

GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT (GIDRM) STRENGTHENING MULTI-RISK APPROACHES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Extreme natural events, slow-onset events such as droughts and sea-level rise, and technological or man-made hazards often have disastrous impacts if the resilience of people and (critical) infrastructure is not sufficiently strengthened and because the preventive measures in place were inadequate. As the world population expands and urbanization continues apace, coupled with inadequate health care, fragile statehood and violent conflicts, disaster risks become more acute. Climate change amplifies these factors such that risks are becoming increasingly complex and transnational in nature. Disasters have impacts on a variety of areas such as public health, economy, governance, tourism, critical infrastructure (e.g. hospitals, transport, water, communication) and can have devastating effects in already fragile contexts. The current COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the vulnerabilities and interdependencies of all socio-political and economic areas and sectors worldwide. Disaster risk management (DRM) is a cross-sectoral issue.

Despite an increasing understanding of the complexity of risks, these are not always adequately considered in development planning and programming, either in the partner regions and countries or by international donors. Often, the expertise, capacities and skills of actors and decision-makers are not yet at a level that would enable them to address risks effectively. To address the complex nature of risks and safeguard development, GIDRM III (2020-2023) aims at strengthening risk governance and risk-informed development (i.e. an understanding of development that considers **multi-faceted, dynamic, interdependent, transnational, simultaneous and systemic risks**). A lack of ability to understand and manage systemic risks jeopardizes the achievement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals. Disasters suddenly destroy long-term development successes and reduce the development opportunities of countries.

GIDRM'S EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

In many partner countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), governments focus not on risk mitigation, disaster preparedness and prevention but on responding to direct emergencies. Authorities generally limit themselves to addressing certain sector-specific

risks and there is no adequate coordination between sectors that would make it possible to evaluate complex disaster and climate risks. In Southern Africa, **GIDRM aims at strengthening the capacities and skills of the SADC region to address complex and systemic risks by applying the guiding principle of risk-informed development in key sectors.**



GIDRM promotes an integrated, cross-sectoral, multi-actor and multi-level approach, while focusing on three main areas of intervention, namely, (1) enhancing the (disaster) risk management capacities to promote gender sensitive, risk-informed development into SADC sectoral policies, (2) supporting the integration of risk-informed development into selected regional value chains and sectors through a strong collaboration with existing GIZ sectoral projects in the SADC region, and (3) strengthening the dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned on how to integrate risk-informed development in various key sectors. The focus is on developing the capacities and skills of the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit and the Gender Unit.

Effective risk governance relies on the broad participation of all groups in society. Only if varying needs, competences and capacities are identified, resilience can be effectively strengthened while also considering the root causes of vulnerability, such as poverty, poor governance, discrimination, inequality, and inadequate access to resources and livelihoods. GIDRM particularly targets vulnerable sections of the population (e.g. children, the elderly or displaced people) in countries with fragile statehood and SADC regions facing higher risks of natural hazards.

There is no doubt, that we will need to transform the way we govern risk as soon as possible. Applying the risk governance lens in all sectors and on all governmental levels is crucial to strengthen risk-informed development.

