



Disaster Preparedness Regional Initiatives in SE Asia

Hazards and Risks

South East Asia is one of the largest disaster-prone areas in the world. The region is exposed to a whole array of natural hazards ranging from floods, typhoons, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions to drought and forest fires.

The losses and destruction caused by natural disasters each year are considerable from an economic and social point of view, reducing in particular the development potential of the poorer countries. In 2004 and 2005 the average economic damage by natural disasters in the region reached €86 million (USD 125 million) with over 150 million people affected.

Although these figures might appear high due to the unusual extent of the Indian Ocean Tsunami there is a clear trend towards an increase in number and impact of natural disasters with new vulnerabilities emerging. This is caused by migration to urban centres, erosion of traditional ways of overcoming the impact of disasters, difficult recoveries after recent economic shocks, fragility of rural livelihoods combined with land and environmental degradation, changes in climate trends etc. While disaster risks are high, national and local governments are often not prepared well enough or overstretched by the extent and intensity of natural disasters.

ECHO's response

Through its Disaster Preparedness Programme DIPECHO, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) aims at building the resilience of communities that face recurrent natural



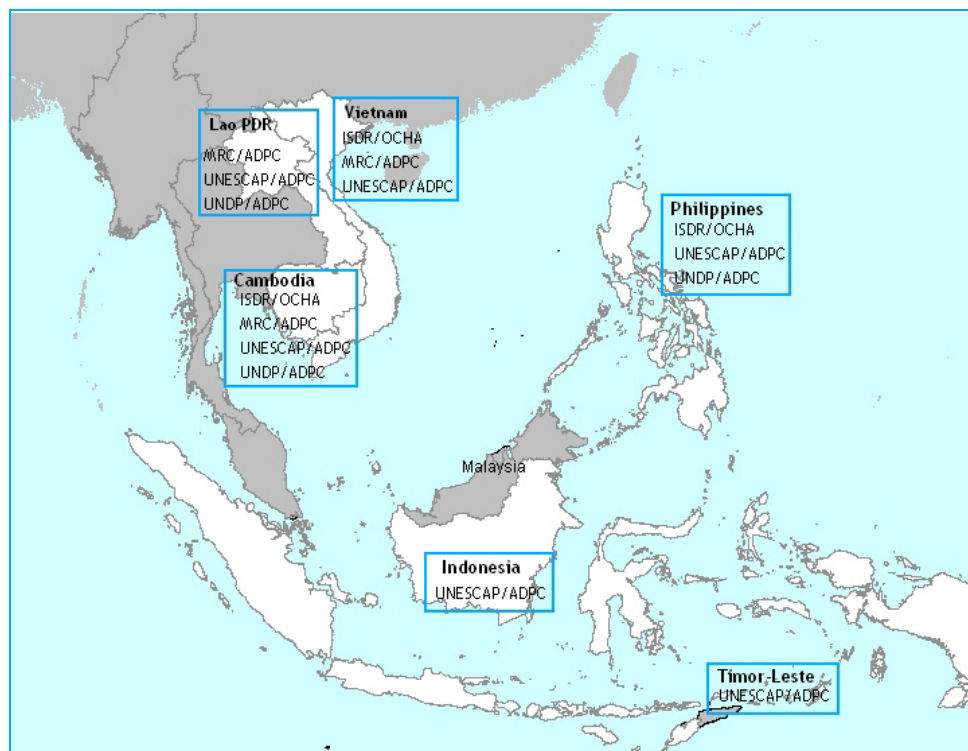
Flood preparedness training for provincial and district level officials under the MRC/ADPC programme

Photo credit: MRC-ADPC ECHO III project

disasters in South East Asia. Since 1998, in parallel to projects at community level, DIPECHO supported nine regional actions for a total of €3.2 million.

Although capacities differ from country to country, exchanges of knowledge and expertise are an effective way of boosting national capacities and

DIPECHO projects in South East Asia





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reducing risks. The European Commission advocates close coordination between all actors intervening in South East Asia including European Union member states, United Nations agencies and governments.

DIPECHO also works with regional entities and inter-governmental organisations such as the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), the Mekong

River Commission. Activities funded promote information exchange, regional cooperation in coordination with local authorities and training in disaster preparedness for disaster management practitioners, government officials, civil society groups and local authorities.

DIPECHO funded projects between November 2006 and May 2008 for a total of €1.3 million:

Partner	Hazard addressed / project type	Area
UNISDR / UNOCHA	Development of national disaster risk reduction plan	Cambodia, Philippines, Vietnam
Mekong River Commission / ADPC	Support to flood preparedness programs at provincial, district and commune levels in Lower Mekong Basin	Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam
UNESCAP / ADPC	Development of partnerships, networking, integration of community-based disaster risk reduction into socio-economic plans at national level	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste
UNDP / ADPC	Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in the education sector, development of school curricula	Lao PDR, Philippines, Cambodia

About ECHO: The Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) is part of the European Commission, the European Union's executive arm. It comes under the direct responsibility of Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid. Through ECHO funding, nearly 20 million people are helped each year in more than 60 countries through 190 partners (NGOs, international organisations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and UN agencies). In 2006, the Commission provided €671 million for humanitarian programmes. Web: <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/>

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