

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Building a Stronger Emergency Management System in the Kyrgyz Republic



REGION: EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

FOCUS: PREPAREDNESS

COUNTRY: THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



RESULTS:

- Synchronized crisis management centers (CMCs) were set up in Bishkek, the capital, and Osh, the second-largest city, to handle early warning and emergency information management systems and provide redundancy in terms of coverage. The country now has a unified national crisis management system in place;
- Emergency response time has been cut by 20%. This is expected to reduce casualties by 10–15% and economic losses by 3–5% annually;
- Emergency warning systems were significantly improved. Bishkek's CMC can intercept 30 TV channels, connect to 10 sirens, and immediately access other media, while the CMCs in Osh and Karakol can intercept 18 and 6 channels, respectively.

Proper coordination is critical to saving lives and meeting emergency needs when it comes to responding to natural disasters. Until recently the Kyrgyz Republic, a country that is frequently affected by small reoccurring natural hazards, did not have a unified national crisis management system in place.

A \$1.45 million grant from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) is helping to enhance the emergency response preparedness of the country's civil protection system by setting up crisis management centers, improving emergency warning systems, and reducing response time.



GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

CONTEXT:

There are more than 200 natural disasters every year in the Kyrgyz Republic, exacting significant societal and economic tolls. Earthquakes have the greatest impact, affecting an average of 200,000 people and causing \$200 million in damage. Additionally, on average, about 80,000 people are affected by floods annually, and related damage totals \$60 million.

To help the country prepare for these disaster risks, this project was designed to assist the government in establishing a unified crisis management system that would improve safety and enhance its disaster risk management capacity.

APPROACH:

GFDRR, along with the World Bank, provided technical assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic to enhance its preparedness and disaster response by establishing one of Central Asia's most advanced early warning and crisis management systems.

The system allows for daily interaction with other countries in the region, namely Belarus, Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, making transnational coordination possible in case of an emergency. In addition, the system makes good use of modern video communication and telecommunications technology, as well as geographic information systems, monitoring systems, decision support, and crisis warnings.

NEXT STEPS:

The Kyrgyz government continues working to improve its crisis management system through both its own budget and with the help of other donors and development partners. The emergency information management service is being expanded to cover the entire country and the CMC capacity is also being steadily improved.

There are plans to carry out similar projects in other Central Asian countries, such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which visited the newly established CMC and have stated their interest in setting up similar systems.

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*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD



“Spending a small amount on prevention can generate real savings when it comes to responding to emergencies. The World Bank, together with other international organizations, helped the Ministry of Emergency Situations create a single information and control system, which has improved cooperation with other key players and the exchange of information with the general public.”

– Kubatbek Boronov, Minister of Emergency Situations

LESSONS LEARNED:

Redundancy is key to effective disaster response. The project demonstrates that a system does not have to be complicated to be effective if redundancy (e.g. setting up twin CMCs) and appropriate structures are in place. However, even with this redundancy, further efforts will be required to improve emergency communication, as Internet access and other issues remain a problem.

Continuously increasing counterpart ownership and capacity is critical. By engaging the government, this project attracted not only the attention of high-level Kyrgyz officials, but also other donors and development partners. This resulted in a special funding allocation from the national budget and brought in other donors, including the government of Japan, which provided a \$2 million grant through the United Nations Development Programme to support the regional network.