

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management initiatives

Managing Drought, Sustaining Growth in Djibouti



RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Building on an initial grant of \$70,000, the partnership has leveraged over \$40 million in funds for disaster risk management projects.
- GFDRR efforts also leveraged the creation of a \$5 million national safety net to ease financial stresses caused by disasters.
- The GFDRR-funded program installed five new hydrometeorological stations in different climatic areas around the country.
- The program also catalyzed a \$3 million water project to better manage resources in rural areas, along with a \$5.2 million power access and energy diversification project.
- GFDRR-funded projects have inspired the Djibouti government to pursue preparedness and resilience in cyber-security, pandemics, and other sectors.

REGION: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

COUNTRY: DJIBOUTI

FOCUS AREA: PREPAREDNESS

Situated on the disaster-prone Horn of Africa, Djibouti is highly vulnerable to prolonged droughts and flooding. The last major drought claimed nearly 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) annually between 2008 and 2011 and impacted more than half of the country's 860,000 residents.

With funding and guidance from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), Djibouti established a vulnerability and risk assessment and communication platform comprised of hydrological early warning systems, flood and drought early warning systems, and seismic and floods vulnerability and risk assessment—the first of its kind in Africa.

Context

With nearly 75% of its population concentrated in its capital city, Djibouti is at particular risk for water shortages and severe flooding, both of which profoundly impact its growing but fragile economic sector. The 2008–2011 drought caused upwards of \$51 million in damages, and more than \$157 million in losses. At current growth rates, the country's population is set to double in less than 15 years, increasing strain on Djibouti's already stressed fresh water resources and its vulnerability to natural hazards (Djibouti's fresh water availability per capita is only one fifth of neighboring Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia). Changes in climate will only exacerbate these issues.

Approach

GFDRR and the World Bank have been partnering with the Government of Djibouti since 2007 to improve resilience and absorb natural shocks to the region's burgeoning population and economy. GFDRR was able to leverage more than \$40 million to fund various projects in disaster risk management and recovery, including the establishment of the Middle East and North Africa's region first comprehensive risk assessment platform to address:

- Outdated preparedness and emergency plans.
- Improvements to weather monitoring systems.
- Needed seismic and flood vulnerability assessments.
- Inadequate flood and drought early warning systems.

LESSONS LEARNED

Successful disaster risk management requires a multi-sectoral approach. The Government of Djibouti recognizes that disaster risk management is not a stand-alone activity, but rather a cross-cutting practice that needs to be mainstreamed through all sectors to ensure sustainable results in development efforts. With trade logistics comprising nearly 85% of GDP, the Government has made it a priority to make the economy more resilient, taking cues from the successful Comprehensive Approach to Risk Assessment in Djibouti (CARAD) completed in partnership with GFDRR and the World Bank.

A multiplicity of voices can further reduce risk. Because input from both the regional and national level inform disaster management policies and implementation, GFDRR is helping solidify an institutional framework that will streamline communication between governance levels, ensuring that local knowledge is effectively incorporated into national policy.

Next Steps

A proposed third phase of technical assistance spanning 2014–2015 consists of (1) operationalization of the risk assessment and communication platform that will inform infrastructure investments; (2) detailed space-borne cartographic mapping of the entire country; and (3) integration of the recently finalized vulnerability and risk assessments for Djibouti-Ville, the capital, in World Bank urban development efforts. Inspired by previous programs, the Government of Djibouti has also reached out to GFDRR to assist in implementing risk management techniques in novel sectors, including cyber-security and public health.

“Our partnership with GFDRR has been instrumental in mitigating the increasing risks from both drought and flood crises and to build resilience in our communities in order to achieve sustainable development of the Republic of Djibouti.”

— Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh, Minister of Economy and Finance in-charge of Industry and Planning

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*All figures in US Dollars