
NDRRMA: Learning from the NRA

Learning from the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) to inform the design of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). *PIF Policy Brief No. 1. March 2019*

Nepal is in the process of setting up the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority in the context of restructuring and devolving disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) functions to the provincial and local governments. Nepal is also rebuilding infrastructure and supporting livelihoods following the 2015 earthquake through the National Reconstruction Authority. This policy brief summarises the relevant lessons for the NDRRMA from the NRA's own experience of navigating recent political transitions, and from other countries, obtained from individual consultations and a literature review.

A clear mandate and role for the NDRRMA, relative to other agencies

Those interviewed argued for an independent and well-resourced NDRRMA with an adequate level of authority and a clearly defined mandate. The authority must work with the federal, provincial and local governments, private sector, civil society and international agencies. This may require some amendments in the DRRM Act (2017). Mandate considerations include:

- The role of the NDRRMA needs to be clarified in terms of leadership and how it will coordinate with other agencies to operationalise disaster management as mandated by the DRRM Act.
- Overlapping provisions on disaster management in federal ministries and various concurrent structures and functions at the provincial and local governments may lead to confusion and duplication. It is critical that there are clear mandates within the different ministries and structures to support the NDRRMA and well-defined coordination principles.
- After the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, Pakistan set up the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) which led to overlapping roles and mandates. It is critical that the NDRRMA considers learnings from other countries specially in terms of avoiding ambiguities in roles and responsibilities.
- The NDRRMA should have the authority to manage funds and hold different agencies accountable for implementing activities, underpinned by a strong public financial management system. There needs to be mechanisms for timely transfer of funds from the Ministry of Finance to the NDRRMA to avoid delays in the reconstruction process.

A permanent NDRRMA core structure, which can expand during an emergency

The NDRRMA should have a permanent core structure covering risk reduction, preparedness, response and reconstruction with necessary units for planning, monitoring, procurement, and research and development. This core structure should be able to expand (with adequate staffing) during a major disaster. Following the NRA's example, the NDRRMA should have the necessary legal instruments, policies, plans and guidelines in place in advance of a disaster to allow it to

undertake its duties immediately and effectively, including the authority to issue directives to governments during an emergency. In addition, the NDRRMA should have a sufficiently resourced internal audit system, particularly in terms of due diligence of financial and contract management.

Functions which are tailored to the different components of DRRM

The different functions of DRRM require a different set of approaches, in particular:

- The NDRRMA needs an institutional understanding of how vulnerability is defined by local contexts, including socio-economic inequalities. Activities need to be carefully tailored to each locality, such as exposure to geo-hazards and different resettlement unit functions, as well as aligned to global commitments to Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles.
- To be able to respond swiftly in an emergency, the NDRRMA needs to be operationally efficient with provisions for rapid decision making and financial allocations. Rapid procurement of goods and services could be aided by pre-selection or standby contractual mechanisms.
- The NDRRMA needs a strong Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system embedded in its operations and capable of interfacing with the federal, provincial and local governments. Experience from Sri Lanka after the 2004 Tsunami showed that a lack of reliable data affects reconstruction planning. The system should include a feedback mechanism with affected populations, learning from the Community Feedback Project (CFP) in Nepal.

A permanent staffing structure able to access additional experts as required

The NDRRMA requires capable staff and high-quality leadership, facilitated through the following:

- The NRA's experience shows the need to have a Human Resource (HR) plan which prioritises staff retention and career progression and provides individual Terms of Reference.
- The NDRRMA CEO should have the credibility to win political trust, and experience to navigate the bureaucracy smoothly. The CEO should build external relations within government and beyond, while a capable managerial and technical team focus on operational issues.
- The NDRRMA will need the flexibility to deploy additional expertise as and when required, for example through a roster of trained government and external experts who can be seconded in case of a major disaster and outsourcing technical tasks like reconstruction monitoring.

An effective interface and coordination with development partners

The NDRRMA needs to regularly and systematically coordinate with development partners and other stakeholders. The following can facilitate this:

- A formal engagement mechanism would enable them to operate effectively and avoid duplication and delay of activities. This should include standards to ensure funds are utilised appropriately by all partners for the intended purposes.
- An external information management system should provide accurate real-time information on evolving disaster risks and vulnerabilities.
- Such partner coordination can build on existing structures such as the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and learn from the interface of the Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform with the NRA and wider development partners.

This policy brief is based on the PIF Working Paper 'Review of the NRA learnings for the NDRRMA setup in Nepal' by Dinanath Bhandari and Chris Hodder (March 2019). The PIF is funded by UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and provides evidence-based research, analysis and advice to the Government of Nepal on integrating climate and disaster resilience in planning, policies and institutional development. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies. For more information contact PIFNepal@opml.co.uk