Evaluation Summary

Disaster Risk Management and Institutional Strengthening Programme (DRM-IS)

Country: **Philippines**	Sector: **Disaster Risk Management**

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Date of the evaluation: **February to June 2022**

Key data on AFD's support

Project numbers: 100% of activities conducted, 55 local government units engaged

Amount: 4.800.000 EUR

Signature of financing agreement: December 22, 2014 (AFD and EUD) and September 3, 2015 (AFD and DILG)

Completion date: December 2021

Total duration: December 2014 – December 2021

Context

The Philippines is considered as one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of disasters and climate change. Local government units play a pivotal role in risk reduction, but they have limited technical capacities and financial resources. In the context of the program to reform local authority financing, which is supported by AFD and the Asian Development Bank, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has developed a Performance-Based Challenge Fund, which rewards the achievement of good governance criteria by local authorities. Through this technical assistance program, AFD is helping DILG strengthen and mainstream the certification mechanism of this fund called "Seal of Disaster Preparedness". This certification rewards, with additional transfers, local government units which have achieved an acceptable level of performance in terms of natural disaster prevention and management.

Actors and operating method

- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- 55 Local Government Units from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

Capacity development, computer-based tool development and pilot testing

Objectives

The DRM-IS technical assistance aims to contribute to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2011-2028's disaster preparedness long-term goal: ***to prepare more resilient communities, especially among the most vulnerable, by strengthening local capacities to anticipate, cope and recover from negative impacts of disasters.***

Expected outputs

Specifically, the technical assistance aimed to:

- Improve disaster preparedness at the LGU level by supporting the revision of the DPA; and,

- Contribute to a more efficient implementation of DRRM national policies at the local level through improved subnational financial management capacities.

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Relevance. The overall rating is **Somewhat Satisfactory**. The DRM-IS's relevance to national (government in general) and internal (within DILG) policies is high. However, it has shortcomings in the achievement of its purpose and desired outcomes and received a mix of neutral and negative feedback from the stakeholders engaged in the evaluation. The finalisation of the pilot LGUs took a while because four of the initially selected provinces were replaced either due to non-responsiveness and non-committal. The replacement has caused delays in the rollout of the activities, particularly in Components 2 (Disaster Preparedness Audit System Enhanced) and 3 (LGUs Capacitated to Perform Disaster Preparedness Mandates). Also, the creation of the DILG Resilience Division that came out as one of the institutional reform proposals of the project did not push through and was not prioritised by the Department of Budget and Management due to its inconsistency with the then proposed establishment of the Department of Disaster Resilience.

Efficiency. The overall rating is **Very Unsatisfactory**. Although there have been promising practices such as partnerships (e.g., local service providers) to ensure efficient implementation and project adaptiveness as the activities shifted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project implementation experienced major shortcomings in the achievement of its purpose and desired outcomes and received a mix of neutral and negative feedback from the stakeholders engaged in the evaluation. The rating is supported by the following evidence: long delays in the procurement of the project contractor, the delayed approval process by the Department of Budget and Management of the request for revalidation of the Special Allotment Release Order added an administrative step that led to the delayed procurement, high staff turnover at the DILG's PMO and Field Offices and eGen levels; the monitoring function of LGUs' progress and performance in the DPA compliance and submission quality assurance was an assumed role of the Field Office staff, but they could not fulfil it given their other roles and responsibilities in the Field Office; shift of focus and attention of the LGUs to the COVID-19 pandemic response resulting in limited participation in the project; the absence of a clear project exit strategy for the pilot LGUs; and, the partnership with the local service providers was not fully achieved.

Effectiveness. The overall rating is **Somewhat Satisfactory**. Although the DRM-IS project contributed to both the DILG and LGUs as claimed, its implementation experienced significant shortcomings in achieving its purpose and desired outcomes and received a mix of neutral and negative feedback from the stakeholders engaged in the evaluation. The rating is supported by the following evidence. The DPA tool: (1) assumes that all LGUs have the same level of capacity and exposure to hazards, and it can be used across all LGUs despite their classification (province, city, municipality); (2) for some LGUs, the tool is complicated to navigate, requires many types of data, requires computers with high-end specs to comply with the tool, and a stable internet connection; (3) have overlapping indicators with the Gawad Kalasag, annual awards for outstanding contribution in the fields of DRRM and humanitarian assistance, in which LGUs are also encouraged to participate; (4) lacks validation component, feedback on their submissions; (5) has yet to be enhanced from its initial pilot, so it is not yet ripe for inclusion in the current indicators of the Disaster Preparedness assessment component of the Seal of Good Local Governance. The evaluation reveals that while it is an innovative and significant project product, its actual utility in planning and LGUs claimed to have not received any investment programming has yet to be modelled before full-scale and nationwide implementation. At the DILG level, the planned institutional reform did not materialise during the project's lifetime due to external factors. Also, opportunities to build capacities of Field Office staff are limited as they juggle different roles. Most staff interviewed claim that they were not fully involved in the project apart from coordinating with the pilot LGUs and sending out invitation letters.

Conclusions and lessons learnt

Overall, the DRM-IS project contributes to the efforts in achieving its disaster preparedness goals in the Philippines, particularly for the pilot LGUs. It is evident in its package of initiatives to strengthen the institutional capacities for them to improve their disaster preparedness service delivery. The DRM-IS project has demonstrated the following lessons that could serve as lessons for future programming for AFD: (1) institutional strengthening-related interventions should complement and advance existing efforts of the government to prevent process overlaps; and, (2) Prior to the start of any interventions on institutional strengthening there should be a thorough assessment of the organisation's systems and processes (vertically from central to field and vice-versa, and horizontally with DILG's different units and the LGU's various offices).

Recommendations

On resolving weaknesses: (1) The capacity building programs should be targeted to not only one (or limited staff) but several staff within the concerned units in DILG and LGUs to ensure continuity of use of knowledge gained or skills acquired. Re-tool or refresh LGU's knowledge and skills on the DPA through face-to-face sessions; (2) Consider procurement delays in the project design; (3) Develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation plan and document the gains, challenges, and lessons learned in the DPA tool use before scaling up; (4) Re-ignite collaboration with local service providers; (5) Clarify the roles of the Local Field Offices staff and provide adequate support to perform the required tasks; (6) Co-develop with the LGUs a clear and feasible exit strategy; (7) DPA tool can be designed to be LGU-context specific and appropriate.

On Overcoming challenges: **(8) R**e-submit proposal to for the establishment of the DILG Resilience Division.

On Optimizing and pursuing opportunities: (9) DILG to ensure harmonisation of all disaster collaterals for the LGUs to improve their service delivery. DILG must ensure all initiatives are consistent with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management 2020 – 2030.; and, (10) Encourage the LGUs to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Science and Technology to access data in the GeoRiskPH platform that can be used for risk-informed plans.

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