

Haiti and the Dominican Republic



Project data

Client:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region:	9 municipalities in the southern border region between Haiti and the Dominican Republic
Lead executing agency:	Haiti: Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE) Dominican Republic: Technical Secretariat of the Presidency
Overall term:	October 2005 to December 2008
Contact:	disaster-reduction@gtz.de

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Reconstruction and disaster risk management in the border region

Context

Heavy rain and tropical cyclones regularly cause flooding, high water and landslides in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Over the course of one night in May 2004, heavy rains and the resulting landslides claimed the lives of over 5,000 people in the municipalities of Fonds Verrettes in Haiti and Jimani in the Dominican Republic. In addition to the high death toll, hundreds of buildings, roads and bridges were destroyed.



farmland in the risk areas, massive deforestation in the

The increasing vulnerability of the population and the ensuing damage are largely attributed to the unplanned expansion of settlements and

mountain regions and the use of farming methods which are unsuited for the region's terrain. The steep areas of the Haitian Massif La Selle and the



Dominican Sierra de Neyba mountain ranges have been largely deforested, causing rapid runoff during heavy rain. Lower-lying settlements are thus threatened by floods and landslides. In addition, arable land is destroyed, which endangers the livelihood of the families and exacerbates poverty. As a result, the inhabitants of these areas have to use their already inadequate income to rebuild their homes and rehabilitate agricultural production. They lack the financial resources and know-how to reduce the risk of disaster.



Project

The project supports the local population in planning and implementing reconstruction in the aftermath of heavy rain. It aims to improve the livelihood of the affected families while reducing their vulnerability to natural disaster in the long-term. The first step involved the implementation of risk analyses as a basis for all interventions, after which reconstruction in the areas of road construction and water management began.

In addition, the project supports measures to reduce the risk of erosion and flash floods by filling ravines, reforesting risk-prone steep areas and building protective barriers. Advisory services aim to contribute to improving resource management, which can serve to rehabilitate degraded water catchment areas and prevent flash floods, while the more efficient use of resources helps to secure the agricultural livelihood of the people.

Another important component of the project involves supporting the population in setting up disaster risk management structures. To accomplish this, the local inhabitants have worked together to set up disaster protection and emergency plans in their communities. These plans facilitate quick and effective action in an emergency, which can minimise damage and loss.

Results – What has been achieved so far?

The project has already achieved important results at several levels. Critical areas of the road system and the irrigation infrastructure have been restored and made more weather-resistant. Public awareness of natural risks has been enhanced, and the local population is involved in setting up structures to prevent disasters. Combined with specific interventions, advisory services contribute to improving resource management, preventing future flash floods and stabilising the agricultural livelihoods of the population.

Other municipalities and aid organisations have expressed interest in learning about the experiences gained and instruments used in order to cope with natural disaster risks, and intend to use them in these areas.

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