedness need to be standardised under Dipecho 4. Training on disaster preparedness and mitigation should include:
 - a. project cycle management,
 - b. any climate change issues which are starting to effect the region,
 - c. environmental impact assessment and
 - d. practical training for students including how to develop tree nurseries.The latter will raise awareness of students and professionals on erosion control, loss of fertile soils, water and forest management. These practical activities are a natural entry way into linking disaster preparedness with local development aspects. School curriculum's which in some locations are already integrating disaster preparedness topics and information booklets should be standardised for Central Asia.
6. The Project should realise Training of Trainers activities as some groups benefit from Dipecho training for 3 consecutive years. These groups should specifically be mobilised and/or contracted for other training activities.
7. Dipecho partners should propose a methodology to ensure the continuity of the Young Rescue Groups. Although there may be a mechanism in place to ensure this process it was not seen in all locations.
8. A disaster preparedness action plan should be realised for the whole area of intervention by Dipecho and other donor's partners through a participatory process approach which ascertains the relevance and sustainability of proposed interventions. This plan can be developed without interrupting current activities. Dipecho can subsequently facilitate the development many aspects of a long term disaster preparedness plan for and with the MES.
9. Training of communities should place an emphasis on local mobilisation and participation. Some activities such as cleaning of drainage canals should not be financed by Dipecho as once functional they should be the responsibility of the community. In general maintenance of small scale mitigation constructions should always be under the responsibility of the local community.

10. Criteria of selection for local mitigation proposals should be standardised for all partners. These should take into consideration relevance, impact, cost and sustainability.
11. As the project area could be very large and cover several regions, international partners should work through local NGOs based within the regions and assist them with capacity building and coordination. The cost/benefit ratio will improve due to decreased transportation costs and time requested for service delivery.
12. Dipecho partners can support official registration of their local partner NGOs as legal entities allowing, over time, for them to diversify their funding sources and partnership portfolio.
13. Dipecho should continue to enter new villages with an institutional strategy to create/reinforce CBO as these are a key to LRRD and to a successful exit.
14. Some of the Dipecho partners have experience in rural development. These organisations are ideally placed to ensure that linking disaster preparedness to on-going community development activities is assured.
15. It is necessary to involve other ministries/state agencies such as agriculture, rural development, water and sanitation in the process of mitigation activities in all locations where Dipecho partners are working. This will help to ensure sustainability of the activities and help to preserve livelihoods of community.
16. Low cost activities for mitigation should be taking into consideration cross-cutting issues with other development projects, (education, credit, agriculture, rural development, health and sanitation).
17. CBOs need more institutional support in all aspects of the disaster management cycle. In each project area where CBOs are well established they can be grouped into a consortium that represents their interests. This consolidation process is necessary to allow for economies of scale. It will be more efficient and effective for Dipecho partners and donors to work with a local/district/oblast organisation involved in disaster preparedness than to contact individual CBOs.
18. Hand-over strategies should involve mobilised communities. As several groups have received Project Cycle Management training, they are better able to identify and effectively implement their own mitigation and disaster preparedness activities and continue beyond Dipecho action plans.
19. The REACT regional centres should be supported as managers and coordinators of Oblast wide disaster preparedness, mitigation and response plans. In this way they will have a level of control over disaster preparedness and response activities in the communities.

4.3. [Uzbekistan](#) (Recipient of 11% in EC funding)

Uzbekistan Evaluation factor: Relevance of work being carried out under Dipecho
Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar Natural Disaster problems in 3 countries make the regional project interesting to solve cross border issues. • Disaster Preparedness coverage by Dipecho partners and partners of other donors is reportedly over half of the vulnerable communities in the region.
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highly disaster prone areas in the whole Ferghana valley due to radioactivity, drinking and irrigation water brought by the Mailuu-Su river may be affected due to, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ unprotected sites, ○ radioactive metals and gravels thefts, ○ cows grazing within radioactive waste burials sites, ○ high number of breast cancers possibly from uranium burials ○ uranium mines situated in an earthquake zones, despite massive programmes to remedy some of these problems land slide and mud flood prone in these areas are only addressed as a regular natural disaster without taking into account the hidden danger. In some villages, people are already very sick possibly because of contaminated drinking water. • Dipecho partners should be more aware of any information available on radioactivity contamination (man made) risk as natural disaster prone areas exists in the 3 countries where their projects are working.
Uzbekistan Evaluation factor: Efficiency of the work being carried out under Dipecho
Strength
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost/benefit ratio is good as low cost mechanisms are being used. • Some groups are established on Community Action groups from the Community Action Investment Programme (USAID). • Bottom up approach is used to build up community groups • The project covers a large area and transportation costs are high. Since an NGO works with individuals trainers (not local NGOs), the training costs could be reduced as they are more flexible and eventually easily dispatched within the regions.
Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Emergencies has a paternalistic relation with one NGO. • There is no revolving fund at national level as all funds are centralised at the headquarters office which slows down activity implementation. • There is a gap of 3 to 4 months between each Dipecho project. New staff have to be recruited and retrained every year, or, some staff work for no salary in the hope that more funding will come. Ideally the gaps between funding programmes should stop to avoid HR retention problems. • In some locations the project would do well to come back to former communities for training purposes of new communities. Dipecho 1 and 2 trained groups are not being used to train Dipecho 3 communities. • In one case the project starting date is September 2005. Mitigation activities are still at a

<p>preparatory stage and are not yet approved by the NGO to start. Training on project management and project proposals will take place after the end of the evaluation mission.</p>
<p>Uzbekistan Evaluation factor: Effectiveness of the work being carried out under Dipecho</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost mechanisms are training/training of trainer/ participation of local population in disaster preparedness and mitigation activities/ awareness building at neighbouring communities: Adult Response Group and Young Rescue Group capacity building/participation of professional rescuers from oblasts for simulation and demonstration activities/ free of charge advertising on local TV/ free participation of engineers, architects from local authorities for mitigation design and inspection. • Adult and Young Rescue Groups have been officially certified as reserve volunteer staff by the Ministry of Emergencies and are active in awareness raising
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no cross border resolution, exchange of information, training. An international summer camp has taken place and 3 international meetings with few effective results. • It is possible that contaminated water from uranium waste storage is flooded by the Malyisu River in Kyrgyzstan and ends up in Uzbek villages where it is used for irrigation and in some cases for drinking purposes. This places the population in danger. This river water was tested by the German implementers of a World Bank project to clean the uranium burial areas close to the Kyrgyzstan border on the Kyrgyz side. However the testing was carried out in the autumn period when the water flows would be at their lowest and not in the Spring which would be the high risk period. • There is little to no local networking activity because of political reasons such as customs and visa delivery facilities. • There are no local NGOs apart from the national Red Crescent Society. Many had been dissolved for political and economical reasons. • The communication network is weak with no radio or telephones in many communities. • In some locations mitigation projects are still in the identification process. • Mobilisation capacity of some local communities has increased for assistance/ simulation/evacuation.
<p>Uzbekistan Evaluation factor: Impact of the work being carried out under Dipecho</p>
<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based organisations DP projects are accepted by neighbouring communities. • 60 % of the regions vulnerable village are covered. • Dissemination of information on local TV allows gives in-extensive Disaster Preparedness awareness
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough exchange of good practices between groups of Dipecho 1, 2 and 3. • In some locations Dipecho disaster preparedness projects do not considered cross cutting issue as there are no links with other projects.
<p>Uzbekistan Evaluation factor: Sustainability of the work being carried out under Dipecho</p>
<p>Strength</p>

- Training of Adult Rescue Groups includes project preparation and management during Dipecho 3.
- Strong Organisational branches have been working within the area visited for many years and has been involved in disaster response and community service. This disaster preparedness programme is allowing them to add another project to their portfolio.

Weakness

- There is a lack of mechanism to sustain the some of the Community Based Organisations. In some locations the ARGs are created from a services demand driven process more than a participatory process of community mobilisation. It creates the dependency more than sustainability. However this is not the case with a volunteer local Organisation which has over 100 active volunteers in each of the branches visited and does have a sustainable approach.
- The Project has to come in former groups every year. It makes dependency occur. There is no mechanism to guarantee the continuity of services and training delivery to the communities. It is not by reinforcing local NGOs that the Project will create sustainability as these NGOs are services driven and will stop their services to communities as soon as their contract ends.

► Recommendations

1. Heads of Adult Rescue Groups should be in charge of the continuity of Young Rescue Groups in terms of numbers of volunteers and training. This will assist with feeding well trained and competent YRG members into the adult groups at the right time.
2. Training and mitigation activities should take into account linking disaster preparedness to on-going community development as a cross cutting issue. This will enhance the level of sustainability.
3. Dipecho partners should not duplicate the activities of the Ministry of Emergencies or try to take over their roles. Real complementarities and coordination should take place with the Ministry of Emergencies.
4. Local staff have to be trained on Dipecho rules and issues in all locations
5. An exit strategy should be considered to sustain the project benefits to Community Based Organisations.
6. See recommendations on pages 11 to 14 of this report.

5. Lessons learnt

5.1 Community strengthening at village level is an effective tool to increase local understanding and implementing capacities for Disaster Preparedness. Strengthening CBOs develops local initiative and capacity to find solutions for community problems.

5.2 Training on Project Cycle Management as well as helping to license mobilised groups as local NGOs help to build up LRRD can give Dipecho partners an exit strategy.

5.3 Beneficiaries are able to take on more activities due to Dipecho training. They would be more willing to carry out more DP activities when the process is integrated within the LRRD approach that leads to community development.

5.4 A multiplier effect takes time. However, unplanned replication effects can be expected as experience proves that once a group is formed in one location, spontaneously new groups form in neighbouring communities.

5.5 DP can be a sound entry point for disaster risk reduction as long as LRRD is taken into consideration from the beginning of the intervention and when the project timeframes reflect the fact that sustainable development is a process that can take years to put in place. Expected results should be realistic.

5.6 Prevention activities like mitigation construction is an opportunity to introduce Project Cycle Management training within the community in order to improve the community capacity to prepare development projects funded by local resources or other donor organisations. It leads to the consolidation of the group through a diversification of its activities.

5.7 Public administrations are generally willing to own project benefits but weak to sustain a project process. A project based on local participatory approach and community development should ideally not hand-over to public administration but to the community based organisation that has been involved.