



Building Resilience: The EU's approach

FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

In 2015, 16% of ECHO's humanitarian funding went to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities, more than €107 million

ECHO is committed to strengthening resilience worldwide. **More than 43% of all ECHO funded projects include DRR activities**

Regional Resilience Programmes

- AGIR

The Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) was launched on 6 December 2012 to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable across 9 countries in the Sahel region of West Africa. The Goal of AGIR-Sahel is 'Zero Hunger' in the next 20 years.

- SHARE

The EU's 'Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience' (SHARE) initiative was born out of the 2011 Horn of Africa food crisis and aims to boost resilience in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia.

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Cash-for-Work site in Safo, department of Madarounfa (Niger). Photo credit: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Key messages

- The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters and humanitarian crises represent a major threat to peace, stability and growth. This is especially worrying in the poorest developing countries. There is an urgent need to help people and communities to avoid, withstand and recover from these increasing shocks and stresses. In other words, help them strengthen their resilience.
- The EU is placing resilience as a central objective of development and humanitarian assistance. To reduce humanitarian needs we must put people first, and allow them, especially children, to fulfil their full potential. We need to tackle the root causes of vulnerability, addressing under-nutrition and poverty: food insecurity, poor access to health and education.
- The EU's resilience approach started with two ground-breaking initiatives: the Supporting Horn of African Resilience (SHARE) and l'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience - Sahel et Afrique de l'Ouest (AGIR).
- The EU has introduced a "resilience marker" – all humanitarian projects include options to reduce future risks, to strengthen coping capacities to avoid or reduce future humanitarian needs
- The EU has launched the Resilience Compendium – 29 practical examples of DRR and Resilience by the EU, by governments, other donors, agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and vulnerable communities.

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, cope, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks such as violence, conflict, drought and other natural disasters without compromising long-term development.

Resilience can be built at various levels. For example, the resilience of communities to future disasters can be boosted through programmes that assist the poorest households before a crisis such as a poor harvest occurs by providing a safety net, for example with cash transfers during the period of the year when their reserves of money and food are lowest.

Another example of resilience-building are prevention and preparedness projects such as early warning systems or disaster insurance, which help local communities face the threats caused by hurricanes and violent storms during the rainy season, or unpredictable events such as earthquakes.

Resilience also encompasses assistance to countries so that they integrate risk management into their development programmes, and to target these at building the capacities of the most vulnerable people.

The EU approach to resilience

The costs of humanitarian crises are rising and become increasingly unaffordable, as climate change generates more severe weather-related events and as the world faces new pressures such as population growth, urbanisation, land and eco-systems' degradation, scarcity of natural resources, fragility of states and complex conflicts.

There is an urgent need to help people and communities to withstand and recover from increasing shocks and stresses. In other words, help them build their resilience.

In October 2012, the Commission presented its Communication ['The EU Approach to Resilience - Learning from Food Security Crises'](#) to confirm its strong commitment to building resilience in crisis-prone countries.

[The 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020'](#) operationalises the Communication and sets the ways forward for a more effective EU collaborative action on building resilience, bringing together humanitarian action, long-term development cooperation and on-going political engagement.

This EU approach adds value to the already existing EU commitments to risk management and resilience, including initiatives on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, social protection, nutrition and food security. It will ensure that different sectors complement and work better together towards the shared goals of reducing poverty and humanitarian needs. Resilience will be factored into all EU development and humanitarian assistance.

Co-ordinated planning and programming between EU and Member States humanitarian and development actors, based on joint identification and identification of risks and vulnerabilities, is becoming systematic (e.g. Nepal, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Haiti, Jordan, Mali and Central African Republic).



The EU Action Plan for Resilience

The European Union's Action Plan for Resilience outlines the steps to be undertaken for delivering early results and supports collecting best practice on effective support to help populations in need. Priority will be given to vulnerable countries that face recurrent crises and that are risk-prone.

The successful implementation of the Action Plan requires strong collaboration among EU Member States, other partner countries, the affected communities themselves as well as NGOs, international organisations, the private sector and the research community.

STRATEGIC COMPONENTS:

The resilience approach aims to reduce humanitarian needs and underpins more equitable and sustainable development gains.

Planners and policy makers must do more to assess risk scenarios, reduce vulnerability and enhance the ability of individuals, communities and countries to absorb and recover from shocks – be it economic, political, ecological, climate related, or triggered by natural hazards. New ways of working, and more effective humanitarian-development collaboration in political dialogue, are now needed.

PRIORITIES:

Supporting the development and implementation of national resilience capacities

Early priority in the action plan is given to vulnerable countries and regions where both EU humanitarian and development assistance are present. The aim is to develop shared assessments, strategies and implementation plans to build resilience. The EU is already incorporating resilience into many programmes beyond those in the Sahel and Horn of Africa: in the Philippines, for instance, successful resilience initiatives bring together local governments and civil society.

Promoting innovation, learning and advocacy

A common understanding of what works and what does not, and why, is required. The European Union and partners are working on new approaches and systems of monitoring and research to establish better practice and to scale up or to further advocate for resilience. In Haiti and the Caribbean, for example, the EU has been at the forefront of developing catastrophe insurance for prompt pay-outs when a disaster strikes, both at national and local level.

Improving methodologies and tools

Effective mechanisms and guidance are being developed to support the EU (the European Commission, the European External Action Service, or EEAS, and the EU Delegations) as well as all relevant stakeholders in implementing their resilience commitments. In partnership with the United Nations and other partners the European Union is currently developing InfoRM, the first global tool to measure the risk of humanitarian crises and help better prevent, mitigate and prepare for them.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES:

- [Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience](#) (SHARE - 2012)
- [L'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience](#) - Sahel et Afrique de l'Ouest (AGIR - 2012)
- Disaster Risk Reduction programmes in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and Global Climate Change Alliance programmes.



A performance management framework, as well as related monitoring and evaluation tools, tracks progress on Action Plan implementation.

The European Commission will increasingly assist development programmes to incorporate flexibility and preparedness for early action. In December 2015, the EU released €125 million to finance emergency actions in countries affected by 'El Niño' in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. The objective is to respond to existing situations of drought and to allow early pre-emptive action and preparedness – instead of waiting for a crisis.

Examples of projects contributing to resilience

In **West Africa**, the European Union is collaborating through AGIR with regional and national authorities who are setting up a food security reserve system in case of food crisis. The programme involves farmers, local authorities, national governments and regional institutions. Effective coordination allows the mobilisation of the most appropriate response to specific food crises reducing the negative side effects often produced by traditional emergency food distributions. © EC/ECHO



In **Ethiopia**, resilience is being built in selected areas that in the past have regularly been stricken by drought and where humanitarian assistance has been provided on and off. EU assistance there includes support to productive activities, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and health. A longer-term presence in these areas is foreseen, whereby a quick change from a predominantly humanitarian to a development mode and vice versa will be possible if the situation so requires. © EC/ECHO

Vietnam is frequently hit by tropical storms, causing floods and landslides. School-based disaster preparedness sessions funded by the European Union have taught approximately 500 000 school children and over 15 000 primary school teachers how to prepare for and cope with disasters involving all concerned people in drafting child-friendly safe-school plans. This program uses innovative and child-friendly methods, such as the simulation exercises and drills.



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In **Nepal**, early warning systems proved their worth in August 2010. When flood levels on the Rapt river breached the warning level, communities downstream were notified through a radio and telephone network. They had time to shift their essential and movable assets to higher and safer places. When the flood reached the villages, all potentially affected people in those locations had already reached safety. The early warning systems thus minimised losses of life and property. © EC/ECHO

In **Haiti**, an initiative supported by the EU has provided low-income micro-entrepreneurs with affordable insurance against weather-related risks. Thousands are now better protected against losses derived from natural calamities, preventing them from default on debts and/or problems to get loans when they need funding to recover from a crisis. Despite being a highly disaster-prone country, Haiti has one of the world's lowest insurance rates, so efforts are being made to scale up these endeavours. © EC/ECHO



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