

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Managing Drought and Sustaining Growth in Djibouti



REGION: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
FOCUS: RISK IDENTIFICATION, RESILIENT RECOVERY
COUNTRY: DJIBOUTI

RESULTS:

- In 2011, a GFDRR team, in partnership with UNDP, the European Union, and USAID, completed the world's first post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) after a drought. The results mobilized \$13 million of World Bank emergency funding and an additional \$30 million of international funding for drought mitigation measures.
- This funding includes the creation of a \$5 million national safety net to ease Djibouti's financial stresses caused by disasters. The PDNA also catalyzed a \$3 million water project to better manage resources in rural areas, along with a \$5.2 million power access and energy diversification project.
- The PDNA catalyzed broader partnerships in disaster risk management (DRM), bringing national actors to share information and collaborate. Since then, six national authorities, including the ministries of Finance, Interior, Housing, Higher Education and Research, Transport and Health, have been working together to improve Djibouti's resilience to natural hazards.
- The GFDRR-funded program installed five new hydrometeorological stations in different climatic areas around the country.

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

With funding and guidance from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), Djibouti established a vulnerability and risk assessment communication platform. This platform is the first of its kind in Africa and is comprised of hydrological early warning systems as well as a hazard and vulnerability assessment of seismic and flooding events.

CONTEXT:

With nearly 75% of its population concentrated in its capital city, Djibouti is at particular risk for water shortages and severe flooding, both of which profoundly impact its growing but fragile economic sector. The 2008–2011 drought caused upwards of \$51 million in damages and more than \$157 million in losses, as well as a 4% GDP contraction over those 3 years. At current growth rates, the country's population is set to double in less than 15 years, increasing strain on Djibouti's already stressed fresh water resources and its vulnerability to natural hazards (Djibouti's fresh water availability per capita is only one fifth of neighboring Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia). Changes in climate will only exacerbate these issues.

APPROACH:

The Djibouti Disaster Risk Management Program started in 2006 with the construction of a dam to protect the population of the capital, Djibouti City, from the flash floods of the dry riverbed Ambouli. Since then, thanks to the support from GFDRR, the country has made considerable progress in setting the foundation to manage the risks from natural hazards.

In 2007, GFDRR developed Djibouti's first hazard risk profile, putting DRM on the agenda of decision makers. This small achievement resulted in the development of a much larger \$2 million World Bank program, which has established an integrated hydrometeorology system, connected to a new national emergency plan, an early warning system, and prepared hazard and vulnerability maps of the capital city.

NEXT STEPS:

Djibouti is now in its third phase of DRM technical assistance from GFDRR, spanning 2014–2015. This will: (1) consolidate the vulnerability and risk assessment and communication systems that will inform infrastructure investments; (2) develop a digital platform to make risk management information and training materials widely available; and (3) integrate vulnerability and risk assessments for Djibouti City in its housing developments and building norms.

The government has also reached out to GFDRR to develop a country-wide and multi-sector resilience strategy to promote investment. This may include assisting Djibouti in implementing risk management techniques in novel sectors such as cyber-security and public health.

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*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD



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

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

LESSONS LEARNED:

Successful DRM requires a multi-sectoral approach.

The government of Djibouti recognized that DRM is not a stand-alone activity, but rather a cross-cutting practice that needs to be mainstreamed through all sectors to ensure sustainable results in development efforts. With trade logistics comprising nearly 85% of GDP, the government has made it a priority to make the economy more resilient. In this, it takes cues from the successful Comprehensive Approach to Risk Assessment in Djibouti (CARAD) which it completed in partnership with GFDRR and the World Bank.

Collaboration and partnerships foster resilience. However, governments sometimes believe that sharing data about their vulnerabilities and strengths will make them weaker. For this reason, during the first years of the DRM program in Djibouti, government officials from different agencies were hesitant to share information amongst themselves. However, many officials had to work together at crisis moments during the 2008–2011 drought and the subsequent PDNA, and became aware of the power of partnering toward the goal of disaster recovery and implementing drought resilience measures.