Evaluation Report

UN ISDR Secretariat
Asia Pacific

Office Evaluation
6 March 2009

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Separate additional report documentation includes:

Resource Book on a separate CD contains all reference materials mentioned in the Report.

Annual Evaluation Guidelines to guide future evaluations in the Regional Office.

Evaluation Brief an eight-page brochure (A4) that summarizes the Evaluation Report.

Resource Book

(on separate CD)

PART ❶

Baseline and Background Materials

1. Terms of Reference for the Assignment (9pp.)
2. Staff Meeting 3 February 2009 (3pp.)
3. Checklist for Evaluating the Incorporation of DRR into the CCA/UNDAF Process (7pp.)
4. Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction (IAP) (2pp.)
5. Disaster Risk Management Networks & Communities (1p.)
6. Checklist for Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Long Term Recovery (1p.)
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11. Summary Notes on Staff Expectations – 2009-2010 (3pp.)
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13. Reporting and Monitoring Requirements - Programmes & Projects (4pp.)
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PART ❷

Stakeholder Survey
Design, Preparations, Management and Results

I. UNISDR Internal Office Evaluation (Survey) (10pp.)
II. Design, Approach and Methodology
III. Key Communications with Survey Participants
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V. Final Survey Recipients (3pp.)
VI. Quick Summary of Initial Feedback on the DRAFT Survey (2pp.)
VII. Interim Results of the Office Evaluation (1p.)
VIII. All Results – All Responses – All Histograms (Excel file)
IX. All Text Only Responses (28pp.)
X. Results: Survey Data Analysis (PowerPoint slides)

Executive Summary

The evaluation has found a strong functioning office of individuals dedicated to their work and proud to be with ISDR. It is a small office; working closely together is a matter of course. Overall the feedback from stakeholders was very positive. The office maintains a good profile in the region, however there is much to be done to further raise awareness, build capacity and make best use of the HFA as a resource and strategy in itself.

The region fully expects ISDR to maintain the role of strong advocate and champion of the Hyogo Framework, with the support to maintain the momentum on disaster risk reduction. ISDR has made the subject of DRR one of the important issues for development[1]. "Advocating for improved disaster risk reduction should be the priority issue for ISDR"[2]. There remains a significant opportunity to engage more systematically and deliberately with UN Country Teams throughout the region; this should be taken up as a matter of urgency, together with UNDP and OCHA in Bangkok.

The suggestions from partners and collaborators[3] that have come from the evaluation through interviews, observation and the stakeholder survey, have also been very positive, showing insight, vision and support for a key regional player. A clear picture of disaster risk reduction needs and priorities in the region is however, still missing.

The future is bright for ISDR with the streamlining of some operational and functional processes to boost efficiency; some increased advocacy and outreach tasks to boost effectiveness; and systematic measuring and reporting on impacts and the value added of the organization.

Simplifying work planning processes, strategically planning for HFA support and monitoring, for communications and knowledge management and for establishing a strong monitoring capability and plan are a few key recommendations for the office. Other comments below capture these major recommendations of the evaluation.

[1] A quote from the Stakeholder Survey conducted as part of the office evaluation in February 2009. The question was on tangible, measurable impacts of ISDR in the region.

[2] As above: question on building and supporting partnerships.

[3] The term collaborators will be used to encompass all those persons and organizations with whom ISDR Asia and Pacific are currently working in various capacities.

Four core functions and capabilities[4]

Over the course of the evaluation (twenty-three working days) an important conceptual and practical planning framework emerged around which the report and recommendations are now structured. The basic premise is that there are four primary functions for which in-house capability is seen to be central to the ability of the office to carry out the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

These four core functions and capabilities capture all five **HFA priorities**, and could be considered as a basis of a 'core team'. The same four functions can act as criteria against which project and programme proposals can be tested; can guide work planning to ensure planned activities are not outside of the capabilities of the core team (or if so, what external expertise will be required), and can help to define the lingering questions of "who we are?", "what it is that we do?", and "how we do it".

As a means of concentrating effort and bringing more focus to the activities of the regional office, it is suggested that the work plan and future projects and programmes reflect a focus on these core functions. The **recommendations** are therefore structured in the same way. The Stakeholder Survey indicated strong support for more concentrated effort on advocacy and partnership building, less diversity of projects, and a clear need to boost this key role; advocacy (and partnerships). **Advocacy** is and should continue to be the key role for the regional office.

The four core functions and needed capabilities to service the regional DRR needs are:

i. Advocacy and Partnerships (AP)
ii. Communications and Knowledge management (CKM)
iii. Monitoring and Evaluation (ME)
iv. Operations, Coordination and Management (OCM).

Work plan coordination

This is possibly the most important planning document for the regional office. All planning, actions and achievements should be guided by the work plan. It should also be the selling point of ISDR, the document used to attract donor and partner support; the document that encapsulates the **regional and national priorities** of the region and communicates these priorities to the Global Work Planning process.

Many of the recommendations in Part Two came from an understanding and appreciation of the **relevance** of current and planned activities in accordance with the 2008-2009 Work Plan, and recognition of the opportunities to improve office performance with this instrument.

A donor driven work plan is not an ISDR work plan. Yes, it is valuable to have key partners contribute to the work planning process, however the starting point should be the work plan needs and priorities, not the partner proposal.

A comprehensive approach

It is hoped that given that this is the first evaluation of the office, that sufficient baseline data has been collected to allow future evaluations to use this data for both qualitative and quantitative comparison and progress monitoring purposes. The extensive **Resource Book** is a collection of all electronic resources, and has been designed for this purpose.

There are however three **targets** that could form the basis of measuring impacts and achievements in the annual evaluations in future. These evaluations will have to be much

[4] ca·pa·bil·i·ty n, 1. the ability necessary to do something, 2. an ability or characteristic that has potential for development, 3. the potential to be used for a particular purpose or treated in a particular manner. Source: Encarta, Microsoft, 2008.

leaner than this one, which will necessarily take a more comprehensive approach than the current Terms of Reference required. Some specific details mentioned in the TOR could and should be available with the installation of improved and regularly completed **monitoring** of output achievement against work plan objectives and outcomes. These targets are described below. It is understood that the new indicators developed for the Interim Review of the 08-09 Work Plan could be appropriate to use here in a modified version.

Three overall targets

1. **ISDR recognized as a regional authority and "torch-bearer" for the DRR** (combining advocacy and partnerships for disaster risk reduction; and knowledge management and communications)
2. **Systematization of standard procedures and operations** (combining monitoring and evaluation and operations, coordination and management)
3. **Strategic planning for effective implementation** (this will include partnership building, establishing/supporting regional initiatives and capacity-building for systematic HFA promotion, support and reporting, including elements of all four categories above).

Global outreach via the regions

Initially, the regional offices were termed "Outreach Offices", a term that remains applicable and one that captures something of what the regional office probably should continue to be doing; i) in the region and ii) as a liaison office or connection to headquarters of ISDR in Geneva. The term indicates something reaching out (arms and legs) more closely to the countries of the region whilst remaining connected to the main center of the organization (head and body)[5].

A number of recommendations are aimed at streamlining the outreach process by:

a) offering a more limited number of clearly defined goods and services,

b) focusing on four primary or 'core' functions and capabilities (see below), and

c) reducing in the tendency to be all things to all comers; i.e. i) saying no to certain types of project proposals and ii) selling the work plan to donors rather than retrospectively fitting project and program components to objectives and outputs.

Systematic operations

Given the rapid growth of the organization, the initial mandate and structure of this Geneva-based hub, it seems that the expanded operational needs of the organization have not kept pace with the expanded roles, responsibilities and geographic locations of staff and regional centers.

Systematic operational procedures, rules of engagement, strategic planning for communications and knowledge management, standard procedures for monitoring and evaluation are a few such issues that are considered in the recommendations to follow. Clearly, there is room for more "bottom-up" information exchanges, to allow the regions (Asia and Pacific in this discussion) some level of autonomy[6], and an increased level of influence and contribution to global work planning.

Evaluation documentation

The three separate documents include a Resource Book (electronic files) that is designed to be available to the next independent evaluator as a basic package of baseline information, and useful background materials.

[5] The consultant utilized this very analogy during the Asia and Pacific Team-Building Retreat in Hua Hin 16-19 February, as the basis of an exercise using body parts of the fictitious Asia Pacific person or "AP-boy/girl" to represent all necessary components of the organization.

[6] Regarding regional autonomy, there is a brief discussion of this need in Part Two: Operations and Management.

Next steps

Following submission of this Final Report, a plan of action will be prepared by the ISDR Secretariat, in the form of a '**Management Response'**. This will address all recommendations, give priority to those recommendations requiring immediate implementation, and ascertain resource needs, designation of responsibility, and determine the support required from HQ and management.

Given the nature and extent of the recommendations in this report, the existing workload of office staff and the importance of certain recommended actions, it is recommended that ISDR Secretariat give consideration to the appointment of a senior policy and advisory consultant to **implement the priority recommendations** by:

i) undertake and guide the implementation of these recommendations through the 2010-2011 biennial Work Planning processes,

ii) provide the overall management of linking recommendations and priorities of the Management Response to planning for the next biennium and through to 2015, and

iii) provide guidance to the preparation and implementation of the recommended strategy plans for Communications and Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Advocacy and Partnerships, and for Operations, Coordination and Management in the office. Lessons should then be drawn for other regional offices.

Risks (completed after the final draft was largely completed)

The evaluation was not able to solicit a strong participation of Government officials or representatives in the Stakeholder Survey. Nor was the evaluator able to interview enough Government persons either. In retrospect, the entire evaluation could have benefited from a more thorough engagement with affected individuals and local governments for example, to have solicited a better opinion of the performance and impact of ISDR activities.

The risks were then as follows: i) that the Stakeholder survey was too 'client' centric and not inclusive enough of the 'end user', the people and communities actually affected by disaster reduction efforts, and ii) not enough opinions were sought from government persons in interviews or the survey. It is my opinion that the survey respondents were a good representative sample. It may have benefited from more Government participants. A wider audience would be recommended in future.

List of Diagrams

Figure 1. Organigram of the office – February 2009
(an organizational diagram that shows the structure of the office staff, titles etc.)

Figure 2. Evaluation Process
(the overall approach and methodology applied to the evaluation, indicating the time schedule, start and finish dates)

Figure 3. Assessment Framework and Key Questions
(a list of some of the questions , information sources and information needs)

Figure 4. ISDR Work Plans – HQ and Asia Pacific
(illustrate comparison by headings and titles)

Figure 5. ISDR Reporting requirements
(all reporting requirements for ISDR to HQ, to donors, to partners, specific requirements of format of reports, and how often, etc.)

List of Acronyms

ABU	Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
ADRRN	Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EM-DAT	Emergency Disasters Database
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GRID	Global Resource Information Database of UNEP
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRP	International Recovery Platform
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NIDM	National Institute for Disaster Management of India
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NP	National Platform
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
PMU	Programme Management Unit for DRR
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission
UN/ISDR	Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNU	United Nations University
WB	The World Bank
WBI	World Bank Institute
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Part One Introduction

Overview

The central **purpose** of the evaluation is to report on progress in achieving results relating to outputs and outcomes. It is essentially an organizational assessment of the relevance, performance and impact of the regional ISDR Secretariat in Asia and Pacific. The evaluation is then tasked to assess; i) the relevance and performance, ii) the role, capacity, impact and value added for the region, and iii) effectiveness and appropriateness of coordination mechanisms; of the ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific.

Rather than count percentages of activity achievements against proposed timing, resources and expected results, the evaluation has also taken a broader view of the performance of the office in terms of achieving **outcome areas and the deliverables** expected by regional collaborators and partners. The detailed monitoring of achievements should be accessible on an on-going basis as part of quarterly intra-office performance review meetings and progress appraisals[7] and should also be a prime focus of the future annual evaluations.

It is useful to initially reflect on some basic mandate history and the evolving structure of the **ISDR System** and the global strategy. See also the "*ISDR mandate History*[8]" (2pp.) in the Resource Book for a full description of ISDR mandate history since the international Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction wound up in 1999. This history is relevant to understand how rapidly the organization has grown from a one-office Geneva-based operation, to having regional offices around the globe.

It is the view of the evaluator that this rapid growth in size and outreach has not been matched with the necessary **administrative and organizational structures**, nor with clarity on the role of the organization in the international disaster and humanitarian community. Efforts have clearly been made in this regard, but these need to be maintained for the time being. "Who we are?" and "What we do?" are still questions that staff ponder, as do some of ISDR's collaborators.

Opportunities for regional inputs into global (Geneva Headquarters) processes, including work planning, appear somewhat ad hoc and could readily be improved to make best use of these extraordinary **regional resources**, certainly in Asia and Pacific and likely from the other regions.

Both the **adequacy** and the **effectiveness** of the regional office could be significantly enhanced with a much closer relationship to Headquarters. For reasons described in the recommendations below, it is suggested to consider the addition of a Regional Advisor to Geneva with a 'roving' role to concentrate fully on all necessary linkages between the regions and HQ (work planning, shared objectives and activities, meaningful information sharing, staff exchanges, boosting 'global' teamwork etc.).

The Hyogo Framework actions have provided a surrogate baseline mandate which has proved to be extremely valuable to international development globally. The collective view from this region (partners[9] and other stakeholders) is that ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific should focus strongly on its **advocacy and partnership-building** role above all else, and minimize 'project-level' interventions in future. Recommendations address all four core functions and capabilities.

Much remains to be done in the Asia and Pacific outreach office to **systematize** (increase efficiency, use standard operating procedures, follow rules of engagement, minimize delays,

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[7] This is detailed as a recommendation in Part Two, Operations, Coordination and Management.

[8] Jerry Velasquez prepared this document in 2007.

[9] The term "**partners**" needs to be more clearly understood rather than simply being a catch-all phrase that includes anyone with whom ISDR wishes to be seen to be working. See Part Two Core Functions and Capabilities.

follow strategy plans, etc.) the provision of goods and services to the collective community of organizations and individuals involved with disaster risk reduction throughout the region.

The HFA has provided a solid and valid basis of the **work plan** and subsequent actions of the regional office. Priorities four and five[10] may have received less attention given the extent of commitments of staff to completing projects and programmes in accordance with donor requirements. That is, the needs of the donor-supported projects (GFDRR, AusAid, and Aidco) consume most staff time. Notably, these activities have also included a large number of **additional activities** that do not appear in the work plan!

It is timely for this evaluation. A mid-term review of the 08-09 Work Plan is on going, the Team Building Retreat has just been completed and the office is commencing to prepare the next biennium work plan. It is hoped that there will be a number of recommendations and findings from the evaluation what will assist in providing some guidance on specific **priority activities** to build capability and capacity in the core functional areas of ISDR's mandate.

The overall **morale** in the office is extremely good. This ensures staff have ample opportunity to contribute to collective opinion and share the workload. Most are multi-tasking, handling a necessarily multi-functional portfolio of tasks and activities. The Regional Coordinator then is faced with an extraordinary range of roles, tasks and responsibilities, attributing a constant workload that may not be sustainable in the longer-term.

The quiet assumption is that the regional office can and should act as a "mini-HQ" which is not an accurate description of the Asia and Pacific office, and which places unnecessary stress on the regional office to perform such **wide-ranging tasks**. In short, the regional office is expected to have and to perform a range of skills consistent with all the necessary skills to implement the mandate of the whole organization. The evaluation has taken these 'core functions' as the guide to recommending changes that will focus more on the outcomes to be achieved and the resources needed to achieve those results.

The International Strategy

In 2000, UN Member States agreed to build on the positive actions of the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). This was called the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction or UN/ISDR, UNISDR or simply ISDR.

The **strategy** aims to;

> "...achieve substantive reduction of disaster losses and build resilient communities and nations as an essential condition for sustainable development"[11].

The ISDR **system** partners are made up of many organizations, states and civil society organizations worldwide, all coming together to collectively reduce disaster losses. To quote more accurately (November 2008):

> "The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) is a *system of partnerships*. These partnerships are composed of a broad range of actors, all of which have essential roles to play in supporting nations and communities to reduce disaster risk. These partners include Governments, inter-governmental and non- governmental organizations, international financial institutions, scientific and technical bodies and specialized networks as well as civil society and the private sector"[12].

[10] HFA Priority 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors, and Priority 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

[11] www.unisdr.org/hfa , accessed 12 February 2009.

[12] Source: Status of Implementation of Article 4, Paragraph 8 of the Convention, Decision 5/CP.7 and Decision 1/CP.10. Submission by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat on behalf of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction System to the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation 25 November 2008.

A **Secretariat** was established in 2000 to support the implementation of the above strategy through functions including policy coordination, advocacy and information management. Monitoring and evaluation has more recently been added to these functions.

In January 2005, a landmark event in Kobe Japan, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, captured an unprecedented commitment to building disaster resilience of nations and communities, with 168 Member States signing the Hyogo Declaration and the **Hyogo Framework for Action** 2005-2015.

Understanding this issue must have been discussed ad infinitum in the past, there still remains a lack of clarity on just what is **"the strategy"**? The quote above suggests the strategy is a partnership or a 'system of partnerships'. It could be made clearer by suggesting that the strategy is in fact the **HFA**, and the system or network is the means to achieve the objectives of the strategy. There is room to make this more explicit in future work plans, global and regional.

The HFA is an international **strategy** for disaster reduction. The ISDR **system** is the implementer, and the Secretariat (Geneva and Regional offices) are the **facilitators**.

The ISDR Secretariat therefore uses this extensive 'system' or network to; i) coordinate actions regionally and globally to implement the HFA, ii) develop indicators for progress tracking (monitoring and evaluation), iii) support national platforms and coordination mechanisms, and iv) facilitate exchange of best practices and reports on HFA achievement.

The above actions represent the **core functions** (see below) of ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific. The stakeholder Survey strongly supported the focus to remain on those core functions, for the regional office to NOT expand its agenda or mandate. With the addition of an additional core function (Operations and Management), the evaluation has used these core functions to **structure** the report and to **organize** the recommendations. They have also been used to structure the proposed future annual evaluations as described in the separate Annual Evaluation Guidelines document (see Report III below).

Basic Principles

The following points are basic principles that have guided this evaluation:

- Strong focus on **communications**, clarity, minimal use of jargon, and being brief and to the point;
- Recognition of the need to consider the potential modeling of this process in order to provide adequate guidance to **future** annual independent evaluation processes;
- Stakeholder consultations and their contributions will form the basis of discussions of **performance and impacts** of the work of ISDR throughout the region.
- **Conclusions and recommendations** will be arranged around the four core functions:
  v. Advocacy and Partnerships (AP)
  vi. Communications and Knowledge management (CKM)
  vii. Monitoring and Evaluation (ME)
  viii. Operations, Coordination and Management (OCM).

Note the addition of the fourth core function or capability; this recognizes the significance of a well-oiled machine that can deliver the first three functions efficiently, effectively and that can track and maintain a quality delivery process. A number of recommendations in Part Two address the operational and management needs of the office.

Organization of the Reports

There are three separate reports arising from the evaluation:

I **Evaluation Brief**
(8pp. brief summary of findings and recommendations for wide distribution);

II **Evaluation Report**
(52pp. full report for internal use, baseline information contained in the Resource Book document (a CD for all electronic files, see the Table of Contents pages 1-2 above), and

III **Outline Structure of an Annual Evaluation**
(a description of basic approach and methodology for the proposed annual evaluation of a regional office).

The **Summary Evaluation** (Report I) has been designed to i) be a brief overview of the key findings of the evaluation, and ii) to provide this information to a wide audience of partners and stakeholders throughout the region and elsewhere, in a pleasing, easy to read format.

The **Evaluation Report** (Report II) contains all documentary components of the evaluation in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The extensive Resource Book document and CD contains a number of reference and resource documents that will provide the baseline information for this and future evaluations.

The proposed outline of a methodology and **Guidelines** for future annual evaluations (Report III) provides a draft structure for content, timing and key tasks as well as providing some basic principles to guide the preparation of brief, **annual evaluation** that target the four primary functions of the regional office, as described above.

Format of Recommendations

Recommendations are structured in a **hierarchy**, under key topics, under which specific detailed recommendations are attached. The findings are drawn from the survey, the many interviews with partners and observations of the evaluator over the course of the month of February and March 2009.

All recommendations are matched to;

i) The required **resources** to implement that recommendation;

ii) **Priorities** that have been attached to the recommended action after consultation with staff and management of ISDR;

iii) The **timing** of the proposed implementation of the recommendations divided into short- (2009) and mid-term (the next Work Plan biennium 2010-2011) and longer-term (say to 2015); and,

iv) Where possible, the recommendations are linked to existing **Work Plan** objectives and outcomes.

Any gaps in this structure will be completed by the Bangkok Office prior to the preparation of the Management Response to the evaluation.

There is a secondary tier of what are grouped as "**Supplementary Recommendations**" which have not been detailed as above, but are included so that; i) these ideas are not lost, and ii) they are part of this document which will form the main baseline source for future evaluations.

The overall **objective** behind this approach to the recommendations is to ensure that suggestions are realistic, they are prioritized, and most importantly, they are linked to Work Plan objectives and outcomes.

1.1 Rationale and Baseline

The evaluation of the office performance has much to do with achievement of proposed objectives and outcomes as described in the biennial work plan. This is however only part of the picture. The primary **opportunity** with this evaluation is to gather the collective opinion and suggested actions from collaborators throughout the region, to boost strengths and improve areas of weakness. This was achieved with a range of interviews and observations coupled with a broad coverage of collaborators in an online **Stakeholder Survey**. Data collected from this survey will provide good baseline material for future evaluations by providing data that can be used comparatively to measure change in performance, achievement, effectiveness, outreach etc.

The **baseline** for this evaluation is the collective work of a growing regional office, the collective opinion on the adequacy, effectiveness and impacts of ISDR's work to minimize disaster risks in the Asia and Pacific region, and institutional memory of staff and collaborators on performance and what was achieved since 2006. Monitoring and evaluation activities have been restricted to necessary periodic reporting requirements with virtually no impact investigations or evaluation of any kind. This is a priority and should be improved as a matter of urgency.

This is the first evaluation of the ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific office since its establishment in Bangkok in 2005. To date there have been two biannual **Work Plans** produced (2006-07, and 2008-09), and the evaluation will look at both. For practical purposes, the focus will however be on the 08-09 Work Plan.

A **mid-term review** of the 08-09 work plan has just been completed and changes will be incorporated and reviewed again for final agreement amongst staff and HQ in early March. A recommendation in Part Two suggests formalizing this process, doing it if possible along with the Team Building Retreat process, which may also be an opportune time to conduct the Annual evaluation in future.

The Regional Office

The Regional Office in Bangkok was established in 2005 as an immediate follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, in order to have a more localized (regional) capacity to provide support to HFA monitoring and reporting throughout the Asian region.

This is a compelling argument for the ISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific to ensure those priorities are what drives both the outcomes and outputs as described in the Work Plan. The three strategic goals of the HFA (mainstreaming, capacity building and risk reduction) should also be goals shared by the regional offices.

Changing Role of ISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific

(See the revised Organigram below

The 2004 tsunami changed the lives of millions of people. It changed the way of doing business for many people and organizations, including the disaster risk reduction community and coastal communities especially. Initially, the Bangkok office was established as an "outreach" office, to take on the following three key areas of focus:

1. **Hyogo Framework for Action**
   (HFA promotion, partnerships, implementation, ISDR Asia Partnership and others)
2. **Tsunami Flash Appeal and Early Warning**
   (Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System project strengthening, coordination and cooperation with donors and technical partners and donors)

3. **Information Management**
   (Development of an effective information management system including regional databases, regional website, "ISDR Informs" bi-annually, plus promoting partners' initiatives and relevant events).

The first Work Plan was prepared for the Regional Office in late 2005 for the 2006-2007 biennium, titled "**2007 Workplan – UN/ISDR secretariat for Asia and the Pacific**". As the office was only newly established, the staffing levels were low, with three professionals and support staff.

At that time, AIDCO, AusAid and the Global Facility were the primary sources of funding. There were four key **"Strategic Priorities"**, with between two and five "**Expected Results**" attached to each priority, and with between two and four "**Activities**" attached to each one of the results. The work plan then was just four pages in a matrix, with no mention of measurement of performance or success against those activities or results. It is unclear just how the office reported back to HQ at that time.

The strategic priorities were aimed at support to; i) policy development and institutional capacity, ii) knowledge and awareness building, iii) strengthening partnerships, and iv) support to the global ISDR system.

The listed activities were necessarily general and lacked adequate detail against which measurable quantitative **indicators** could be attached. For example it is difficult to comment on Activity 3.1 for example; "Strengthen national and regional HFA reporting processes in coordination with ISDR Geneva". This is an ongoing process but makes no reference to the significant reporting initiative that was coming the following year.

This work plan provides however a very positive and important **baseline** for future work plans in the region. Although general, it contained all key components of what is contained now in the current regional work plan. It can be said that much of what was intended to be achieved has or was indeed achieved given that much of the activities in the 2007 work plan are ongoing activities for the Secretariat today. This points to a possible recommendation to divide the work plan activities into those that are achievable (start to finish) in the biennium, and those that are continued before and beyond the biennium.

Summary of the Terms of Reference

At the commencement of the project, the consultant reviewed in detail the Terms of Reference and conducted initial discussions with the ISDR staff in Bangkok.

The Titles Summary below indicates the **structure** of the Terms of Reference and the Resource Book CD provides a shortened version of the seven page Terms of Reference.

The full Terms of Reference and the **Summary of the Terms of Reference** by the consultant are enclosed in the Resource Text. The summary includes the narrative mentioned above.

The **purpose** of this initial review is twofold:

i) to identify any significant gaps or overlaps, and to amend (if necessary) parts of the Terms of Reference at the outset of the project and again at the mid-term, again if required; and

ii) to provide the basis of the overall structure of the evaluation that directly reflects the intention and requirements of the Terms of Reference.

Titles Summary

This is a short summary of the hierarchy of titles and subtitles as described in the original Terms of Reference. A more detailed narrative summary is contained in the Appendix.

I Background (3pp.)

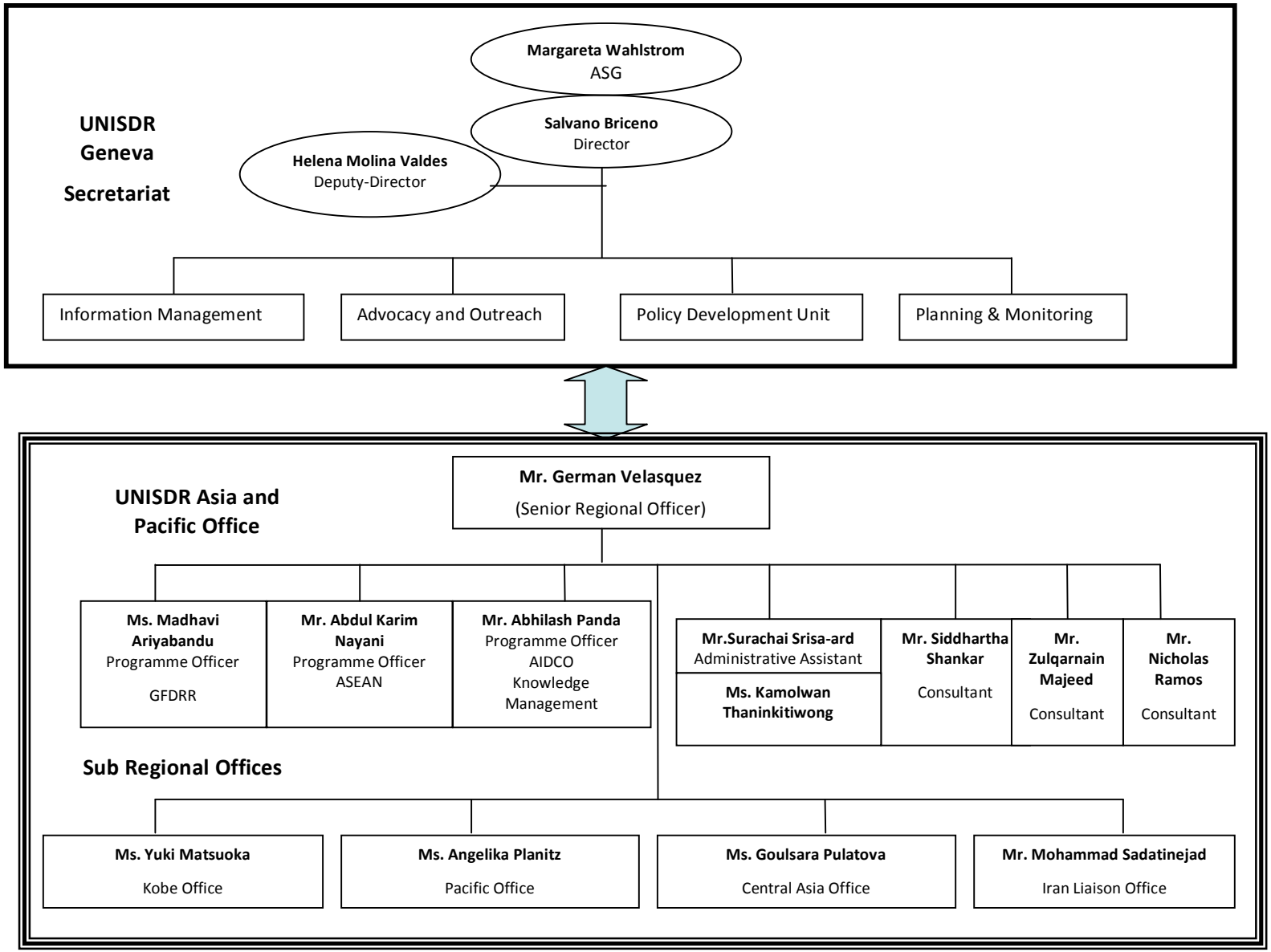
Asia Pacific Specific

Regional Strategic priorities for 2008-2009 (a) to (g)

II Purpose of the Evaluation (1pp.)
2.1 Relevance
2.2 Efficiency
2.3 Effectiveness
2.4 Impact and Sustainability
III Evaluation Methodology (1pp.)
3.1 Methodological Framework for Assessment of Results
IV The Evaluator (1pp.)
4.1 Qualifications
4.2 Professional Skills
V Duration and Deliverables (1pp.)

Figure 1. Structure of the Office personnel – Organigram @ February 2009 (on page to follow)

Structure of the Office



1.2 Approach and Methodology

Much of the evaluation results are drawn from stakeholder views, suggestions and opinions and not those of the evaluator. In this case, the use of a sizeable sample in an on-line survey has provided rich and varied views on the adequacy, the effectiveness and the overall impacts of the work of ISDR in the Asia and Pacific region.

In deciding on an overall approach, while the Terms of Reference provided clear project requirements, a **strategy** was needed to satisfy the TOR. The main element of this **planning** was to match the needs of the evaluation to an appropriate way of collecting information, consulting the main persons and organizations, and ensuring that these inputs could shape the evaluation.

The assistance and contributions of the **partners** and organizations that ISDR are working with (collaborators) is at the very heart of this evaluation. Subsequently, a strong **qualitative approach** to the assessment has been adopted. There are a number of reasons for this approach:

- ✓ Results are equally as scientific as more quantitative indicator-based assessments;
- ✓ Given the available time, this approach could accommodate a much wider range of inputs and data collection;
- ✓ Using a combination of data collection techniques including observation, formal and informal interviews and survey could provide a good "big picture" that is necessary given the lack of prior baseline data, and
- ✓ The expression of collective views and opinions from practitioners in the field has proven to be an accurate, reliable and authoritative source of data on the impact and effectiveness of disaster risk reduction actions.

The use of an **on-line survey** has several advantages: it is a powerful communications tool; it illustrates ISDR's consultative, open and transparent way of doing business. Most importantly, it is an opportunity to identify (and subsequently address) needed change and development of the organization, based on evidence from clients, users and partners.

In order to use the available time as efficiently as possible, and given the extensive coverage of the survey, it was agreed that the country visits proposed on the TOR would not be undertaken in lieu of the time-intensive requirements of the survey. All raw data from the survey will be compiled on a separate CD for the record. The survey was completely anonymous, however a list of those individuals and their organizations that were asked to respond is included in the survey records.

Effective Evaluation

A program evaluation can help ensure the quality of feedback about a program by making certain that the evaluation is **future action-directed**, caries both scientific and stakeholder credibility, and takes a holistic approach.

Most stakeholders are eager to learn of new ideas on what to do next, and will find evaluations useful if they offer; i) **conclusions and recommendations** on how well programs have worked and ii) provide information that assists the stakeholders in providing some **ideas** on what needs to be done next to consistently attain and go beyond program goals.

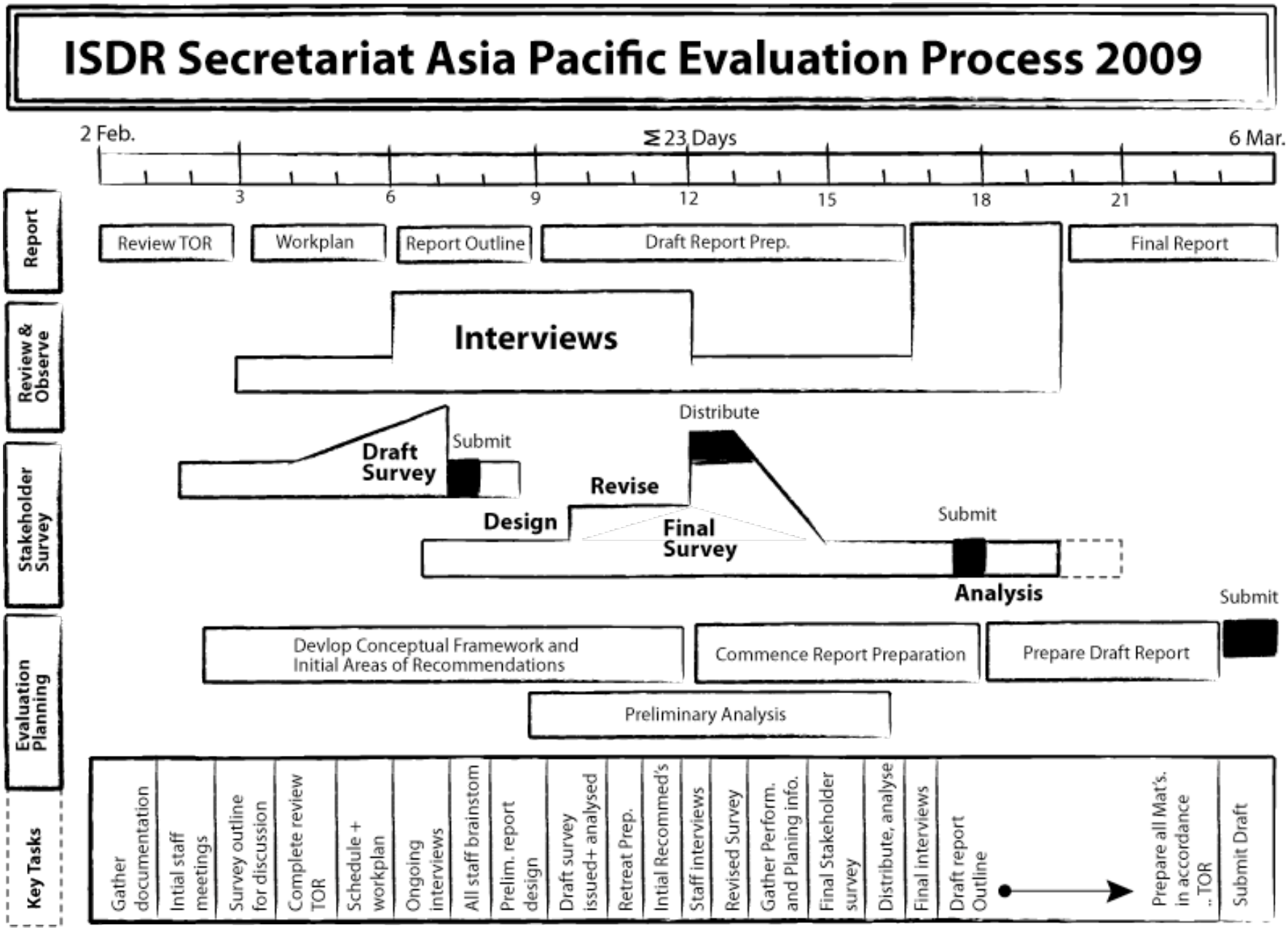
The most useful program evaluation therefore needs to equip stakeholders with knowledge of those program elements that are working well and those that are not; a determination of **needed improvements**. This can help to continually guarantee or improve the quality of services provided. One important characteristic distinguishing program evaluation is its need, rarely shared by other disciplines, to use a **holistic** (comprehensive) **approach** to assessment. This has been the approach taken in this evaluation.

Overall Evaluation Process

The diagram on the following page illustrates in detail the complete evaluation process over the course of the 23 days. This was prepared in draft at the initial Work Planning stage (week one) and presented in a simplified form to the Staff Team Building Retreat as a brief overview of the evaluation process.

Further detail and elaboration on specific actions that were drawn from this process have been compiled in the Report III – Annual Evaluation Guidelines.

Figure 2. Evaluation Process Diagram (next page).


ISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific Evaluation Process 2009
2 Feb.
≤ 23 Days
6 Mar.
3
6
9
12
15
18
21
Report
Review & Observe
Stakeholder Survey
Evaluation Planning
Key Tasks
Review TOR
Workplan
Report Outline
Draft Report Prep.
Final Report
Interviews
Draft Survey
Submit
Distribute
Revise
Design
Final Survey
Submit
Analysis
Submit
Devlop Conceptual Framework and Initial Areas of Recommendations
Commence Report Preparation
Prepare Draft Report
Preliminary Analysis
Gather documentation
Intial staff meetings
Survey outline for discussion
Complete review TOR
Schedule + workplan
Ongoing interviews
All staff brainstom
Prelim. report design
Draft survey issued+ analysed
Retreat Prep.
Intial Recommed's
Staff interviews
Revised Survey
Gather Perform. and Planing info.
Final Stakeholder survey
Distribute, analyse
Final interviews
Draft report Outline
Prepare all Mat's. in accordance ..TOR
Submit Draft

Evaluation Methodology

As is typical of evaluations of this nature, it is convenient to describe the process in three distinct phases:

Phase I. **Information and situation**
documentary collection and review
initial interviews (telephone and in person)
draft survey
(attending the office Team Building Retreat)
final survey
staff brainstorming

Phase II. **Analysis and Overview**
survey analysis
interview summaries
observation notes, performance assessment
comprehensive overview
preliminary reporting needs and outline
verification of preliminary findings

Phase III. **Reporting and recommendations**
preliminary recommendations
staff review and response to recommendations
partner and stakeholder feedback (survey)
survey results analysis
draft recommendations, discussion, approval
final evaluation report (Evaluation Brief 8pp. and Evaluation Guidelines 8pp.)

Assessment Framework and Key Questions

The table below provides a short summary of some of the key areas of investigation. These questions are derived specifically from the needs of ISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific.

Assessment Framework and Key Questions

Key evaluation questions	Information needs	Information sources	Comments
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE • How **relevant** is ISDR AP to the regional stakeholders? • How **effective** is ISDR AP in working towards achieving the Mission[13] and stakeholder expectations? • How **efficiently** is ISDR AP converting its resources to achieving its objectives?	Diverse inputs and opinions, informal discussion views, etc. ...ditto... Same for Ministerial – relevance, value, coordination? What are the big ticket expenses?	Survey, interviews Discussions with HQ Administrative staff	Added value of ISDR specifically, is there a clear role and who can tell this story? Formal and informal inquiries are relevant.

[13] See an outline of the ISDR Secretariat Mission and primary Goals and Objectives in the Resource Text.

• Is ISDR AP financially **sustainable**? • Are work plan outcomes and outputs being **adequately** achieved?	Overall financial statements, status reports, income and expenditure. All staff discussions	Jerry, Nong All staff, survey, all stakeholders	Mid-term on 08-09mplanmakes it difficult to gauge achievement as it is an informal mid-term review.
Office Capacity • Do existing office **capabilities** match current needs and demand? • To what extent may future **demand** affect current office skill sets? • Are the **impacts** of the work tracked sufficiently to illustrate the value-added of ISDR AP?	Same as below Is demand being investigated at all? What impacts if any are being monitored and / or evaluated?	Interviews with partners; Staff Staff, interviews with partners, survey	Check alignment of skills to the need to satisfy the four core functions and capabilities on the office. Impact indicators need to be established for future evaluations.
Work Environment • Do existing **stakeholders** actively support ISDR AP? • How does the **administrative** and legal environment affect the office? • Are office **roles and reporting** lines clear and implemented in a timely manner? • Are **communications** with partners and stakeholders adequate?	Donor views less important here. Status of admin agreements with ESCAP, OCHA.. etc. One on one interviews with selected staff. How does everyone communicate? Meetings, phone, not at all?	Interviews with ISDR staff involved in partner liaison; annual reports Interviews with staff; ISDR internal reports if available, interim donor reports Interviews and survey	A happy office is a productive office. Is ISDR a legal entity, will that change in the not too distant future?
Motivation • Is **staff** turnover affecting performance? • Does the **workload** match staffing needs? • Are existing **operations** and management systems affecting morale? • Is the office able to respond to crises and matters of **urgency**? • Are we having **fun**?	Why are staff leaving? Is there a thread of consistency? What are the overall stress levels? How frustrating is it dealing with a very top-heavy decision making apparatus? ...smiles, laughter, "...good morning!"	Interviews, personal information. Interviews. Observation. No real need for rapid response to disasters. Observation	**Administration is the backbone to the efficiency of the office.**

RISKS	Lack of time or availability for adequate interviews. If no face-to-face meetings are held, are telephone discussions adequate?	Can I get access to the right people? Can I read through all the relevant documentation?	Most risks can be avoided with a planned and strategic approach to the stakeholder survey to gather a wide range of opinion. It will never be a substitute for face-to-face interviews.

Figure 3. Assessment Framework and Key Questions.

Stakeholder Survey[14]

The anonymous on-line survey was at the very heart of the evaluation. The collective opinion and contributions of a range of field-based stakeholders is quite reliable data when considered collectively. The survey results have proven to be most effective in addressing the key purpose of the evaluation.

It was agreed that the most effective means of gathering inputs from the widest possible representation of partners and stakeholders was to initiate an **on-line survey** that would not be an arduous task for respondents. This was undertaken in two phases:

Stage I. (2 February to 14 February)
Design, formulate, pre-test and undertake a sample testing with at least five respondents (eleven response received).
Revise the survey based on that feedback, derive preliminary results for presentation at an interim reporting stage (presented to staff at the Team Building Retreat 16-19 February).

Stage II. (16 February to 6 March)
Finalize survey questions, determine data analysis methods, create mailing list, distribute with seven-day turn-around, analyze and summarize results for inclusion in the Evaluation Report and the Evaluation Guidelines, prepare presentation on survey results.

Approach
The Terms of Reference provided much of the content of the initial drafts of the survey. Primarily, the survey attempted to gather fairly broad contextual information with little attempt at quantitative data collection. This was to gather information on overall impacts, general efficiency and overall adequacy of the efforts to reduce disaster risks in the Asia and Pacific region. Knowing more of the big picture of the working context and environment would then provide the evaluation with an understanding of;

i) the extent of **demand** to be addressed by the office for needed change,

ii) how to identify **priorities for action** (key recommendations) short- and mid-term, and

iii) how to provide clear **evidence** of adequacy, effectiveness and impact of ISDR in the region.

Pre-testing showed the survey could be done in about fifteen to twenty minutes, and up to thirty minutes if additional effort was put into the text questions. Surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents have spent the maximum amount of time to add a large volume of rich text view and opinion responses. This richness is evident in the level of detail possible in the recommendations to follow.

[14] See the full list of questions issued in the Final Survey enclosed in the Resource Book CD. Although the survey was totally anonymous, a list of all those to whom the survey was issued is also included.

Technique
Readily available software was used to build the survey. This included a simple data analysis capability on numeric questions. Simple data analysis was done using response rate/percentages and there were only two preferential ranking questions for which high and low option/choice conclusions have been drawn. More than half the questions were text based. These have all been summarized into suggestions and recommendations from the respondents.

Initial pilot testing (n=11)
The draft survey sample included eleven responses. Four or five would have been adequate. The final survey was sent to around fifty individuals (identified in consultation with staff and donors) who were in a position to offer valuable inputs to the evaluation. A fifty percent response rate was expected, however with numerous follow-up telephone conversations, the response rate was around 65%, more than adequate for minimal trend indications and basic statistical analysis. This was a very positive indicator of both interest and commitment to assisting ISDR as it continues to develop credibility in the region.

Analysis
Of the thirty questions, more than half required only simple YES/NO answers. The pre-testing indicated the need for a third option neither yes nor no. "Something in between Yes and NO" was added as an option as well as an optional text box to explain one's answer. Several pre-test respondent also suggested the additional text box. A simple percentage breakdown was used to summarize the overall collective opinion on these questions. The text was incorporated into narrative recommendations on the question topics.

The remaining text question responses were summarized, paraphrased by the evaluator, and presented as collective recommendations in the categories in Part Two below.

Brief notes on the results
In all, thirty-four responses were received, with an almost overwhelming volume of qualitative text data; a very positive result. This is a statistically valid sample number that supports an accepted level of reliability and validity of conclusions. Although each sample (respondent) represented a fairly heavy 3% weighting, thanks to the "no answer" response being very low, this was still therefore a good sample.

The final survey then contained twenty-four main questions, with supplementary text boxes or comments available to almost all twenty-four questions. Fifteen were simple 'yes'/'no'/'neither yes or no' checkbox answers. There were two questions requiring a ranking of optional answers, and the remaining seven were open-ended text responses.

There were six questions that emerged as the key questions based on the sheer volume of response (2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6. 4.6 and 4.7). These questions dealt with the following topics:

- ✓ Has ISDR been successful in strengthening regional coordination, cooperation...?
- ✓ HFA reporting
- ✓ Impacts of ISDR
- ✓ Existing knowledge tools
- ✓ Climate change adaptation and the link to DRR
- ✓ A vision for ISDR

These are discussed in detail and specific suggestions on each topic are contained in the recommendations in the next section.

Part Two: Analysis and Recommendations

Introduction to Part Two

2.1 Analysis: Role, Impact and Value Added

2.2 Recommendations: Core Functions and Capabilities

Advocacy and Partnerships

Knowledge Management and Communications

Monitoring and Evaluation

Operations, Coordination and Management

2.3 Summary Recommendations

Recommendations Summarized by Activities

Typology of Recommendations

Introduction to Part Two

It should be noted once again, the vast majority of recommendations and the narrative leading to those recommendations come from **stakeholders**, facilitated (and with some paraphrasing) by the evaluator. The priorities attached to these recommendations have come from the Coordinator and staff in the Regional Office.

Part Two of the Report is in two main parts; i) the **analysis** of collaborator inputs with a summary of perceptions of the achievements to date, and ii) followed by a range of **recommendations** based on the discussion topics. The analysis includes a brief discussion of the subtitle topic, arising from interviews, observation and the Stakeholder Survey.

The narrative discussion below focuses on ISDR's role, impact and value added, as well as narratives attached to each recommendation. As a means of both justification for the recommendation, and as an indication of real and/or perceived need, the discussion on **progress** in achieving results below is broken into four parts:

i) Relevance;

ii) Efficiency;

iii) Effectiveness; and

iv) Impact and sustainability.

A number of stakeholders have suggested combining the discussions on advocacy and knowledge management, as there is a fine line that differentiates these activities. It could be argued that knowledge management is a critical tool and component of comprehensive advocacy and awareness building for disaster risk reduction. Given the acceptance of these core functions in ISDR overall mandate, it was decided to keep these sections separate, with the addition of a clear, practical **communications strategy** to deliver those messages and information materials that both advocacy and knowledge management require.

As with any organizational evaluation, the **views of staff** are critical to making the recommended changes real, and actually implementing them. For this purpose, a number of one-on-one interviews we conducted, as well as an all-staff brainstorming was carried out in the first week of the evaluation. A second all-staff meeting was convened just prior to the completion of the evaluation to do a 'reality-check' on the main recommendations. The list of issues below summarizes the staff concerns.

Staff Challenges in the Office

Staffing levels, stress and planning

- ✓ How to keep track of our commitments and focus staff on priorities, reduce stress + scale – up at the same time
- ✓ Planning/action disconnect -> Too diversified
- ✓ Too many last minutes actions, sometimes need to complete assignment with incomplete information
- ✓ More clarity about role/status of ISDR within UN System
- ✓ Keep staff happy (proactive to stay)
- ✓ Better admin/business processes needed throughout the office
- ✓ Admin/procedures/bureaucratic
- ✓ Right audience -> More stress

How and When to say No

- ✓ How to advocate more effectively and strategically
- ✓ How to scale-up HFA implementation drastically
- ✓ How to raise more national resources for DRR
- ✓ Need more clearly defined and clear scope of work
- ✓ Take on less project management responsibilities, less projects
- ✓ Fewer projects better quality delivery.

Building / sustaining partnership

- ✓ Planning for knowledge distribution is not happening
- ✓ DRR activities are not in priority of many government
- ✓ Improved operationalisation of partnerships, Better positioning of UNISDR
- ✓ Budget predictability, safeguards
- ✓ More understanding and support from HQ + vice versa
- ✓ Training of admin and finance staff in the region Clearer conditions in agreements with partners to minimize confusion
- ✓ Standardization of reporting procedures if possible
- ✓ Strengthening partnerships at national/country level/sub region

A vision for 2009

- ✓ Concrete decisions on priorities for 2009
- ✓ Better alignment of regional and global programming
- ✓ Better exchange between the regions and learning from others how to solve problems
- ✓ Getting clarification on expectations of national posts
- ✓ Becoming a stronger team and speaking in one voice
- ✓ Learning experience from Asia Pacific for mainstreaming across secretariat
- ✓ Working better as a team, getting to know the team
- ✓ Understanding/agreement of what we need to do in 2009 and 2010/2011
- ✓ Better clarity on our role among all as piece of a bigger ISDR family/Partnership

The analysis and recommendations to follow will also incorporate some of these and other suggestions from staff gathered from interviews and observations in the office.

2.1 Analysis: role, impact and value added

Stakeholder contributions

The following discussion addresses overall **relevance and performance** of UNISDR assessed by analyzing the impacts the organization has had in the region, how this role has added value to reducing risk to the adverse impacts of disasters, and the appropriateness of the coordination mechanisms that the regional office has fostered over the last few years.

Much of the following material is drawn from the responses in the Stakeholder Survey and may not necessarily be the view of the evaluator. All responses, qualitative and quantitative are contained in the Resource Book CD along with all relevant data on design and implementation of the survey.

Impact on DRR needs and priorities

Overall the impact of the work of ISDR in the region has been very positive. It should continue building that foundation for systematic disaster risk reduction in the region (its key mandate) but refrain from implementing programmes, rather to be the driving force behind those programmes.

- ✓ Doing a good job with advocacy comes with an expectation that more tangible implementation measures will follow!
- ✓ While partnerships and HFA reporting seems to have been successful, overall reduction of risk has not had the intended impact.
- ✓ Impact has been positive but not in terms of implementing programs – ISDR is not an implementing actor.
- ✓ High transaction costs have been incurred in the regional processes, with little or limited substantial impact on governments commitment to dealing with underlying causes of disaster risk.
- ✓ A clear picture of DRR needs and priorities in the region is still missing.
- ✓ A-P Secretariat is still considering/establishing its own mandate/role, and regional coherence and the regional platform/fora remain weak.
- ✓ Greater impact could be achieved if ISDR would develop time-bound strategies in line with the HFA.
- ✓ There is evidence that capacity has been built illustrated by the new partnerships that have developed with multilateral agencies, NGOs and ISDR as well as the bilateral country assistance plans and programmes.
- ✓ The HFA is and will remain the area where ISDR has the greatest opportunity to gain traction on risk reduction.
- ✓ ISDR have been slow of the mark with the climate change debate which is why DRR is now left at the station.

Links between disasters and development and 'mainstreaming'

- ✓ There is a need for more concrete tools for governments to illustrate, in a practical sense, how to go about integration/mainstreaming.
- ✓ For governments and other public sector actors, DRR advocacy has been only partly successful in highlighting and developing the awareness of disaster risk reduction as a development issue.

- ✓ While there may be some understanding in the region, this has not translated into much action on mainstreaming as yet. "Understanding is one thing - words to action is another".
- ✓ The lack of progress made in integration/mainstreaming DRR is demonstrative of this link not being adequately made by decision-makers.
- ✓ A key barrier to greater understanding is the poor evidence base for considering DRR as a development concern.
- ✓ If ISDR could articulate these linkages more clearly (and the economic benefit/business case to governments/partners) greater understanding could be achieved.
- ✓ ISDR must build a stronger more active role for mainstreaming DRR into sectoral plans and poverty reduction strategies (although mainstreaming is often not well understood).
- ✓ ISDR does have a key role in supporting all stakeholders for mainstreaming DRR, a role that should focus on advisory and technical support and the development of tools, best practice case studies and other knowledge products rather than any direct implementation.

Coordination, cooperation and support

- ✓ The DRR arena is in the danger of being over-populated. Demand for services should be thoroughly researched and understood to replace ad hoc committee decisions on perceived need.
- ✓ More small events would be very useful, promoting cooperation, coordinating effort on topics in high demand (e.g. linkages between climate change adaptation and DRR).
- ✓ Directly encourage Pacific governments to involve the private and NGO sectors more in DRR.
- ✓ At present, this is a very fragmented process even within the UN system where ESCAP, ISDR and others try to fulfill this role. A clearly articulated (collective) mandate as to which organization has (lead) responsibility would be useful.
- ✓ Continued well coordinated expansion of IAP; continued support for groups such as ASEAN and SAARC to improve their DRR capacities; and for others (e.g. ESCAP) to clarify their DRR roles and avoid potential duplications with ISDR mandate.
- ✓ ISDR should take into consideration the views of other stakeholders in the region; more bottom-up actions may be useful.
- ✓ ISDR needs to enhance its organizational capacity to manage and maintain regional initiatives.
- ✓ There is a need to move beyond rhetorical discussion on regional cooperation to concrete activities -- such as regional scale risk assessments -- that advance the cause of regional cooperation.
- ✓ Since the adoption of the HFA, regional collaborations have been accelerated and increased dramatically which should be considered as significant progress.
- ✓ Still needs exist to resolve the organizational rivalry; the development of platforms and networks is useful in promoting cooperation.
- ✓ There is still potential to be realized with the IAP; e.g. more practical operationalisation of IAP as a true partnership.

Follow-up to Kobe (WCDR 2005)
The office has performed well in this regard, although stakeholders expressed frustration at the lack of practical actions on the ground.

- ✓ There is still a need to build greater understanding of DRR amongst non-traditional stakeholders.
- ✓ Many countries are still struggling to develop national strategies aligned with HFA.
- ✓ ISDR could contribute more meaningfully to the implementation of the HFA and other linked instruments at national level within Pacific countries.

HFA Reporting
Stakeholders expressed consistent but mild dissatisfaction with the HFA reporting processes. A wide range of suggestions were made on improving this process.

- ✓ It would be helpful if each indicator has sub-sets of questions.
- ✓ Government recognition, ownership and capacity to report are lacking.
- ✓ Jargon like "drivers of progress" and many other terms should be avoided.
- ✓ There has got to be more investment in ensuring that Pacific countries can adequately fulfill reporting requirements.
- ✓ Very cumbersome, not well understood; limited capacities in countries to report; NDMOs requested to do it when it is an all-government business. Need to explain better, provide tools for establishing M&E systems.
- ✓ There needs to be a continued emphasis on encouraging reporting at the country level. This should not only be directed at governments but also at the local and international organizations supporting governments and/or working at the community level.
- ✓ CBDRM could be better captured. Format is too tedious.
- ✓ Improving HFA reporting requires a dedicated capacity building approach. It is not enough to tell governments that the HFA reporting process and the reports provide important guidance for strengthening their DRR programme; we need to be able to demonstrate this through on-the-job support.
- ✓ Reports, relevant information and data should be made public (or to key stakeholders) and more accessible.
- ✓ Indicators are essentially adequate, although some stakeholders disagreed (one third).

Tangible measurable impacts of ISDR in the region

- ✓ Advocacy and partnership building above all else – the key functional impact.
- ✓ Awareness created where it was not before; regional discussions and cooperation again where it was not there previously.
- ✓ Change in negative attitudes of stakeholders on DRR & inculcate culture of good practices of DRR at ground level.
- ✓ Increased political commitment on DRR.
- ✓ ISDR through the HFA has been able to motivate governments to pursue disaster risk reduction more aggressively; ISDR has helped to boost the profile of DRM.
- ✓ ISDR has spread DRR concept across humanitarian sector worldwide.
- ✓ ISDR has made the subject of DRR one of the important issues for development.

Means of measurement

- ✓ Increase in investment
- ✓ Interviews with people impacted by disasters
- ✓ National budget allocations
- ✓ The extent to which hazard, vulnerability and risk assessments have been incorporated into national planning and budgetary processes in Pacific countries.
- ✓ Look more at impact assessment of practical measures.
- ✓ Presence of a law or policy on DRR with guidelines for implementation by government agencies and local government units.
- ✓ A combination of surveys of awareness and surveys of actions taken.
- ✓ Case studies would be a nice complement to the existing indicators.
- ✓ Longer-term planning with national authorities and stakeholders -Periodic progress reviews.
- ✓ Plans developed and implemented.
- ✓ Bangladesh is a good example and a significant opportunity to measure tangible impact and change.

Knowledge Tools

- ✓ Needs a thorough analysis on the reach and who actually reads the materials – demand analysis. There is no evaluation of whether and how the publications, which ISDR is disseminating, are being used.
- ✓ Contribution on professional resources such as practical guidelines, manuals, etc. should be further encouraged.
- ✓ ISDR should help Pacific countries improve ICT capacity**.**
- ✓ Explore more participatory information sharing methods, blogs, etc. and ways to showcase a wider range of players beyond the UN.
- ✓ Need to make a stronger portal website that covers DRR related meetings and information.
- ✓ Need to be more targeted, beyond good practice to some form of analysis and guidance.
- ✓ There needs to be much greater service orientation to these knowledge tools rather than only \"pushers\" of information.
- ✓ Make these tools in and with communities.
- ✓ ISDR Informs publication is a good tool to promote DRR.
- ✓ Regional approach should be further pursued for publications. For instance, ISDR Informs Asia should be published more frequently, and in a few languages. ISDR Highlights Asia could be made available in a few languages.

Building and supporting partnerships

There was very strong support for this positive achievement of the regional office, while there was a consensus on the need to provide support to increase capacity of organizations implementing the HFA and undertaking reporting.

- ✓ Advocating for improved disaster risk reduction should be the priority issue for ISDR.

- ✓ For both the ISDR partnership and the AMCDRR the move to have a work plan and follow-up actions with responsibilities of Governments and Partners outlined is important.
- ✓ Clearer mandates for the IAP and Asian Ministerial are needed including roles and responsibilities of members, and forums need to be MUCH more action and outcomes oriented, not just focused on sharing information.
- ✓ Climate change partners need to be linked into discussions where possible.
- ✓ More active participation of Governments in the preparation of the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR.
- ✓ Action plan/follow up action should be drawn from the real needs of the region.
- ✓ The ISDR Asia Partnership is an excellent mechanism (or platform, forum, network) to discuss the common issues and promote cooperation. Information sharing, promotion of cooperation and sharing of funds however need to be improved.
- ✓ The office clearly lacks adequate human resource capacity, being overstretched with many issues. There is an imbalance between staffing in GVA and in the regions and a mismatch between expectations of the ISDR regional office and their capacities to do what is expected.

Coordination in the region

Overall there is a consistent and positive view of the relevance and value of regional coordination initiatives such as the Ministerial conference and the ISDR Asia Partnership.

- ✓ Impressive quantitative positive growth in the membership of both of these organizations is evidence of their value and significance to the DRR community in Asia and the Pacific.
- ✓ As always, there remain opportunities to strengthen these coordination networks.
- ✓ Both fora could benefit from greater visibility. Encourage the Pacific to embrace discussions on DRR at the Ministerial level as well.
- ✓ There should be an intergovernmental consultative process leading to the Ministerial Conference on DRR. IAP, as an informal multi-stakeholder forum, continues providing its support in the preparations.
- ✓ Unfortunately they are often too official to involve the key practitioners. . Annual progress review is a must along with annual action plan for IAP. The IAP meetings should be convened more systematically.
- ✓ Need a physical commitment such as Asia-Pacific Disaster Fund for DRR Activities, etc.
- ✓ Ministerial meeting should be held less frequently, and be used as the official inter-governmental meeting.
- ✓ There are organizations in the region with which ISDR should have much closer relationships (e.g. JICA, Manila Observatory, U Philippines Los Banos, UNDP generally, media groups, IRIN, SPREP, Mekong Commission).
- ✓ Significant opportunity to engage more systematically and deliberately with UN Country Teams throughout the region MUST be taken up as a matter of urgency.
- ✓ The regional office is well linked to global DRR initiatives, however more joint planning with the UN/ISDR Secretariat in Geneva, and keeping regional partners aware of those activities and events is needed. The gap in information exchange and coherence seems more to come from GVA.
- ✓ Region-specific needs and priorities should be driving global agenda, effective DRM has to be tailored to the culture, 'hazardscape' and development needs of the region.

- ✓ Demand for support must be clearly articulated. Support should be given in priority to most disaster-prone countries and least developed countries upon their request.

Government awareness and political will for DRR

The unanimous view of stakeholders is that yes, ISDR has been effective in building this awareness and political will – but to a limited extent only.

- ✓ ISDR does not have the capacities to work with all governments on a bilateral basis and assist them. UN Country offices and regional structures should do that. ISDR should work more on partnerships and action plans with UN structures so to achieve these objectives.
- ✓ ISDR should do more in terms of assisting Pacific countries to deliver more tangible DRR results through direct technical assistance.
- ✓ It is difficult for ISDR to undertake this task on a sustained level. This should be the responsibility of the Country Team lead by UNDP Resident Representative/ UN Resident Coordinator.
- ✓ If "risk reduction has to become everybody's business" ISDR needs more robust agenda to assist all stakeholders.
- ✓ There is a lingering impression that ISDR is a funding agency and can provide funding for DRR activities.
- ✓ There is very strong support for ISDR to provide technical support and advisory support but NOT direct implementation.
- ✓ ISDR must respond to the needs at the national level and how nations perceive ISDR can contribute.

ISDR in the coming 3-5 years

Advocating for improved disaster risk reduction is the number one area that stakeholders would like to see ISDR develop, strengthen and adopt as the priority issue over the next three to five years.

- ✓ Having said that, there was strong support for ensuring ISDR maintained strength, capabilities and expertise in all core functions. Virtually all stakeholders agreed the three core functions must be maintained, and it would be logical to have these three skill sets as a basic minimum at the regional level to support the Regional Coordinator and support staff.
- ✓ If anything the mandate should be reduced to focus more on advocacy while that need exists; it may and should diminish over the next five years. This will be a good measure of overall impact of DRR in the region.
- ✓ In five years time, hopefully the shift will be more towards monitoring and evaluation and the intelligent use of practice and experiences shared throughout the region.
- ✓ It one area was to be chose to focus on out of the entire range of activities; advocacy is the first choice for the majority of stakeholders (ahead of monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management).
- ✓ There are some activities that ProVention (for example) is better able to do - it would be better if ISDR were able to assist/fund ProVention in the development of appropriate DRM/DRR tools.

Climate change adaptation and the link to disaster risk reduction

This was one of the most discussed and written about topics of the evaluation. Almost everybody (90% of survey respondents) endorsed the idea of ISDR having a (lead) role and responsibility to better inform regional governments and stakeholders of the best available information on this topic as it relates to disaster risk reduction.

- ✓ Climate change and adaptation and the links to disaster risk reduction are of increased interest to much of the international community. Citizens of cities, coastal communities and rural areas are deeply concerned about the possible consequences of these weather-related hazards.
- ✓ Linking with UNFCCC to complete the puzzle would be a good start!
- ✓ Focus on advocacy related to the very strong connection between adaptation and risk reduction.
- ✓ ISDR should not be advocating for climate change adaptation. Its focus should be on advocacy to bring the CCA and DRR communities closer together.
- ✓ It is relevant for ISDR to address KM, Advocacy and M&E within these parameters. In doing so, it should be coordinating with existing institutions.
- ✓ All ISDR staff should get training on CC to be able to provide the required advise to partners and advocate effectively.
- ✓ Knowledge management and advocacy roles should be strengthened.

A vision for the future (...say, ten years from now)

- ✓ ISDR The Historian! No More NEW Disasters!
- ✓ A lead advocate ensuring that DRR is included in all aspects of development, with earmarked resources as a % of all development activities.
- ✓ A household name within the UN system and the main DRR agency.
- ✓ To develop the regions to a state where the need for the ISDR no longer applies.
- ✓ International conferences should be banned and replaced with more meaningful regional forums as a means of information gathering and dissemination.
- ✓ Refocused action to better advocacy. Better support from GVA and from other UN agencies.
- ✓ In 10 years, ideally DRR will be common sense!!!!
- ✓ By then, advocacy with Governments will be unnecessary, and M+E (for sustaining the gains) and knowledge management will be the work that remains.
- ✓ A vibrant movement that takes disparate actors together, advocates for appropriate change in policy, and connects policy making to practice and vice versa.
- ✓ ISDR has turned into a movement that is not only known to a relatively small group of DRR actors, but has been fully embraced by the development community which considers disaster risk in all steps of development planning and implementation.
- ✓ The top most advisory organization on DRR and poverty reduction with a lean and mean secretariat.

Progress in achieving results

The following discussion is a brief summary of the four areas or criteria against which the performance of the regional office can be gauged, namely; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact and sustainability. The lengthy stakeholder contributions above address all of these aspects of how the office is perceived to have achieved what is set out to do. The following discussion should be prefaced by a recognition that the evaluator was not able to interview all possible partners and collaborators, but rather a representative sample was chosen. No Government representatives were interviewed.

Work Plan format

It should be stated clearly that the work plan is overly **complex** in its current format. It could benefit from a format change to a **matrix** rather than a narrative. Use of cells in an excel table does restrict the number of words one can use, and this can be useful. While the content is comprehensive, it could benefit from the addition of basic scheduling, Gantt chart graphing, to accommodate comparisons between timing of events, use of resources and staff time, and match this to staff leave and other milestones and key events.

The attempt to retrospectively create linkages to the **Global Work Plan** (which was then altered without consultation with the regional office), has also led to complications such as deliverables not matching activities, Area of Work matching the Global Focus Areas but Outcomes not matching, etc. Understandably, this has been a most frustrating process for all involved and this needs to be addressed urgently, while this current mid-term review is alive. Detailed recommendations are enclosed in Section 2.2 below. See also the Global and Regional Work Plan Illustrations in Figure 4. below.

Relevance

*How **relevant** is ISDR AP to the regional stakeholders?*

- ✓ The alignment of how well the actions of the regional office correspond to the real needs on the ground, in the countries of the region has met with **mixed success**. While projects and programmes have been undertaken, managed and received well by beneficiaries, the **demand** for ISDR goods (publications, knowledge products, technical assistance) and services is not well understood.
- ✓ This will require a concerted effort in the immediate future to consider a more open and transparent means of preparation of the next biennium work plan where **stakeholders** will have the opportunity to contribute and layout the national DRR priorities that respond to precisely what the needs are on the ground for disaster risk reduction. Discussions with ISDR, through the IAP, will hopefully lead to agreed region-wide priorities for a programme designed and implemented within the structure of the HFA.
- ✓ Donors and beneficiaries have expressed **overall approval** of the way in which the regional office has been successful in building strong partnerships and continuing to provide advocacy and leadership in DRR where possible. The relevance of ISDR's actions was brought into question in discussions of the continued confusion about the roles of the regional office and that of other organizations involved in DRR (including ESCAP), and in ISDR's contributions to post-disaster recovery processes in Myanmar.
- ✓ It appears that **further benefit** to the relevance of ISDR's actions could be gained with even more adherence to the five priorities of the HFA, including a closer alignment of the work plan to the five priorities if that is possible.
- ✓ It seems little progress has been made on the **Outcome 1.1** where the activities to support OCHA and the RC system in UNDP Country Offices in the region (as well as making better use of the CCA/UNDAF Guidelines and training for mainstreaming DRR). This is a significant opportunity in terms of exposure, **relevance**, and as a very

important entry point to the **Country Team system** throughout the region which is arguably the most important client.

- ✓ The **Regional Platform** has not taken shape as quickly and as explicitly (its membership, contributors, the leadership, its home if appropriate) as intended although a number of parts are in place. There seems to be a lack of understanding behind the need, the relationship with other regional initiatives (SAARC, ASEAN ADB and others), and the added value of this 'platform'.
- ✓ There is considerable scope for improvement where the work plans for all the ISDR coordinated programmes and initiatives could be much closer aligned to **HFA principles** and priorities. Indeed, this is a key recommendation regarding any and all future agreements with donors and partners, that such agreements undergo a thorough screening process for the addition of monitoring and evaluation processes at appropriate times (including deliverables) as well as for closer alignment to HFA principles and priorities.
- ✓ In terms of **relevance to partners and collaborators** in the region, the HFA is and will remain a main vehicle for maintaining this relevance to the disaster reduction community for the foreseeable future.

Efficiency

*How **efficiently** is ISDR AP converting its resources to achieving its objectives?*

- ✓ Most stakeholders felt their **participation** has been adequate and well accommodated apart from a lack of systematic meetings and agenda preparations with the IAP meetings. It was also felt that host Governments and other key Government partners could and should have greater access to the preparatory stages of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction. There was considerable opinion suggesting fewer Ministerial Conferences, maybe every three years instead of two.
- ✓ The office is sustaining itself quite efficiently at present in the absence of regular core budgetary support from Headquarters. Donors are generally pleased with the use of resources, however the heavy burden of **travel budget** components is alarming.
- ✓ An important aspect of the overall efficiency of the office is associated with two sources of time consuming bureaucratic **procedures**[15];

  i) the ability of the administrative staff to deliver services to the office in a timely and efficient manner due mainly to the current set-up with UNESCAP as the host for the provision of administrative services, including **travel and procurement**. This arrangement is hampering office efficiency and alternative arrangements exist (utilization of UNDP Regional Centre Finance and Operations OST team) which should be investigated as soon as possible; and

  ii) top-down decisions required for relatively minor changes to contractual agreements involving minor amounts of money, or no money at all in the case of **no-cost extensions** to contract time, usually to accommodate the submission of bills for work completed the previous quarter. Many of these decisions go before the OCHA Committee in Geneva. A level of local (regional) **autonomy** should be granted such as for example the $2500 limit for expenditure on procurement requiring only a desk review of three providers, cash paid from a petty cash fund (as is the case with UNDP Operations policy). Preliminary discussions with UNDP Regional Centre suggest that an arrangement could be established. OCHA has done this to a limited extent already.

[15] Staff have voiced frustration at the /IMIS System as being overly complicated and not user friendly.

- ✓ Recent **staff turnover** has had an affect on the ability of the office to deliver on time. There are a number of consultants in the office at present with only 4 core professional staff. The background and skill set of these core staff should be evaluated to determine key strengths and divide responsibilities according to interest, skills and experience, seniority and knowledge of the issues.
- ✓ A clear scope of work and work plan is equally important for the support staff.
- ✓ While programme outputs have been largely achieved, this is not the case for all outcomes. We are at the mid-term stage of the plan implementation so it is hard to judge the likelihood of overall achievement of objectives at this stage. Given staff changes, the recent Ministerial in December and pressures from a host of activities outside of the work plan, the amount of work that has occurred and what has been achieved has shown **commitment and dedication** from staff and this has been recognized and appreciated by many collaborators.
- ✓ The overall efficiency of the office in terms of its use of financial resources and converting those resources into achieving its objectives was not adequately investigated during the evaluation.

Effectiveness

*How **effective** is ISDR AP in working towards achieving the Mission[16] and stakeholder expectations?*

Operational procedures have been mentioned and are the subject of a number of recommendations in Section 2.2 below. These recommendations address for example the lack of adequate systematic monitoring processes, systems for monitoring project and programme activities, and any evaluation guidance or strategy planning for these activities.

Given that this is a **core function** of the regional office, this current lack of capacity and practice needs to be addressed urgently, so as to be well positioned to deliver on these core functions and capabilities.

Little can be said regarding compliance with contracts and **contractual agreements**. The opinion of this evaluator is that there is an opportunity to streamline any further agreements or MOUs to ensure certain **standard clauses** are incorporated (where possible) into all agreements regarding standardized reporting formats, monitoring intervals and procedures, evaluation requirements, knowledge product preparations, story collection, and documentation of best practices and lessons learned for example. Such use of some standard procedures is especially important for the reporting processes and the need to develop some standardized reporting acceptable to i) HQ, and ii) partners and collaborators. See Figure 5. below.

No specific comments can be offered on **programmatic performance** levels however the responses from stakeholders indicate generally positive and adequate performance in most interactions.

There is consensus on the value and significance of achievements of the regional office in forging **partnerships** that have been an effective means of achieving coordination and collaboration at the regional level. The IAP in particular has grown substantially, in membership and meaningful content of agenda items. This again is a significant opportunity that will require a more determined effort to make best use of this resource, to the benefit of all concerned in the region. There is very strong support for this regional platform.

There are a number of innovative and valuable components to the existing work plan. For example, the Outcome 2.2 to publish materials in journals is a very useful idea. This can contribute to a number of important office functions, and is valuable for visibility, to develop

[16] See an outline of the ISDR Secretariat Mission and primary Goals and Objectives in the Resource Text.

credibility and respect in the DRR community, and to be a net contributor to the discipline. In fact, it is recommended that a publication be developed based on the findings of this evaluation and the primary data generated from the stakeholder survey processes.

Recommendations below build on this initiative by suggesting a much closer relationship with **IRIN** (see their Fact Sheet in the Resource Book) for story publication but also for opening up the opportunity to utilize their stringers, writers on no-cost retainers with IRIN throughout the region. Donors and indeed all stakeholders like to see their investments publicized and those experiences made available to others in the region and elsewhere. It can be a valuable source of pride to families, communities and collaborators. In all, this is a very effective means of achieving more than one objective in the work plan.

It can be said that the organization has been quite effective in working towards the ISDR Mission however stakeholder expectations are greater than what could be delivered. Comments in Section 2.1 describe this in some detail.

Impact and Sustainability

*Is ISDR AP financially **sustainable**? Are work plan outcomes and outputs being **adequately** achieved?*

The consensus is that the overall **impact** of the organization in the region has been extremely **positive**, with the role in the promotion of disaster risk reduction advocacy coming through as a series of actions that has resulted in very positive change. Many responses in the survey point to a range of impacts that are predominantly positive, both intended and unintended.

Measurable indicators require baseline data. Some of the HFA indicators developed can demonstrate or measure the impacts. It is suggested that these impacts, and the innovative suggestions for measuring impacts be adopted, revised and developed into a set of **measurable impact indicators** for all future evaluations. These could include for example:

- ✓ Direct investment in DRR
- ✓ No. of participants at certain events
- ✓ Interviews with affected populations
- ✓ National budget allocations
- ✓ The extent to which hazard, vulnerability and risk assessments have been incorporated into national planning and budgetary processes.
- ✓ HFA monitoring tool is a good tool to measure impact on a regular basis.
- ✓ Impact assessment of practical measures
- ✓ Presence of a law or policy on DRR with guidelines for implementation
- ✓ Combination of surveys of awareness and surveys of actions taken
- ✓ Is integration/mainstreaming occurring across ministries?
- ✓ Plans developed and implemented implementation mechanism created more resources available for national action

Given the very strong feedback and consensus on this being the main core function of ISDR in the region, consideration should be given to the development of a specific and more detailed **Advocacy Strategy** and plan of action that is championed by one individual in the office who has this as a 50% workload. This could form a strengthened Outcome 2.2 in the work plan. Currently the deliverables under this outcome are aimed at HFA awareness and integration.

Private sector partnerships

The following couple of paragraphs provide an example of the impact, credibility and value added that ISDR has brought to the international community in a short time, especially post-Kobe[17]. This is a position paper building a strong case for the private sector to take very seriously the potential damage and loss of life and property for businesses and communities from the impacts of natural and anthropogenic (human-made) hazards. Here, ISDR takes on the facilitator role, providing support as required to a joint initiative, while providing advocacy and a credible knowledge base to a new concept for much of the private sector.

This is included here to illustrate precisely the roles and responsibilities that should be the focus of the organization. Even monitoring is mentioned, if indirectly.

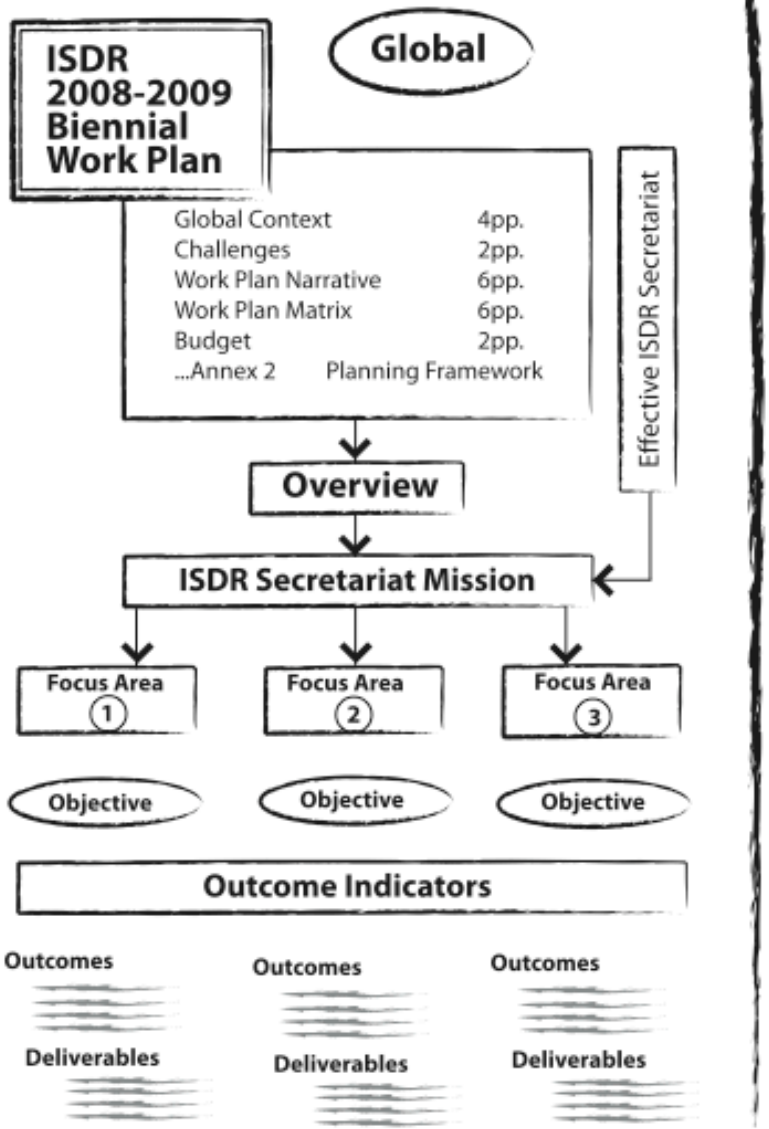
> ***Natural disasters are a major obstacle to socioeconomic development***
>
> *Economic losses from natural disasters are unacceptably high and continue to increase. According to Munich Re, there were record losses of around USD 210 billion in 2005, with insurance claims of USD 94 billion. This burden is even more dramatic for developing countries: while insurance has covered more than 50% of losses in USA and 30% in Europe, it has covered only 5% of the losses in Asia.*
>
> *Prevention is considered much more efficient than relief and reconstruction. Around 90% of disaster-related expenditure is still directed to relief and reconstruction, after the consolidation of the losses. Informal estimates indicate that for each USD invested in resilience and prevention, around USD 4 are saved in response. In order to stimulate resilience, 168 governments have adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action in the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005.*
>
> *Despite the potentially large untapped resources of the private sector, there are no systematic strategies for its engagement yet. The international debate on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has evolved and has yielded several initiatives, including the UN sponsored International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) with its Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and, more recently, the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. However, most of the debate and discussion has been oriented towards public institutions and international organizations. While Public-Private Partnerships are one of the most important components of the Hyogo Framework for Action, not much has been done to engage the private sector.*
>
> *Recognizing the nature of the challenge, the World Economic Forum, with the support of the UN International Strategy Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), has launched a 2-phase initiative for building strategies for engaging the private sector as an integral element of risk reduction and sustainable agenda in natural disaster hotspot countries.*
>
> *Source: "**The Case for Business to Undertake Disaster Risk Reduction Activities**", World Economic Forum, July 2008, Executive Summary p.2.*

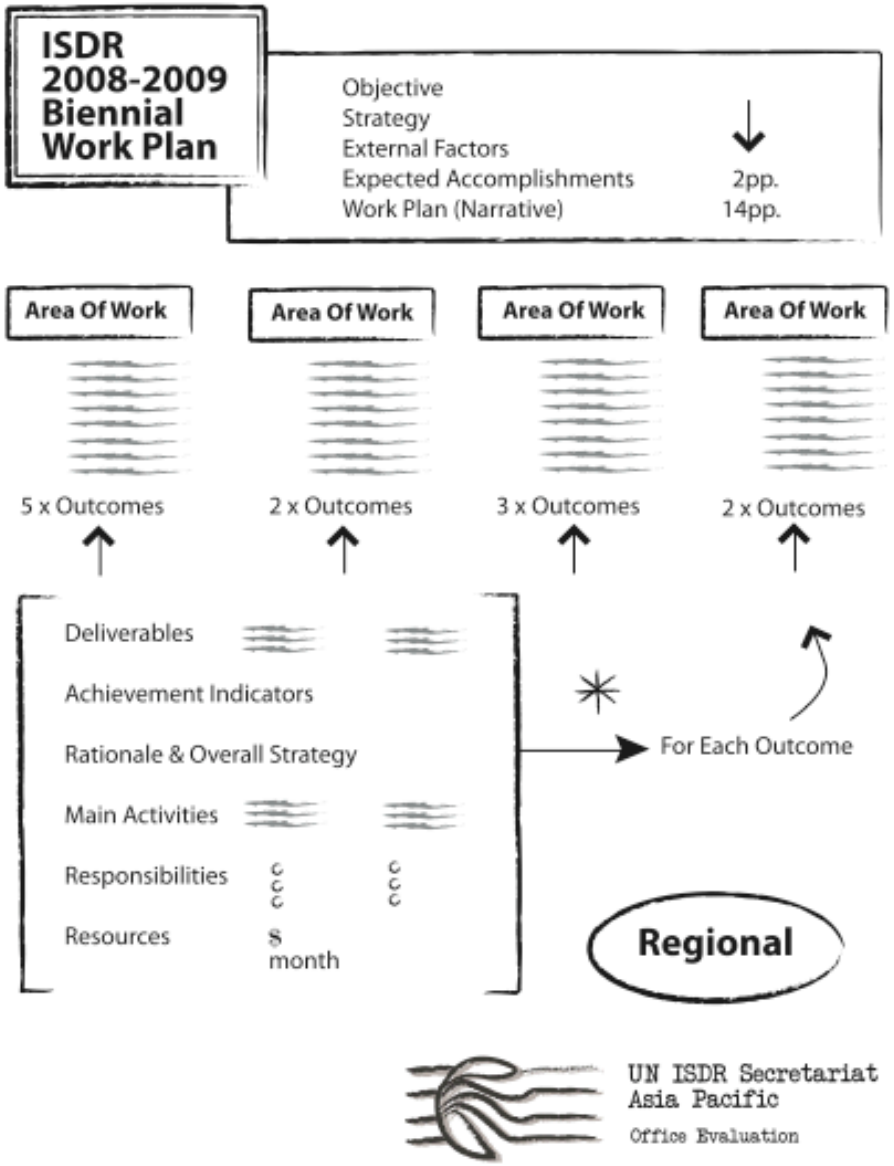
Global and Regional Work Plan Illustrations

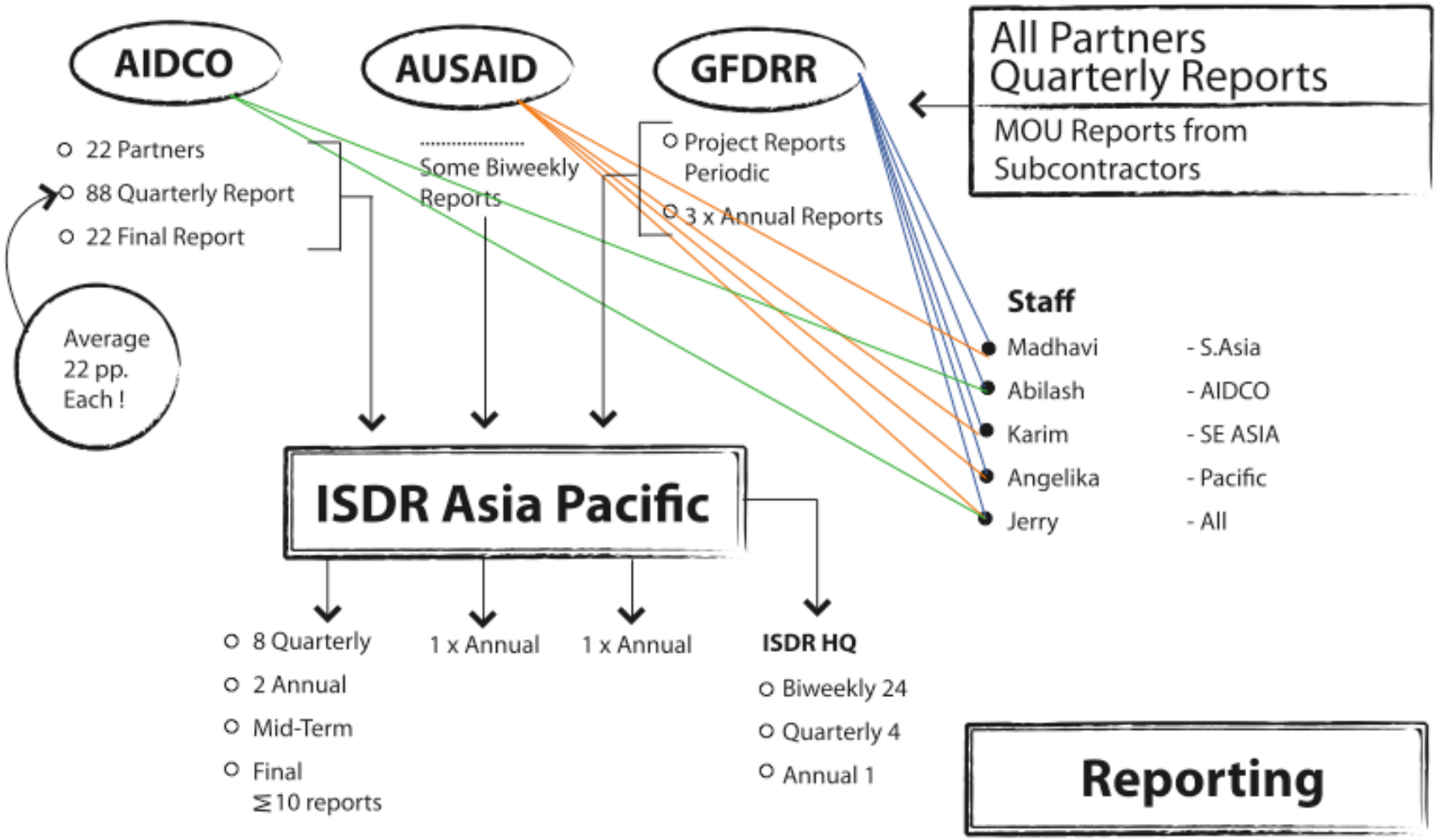
Figure 4. Global and Regional Work Plan illustrations (next page)

Figure 5. Illustration of reporting lines (next page)

[17] "Post Kobe" refers to the intense series of actions and events that followed and were undertaken as a result of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan (January 2005) where the Hyogo Framework for Action was agreed to by 168 member states.


ISDR 2008-2009 Biennial Work Plan
Global
Global Context 4pp.
Challenges 2pp.
Work Plan Narrative 6pp.
Work Plan Matrix 6pp.
Budget 2pp.
...Annex 2 Planning Framework
Effective ISDR Secretariat
Overview
ISDR Secretariat Mission
Focus Area 1
Focus Area 2
Focus Area 3
Objective
Objective
Objective
Outcome Indicators
Outcomes
Deliverables
Outcomes
Deliverables
Outcomes
Deliverables


ISDR 2008-2009 Biennial Work Plan
Objective
Strategy
External Factors
Expected Accomplishments 2pp.
Work Plan (Narrative) 14pp.
Area Of Work
Area Of Work
Area Of Work
Area Of Work
5 x Outcomes
2 x Outcomes
3 x Outcomes
2 x Outcomes
Deliverables
Achievement Indicators
Rationale & Overall Strategy
Main Activities
Responsibilities
Resources
$
month
For Each Outcome
Regional
UN ISDR Secretariat
Asia Pacific
Office Evaluation



UN ISDR Secretariat
Asia Pacific
Office Evaluation

2.2 Recommendations: core functions and capabilities

Recommendations are divided into four categories as described in the previous section:

- *Advocacy and Partnerships (AP)*
- *Communications and Knowledge Management (CKM)*
- *Monitoring and Evaluation (ME)*
- *Operations, Coordination and Management (OCM)*

(A summary of the recommendations is provided at the end of this section).

One general concern that came out in interviews was that while there is a clear mandate and need to maintain high level links and support to decision-makers in government and other institutions at a senior level, that this 'upwards' **accountability** (to boards of management, Governments, donors) should not be at a cost to the more downwards accountability to families and communities. We should not forget for a moment that our ultimate goal is to minimize the adverse impacts of disasters on vulnerable families and communities. This 'downwards' accountability is also applicable to all ISDR's collaborators and local partners, staff and other supporters.

Supplementary recommendations are added as a way of having a category of 'optional' recommendations, which may or may not be considered in the larger scheme of recommendations.

Advocacy and Partnerships (AP)

ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific capacity and national presence

Stakeholders reminded us of the fact that ISDR is a Secretariat, not an agency, and that OCHA, UNDP and other partners ARE in fact ISDR and the system that supports that is what is being evaluated. This was raised on a number of occasions in light of ISDR undertaking roles that other agencies, NGOs or organizations are undertaking. While the national presence of staff in Maldives, Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia in support of the Aidco project has had the added value of providing additional disaster reduction technical assistance to Country Teams and other partners, and these roles can and do fill strong advocacy and coordination roles, the question remains; is this an appropriate role for ISDR?

While it would have been a useful output from this evaluation to have answered that very question, there is no definitive answer arising from interviews and the survey. This should probably be the subject of an investigation of itself or established as and on-going debate that is set up to discuss with partners and collaborators (e.g. at the IAP meetings). While the Terms of Reference hinted at such an output, it has not been resolved.

It is the opinion of the evaluator however that the in-country, project-related presence should not be pursued on future. That is; it is **not recommended** to take on such project management roles in future, and upon completion of this current round of projects under the Aidco support, that such future roles for ISDR be realigned to a more coordination and facilitation role rather than managing/overseeing project implementation. This is not to say the experience has not been valuable in terms of both advocacy and exposure, which has been very positive.

Maintain and strengthen current roles in the region

There is strong support for ISDR to:

i) consolidate it's efforts, not to spread the capacity too thinly across the region and across too many projects and programmes;

ii) be more strategic about national level project staffing, and national level programming which may be the traditional or prior domain of other agencies or organizations; and

iii) ensure that the regional office in Bangkok can become a recognized, respected regional resource centre for disaster risk reduction.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Maintain and strengthen current roles in the region	Priority	Resources	Timing
AP1	Review the effectiveness and impact of the national level staffing to determine if indeed this is an appropriate role for ISDR to be either expanded or phased out in favor of other advocacy and management systems.	**Medium**	Staff time, possible consultant review/independent assessment contract.	Q3 2009
	Consider the opportunity to create a DRR regional map of all government, multilateral, bilateral, UN and NGO organizations involved and contributing to DRR throughout the region. The role of ISDR in the region could be made explicit within this illustration, inclusive of responsibilities, staffing, etc.	**Medium**	tbd	2009
	If it is appropriate, consider the development of some basic "Rules of Engagement" for the organization to set a standard for how partnerships are forged, and what potential partners can expect from the regional office.	**Medium**	tbd	2009
	As a means of further strengthening the IAP, consider the establishment of some longer term goals and achievable objectives for the ISDR Asia Platform (IAP), in collaboration with IAP members to strengthen the organization, establish regular meeting times and protocols for agenda formulation as well as other current issues.	**High**	Staff time	Immediate

A strategy and plan of action for advocacy 2009-2010

Of all recommendations from stakeholders and collaborators throughout the evaluation, the single most important role of the regional office that should be strengthened and expanded was its role as an advocate for building knowledge and awareness of disaster risk reduction. The recommendation is then for the preparation of a strategy and subsequent plan of action for orderly, systematic and planned delivery of support, encouragement, and the promotion of a culture of disaster reduction throughout the Asia and Pacific region. Consultants, in close collaboration with the regional staff, could prepare the strategy.

Following through on the implementation of such a strategy and plan of action may require a dedicated person in the future, but will demand at least a 50% person dedicated to this task alone for the remainder f 2009. The future of this role should be determined in the detailed investigations and formulation of the Advocacy Strategy or plan of action.

ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific Information package

A full package of descriptive, technical and organizational information should be prepared for use by all staff and for distribution to partners and potential partners, that describes the mandate, the experience and the vision for the Asia Pacific office 2009-2010.

This package should include hard-copy brochures, presentation materials, small-scale transportable exhibition panels and specific DRR knowledge products.

It is recommended that this package could initially be aimed at the development of a more systematic relationship with UN Country Teams, and thus linked to a wider strategy to open this door and take full advantage of the opportunity. Note the 08-09 work plan does specify such activities for this biennium. Stakeholders endorsed this approach (there were few UN staff in the survey sample).

Rec. #	Recommendation: Advocacy plan & Information package	Priority	Resources	Timing
AP2	Prepare a strategy and subsequent plan of action for orderly, systematic and planned delivery of support, encouragement, and the promotion of a culture of disaster reduction throughout the Asia and Pacific region for immediate start-up, full implementation in 2010, planned through to 2011 with suggested actions to 2015.	**High**	Consultant time, cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $8=10000	Immediate start completion in Q3 2009
	Develop a full package of descriptive, technical and organizational information should be prepared for use by all staff and for distribution to partners and potential partners, that describes the mandate, the experience and the vision for the Asia Pacific office 2009-2010. This could be done in conjunction with other regional offices and HQ.	**High to Medium**	Cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $8=10000	Immediate start completion in Q3 2009

Basic terms explained[18]

There are a number of key terms that need to be made absolutely clear with a simple language that can be understood and translated for non-English speakers globally. These terms include for example:

- The ISDR 'system'
- What is 'the strategy'? (Role of the Interagency Task Force?)
- National 'platforms' (regional and global)
- 'Mainstreaming'
- 'Advocacy'
- 'Stakeholder/collaborator/partner/beneficiary'

Disaster risk reduction in the field

The following table lists what one group of practitioners consider as the main components of disaster risk reduction. This was compiled alongside four other lists of indicators that together made up a comprehensive view of disaster risk management against which the performance of these actions could be measured and quantified.

The list is here to indicate the obvious fact that disaster risk reduction means such different things for different people, places, organizations and communities.

The recommendation below should be considered in conjunction with other recommendations aimed at the preparation of a comprehensive **information package** (see recommendation AP1 above) on disaster risk reduction and how the ISDR Secretariat Asia Pacific supports those actions.

Component Indicators - DRR
Risk consideration in land use and urban planning
Hydrographical basin intervention and environmental protection
Implementation of hazard-event control and protection techniques
Housing improvement and human settlement relocation from prone-areas
Updating and enforcement of safety standards and construction codes
Reinforcement and retrofitting of public and private assets

Source: Evaluation of risk management performance[19].

[18] These terms may be defined in other ISDR publications beyond the latest version of the basic disaster terminology definitions recently updated by ISDR and available on the website.

[19] "*Evaluation of the risk management performance*", M. L. CARREÑO, O. D. CARDONA, AND A. H. BARBAT, Technical University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, IDEA, Manizales, Colombia.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Disaster risk reduction in the field and basic terms	Priority	Resources	Timing
AP3	Consider the preparation of a simple set of thesaurus definitions of key terms in no nonsense; plan English that will lend itself to translation, easily and without confusion. Demand for such a tool should first be determined adequately of course.	**Medium**	Possible IRIN stringer assignments,, translation into local regional languages.	Q3 start completion in 2009
	An outline should be prepared that describes in 'no nonsense' English basic DRR principles and practices[20] (that is easily translatable), precisely what disaster risk reduction is for this region, for communities in this sub region. This should speak to a non-technical audience, aimed at promotion and mainstreaming of DRR principles and practices.	**High to Medium**	On-going staff initiative	Completion in Q3 2009

Capacity building and mainstreaming

Consider the possible increased focus on capacity building for DRR (institutional and organizational) and mainstreaming DRR into development project design and all forms of appraisal to incorporate as a matter of policy, all-hazard vulnerability assessments. This could be developed over the course of 2009 for incorporation into the 10-11 Work Plan. It is noted that this also appears in the existing 08-09 work plan however the progress on these activities was not determined.

Priority for UN Country Teams and UNDP Country Offices

As above, it is to be considered a top priority to invest in the UN system, reinforcing the capacity of ISDR and the system in general by providing knowledge, awareness building, support and resources to the Country Teams in the region. Few RCs need to be convinced of the value and significance of disaster risk reduction, however some do need assistance. There is much to be gained by developing closer relationships with UNDP Country offices throughout the region. This should be a priority to initially establish/formalize this at HQ level.

At present there appears to be a lack of clarity as to just what ISDR can bring to Country Teams to assist them minimize disaster risk and potential subsequent losses in times of disaster. This is a significant opportunity for ISDR that is not being utilized. It is clear that the need exists for capacity building for virtually all Country Teams in the region[21]. While this should not be the sole responsibility of any one agency, ISDR is well positioned to help facilitate this necessary work.

The promotion of the appropriate use of the HFA, the establishment of National Platforms and contributions to the Global Platform can all bring added value to a well-planned capacity building programme for country teams in the region. This could commence with a Capacity Assessment for example, for one or two country teams to form the basis of a joint OCHA, UNDP and ISDR UNDP Regional Programme has been developing over the last two years.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Capacity building and mainstreaming (incl. COs/CTs)	Priority	Resources	Timing
AP4	Consider the preparation of a comprehensive mainstreaming strategy incorporating; i) UN Country Team initiatives, ii) investigations of opportunities to support those who engage with local governments, and iii) capacity building initiatives developed for a more	**High to Medium**	Could be cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $10=15000	start in Q2 2009, complete in Q3 for inclusion on next biennium plan

[20] There is presently a document in draft by consultant Antonio Fernandez aimed at making a simplified version of the "Words into Action" publication. It is however recommended that a shorter, simpler document be prepared that does not use jargon and explains things in easy-to-understand terms for all people. Future translation would also be accommodated by such a document, printed onto newsprint for example for wide, inexpensive distribution.

[21] This was confirmed in 2007 at a meeting of all Resident Coordinators from the region, held in Hua Hin, attended by Margareta Wahlström, Kathleen Cravero and Jerry Velasquez, and this evaluator.

	sustainable HFA reporting body of expertise in the region.			
	Mainstreaming strategy: Evaluate progress in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, develop performance targets and indicators to assess progress in integrating disaster risk reduction into both humanitarian and development policies and programming. This should be undertaken in collaboration with the current mainstreaming initiatives and activities of UNDP BCPR in the Delhi office and Geneva to build on existing work in this area.	**High**	tbd	start in Q2 2009, complete in Q3 for inclusion on next biennium plan
	Make appropriate adjustments in the work plan to raise this initiative to a higher priority, and commence the development of an **engagement strategy**, a plan for ramping up this relationship, possibly starting with two or three high-risk countries, and working through the RC's office, to develop this collaboration with full participation of the UNDP Country Office and the CT itself. HQ contact with UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific will be required.	**High**	Staff time	Immediate start ongoing
	Agreements with UNDP Country Offices Through appropriate channels, develop a system of mutual understanding and mutual support for mutually shared development objectives that would usher in a renewed and closer relationship with **UNDP Country Offices**, to the benefit of both parties. This should be undertaken simultaneously with initiatives to develop a package of support and awareness building for the UN Country Team.	**High**	HQ staff time	Immediate
	In close collaboration with one or two selected offices of the Resident Coordinator, develop a **time bound strategy** to establish an on-going role in providing .the Country Team with motivation and planning, and for developing practical actions for disaster risk reduction with collaboration of the entire Country Team. This should be developed in close collaboration with the UNDP Country Office and the national offices of other key [partners in that country.	**High**	Staff time	Immediate

Linking climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction

There is strong support for this additional role for ISDR. The provision of this expertise, making it available to the regional office, will need to be planned and designed following a more in-depth investigation into the demand and expectations for such a role in the region, and to decide whether or not this is a technical area that ISDR wished to develop as a function and capability, firstly from the corporate level.

Stakeholder opinion is certainly clear; this is and will continue to be an important role for ISDR to be able to offer technical guidance on the interface between climate change, climate adaptation measures and disaster risk reduction activities.

It is therefore the view of the evaluator that this apparent demand should be accommodated, in a staged process to; i) confirm the demand (from all partners, consult also with other regions and HQ) and what role or gap in already existing regional expertise needs to be filled, and ii) consider the preparation of a position paper on the subject with wide regional consultation, using this opportunity to confirm or not, the need for this position or expertise to be provided by the regional office. All options should be investigated including the use of consultants if plausible.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Linking climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction	Priority	Resources	Timing
AP 5	Undertake an initial investigation on the demand for additional expertise from ISDR in the field of climate change and climate adaptation and the linkages to disaster risk reduction. This investigation should result in an understanding of likely future needs to say 2015, inventory existing expertise with other DRR	**High to Medium**	Possible donor funding for 2010-2011	Commence preparations Q3 2009

	organizations at present, and confirm the need for such in-house expertise.			
	Consider the establishment of in-house technical expertise in the disciplines of climate change adaptation and (the link to/with) disaster risk management. This should be for the express purpose of the development of regional cooperation for the development of action plans to deal with this hazard, specifically with respect to the interface with disaster risk reduction.	**High to Medium**	Possible donor funding for 2010-2011	Commence preparations Q3 2009

Supplementary Recommendations for Advocacy and Partnerships:

- **Clarity on the role of ISDR**
  While the regional office has had significant impact on the raising of awareness of disaster risk reduction in the region, this need will likely continue for the foreseeable future. Straight forward language describing ISDR's primary role in the region and globally in different media forms would be most useful for periodic distribution.
- Treat with some urgency, the preparation of the "**Regional DRR Framework for Action**". This will necessarily be a collaborative and consultative process, utilizing the IAP forum and other opportunities for wide consultation. This initiative will bring together all keya actors to derive a thorough picture of DDRR in the region. This will require significant further development.
- Consider the altering the regularity of future **Ministerial meetings** after Korea, to hold these meetings every three years as opposed to every two years. There was considerable support fro this idea amongst stakeholders.
- Is the organization financially sustainable? Longer-term planning for sustainable initiatives may require obtaining a longer **commitment** from partners for initiatives that have a three to five year life span. Again, this will be a longer negotiation with donors and collaborators.
- There is a need for more concrete tools for governments to illustrate, in a practical sense, how to go about **integration/mainstreaming**. A key barrier to greater understanding is the poor evidence base for considering DRR as a development concern. ISDR does have a key role in supporting all stakeholders for mainstreaming DRR, a role that should focus on advisory and technical support and the development of tools, best practice case studies and other knowledge products rather than any direct implementation.
- ISDR must build a stronger more active role for mainstreaming DRR into sectoral plans and poverty reduction strategies. Mainstreaming is often not well understood.
- There should be a continued and well coordinated **expansion of IAP**; continued support for groups such as ASEAN and SAARC to improve their DRR capacities; and for others (e.g. ESCAP) to clarify their DRR roles and avoid potential duplications with ISDR mandate. The office may need to enhance its **organizational capacity** to manage and maintain regional initiatives.
- A regional scale **risk assessment** initiative could advance the cause of regional cooperation, and serve to build greater understanding of DRR amongst non-traditional stakeholders.
- There may be an argument for greater attention to be paid to **Pacific countries** in the near future given vulnerabilities and capacities in that sub region, and the need for further assistance with HFA implementation and reporting.

- **Demand** for support must be clearly articulated. Support should be given (priority) to most disaster-prone countries and least developed countries upon their request.
- If anything the mandate of the regional office should be **reduced** to focus more on **advocacy** while that need exists; it may and should diminish over the next five years. This will be a good measure of overall impact of DRR in the region. In five years time, possibly the shift will be more towards monitoring and evaluation.

Communications and Knowledge Management (CKM)

Communications and knowledge management strategy

At present there appears to be no specific plan or strategy to guide this important role and core function and capability of ISDR in the region. While there is wide recognition of the important contributions made by the publications and web-based materials from ISDR, a number of recommendations are aimed at:

i) a more systematic and strategic approach to the production of information resources,

ii) ensuring that such an approach responds to real and not perceived demand for such products, and

iii) good forward planning could accommodate inputs from partners and stakeholders, to guarantee that demand is being met appropriately (including translation as necessary).

Given the core function in the office and the current lack of structure being applied to this role, this is a high **priority** and should be afforded the support commensurate with a core function. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a P3 level coordinator to take responsibility for a number of functions including but not limited to: media relations, public information, communications strategy planning, development of a knowledge management strategy and to provide a focal point in the office for this core function.

Prepare a comprehensive communications and knowledge management (CKM) strategy for 2009 and commence planning for the CKM Strategy for 2010-1011 Work Plan. The consolidation of materials, ownership, content limitations and management of PreventionWeb must be included in this strategy (ownership being a key present and future issues with this resource). Stakeholders want to know "why should we contribute to this resource? And what's the value in putting something up on PreventionWeb?"

Rec. #	Recommendation: Communications and knowledge management strategy	Priority	Resources	Timing
CKM 1	Consider the appointment of a Communications and Knowledge Management Programme Officer at P3 level.	**High to Medium**	HQ core resources, annual $120-140,000 est.	Immediate appointment in 2009
	Consider the establishment of a "**DRR Lessons Learned Clearing House**[22]" to provide regional organizations and Governments with access to valuable examples of how DRR has worked elsewhere in the region. Practical experience and examples from the region are often a most valuable tool to build knowledge and experience.	**Medium**	Staff time	As soon as Comms and KM Program officer is established in the office
	Linked to the DRR Lessons Learned Clearing House above, develop a Plan of Action for the development and support for sharing **South-South experiences** in collaboration with other potential partners supporting South-South cooperation in the Region (e.g. UNDP Regional Centre S_S Cooperation in DRR).	**Medium**	Staff time	As soon as Comms and KM Program officer is established in the office
	Undertake a review with stakeholders as to the future use and ownership of the **PreventionWeb** resource. This will include contributions from stakeholders to ascertain a niche for this resource, who is going to maintain the site after 2009, and how can it be made to be a more useful resource to all stakeholders.	**High**	Possible brief consulting contract.	Q3 2009

[22] This needs to be accessible electronically via PreventionWeb.

Demand for DRR technical guidelines/documentation

Investigate and identify specific priority DRR needs (including the need for Guidelines-type documentation) of the eight to ten high-risk countries in the region. This may include the use of available capacity assessment tools to determine priority needs and gaps in knowledge and skills at a national level.

Demand investigations may include the following for example:

- Review all current KM systems in the region that focus on or include DRR KM products and information.
- Identify gaps and opportunities for development of ISDR "Virtual library"
- Regular research investigations with key stakeholders into demand for publications, information, technical information etc...
- Conduct informal or verbal surveys regularly
- Learn and know the audience that has interest in specific publications/language translation use of jargon etc.

Disaster Risk Reduction Community of Practice

The recommendations below could be one of the most powerful and cost-effective advocacy tools available to ISDR at this time.

There exist a number of very successful, popular and well-used websites for information exchange in Asia on a range of topics in the disaster risk management field, including disaster risk reduction of course (see also in the Resource Book document and CD "Disaster Risk Management Networks & Communities" for a description of some existing networks).

The Solutions Exchange in India has met with extraordinary success. Since 2007, the Disaster Management Community has compiled over fifty Consolidated Replies on a diverse range of disaster risk management topics and has over 1700 members.

Launched in 2006, the Disaster Risk Management Asia site (DRM-Asia) is an e-mail based Community of Practice (CoP) which was established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The aim of the CoP knowledge sharing of DRM best practices, guidelines, lessons learned, information and resources across Asia-Pacific.

This network of practitioners is a significant opportunity for ISDR to extend its outreach in the region, by making positive and topical contributions to current hot topics in disaster risk reduction, and to deliver that advocacy role to the field, without fear of duplication or retribution.

Note for example the recent call for discussants on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction from DRM-Asia. For reference, this invitation is also enclosed in the Resource Book document and CD "DRR Mainstreaming discussion Mar09".

Note the following most visited sites:

DRM-Asia: http://www.snap-undp.org

CPR Practice Workspace: http://practices.undp.org/cpr/

Solution Exchange India: http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/en/index.php

(For further detail, refer to "Partnering with Solution Exchange" document in the Resource Book.)

Rec. #	Recommendation: **Demand for DRR technical guidelines and info. sharing**	Priority	Resources	Timing
CKM 2	Design, develop and conduct a thorough **demand study**, utilizing all existing partners and collaborators throughout the region, to determine the priorities for knowledge products, information, guidelines etc. so as to guide the preparation of a communications and knowledge management strategy for the regional office.	**High**	To be determined.	Q2 or Q3 2009

	Simultaneously, a **framework to monitor and evaluate** each and every publication in terms of its impact, the quality and effectiveness of the messages contained in the publication etc. No publication should be considered without a plan to gather information on the effect the publication has had on the intended audience.	**High**	To be determined.	Q2 or Q3 2009
	Update the PreventionWeb to be inclusive of the **Communities of Practice** mentioned above and investigate appropriate means to link the site to discussions of relevance and to make this available on the website.	**Medium**	Staff time of web manager / KM manager	Immediate update all relevant data in Q3

Supplementary Communications and Knowledge Management Recommendations:

- **Thematic campaigns**
  Determine if one to two years is adequate for the staging of specific campaigns. Many stakeholders felt these campaigns were very useful and important advocacy tools for DRR. Consider limiting to two years maximum, the focus on one annual thematic campaign (such as Education, Health, Urban Risk) and sector specific support that includes a strategy for transition of responsibility from ISDR to an appropriate partner organization after the specified 12, 18 or 24 months. The campaigns should be handed over to partners and should not linger as open projects in the office beyond 24 months.
- **Economic impacts of disaster risk reduction**
  Develop a collection of documentation of case studies and experiences that illustrates the economic impact and value of DRR, the social, economic and environmental consequences of systematic DRR activities across all development sectors.
- **Roster of disaster reduction experts**
  Investigate the need for and availability of a comprehensive roster of DRR experts in the region, particularly focusing on regional/national persons, those available at short notice, etc. Assuming this need exists, investigate how to build on existing rosters, or the need to create a new body of knowledge. This is unlikely given efforts in this regard by OCHA and UNDP BCPR.
- **Topical research agenda**
  Expand support for research on key issues in disaster risk reduction, including the immediate and longer-term impacts of DRR, on links with climate change, health, livelihoods and governance, and on approaches to cost-benefit analysis of DRR activities at the national and regional levels.
- **Regular Publication**
  It is recommended that a closer relationship be developed with IRIN in Bangkok, to work closely with them on the current initiative (Global Platform story collation and photographic exhibition materials), and to consider for example establishing a target of say three to five story ideas per month to be forwarded to them for consideration. Publication of the stories on their website and the availability of their materials to other publishers is a useful visibility opportunity for the regional office.
- Existing publications could be the source of the first round of story sources for IRIN journalists' consideration. For example the recent Indigenous Knowledge publication must have a number of extremely interesting stories on disaster reduction that could be developed.
- The library of publications in the office could be made available to Universities in the region with donations of any publication older than three years to be systematically passed on to students in the region. Retaining one or two copies in the library would be of value to staff.

- In order to make best use of the resources generated by the investment in this evaluation by ISDR, it is recommended that i) a paper (for journal publication) be developed based on the findings of this evaluation and the primary data generated from the stakeholder survey processes, and ii) brief summary materials be circulated to the various Communities of Practice and other networks in the disaster management community, in Asia and all the other regions.

- **Communications**
  A deliberate, planned and regular system of **communications with partners** and stakeholders should be developed and tracked. The CKM person in the office should track the regularity and means of communications with partners to ensure a regulated communications. The use of a newsletter may satisfy this need to some extent.

- Consideration should be given to converting ISDR INFORMS into a more regular **newsletter** if this was appropriate and if there was support from stakeholders for such an initiative. This should be investigated.

Monitoring and Evaluation (ME)

It could be said that this is a neglected and under-utilized **working tool** in disaster risk reduction. This is certainly the case with the ISDR Secretariat Asia and Pacific office. When it is used, mainly for data collection necessary for progress reporting, the emphasis is on assessment of activities and outputs rather than evaluating impacts of those disaster reduction initiatives.

Evaluation of impact for disaster reduction is clearly difficult when it is about events that hopefully will never occur.

Identifying and measuring causality and progress is a primary target of evaluations. Unless there is adequate consideration of evaluation needs at the commencement of projects, programmes, and initiatives of any kind, the evaluation could be without adequate **baseline** upon which to base conclusions and measure change.

At present, there is a need to boost this capability and to build a **commitment** and knowledge base for all staff in the office to have a well rounded grasp of basic monitoring and evaluation processes and methodologies so as to champion this role in all work activities.

Readily available tools for evaluating projects in the development and humanitarian sectors can be easily be **adapted** to assess risks from natural hazards, DRR needs and potential return on investment in disaster risk reduction. There is nothing especially difficult about assessing risk reduction activities or monitoring such activities.

Measuring the benefits of risk reduction with quantifiable impact indicators is considered a **baseline activity** of the regional office, in line with the four core functions. Building this capability should commence immediately.

In short, there needs to be more emphasis on M+E in the office, particularly with the establishment of longer-term impact evaluation baseline data. This baseline data needs to be collected at project planning stage and should then form a component of Work Plans with impact indicators and causal linkages (sources of change, indirect impacts etc.)

Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework[23]

Tracking progress and achievement is not an option; it is critical to efficient and effective delivery of goods and services. The need exists in the office to address **efficiency** in general. In discussing systematic operations and delivery, there are three key components, described as;

i) system,
ii) process, and
iii) discipline.

All three are critical to good management. These three elements are like three sides of a triangle; if one side is inadequate, the whole triangle falls in a heap.

At the moment the office M+E could be summarized as having virtually no system, the processes are not well arranged, and the discipline is medium to low. The work of the existing programmer (Sid) is addressing the systems component, however the discipline and process still need to be developed for all staff.

Assessment of outputs and activities should be less of a priority than assessing the **impacts of DRR** activities in the region. Project planning needs to incorporate more systematic baseline information to help identify and monitor progress and causality. Qualitative indicators for data collection should supplement the development of quantitative indicators. Evaluations based on regular monitoring can be the basis of informative **Lessons Learned** compilations.

[23] This activity could be combined with a comprehensive planning (see HFA Strategy Plan for Asia and the Pacific below) for the development of a sustainable HFA Reporting and Planning exercise to be rolled out in the region over the course of the next biennium leading to the 2015 deadline..

Rec. #	Recommendation: Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework	Priority	Resources	Timing
ME1	Prepare project appraisal and evaluation guidelines for inclusion of monitoring and evaluation actions throughout output and activity actions.	**Medium**	Ongoing	Completion in 2009
	Plan for basic M+E training for key staff with in-depth training for senior staff	**Medium**	Staff time	Commence in 2009
	Consider the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Officer at P3 level (see attached generic Terms of Reference for this position in the Appendix).	**High to Medium**	HQ core resources, annual $120-140,000 est.	Immediate appointment in 2009
	Prepare an office-wide M+E Framework to plan and implement the building of this core function and capacity in the office over the course of the next 12 months. This will need to be inclusive of a wide range of monitoring actions to measure progress, to measure project and programme impacts and to establish accountability frameworks for partner and donors.	**High**	Consultant or component of the proposed M+E appointment above.	IMMEDIATE

HFA Strategy Plan for Asia and the Pacific

The Secretary General noted the urgency for HFA implementation (GA 62nd Session 2007), and this commitment must be followed through to 2015. Implementation is however lagging. The office needs to strengthen HFA guidance to the region:

- ✓ The preparation of the Interim National Progress Reports in the region in 2008 was undertaken within the framework of the biennial 2007-09 HFA Monitoring and Progress Review process, facilitated by UNISDR and ISDR System partners.
- ✓ The Interim progress report assessed current national strategic priorities with regard to the implementation of disaster risk reduction actions, and established baselines on levels of progress achieved with respect to the implementation of the HFA's five priorities for action.
- ✓ There exists a need to design, develop and disseminate widely a clear plan of action for improved HFA monitoring and reporting. Action plan/follow up action should be drawn from the real needs of the region. There is much to be gained by such a strategy given the shortfalls of the 2008 reporting exercises carried out in the region. For example:
  - i) Provision of training for HFA reporting needs to be sustained, carried out regularly and developed with country-specific needs in mind.
  - ii) Outside reporting consultants should be avoided in favor of building national capacity to both report on HFA progress and also to further promote and develop opportunities for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national policies and programmes.
  - iii) HFA reporting cannot be seen to be serving ISDR reporting needs only, but rather should be carried out collaboratively, to the benefit of national efforts to improve disaster risk reduction.
  - iv) Where possible, a clear collaboration agreement with UNDP to work with country offices in the region should be developed in tandem with a more comprehensive package to Resident Coordinators' and Country Teams' disaster risk reduction capacity development.

Roving HFA monitor and trainer

Consider the appointment of a 'roving' HFA expert that is available to advise on all aspects of HFA reporting, to provide training on HFA implementation, provide technical assistance for National Platform formulation, design and development.

This could be initially be undertaken on a rolling basis with staff sharing this role month to month, with the addition of national experts as they become trained and efficient in delivering this information. A network of trainers and HFA monitors would then be the goal over the next three years.

Rec. #	Recommendation: HFA Strategy Plan for Asia and the Pacific 2010-15	Priority	Resources	Timing
ME2	In accordance with recommendations presented in the Lessons Learned document[24], prepare a plan of action for **HFA Reporting** in 2009, including capacity development, resource mobilization and partnership collaboration with UNDP Country Offices throughout the region.	**High** (consider possible presentation at the Global Platform)	HQ core resources, annual $15-20,000 est. for travel ad DSA	Immediate commencement, completion 2009
	Roving HFA monitor and trainer: Design a regional roving HFA monitor and trainer Terms of Reference in accordance with recommendations arising from the recent reporting exercise and lessons learned to date.	**Medium to High**	HQ core resources, annual $15-20,000 est. for travel ad DSA	Immediate appointment in 2009

Supplementary monitoring and evaluation recommendations:

- Consider the development and staging of a **regional forum on monitoring** and measuring the impacts of disaster reduction with partners and collaborators across the region,. This could be introduced to the IAP and followed up with those interested in pursuing this initiative.
- There is considerable scope for improvement where the work plans for all the ISDR coordinated programmes and initiatives could be much closer aligned to **HFA principles** and priorities. Indeed, this is a key recommendation regarding any and all future agreements with donors and partners, that such agreements undergo a thorough screening process for the addition of monitoring and evaluation processes at appropriate times (including deliverables) as well as for closer alignment to HFA principles and priorities.
- **Case studies** would be a nice complement to the existing indicators. Bangladesh is a good example and a significant opportunity to measure tangible impact and change.
- Carry out a thorough investigation into the opportunity to standardize and rationalize all **reporting processes**, including for example the 24 biweekly reports required each week by HQ.
- This would also include taking the opportunity in **contracts with donors** to stipulate the reporting standards and format to satisfy those partner requirements. Standardized reporting should be available to the office for the 2010-2011 biennium.
- The **impacts** of the work of the office must be more thoroughly tracked to illustrate the "value-added" of ISDR. This should be adopted as a goal of the M+E Framework currently being prepared.
- Considerations should be given to the development of a means of measuring the impacts of DRR on the **overall reduction of risk**. This should be done on a case by case pilot study at first to develop this methodology. It would be extremely useful for DRR elsewhere as well.
- Beware and minimize the use of **jargon** terms such as "drivers of progress" and such words that so not translate well, particularly with HFA implementation support and reporting processes.
- Overall the **HFA reporting** process in the view of many in the field, was that it is very cumbersome, not well understood; limited capacities in countries to report; NDMOs

[24] Lessons Learned, ... UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok, 2008.

requested to do it when it is an all-government business. Need to explain better, provide tools for establishing M&E systems. Format is too tedious.

- Improving HFA reporting will require a dedicated **capacity building** approach.
- Consideration should be given to the use of **impact assessments** to measure how practical actions have affected change in state or position.

Operations, Coordination and Management (OCM)

A **zero growth policy** in 2010 should be considered for HQ in Geneva (except for additional staff required to support the core functions and capabilities, e.g. the proposed Regional Coordinator is very important) in order to focus staff growth in the regions if that is possible. The growth should be in the regions. This was also strongly endorsed by stakeholders.

Regarding all issues concerning **Human Resources**, it would be of little value to repeat recommendations made in March 2008 by the consultant team that prepared a discussion paper on human resources issues[25]. Virtually all the recommendations made in that document are relevant to the Asia and Pacific regional office, and reference should be made to that document in relation to improvements to human resources in the regional office.

Coordinated Work Planning – Regional and Global[26]
The value of a work plan is realized in the efficiency and timely delivery of the intended goods and services. Put another way, good design is good business. At the present time, there is little cohesion or collaborative work going into the work plans. Rather, they are being prepared almost independently. This is both wasteful and inefficient to say nothing of effects of staff unable to track achievements against work efforts. Figure 4. illustrates the structure and main contents of the two work plans.

There is significant opportunity to improve the coordination of work plan design, planning and preparations by:

i) allowing regional offices sufficient **time** to meaningfully contribute to the global work plan (at least Q1 and Q2 of the year before, if not earlier);

ii) **simultaneously** preparing the regional work plans starting in Q1 the year before (i.e. Q1 2009 for the 2010-2011 Biennial Work Plan);

iii) **coordinating and sharing** regional work plan outcomes and deliverables (between the regions) to identify opportunities for shared resource use, staff exchange or other exchange of information and experience (this could be achieved at the Global Retreat or electronically beforehand;

iv) set and align global **objectives** (Focus Areas) to regional outcomes and deliverables;

v) allowing adequate lead time to plan for and establish a **strategy**, a schedule and a planning framework[27]. The Planning Framework in the existing Global work Plan is of little functional value;

vi) for both regional and global work planning, it should be agreed that key areas such as Outcomes, Deliverables and Objectives **should not be changed** during the biennium except with the concurrence of all parties in the mid-term review process.

Regional work plan
This is possibly the most important planning document for the regional office. All planning, actions and achievements should be guided by the work plan. It should also be the selling point of ISDR, the document used to attract donor and partner support; the document that encapsulates the **regional and national priorities** of the region and communicates these priorities to the Global Work Planning process.

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[25] ISDR Human Resources Process – Discussion Document and Recommendations on Human Resources Issues, Mannet, Switzerland, March 2008.

[26] It should be noted that the consultant was only able to review the Asia and Pacific Work Plan and the Global Work Plan.

[27] "Planning framework" in this case, means a structured systematic way of organizing a plan. It would include for instance all the main actions, timing of those actions, responsible persons, costs, location and other items required to make it happen.

As discussed earlier, it should or at least could be the document that is "sold to" donors and collaborators as the document to provide the conceptual and practical planning framework for disaster reduction in the region. It should recognize all players and not appear to be alone in the field. It should remain unchanged over the course of the biennium except for minor changes possible at the mid-term review.

This may entail a restructuring of the work plan in its current format. The opportunity for standardization of main components of the work plan from the region and HQ could be considered in the next plan. This process should have already commenced in all areas.

The existing work plan includes a three-page introduction narrative under the following headings:

- ✓ Objective (one sentence)
- ✓ Strategy (five bullet points)
- ✓ External Factors (one paragraph)
- ✓ Matrix of four main accomplishments (first column)
    a. Internal Office Expected accomplishments
    b. Internal Office Indicators of achievement
    c. Internal Office Unit of measure
    d. December 2007 Baseline
    e. December 2009 Target

Four key principles are also indicated with acronyms for staff. While this narrative provides valuable guidance to the reader, the Strategy could present priority issues and link the regional 'strategy' to other regions and HQ. Later in the outcome and activity descriptions, there are for example factors common to multiple deliverables that could benefit from a change in format. It would be beneficial to the users if the deliverables indicated some prioritization.

Quarterly Review – Work Plan

The detailed monitoring or achievements should be accessible on an on-going basis as part of quarterly intra-office performance review meetings and progress appraisals.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Coordinated Work Planning – Regional and Global	Priority	Resources	Timing
OCM1	Consider the appointment of a dedicated "**Regional Coordinator**" in Geneva to build a continuous process of exchange and dialogue with all available tools, media, technologies and an inter- and intra-regional strategy for collaboration, coordination and support amongst the regional office and between Headquarters and the regional offices.	**High**	Core funds. This person could share other functions such as Public Information, Media relations etc.	Q3 start 2009
	Consider the development of a set of **standardized deliverables'** wording or description, for which standardized indicators can also be developed, these could be utilized across all regions and HQ. See also recommendation to consider standardization of reporting that is acceptable to all partners if possible.	**High**	Staff time, planning for the next biennium.	Q2-Q4 2009
	There is an opportunity to develop some common **financial planning** and budgeting processes across the Secretariat. This could be undertaken as an initiative and a component to the regional work plan. Similarly, a common format for reporting should be investigated.	**High**	Staff time, planning for the next biennium.	Q2-Q4 2009
	Consider reformatting and restructuring the **Work Plan** into more of a matrix format with supplementary details on scheduling, persons responsible and resource allocation. This supplementary data can be updated; the Plan should remain the same until the mid-term review.	**High**	"No-cost extension", staff time only.	IMMEDIATE
	Quarterly Review - Work Plan: Quarterly review meetings of all staff should be schedules in the work plan. Changes may be made to the supplements to the work plan but not to the work	**High**	staff time only.	IMMEDIATE

	plan itself. This may only be altered at the mid term review in collaboration with relevant partners or donors. The main body of the work plan should remain largely unaltered through the biennium.			

Supplementary recommendations on Coordinated Work Planning:

- Formalize a means of **regional contributions** to the global work planning processes so there is shared ownership of the document, and it reflects priorities on the ground, as communicated from the regional offices to HQ.
- Current work planning could be more effective by planning for more lead-time in plan preparations to allow for additional **collaborative inputs** from the regional office.
- Similarly, the preparations and negotiations with partner **MOUs** could benefit from closer coordination with the regional office, particularly for the inclusion of necessary clauses relating to standardized reporting, and monitoring and evaluation components linked to Best Practices and Lessons Learned documentation.
- If at all possible, projects/programs should not be **backward**-linked to the work plan.
- Consider the option of producing **one work plan**, and one only for HQ and the regions. This would then be supplemented with specific deliverables, activities, strategy statements etc. This could be an appropriate means of bringing together all contributors to the planning process.
- All project activities must be clearly linked to the work plan. Retrospective 'back-linking' is a last resort. The work plans should be driving the choice of activities the office undertakes not vice versa.
- Out posted staff should not suffer the **payment delays** and short-term contract status that is currently common practice. A means of guaranteeing salary payments should be a priority to retain good staff in the field.
- The question of the role of the Regional Office in the **Joint Work Plan** process was not investigated. This should be followed up with HQ and clarified.

Supplementary recommendations on Regional Work Planning:

- Formalize the **mid-term review** process; consider timing this to coincide with annual Team Building Retreat and Annual Evaluation.
- Use Gantt chart **scheduling** to graphically plot resources (human and financial) against a time scale.
- Copies of all MOUs completed and signed in Geneva should be copied to the regional office immediately. It is recommended to review this practice in light of the possible development of increased autonomy in the regional office. A tracking tool should also be developed to track achievements in accordance with the MOUs.
- A thorough review of the potential value of increased **operational and financial autonomy** for the Regional Office (of the value and practicability as well as subsequent needs and requirements) should be undertaken to investigate if indeed this would be a more efficient operations approach for the Secretariat function.
- There needs to be a better alignment of **regional and global programming**. This would include alignment with the other regional programmes which is currently only occurring at HQ level. Also, a better exchange **between the regions** and learning from others how to solve problems would be useful, and lead to better clarity on the role among all as pieces of a bigger ISDR family/Partnership.

Focus on core functions

This discussion assumes a strong commitment from ISDR to ensure both global and regional capacity to deliver advisory and advocacy services in the three core areas of the mandate, namely a) advocacy, b) communications and knowledge management, and c) monitoring and evaluation.

It is recommended that the regional office undergo a rapid capacity assessment with the following objectives and outcomes:

i) identify existing resource persons and human resource gaps, that are necessary to ensure a strong competency in at least a) advocacy, b) communications and knowledge management, and c) monitoring and evaluation;

ii) to ensure adequate capacity in all three areas, with designated individuals to lead that work area;

iii) consider the appointment of a designated staff member to be the focal point responsible for monitoring and evaluation processes in the office, including preparation of monitoring and evaluation plans for individual projects and programmes, for overall office performance and staff semi- and annual performance reviews, and to provide coaching and mentoring for staff to share monitoring responsibilities.

Standard Operating Procedures review

Having reviewed with the Administrative staff, several key procedures (travel procurement, other procurement, no-cost extensions, and consultant procurement), it became imminently clear that certain procedures could and should be streamlined for increase efficiency and minimizing delays that are frustrating to partners and collaborators throughout the region.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Focus on core functions and SOPs review	Priority	Resources	Timing
OCM2	Undertake office-wide rapid capacity assessment to clarify individual staff roles and responsibilities and identify gaps that need to be filled to provide strong advisory services in the three core competency areas.	**High**	Two to three consultant days, in collaboration with UNDP capacity assessment tools development and resources staff from the Regional Centre.	Q2 2009
	Undertake a thorough review of basic administrative office procedures, and investigate the opportunity to utilize the UNDP Regional Centre Operations and Finance Unit for certain procurement and financial transactions, and utilization of their standard operating procedures including procurement minimum standards.	**High**	Staff time	Immediate

Staff training and skills development

All staff would benefit from having a basic level of understanding, knowledge (and experience where possible) in a range of disaster risk reduction activities, tools and methods. Office staff need to have a basic skill set that is shared by all, in addition to their individual specific area of expertise.

Professional staff should all be competent HFA advocates, trainers and practitioners. Regular training opportunities should be investigated and scheduled, to the benefit of staff development, good teamwork and the general office morale.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Staff training and skills development	Priority	Resources	Timing
OCM3	In close collaboration with all current staff, develop an initial schedule of possible training and skills development needs and opportunities, and plan for this to commence in Q3 2009	**Medium**	Appoint one staff member to take responsibility for this, to negotiate for core resources from HQ for this purpose.	Commencement in 2009
	Provide regular and targeted skills and knowledge development and training opportunities for office staff	**Medium**	tbd	Q3 start 2009

	including basic skills in: Project management, DRR, vulnerability assessment, capacity assessment, risk assessment and climate change adaptation. This training would likely be quite useful for all regional offices and Hq staff as well.			

Shared workspace for disaster risk reduction

In the mid- to long-term, it may be valuable to consider a shared working space for the UN organizations with key disaster risk reduction roles and responsibilities. That is, a share workspace for UN OCHA, UN ISDR, UNDP BCPR and UN ESCAP colleagues. At first glance, this may appear a political and practical impossibility. There are however, compelling arguments for physically working together as well as the added value of a shared disaster reduction 'Centre' in Bangkok.

Rec. #	Recommendation: Shared workspace for disaster risk reduction	Priority	Resources	Timing
OCM4	Investigate the willingness, the potential and the possible value of the UN family of disaster risk reduction professionals coexisting as one UN would possible envisage, as a creative and potentially significant step forward in the endeavor to develop clarity and cohesiveness on the roles of all UN partners to minimize disaster risk in the region.	**Medium**	collective	Commence discussions in 2009

Supplementary recommendations on Operations, Coordination and Management:

- Current office capabilities do not adequately match current needs and demand. This can results in stress and overly heavy workloads leading so job dissatisfaction in the worst case. The **demand for services** must be clarified and subsequently matched to the staffing capabilities in the office. **Future demand** should be forecasted by estimating likely expanded areas of responsibility and likely future demand for services coming from the region. Office skill sets need to match this demand.
- The **administrative environment** of the office could be drastically improved by; i) a closer and more consistent coordination with HQ, and ii) a reconfiguration of the arrangements with ESCAP and making use of the UNDP Regional Center's OPS unit.
- All staff roles and **reporting lines** should be made absolutely clear to all others. This can easily be achieved with a two to three sentence summary of one's TOR together with a tree diagram or organigram illustrating the structure and line of reporting.
- **Staff turnover** could be affecting performance of the office. The current openness of staff meetings should be encouraged, and issues should be brought to staff meetings after initial discussions with the Senior Coordinator to then mutually agree on the need to bring such an issue to the whole team.
- **Staff meetings** should then include discussion points such as; "Is workload adversely affecting performance?" What social events could be organized to bring staff together more often than once a year at the retreat?
- A clear picture of the **transaction costs** of supporting the regional processes should be considered as a means of gauging overall efficiency of the office. This was not adequately discussed during the evaluation.
- The office lacks some human resource capacity, being overstretched with a wide variety of issues. There seems to be an imbalance between staffing in GVA and in the regions and a mismatch between expectations of the ISDR regional office and their capacities to do what is expected.

2.3 Summary Recommendations

Typology of Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Typology / Activity Description[28]	Priority	Timing	Resources	Work Plan
AP 1	**Maintain and strengthen current roles in the region**					
	Review the effectiveness and impact of the **national level staffing** to determine if indeed this is an appropriate role for ISDR to be either expanded or phased out in favor of other advocacy and management systems.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**Medium**	Staff time, possible consultant review/independent assessment contract.	Q3 2009	
	Consider the opportunity to create a DRR **regional map** of all government, multilateral, bilateral, UN and NGO organizations involved and contributing to DRR throughout the region. The role of ISDR in the region could be made explicit within this illustration, inclusive of responsibilities, staffing, etc.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY	**Medium**	tbd	2009	
	If it is appropriate, consider the development of some basic "**Rules of Engagement**" for the organization to set a standard for how partnerships are forged, and what potential partners can expect from the regional office.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**Medium**	tbd	2009	
	As a means of further strengthening the IAP, consider the establishment of some longer-term goals and achievable objectives for the ISDR Asia Platform (IAP), in collaboration with IAP members to strengthen the organization, establish regular meeting times and protocols for agenda formulation as well as other current issues.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS	**High**	Staff time	Immediate	
AP 2	**Advocacy plan & information pack**					
	Prepare a strategy and subsequent plan of action for orderly, systematic and planned delivery of support, encouragement, and the promotion of a culture of disaster reduction throughout the Asia and Pacific region for immediate start-up, full implementation in 2010, planned through to 2011 with suggested actions to 2015.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY	**High**	**High**	Consultant time, cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $8=10000	

[28] This column describes the proposed Activities of the recommendations that fall into one or other of the following types of activities: Capacity assessments, demand studies, human resource strengthening or strategy/action plans.

	Develop a full package of descriptive, technical and organizational information should be prepared for use by all staff and for distribution to partners and potential partners, that describes the mandate, the experience and the vision for the Asia Pacific office 2009-2010. This could be done in conjunction with other regional offices and HQ.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**High to Medium**	Cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $8=10000	
AP 3	**Disaster risk reduction in the field and basic terms**					
	Consider the preparation of a simple set of thesaurus definitions of key terms in no nonsense; plan English that will lend itself to translation, easily and without confusion. Demand for such a tool should first be determined adequately of course.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**Medium**	Possible IRIN stringer assignments,, translation into local regional languages.	Q3 start completion in 2009	
	An outline should be prepared that describes in 'no nonsense' English basic DRR principles and practices[29] (that is easily translatable), precisely what disaster risk reduction is for this region, for communities in this sub region. This should speak to a non-technical audience, aimed at promotion and mainstreaming of DRR principles and practices.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High to Medium**	On-going staff initiative	Completion in Q3 2009	
AP 4	**Capacity building and mainstreaming**					
	Consider the preparation of a comprehensive mainstreaming strategy incorporating; i) UN Country Team initiatives, ii) investigations of opportunities to support those who engage with local governments, and iii) capacity building initiatives developed for a more sustainable HFA reporting body of expertise in the region.	STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN	**High to Medium**	Could be cost shared with all regions and HQ, estimated total cost of $10=15000	start in Q2 2009, complete in Q3 for inclusion on next biennium plan	
	Mainstreaming strategy: Evaluate progress in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, develop performance targets and indicators to assess progress in integrating disaster risk reduction into both humanitarian and development policies and programming. This should be undertaken in collaboration with the current mainstreaming initiatives and activities of UNDP BCPR in the Delhi office and Geneva to build on existing work in this area.	STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN	**High**	tbd	start in Q2 2009, complete in Q3 for inclusion on next biennium plan	
	Make appropriate adjustments in the work plan to raise this initiative to a higher priority, and commence the development of an **engagement strategy**, a plan for ramping up this relationship, possibly starting with two or three high-risk countries, and working through the RC's office, to develop this collaboration with full participation of the UNDP Country Office and the CT itself. HQ contact with UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific will be required.	STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**High**	Staff time	Immediate start ongoing	

[29] There is presently a document in draft by consultant Antonio Fernandez aimed at making a simplified version of the "Words into Action" publication. It is however recommended that a shorter, simpler document be prepared that does not use jargon and explains things in easy-to-understand terms for all people. Future translation would also be accommodated by such a document, printed onto newsprint for example for wide, inexpensive distribution.

	Agreements with UNDP Country Offices Through appropriate channels, develop a system of mutual understanding and mutual support for mutually shared development objectives that would usher in a renewed and closer relationship with **UNDP Country Offices**, to the benefit of both parties. This should be undertaken simultaneously with initiatives to develop a package of support and awareness building for the UN Country Team.	DEMAND STUDY STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN	**High**	HQ staff time	Immediate	
	In close collaboration with one or two selected offices of the Resident Coordinator, develop a **time bound strategy** to establish an on-going role in providing .the Country Team with motivation and planning, and for developing practical actions for disaster risk reduction with collaboration of the entire Country Team. This should be developed in close collaboration with the UNDP Country Office and the national offices of other key [partners in that country.	STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN	**High**	Staff time	Immediate	
AP 5	**Linking climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction**					
	Undertake an initial investigation on the demand for additional expertise from ISDR in the field of climate change and climate adaptation and the linkages to disaster risk reduction. This investigation should result in an understanding of likely future needs to say 2015, inventory existing expertise with other DRR organizations at present, and confirm the need for such in-house expertise.	DEMAND STUDY	**High to Medium**	Possible donor funding for 2010-2011	Commence preparations Q3 2009	
	Consider the establishment of in-house technical expertise in the disciplines of climate change adaptation and (the link to/with) disaster risk management. This should be for the express purpose of the development of regional cooperation for the development of action plans to deal with this hazard, specifically with respect to the interface with disaster risk reduction.	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**High to Medium**	Possible donor funding for 2010-2011	Commence preparations Q3 2009	
CKM 1	**Communications and knowledge management strategy**					
	Consider the appointment of a Communications and Knowledge Management Programme Officer at P3 level.	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**High to Medium**	HQ core resources, annual $120-140,000 est.	Immediate appointment in 2009	
	Consider the establishment of a "**DRR Lessons Learned Clearing House**[30]" to provide regional organizations and Governments with access to valuable examples of how DRR has worked elsewhere in the region. Practical experience and examples from the region are often a most valuable tool to build knowledge and experience.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY	**Medium**	Staff time	As soon as Comms and KM Program officer is established in the office	
	Linked to the DRR Lessons Learned Clearing House above, develop a Plan of Action for the development and support for	TOOLS FOR		Staff time	As soon as Comms	

[30] This needs to be accessible electronically via PreventionWeb.

	sharing **South-South experiences** in collaboration with other potential partners supporting South-South cooperation in the Region (e.g. UNDP Regional Centre S_S Cooperation in DRR).	PRODUCTIVITY	**Medium**		and KM Program officer is established in the office	
	Undertake a review with stakeholders as to the future use and ownership of the **PreventionWeb** resource. This will include contributions from stakeholders to ascertain a niche for this resource, who is going to maintain the site after 2009, and how can it be made to be a more useful resource to all stakeholders.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY CAPACITY ASSESSMENT	**High**	Possible brief consulting contract.	Q3 2009	
CKM 2	**Demand for DRR technical guidelines and info. sharing**					
	Design, develop and conduct a thorough **demand study**, utilizing all existing partners and collaborators throughout the region, to determine the priorities for knowledge products, information, guidelines etc. so as to guide the preparation of a communications and knowledge management strategy for the regional office.	DEMAND STUDY	**High**	To be determined.	Q2 or Q3 2009	
	Simultaneously, a **framework to monitor and evaluate** each and every publication in terms of its impact, the quality and effectiveness of the messages contained in the publication etc. No publication should be considered without a plan to gather information on the effect the publication has had on the intended audience.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	To be determined.	Q2 or Q3 2009	
	Update the PreventionWeb to be inclusive of the **Communities of Practice** mentioned above and investigate appropriate means to link the site to discussions of relevance and to make this available on the website.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY	**Medium**	Staff time of web manager / KM manager	Immediate update all relevant data in Q3	
ME 1	**Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework**					
	Prepare project appraisal and evaluation guidelines for inclusion of monitoring and evaluation actions throughout output and activity actions.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY	**Medium**	Ongoing	Completion in 2009	
	Plan for basic M+E training for key staff with in-depth training for senior staff	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**Medium**	Staff time	Commence in 2009	
	Consider the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Officer at P3 level (see attached generic Terms of Reference for this position in the Appendix).	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**High to Medium**	HQ core resources, annual $120-140,000 est.	Immediate appointment in 2009	
	Prepare an office-wide M+E Framework to plan and implement the building of this core function and capacity in the office over the course of the next 12 months. This will need to be inclusive of a wide range of monitoring actions to measure progress, to measure project and programme impacts and to establish accountability frameworks for partner and donors.	TOOLS FOR PRODUCTIVITY PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	Consultant or component of the proposed M+E appointment above.	IMMEDIATE	

ME 2	**HFA Strategy Plan for Asia and the Pacific 2010-15**					
	In accordance with recommendations presented in the Lessons Learned document[31], prepare a plan of action for **HFA Reporting** in 2009, including capacity development, resource mobilization and partnership collaboration with UNDP Country Offices throughout the region.	STRATEGY / ACTION PLAN PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High** (consider possible presentation at the Global Platform)	HQ core resources, annual $15-20,000 est. for travel ad DSA	Immediate commencement, completion 2009	
	Roving HFA monitor and trainer: Design a regional roving HFA monitor and trainer Terms of Reference in accordance with recommendations arising from the recent reporting exercise and lessons learned to date.	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**Medium to High**	HQ core resources, annual $15-20,000 est. for travel ad DSA	Immediate appointment in 2009	
OCM 1	**Coordinated Work Planning – Regional and Global**					
	Consider the appointment of a dedicated "**Regional Coordinator**" in Geneva to build a continuous process of exchange and dialogue with all available tools, media, technologies and an inter- and intra-regional strategy for collaboration, coordination and support amongst the regional office and between Headquarters and the regional offices.	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**High**	Core funds. This person could share other functions such as Public Information, Media relations etc.	Q3 start 2009	
	Consider the development of a set of **standardized deliverables'** wording or description, for which standardized indicators can also be developed, these could be utilized across all regions and HQ. See also recommendation to consider standardization of reporting that is acceptable to all partners if possible.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	Staff time, planning for the next biennium.	Q2-Q4 2009	
	There is an opportunity to develop some common **financial planning** and budgeting processes across the Secretariat. This could be undertaken as an initiative and a component to the regional work plan. Similarly, a common format for reporting should be investigated.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	Staff time, planning for the next biennium.	Q2-Q4 2009	
	Consider reformatting and restructuring the **Work Plan** into more of a matrix format with supplementary details on scheduling, persons responsible and resource allocation. This supplementary data can be updated; the Plan should remain the same until the mid-term review.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	"No-cost extension", staff time only.	IMMEDIATE	
	Quarterly Review - Work Plan: Quarterly review meetings of all staff should be schedules in the work plan. Changes may be made to the supplements to the work plan but not to the work plan itself. This may only be altered at the mid term review in collaboration with relevant partners or donors. The main body of the work plan should remain largely unaltered through the biennium.	PROCESS RECOMMENDATION	**High**	staff time only.	IMMEDIATE	

[31] Lessons Learned, ... UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok, 2008.

OCM 2	**Focus on core functions and SOPs review**					
	Undertake office-wide rapid capacity assessment to clarify individual staff roles and responsibilities and identify gaps that need to be filled to provide strong advisory services in the three core competency areas.	CAPACITY ASSESSMENT	**High**	Two to three consultant days, in collaboration with UNDP capacity assessment tools development and resources staff from the Regional Centre.	Q2 2009	
	Undertake a thorough review of basic administrative office procedures, and investigate the opportunity to utilize the UNDP Regional Centre Operations and Finance Unit for certain procurement and financial transactions, and utilization of their standard operating procedures including procurement minimum standards.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**High**	Staff time	Immediate	
OCM 3	**Staff training and skills development**					
	In close collaboration with all current staff, develop an initial schedule of possible training and skills development needs and opportunities, and plan for this to commence in Q3 2009	CAPACITY ASSESSMENT	**Medium**	Appoint one staff member to take responsibility for this, to negotiate for core resources from HQ for this purpose.	Commencement in 2009	
	Provide regular and targeted skills and knowledge development and training opportunities for office staff including basic skills in: Project management, DRR, vulnerability assessment, capacity assessment, risk assessment and climate change adaptation. This training would likely be quite useful for all regional offices and Hq staff as well.	HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING	**Medium**	tbd	Q3 start 2009	
OCM 4	**Shared workspace for disaster risk reduction**					
	Investigate the willingness, the potential and the possible value of the UN family of disaster risk reduction professionals coexisting as one UN would possible envisage, as a creative and potentially significant step forward in the endeavor to develop clarity and cohesiveness on the roles of all UN partners to minimize disaster risk in the region.	INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES	**Medium**	collective	Commence discussions in 2009	

"....In 10 years, ideally, DRR will be common sense!!!!"

...In response to the final question of the stakeholder survey ("Briefly describe your vision of ISDR ten years from now"), by an unidentified respondent.

2 March 2009

...sincere thanks...

My thanks go to all those who assisted me with this evaluation, for the extraordinary openness and generosity from all persons interviewed and especially those who responded to the survey; it showed the passion and commitment to disaster risk reduction throughout the region. The key donors especially were most generous with their time and efforts to make the evaluation the best it could be.

The biggest thanks go to Jerry and his team in Bangkok. I think almost everyone had extra items to pull together for me that are now part of the report. My small team of helpers, Thomas and Sawoani, brought ease to some arduous tasks, thanks.

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Scott Cunliffe

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