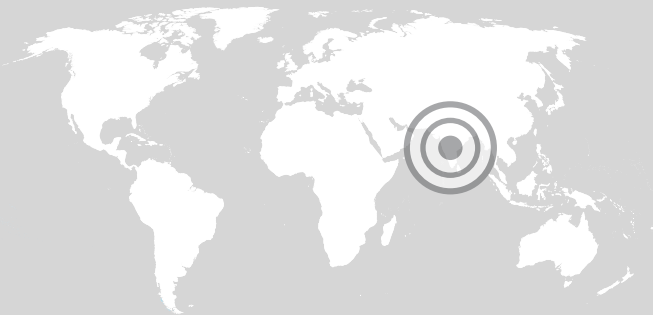


Program Profiles

*A series highlighting key
GFDRR-supported initiatives*

European Union– South Asia Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management Program

REGION: SOUTH ASIA
FOCUS: PREPAREDNESS



PARTNERS:

EU-SAR DRM Program is funded by the European Union and managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). It is implemented by the World Bank and national and regional partners in SAARC member states.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The European Union (EU)–South Asia Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management Program (EU-SAR DRM Program), launched in 2015, is a five-year program that helps build the resilience of South Asia to weather and climate-related disasters by strengthening DRM and hydro-meteorological (hydromet) service capacity. The program plays a catalytic role in leveraging knowledge and financing by drawing on the best expertise in the field and working closely with a broad range of partners and stakeholders.

The EU-SAR DRM Program addresses service delivery limitations at a regional and national level. It is focused on enhancing capacity among regional bodies, national DRM agencies, and other counterparts in member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). With the first year of activities now launched, the program will support projects in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan over the coming years.



BACKGROUND:

Over the past two decades, over 50% of South Asians – more than 750 million people – have been affected by natural disasters. South Asia is particularly vulnerable to climate-related hazards like floods and tropical cyclones. By their nature, these hazards often affect multiple countries at a time, with events originating in one country often having a direct and significant impact on a neighboring country. Flooding, particularly during the monsoon season, is common throughout the region and causes widespread damage. In low lying Bangladesh, for example, river flooding annually reaches 20% of the country, increasing up to 70% in extreme years, with the poor typically the worst affected.

Addressing this requires cooperation between countries to better forecast and mitigate the impact of climate-related hazards. South Asian countries are increasingly recognizing the threats natural hazards pose and striving to improve national and regional cooperation for resilience, including through SAARC. There is a limited regional network of hydromet services in the region and limited DRM capacity in some countries. Many coordination and capacity challenges exist, however, and this Program seeks to seize on opportunities to address them.

APPROACH:

Cooperation across borders is particularly important in the field of weather and climate services, where national capability in South Asia is underdeveloped and the potential benefits of regional forecasting are significant. The program aims to address this challenge, with the goal of providing technical assistance and other support to help SAARC countries strengthen capacity to generate, access, and use disaster risk information for preparedness and risk reduction; strengthen capacity to incorporate disaster and climate risk information in decision making; and integrate solutions on regional and transboundary disaster risk.

The EU-SAR DRM Program focuses on:

- Developing national and regional DRM knowledge learning and institutional capacity to enhance preparedness, contingency planning, and service delivery; and
- Developing regional and national hydromet institutional capacity. An initial focus will be on Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan, all of which are planning major upgrades to their observation infrastructure that the Program will complement.

The Program is implemented in coordination with development partners and stakeholders, including the European Union. At the national level, partners include national DRM centers and national meteorological and hydrological services. Other partners include water resources agencies, river basin authorities, and municipal authorities that play critical technical and operational roles in DRM.



FUTURE GOALS:

Following its first foundational year, the EU-SAR DRM Program will scale up activities, in coordination with partners. The Program will examine opportunities to support regionally-focused organizations in developing thematically-focused capacity building programs, such as a virtual regional resource center, and a post-disaster regional emergency coordination mechanism. Other planned activities include the sharing of best practices for hydromet modernization and data sharing, especially in connection with disaster and climate risk management services. The Program will also seek to partner with organizations holding official regional mandates in related fields, such as the India Meteorology Department, which is the WMO's designated regional specialized agency for weather and climate services.

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