



Disaster Preparedness in Timor Leste

Hazards and Risks

Timor Leste is highly vulnerable to recurrent natural hazards, in particular flash floods, landslides and erosions resulting from the combination of heavy monsoonal rain, steep topography and widespread deforestation.

Frequent tropical storms, occasional earthquakes which could trigger tsunamis, represent additional potential disasters. Every four to seven years the country experiences the El Niño/Southern Oscillation related weather anomalies provoking mainly droughts.

These hazards have a negative impact on livelihoods and development perspectives, in particular of the poorest people. The country, barely recovering from years of conflict and instability, is still fragile, with a population highly dependent on agriculture. The irregularity of seasonal patterns, recurrent meteorological shocks, as well as the impact of floods and landslides can easily cause disaster situations at household level.

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 flash floods, landslides and droughts.

Since 2004, three projects have been funded under the DIPECHO programme for a total of €0.7 million to assist vulnerable communities in understanding and assessing the risks they are exposed to and taking appropriate pre-emptive measures to reduce them. These measures address mainly floods, landslides and droughts.



Population	1,084,971 (July 2007 est.)
Population growth rate	2.059% (2007 est.)
GDP per capita	\$3,900 (2006 est.)
Pop. below poverty line	42% (2003 est.)
Life expectancy	70.16 yrs
Infant mortality	32.14 per1,000 live births

Source: CIA Factbook



Rehabilitation of an eroded irrigation system, Lautem district

Photo credit: Concern World Wide



Disaster Preparedness in Timor Leste

Activities funded include disaster risk mapping to visualise the impact of the floods or droughts on communities, the formulation of action plans, the establishment of community managed grain storages to improve food security and the building of dykes.

Training of local authorities and disaster management practitioners, translation of materials and modules into local languages, as well as coordination and information systems were other activities supported. DIPECHO also seeks to link communities

at risk to disaster management institutions at national and sub-national level so as to promote additional support for newly established local government structures.

The knowledge built up under the DIPECHO programme contributed to the successful integration of disaster risk reduction measures into development programming of the European Commission and other agencies. In addition Timor Leste is eligible for the European Union Disaster Risk Reduction Facility developed for ACP countries.

DIPECHO funded projects between November 2006 and May 2008 for a total of almost €0.2 million:

	Partner	Hazard addressed / project type	Area
Country projects	Concern World Wide	Drought, floods	Lautem
Regional projects	UNESCAP/ADPC	Development of partnerships, networking, across South east Asia	National

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/>

For more information contact ECHO's Regional Support Office in Bangkok, tel +66 2 255 10 35 / 36

Cécile Pichon, Technical Assistant

e-mail: ta02@echo-bangkok.org

Thearat Touch, Programme Assistant

e-mail: program01@echo-bangkok.org

Heinke Veit, Regional Information Officer

e-mail: rio@echo-bangkok.org