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Strengthening the capacity of ASEAN Member States to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems for resilience

Regional Synthesis Report



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



European Union
Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid

June 2019

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Acknowledgements

This report – and all outputs of the Joint-UN and ASEAN “Strengthen Capacity of ASEAN Member States to Develop Risk-informed and Shock-responsive Social Protection Systems for Resilience” – are greatly appreciative to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

The key partners in this grant are Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and ASEAN Secretariat.

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Executive summary

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises 10 Member States (AMS) with very diverse economies: two are high income (Brunei Darussalam and Singapore), two are upper-middle income (Malaysia and Thailand), and the remaining six are lower-middle income (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, and Viet Nam). ASEAN is the most disaster-prone region of the world. More than 200 million people in AMS have been affected by disasters from 2000 to 2015 and there have been US\$8 trillion total economic losses in the region in those 15 years. Addressing the root cause of disaster vulnerability in the ASEAN region and building long-term resilience to climate extremes is vital to breaking the cycle of recurrent humanitarian crises and the remaining high levels of poverty in the region. However, climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and severity of hazards and will lead to more disasters.

The complementarity of social protection and disaster risk management (DRM) is increasingly acknowledged by ASEAN. Accordingly, this study, the overarching research question of which is:

- **What factors enable social protection systems and programmes in ASEAN countries to be responsive to shocks and to deliver an effective response?**

This research defines social protection as the set of public actions that address both the absolute deprivation and vulnerabilities of the poorest, as well as the need of the currently non-poor for security in the face of shocks and lifecycle events. The rationale for shock-responsive social protection being given a front-line role in disaster response include efficiency gains from faster responses, pooling of financial and programmatic resources, and speeding up decision making. Shock-responsive social protection also implies better preparedness for disaster response by improving the resilience of households facing shocks.

Risks and shocks in AMS

This study considers various types of shock although the focus is on climate and weather-related shocks. The table below provides an overview of the main types of shocks affecting AMS:

Table 1: Overview of shocks affecting AMS

Type of shock	Speed	Frequency	Duration	Countries most affected
Earthquake	Rapid	One-off/Recurrent	Short term	Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia
Volcanic activity	Rapid	One-off	Short/medium term	Philippines, Indonesia
Mass movement	Rapid	One-off	Short term	Malaysia, Myanmar
Storm	Rapid	Seasonal/One-off	Short term	Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, Viet Nam
Extreme temperature	Rapid	One-off	Short/medium term	Thailand
Flood	Rapid	Seasonal/One-off	Short/medium term	Malaysia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam
Landslide	Rapid	One-off	Short term	Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Viet Nam
Drought	Slow	Seasonal/One-off	Medium term/ Protracted	Thailand, Lao PDR
Wildfire	Rapid	One-off	Short/medium term	Brunei Darussalam
Armed conflict	Rapid	One-off/Recurrent	Medium term/ Protracted	Myanmar, Philippines

DRM in AMS

There are a variety of DRM systems across the ASEAN region, although generally speaking AMS have 'tailored national DRM systems underpinned by legal provisions' (IFRC 2017). The table below categorises AMS according to their DRM systems:

Table 2: Categorisation of AMS DRM systems

DRM system type	Law/system description	Where/when type used	AMS
Disaster emergency management law	A specific law on disasters, focused on preparedness and response, potentially with elements of early warning and recovery	Tends to be in countries with low hazard exposure, or higher exposure but effective risk governance through sectoral laws, or limited governance capacity	Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore
Broad DRM system law(s)	Covers the full spectrum of DRM and establishes specialist national institutions for DRM coordination and at least some local structures or roles	Most common in countries with medium-high exposure that have adopted DRM laws since the mid-1990s. May involve a mix of laws, regulations, and executive orders	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR (in draft), Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam
Broad DRM system law(s) + high DRR priority law	Broad DRM focus (as above) and permanent DRM system; DRR is given a high priority, with emphasis on a whole-of-society approach to disaster risk governance. High degree of detail and broad DRR mandate, with strong vertical and horizontal inclusion	Most of these laws post-date the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and Indian Ocean Tsunami. Tend to be found in medium- and high-exposure countries that do not have a long tradition of risk governance through sectoral laws and local government	Philippines

These DRM systems face a number of challenges, including the changing scale and nature of disasters, inadequate financing structures, limited updates based on evidence, and a lack of coordination between regional and national entities. Most challenges are associated with governance and institutional coordination, and include issues with coordination and overlapping mandates, lack of technical capacity among staff responsible for implementing DRM (particularly those working at community level), limited capacities for risk assessment and systematic data collection, and challenges in mainstreaming DRM into both sectoral and overall development frameworks. Nonetheless, given the significant alignment between the objectives of DRM and social protection, the actors involved, and their governance, the following synergies between DRM and social protection are possible:

- Both systems can contribute to risk reduction before disasters happen;
- The targeting of assistance could be improved through a joined-up focus on vulnerable groups;
- Embedded social protection systems can improve the speed of disaster response; and

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