

Marshall Islands

National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

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Strategic goals 1

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Disaster and environmental risk management policies have been integrated into the RMI DRM National Action Plan which in turn supports the country's national development Vision 2018.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Enhanced capacities at all levels to monitor and respond to potential disaster and environmental risks of national concern.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Strengthened policy framework and implementation capacity of national programmes to reduce physical and socioeconomic vulnerabilities, for the achievement of RMI's Strategic Development Plan.

Priority for action 1

Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Core indicator 1

National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralised responsibilities and capacities at all levels.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The DRM NAP provided an opportunity for RMI to re-examine existing policy and develop a coordinated programme of action focusing on key vulnerabilities and risk issues and priority gaps. The NAP has direct and indirect linkages with the SDP and will help reduce the impact of disasters on the achievement of the development vision, RMI Vision 2018.

Context & Constraints:

Commitment by all stakeholders to implement the NAP using available resources as well as support from development partners.

Core indicator 2

Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Provisional Indicative Implementation Program of the RMI DRM NAP was developed by the NAP Task Force appointed for this purpose by the RMI Government. The Implementation Program has been constituted through the following steps:

1. The identification of specific Sub Actions (linked to the overall Actions, Objectives and Goals as identified in the NAP).
2. The identification of resources required to facilitate the implementation of each of the Sub Action.
3. The identification of specific costs or funds required to facilitate resource needs.
4. The development of a suitable structure and support system to help coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the NAP.

Context & Constraints:

1. 20% of PIP funded by the RMI Government with the remaining 80% to be secured.
2. need for an appropriate arrangement or coordination body to provide oversight of implementation on behalf of the RMI Government.
3. need to continue with the momentum for improved disaster risk management that has been generated through the NAP development process
4. The success of NAP implementation will rely heavily on the ownership and support it receives not only from within the RMI Government but certainly also from all sectors of the economy and levels of the community. This ownership and support will be made possible through a mechanism that provides on-going and focused awareness and understanding not only of the NAP Actions etc, but indeed and more importantly of the critical importance of disaster risk management to the longer term sustainable development of RMI.

Core indicator 3

Community Participation and decentralisation is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

An objective in the NAP is to strengthen the capacity of key community groups and NGOs in RMI and assist communities in the outer islands to develop their own mechanisms to supplement the national and local government plan for emergency preparedness and response

Context & Constraints:

1. Communities need to be committed to building their own resilience
2. Limited budgetary allocation for community based DRM

Core indicator 4

A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

DRM NAP outlines areas for multisectoral engagement. It was developed in collaboration with experts from different sectors

Context & Constraints:

The success of NAP implementation will rely heavily on the ownership and support it receives not only from within the RMI Government but certainly also from all sectors of the economy and levels of the community. This ownership and support will be made possible through a mechanism that provides on-going and focused awareness and understanding not only of the NAP Actions etc, but indeed and more importantly of the critical importance of disaster risk management to the longer term sustainable development of RMI.

Priority for action 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

Core indicator 1

National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

1. Ecological assessment of proposed Majuro lagoon rim aggregate dredging
2. Water quality monitoring. RMI Environmental Protection Agency has EPA certified laboratory
3. Regional Coordination of Pacific Islands GOOS (Global Ocean Observing System) in the SOPAC Region.
4. South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project [Phase IV] Support.
5. Improve access to freshwater through the provisions of rainwater tanks, expanded runway catchment, and maintained reticulation system

Context & Constraints:

- Increasing migration to Majuro and Ebeye
- Unplanned and highly congested living conditions
- Poor waste management and sanitation provisions
- Poor education system
- Adoption of western diet and lifestyle
- Shortages of skilled health personnel

Core indicator 2

Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

1. Water quality monitoring
2. Regional Coordination of Pacific Islands GOOS (Global Ocean Observing System) in the SOPAC Region.
3. South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project [Phase IV] Support.
4. Regional Early Warning Strategy - The Early Warning Strategy is aimed at identifying a range of initiatives with regard to early warning for different hazards which PICs and partner/donor organisations can collaborate on.
5. Tsunami Capacity Assessments for PICs - The project with AusAID, Australian Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia and Emergency Management Australia is intended to gauge the capacity for tsunami assessments in PICs.
6. MapServer installed at

Context & Constraints:

1. capacity development required
2. resources required to maintain systems
3. stakeholder buy in to contribute information into central place

Related links:

Vai Pasifika <http://www.sopac.org/Vai Pasifika>

Core indicator 3

Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

1. Regional Early Warning Strategy endorsed by SOPAC Governing Council covers a range of initiatives with regard to early warning for different hazards which PICs and partner/donor organisations can collaborate on.
2. Australian Tsunami Warning System capacity assessment programmed for 2009. The assessment will highlight areas for capacity strengthening in RMI.
3. RMI DRM NAP Goal 4 addresses Early Warning. Actions and agencies responsible identified

Context & Constraints:

- * communities are far apart
- * require technical resources and capacity to setup, test and maintain

Core indicator 4

National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Australian Tsunami Warning System will facilitate warnings issued in the South-west Pacific through the Pacific Tsunami Warning System (PTWS). Capacity assessment planned 2009.

Context & Constraints:

Considerations for non traditional hazards such as pandemics need to be made

Priority for action 3

Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

Core indicator 1

Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems etc)

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

1. Development of an up-dated high resolution and geographic information system (GIS) for support of hazard and risk management applications.
2. Regional information database (Pacific Disaster Net www.pacificdisaster.net) developed to assist member countries in the implementation of the Regional Framework for Action
3. MapServer setup as resource information centre <http://maps.mimra.com/>

Context & Constraints:

1. Data still resides with primary agencies. Plans for consolidation slow. Addressed in DRM NAP
2. Online web servers are expensive to access and maintain due to costs related to internet connectivity and maintenance.

Core indicator 2

School curricula , education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

1. Training programmes to enhance professional development in DRR and DM includes TAF/OFDA programme
2. Public awareness and education materials
3. Hazard fact sheets produced

Context & Constraints:

1. Securing resources for implementation
2. Sustainability beyond 2008 when the TAF/OFDA programme funding ends.

Core indicator 3

Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

Economic Impact of Natural Disasters on Development in the Pacific

Vol 1: Research Report

Vol 2: Economic Assessment Tools

Context & Constraints:

* Adapt tools for national implementation

* Training required. Materials need to be developed.

Supporting document:

Economic Impact of Natural Disasters on Development in the Pacific (2005)

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/3541_JC0179b.pdf [PDF 2.86 MB]

Economic Impact of Natural Disasters on Development in the Pacific (2005)

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/3541_JC0179a.pdf [PDF 3.52 MB]

Core indicator 4

Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

o Immunisation coverage rate is now estimated at 80% for 2-year old children (Polio, Diphtheria, Tetanus, TB, Hepatitis, Mumps, Measles),

o All MOH staff trained in emergency preparedness and drills conducted regularly for plane crash, hospital fire drill, bird flu.

o Public awareness campaigns in outer islands include traditional authorities

Context & Constraints:

o Not all kinds of emergencies are covered

o Sustainability of training and public awareness programmes once funding ceases

Priority for action 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

Core indicator 1

Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

RMI DRM NAP

Context & Constraints:

DRM NAP has been submitted to Cabinet for endorsement. There are priorities for DRR identified within the NAP.

Core indicator 2

Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Churtaro B. (2004) Social and Economic Baseline Survey Jenrok Village. Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination

Presley, T. 2005. Effects of the 1998 drought on the freshwater lens in the Laura area, Majuro Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands. (U.S. Dept. of the Interior & U.S. Geological Survey)

World Bank. 2005. Human Development Review of the Pacific Islands: RMI (Draft)

World Bank. 2005. Opportunities to Improve Social Services in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

ADB. 2006. The Marshall Islands. Country Strategy and Program Update

ADB. 2006. Juumemmej. RMI. Social and Economic Report 2005

Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO). 2006. Community Survey Report

Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO). 2006. International Best Practice and Specific Recommendations for Improving Economic and Social Development in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

RMI Ministry of Education. 2006. Strategic Plan 2007 - 2011

Graham, B. 2007. RMI Integrated Water Resource Management Diagnostic Report

Marshall Islands Invasive Species Taskforce. 2007. Strategic Action Plan 2007 - 2010.

Context & Constraints:

- Capacity constraints exist within ministries (planning, policy, extension skills, training, marketing, etc.) to promote primary and value added products
- reliable and stable inter-island shipping service.
- Greater support and commitment is required from local governments as well as traditional authorities
- Economic diversification and the building of a more balanced economy remains the most effective solution to temporal declines in the fisheries sector.
- The sustainability of the current fishing effort requires investigation.
- Stricter surveillance and monitoring of shipping operations as well as transfer of oil to on-shore tanks may be required.
- While regulations exist concerning construction projects in the coastal zone, there is a lack of political will in enforcing these regulations. The same applies for solid waste management. EPA needs to enforce regulations rather than focus only on monitoring

Supporting document:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/3541_JenrokStudy.pdf [PDF 758.25 KB]

Core indicator 3

Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Churtaro B. (2004) Social and Economic Baseline Survey Jenrok Village. Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination

Presley, T. 2005. Effects of the 1998 drought on the freshwater lens in the Laura area, Majuro Atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands. (U.S. Dept. of the Interior & U.S. Geological Survey)

World Bank. 2005. Human Development Review of the Pacific Islands: RMI (Draft)

World Bank. 2005. Opportunities to Improve Social Services in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

ADB. 2006. The Marshall Islands. Country Strategy and Program Update

ADB. 2006. Juumemmej. RMI. Social and Economic Report 2005

Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO). 2006. Community Survey Report

Economic Policy Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO). 2006. International Best Practice and Specific Recommendations for Improving Economic and Social Development in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

RMI Ministry of Education. 2006. Strategic Plan 2007 - 2011

Graham, B. 2007. RMI Integrated Water Resource Management Diagnostic Report

Marshall Islands Invasive Species Taskforce. 2007. Strategic Action Plan 2007 - 2010.

Context & Constraints:

* small national economy that is primarily driven by public sector spending and contributions from the US Government

* weakly developed private sector

• Capacity constraints exist within ministries (planning, policy, extension skills, training, marketing, etc.) to promote primary and value added products

• reliable and stable inter-island shipping service.

• Greater support and commitment is required from local governments as well as traditional authorities

• Economic diversification and the building of a more balanced economy remains the most effective solution to temporal declines in the fisheries sector.

• The sustainability of the current fishing effort requires investigation.

• Stricter surveillance and monitoring of shipping operations as well as transfer of oil to on-shore tanks may be required.

• While regulations exist concerning construction projects in the coastal zone, there is a lack of political will in enforcing these regulations. The same applies for solid waste management. EPA needs to enforce regulations rather than focus only on monitoring

Core indicator 4

Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

* Standard Mitigation Plan (2005-2007), identified the review, enactment and enforcement of relevant legislation (Planning and Zoning Act 1987, National Building Code)

* DRM NAP - Goal 8: Improve understanding of the linkages between zoning, building codes and vulnerability to disasters

Context & Constraints:

- * complex land tenure system in operation. Given the shortage of land ownership of land is considered sacrosanct making it difficult for agencies tasked with land management to apply planning and environmental management regulations
- * Inadequate management of rapid urbanization has led to densely populated and poorly planned settlements, often containing structurally deficient buildings

Core indicator 5

Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

- * EPA has established a "Coastal Management Committee" to try and address land tenure issues on Majuro. Note link to CI4 above.
- *EPA has also been concentrating on developing GIS mapping capacity as a prelude to playing a greater role on land use planning
- *Any construction or activity in the coastal zone that involves earth-moving requires a permit from EPA. The regulations have recently been reviewed through compliance is still unacceptably low. Been improvement following an intensive campaign by EPA to implement the new regulations. The EIA process is also beginning to bare fruit, although there is still a long way to go. The EIA regulations were only implemented since 2005, but the number of large projects complying with the requirements is growing (5 in 2005, 40 in 2007). A test case for the EIA process was the Ching Fu Dry Dock project whose application was denied on the basis of the inappropriate nature of the site.

Context & Constraints:

- * greater understanding of the need for sustainable development required
- * finding alternative sources of aggregate and building sand

Core indicator 6

Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Key regulatory authorities established - Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority, Ministry of Internal Affairs - Local Government and Office for Environmental Policy and Planning Coordination.

Context & Constraints:

- perception within the private and public sectors that environmental regulations act to block much needed development. Building greater understanding of the need for sustainable development is key.
- Land ownership issues make coastal and other resource management issues particularly difficult in RMI due to conflicts between traditional perceptions of land use rights and government planning priorities.
- The development of, and adherence to, building codes is another area requiring intervention (particularly for commercial and public buildings).

- The role of Local Government in implementing the Land Use and Planning Act requires reviewing.
- Finding alternative sources of aggregate and building sand.
- Halting the degradation of protective vegetation

Priority for action 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

Core indicator 1

Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

recommended policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms outlines in Review of the RMI Standard Mitigation Plan (2005); Review of Disaster & Mitigation Plan Arrangements and alignment with the Pacific Framework for Action 2005 - 2015 (2005); Disaster Management Act (2000); DRM NAP 2008 - 2018 (awaiting cabinet endorsement); RMI National Disaster Risk Management Arrangements June 2008 (draft)

Context & Constraints:

* capacity building required as well as resources to achieve it

Core indicator 2

Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

MOH has partnered with the US Center for Disease Control in preparing a Health Emergency Operations Plan. Influenza and Avian Flu Emergency plans have also been prepared

MOH receives Bio-terrorism Grant can be used either for public health preparedness or/and Hospital Preparedness

MOH runs drills on a regular basis (e.g. plane crash, hospital fire drill, bird flu)

Context & Constraints:

* Securing resources for implementation

Core indicator 3

Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund (DAEF) USD 200,000/ year can be applied for during and after a confirmed disaster (natural and man-made). The fund is 'matched' by the US through the Compact.

Context & Constraints:

- * Limited funds for emergency response (other than the 'disaster fund')
- * DAEF - funds need to be spent before it is matched

Core indicator 4

Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

- * Pacific Disaster Net and RMI MapServer are both platforms for information exchange
- * Initial Damage Assessment (TAF-OFDA) course delivered. provides templates for damage assessments
- * Emergency Operations Centres (TAF-OFDA) course attended. Provides standard operating procedures for EOC

Context & Constraints:

- * Securing resources for information exchange

Related links:

Marshall Islands Mapserver <http://maps.mimra.com>

Pacific Disaster Net <http://www.pacificdisaster.net>

Drivers of Progress

a) Multi-hazard integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and development**Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Do studies/ reports/ atlases on multi-hazard analyses exist in the country/ for the sub region?:

No

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

The risk posed by socio-economic and physical frame-conditions are compounded by weak management of various human activities and little consideration of the risk that is created through development activities that serve to undermine the natural resource base and/or increase general vulnerability. Waste management in Majuro and Ebeye, for instance, is a growing problem given the limited land space available. While the management of waste collection and the land-fill site on Majuro has improved following the establishment of the Majuro Atoll Waste Corporation, the potential for pollution of critical water sources and the general threat to public health remains.

b) Gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery adopted and institutionalized

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Being considered and will be worked in DRM NAP implementation

c) Capacities for risk reduction and recovery identified and strengthened

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

DRM NAP outlines areas for improvement

d) Human security and social equity approaches integrated into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Implementation of DRM NAP will take this into account.

e) Engagement and partnerships with non-governmental actors; civil society, private sector, amongst others, have been fostered at all levels

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

RMI has a small number of NGOs, all based in Majuro, that provide an assortment of services from education to vocational training, to advocacy on women's issues.

Recovery and Rehabilitation Options (RRO)) focuses on targeted counselling services for troubled youth.

Youth to Youth in Health makes use of forum theatre in raising public awareness about health-related issues.

f) Contextual Drivers of Progress

Levels of Reliance:

Significant and ongoing reliance: significant ongoing efforts to actualize commitments with coherent strategy in place; identified and engaged stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

institutionalization of mechanisms to mainstream disaster risk reduction in national development policy and programmes as outlined in the RMI DRM Provisional Indicative Implementation Program.

Future outlook

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Overall Challenges:

Disaster risk management has been generally regarded as either an environmental or humanitarian issue

Future Outlook Statement:

Promote a paradigm shift from treating disaster as an environmental and humanitarian issue to treating disaster risk management as a sustainable development issue, which requires a balanced approach addressing social, economic and environmental goals and objectives.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Overall Challenges:

Decision-making processes at the national, sectoral, provincial and community levels do not reflect explicit considerations of assessment of hazards and vulnerabilities to disasters and often do not engage with communities at risk, private sector, women's groups and other stakeholders.

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster risk management fundamentally involves supporting communities in understanding and managing their hazards and disasters

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Overall Challenges:

Disaster management has been largely considered in terms of response and recovery from disasters without considerations of risk reduction opportunities in a holistic manner and as an integral element of development planning

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster risk management fundamentally involves supporting communities in understanding and managing their hazards and disasters