



Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia

## DISASTER RISK PROFILING IN ETHIOPIA

### THE STEPPING STONE TO DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Ethiopia has registered steady and high economic growth in the last several years; however, being one of the most disaster prone countries globally, the impact of disasters on rolling back the socio-economic gains cannot be underestimated. The Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) led to a realisation in the country that Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is a more effective and economic way of mitigating the effect of disasters. It inspired the Government of Ethiopia to undertake a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) which changed the focus from reactive crises management to a comprehensive and proactive DRM. A new institutional structure called Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) within the Ministry of Agriculture was established in 2008 to implement the new approach. DRMFSS adopted the full cycle of DRM (consisting of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation) to guide the undertaken programmes with a redirected focus on DRM.

One of the first steps required to implement a system based on risk reduction was an information system that could provide answer to a set of questions:

- ✓ *Where are the hazards present?*
- ✓ *Why are they present there?*
- ✓ *Who gets affected?*
- ✓ *What makes them vulnerable to these disasters?*

The answers to these questions are critical to have an effective DRM system with the focus being on prevention, mitigation and preparedness but also strengthening response, recovery and rehabilitation. With a view to establishing this information system, DRMFSS launched an innovative programme on **Disaster Risk Profiling**. This programme envisages profiling every district (*wereda*) in the country on risk elements (hazards, vulnerability and capacity) with a view to:

- examining underlying causes of disaster risk and designing Disaster Risk Reduction/Adaptation plans
- informing the kind of early warning and response system that needs to be framed in different risk contexts
- informing a comprehensive contingency plan at district level



The Disaster Risk Profiles form the basis of implementation of the new proactive risk reduction approach of the Government of Ethiopia. This also strengthens the implementation of HFA approach in the country (see Box).

#### **Methodology**

The Disaster Risk Profiles are representations of information regarding a population, place or system's exposure, sensitivity and resilience to given hazards that can be applied to DRM strategies in a district. For this, a comprehensive framework of analyses was adopted that assesses risk from the lens of hazards, vulnerability and capacity.

HFA Priority Areas	Interface with Disaster Risk Profiling Programme
1. <b>Make Disaster Risk Reduction a Priority</b>	Disaster Risk Profiles prioritize risk reduction both at national and local levels with an institutional framework for implementation.
2. <b>Know the Risks and Take Action</b>	The programme helps identify and assess risks and their underlying causes, hence enhancing early warning and response.
3. <b>Build Understanding and Awareness</b>	Profiles at community/local levels enhance knowledge to build a culture of safety and resilience.
4. <b>Reduce Risk</b>	A database on hazards and vulnerability enables precautionary actions for reducing underlying risk factors.
5. <b>Be Prepared and Ready to Act</b>	The profiles form the basis for informing an effective and efficient early warning system and contingency planning.

Detailed indicators were developed to capture information on all these risk components. All possible data from secondary sources are initially collected and for the remaining indicators primary information is collected from qualitative and quantitative questionnaires. The quantitative questionnaires are administered at household level, one focus group discussion is conducted in every kebele while key informant interviews are conducted with major wereda level government and non-government actors.

All these information is analyzed and then converted into an informative database and digital library, including a simple and concise risk profile. This digital library is made very user-friendly to enable easy access to all relevant information for that district. The information contained in the digital library and profile are shared and validated with wereda-level actors and stakeholders for greater accuracy.

The database and digital library will be shortly uploaded on a web-based platform for wider access.

### Highlights

The Disaster Risk Profiling programme is a fully government led and operated programme and presents a classic case of streamlined capacity development of government at all levels. The launch of this programme was marked by secondment of a technical staff to DRMFSS by the UN World Food Programme. Once the methodologies, indicators and study tools were developed and tested in field, trainings were conducted at the federal level that were cascaded down to the lowest administrative levels – all by government staffs. The data collection process now is completely managed by the government staffs. As of September 2012, data for over 185 districts have been collected, consisting of over 80,000 households, over 3500 Focus Group

Discussions with communities and over 1800 interviews with key district level government and non-government staffs.

A total of around 2300 government staffs at federal, regional, zonal, wereda and kebele levels have been trained in data collection, 45 federal staffs in data entry while 25 federal staffs have been trained in analyses.

Besides community involvement in profile development process, the profiles also have a component on gender elements, besides a related study being conducted on gender based on the profiles.

The programme has generated huge interest among all actors and stakeholders in DRM. It is being funded by a series of donors, while the government and GFDRR putting the implementation of this activity on top of their agenda. Such profiles also work as baselines for project implementation by NGOs and other agencies. This has also led to standardization of risk assessments in the country, wherein the assessment methodology has been endorsed by the Central Statistical Agency.

The implementation of Disaster Risk Profiling programme is leading to an informed decision-making process in Ethiopia. This is being regarded as a best-practice case in the IGAD region that needs replication in other parts of the world.

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