

‘Strengthening the Resilience of Communities through

Community-based Disaster Risk Management’ Project

(CBDRM)

**Mid-term Review**

*Draft Final Report*

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# Executive Summary

**Overview**

The mid-term review (MTR) of the ‘Strengthening the Resilience of Communities through Community-based Disaster Risk Management’ (CBDRM) project has been commissioned by UNDP in order to provide an independent assessment for the Project Steering Committee and UNDP on the progress of project at the mid-point of the project, as well as identifying any changes that need to be made to the project’s strategy to ensure its continuing relevance, effectiveness and increased potential for sustainability. The MTR will further identify initial lessons learned that can be used to reinforce project activities going forward.

The project was developed in order to support vulnerable communities in DPRK to minimize the annual loss of life, and safeguard livelihoods and assets during quick onset disasters such as flooding and landslides and build local capacity to sustain the change created to improve the overall resilience of target communities. The intended outcome of this project is to enhance resilience of vulnerable communities to natural hazards. The project seeks to achieve this objective by imparting skills and guiding the appropriate use of resources necessary for managing risks over time at household and local (Ri) levels.

The MTR was carried out using both inductive and deductive approaches, through four phases: desk review, data collection, analysis and drafting/finalization. A number of challenges emerged throughout the MTR process, including the limited data availability related to community feedback given the geopolitical context of the country, and reduced access to community members due to poor weather. The MTR was also carried out simultaneously with the MTR for the SES project, which added some logistical and data collection challenges where target communities overlapped. However, these challenges were planned for and managed throughout the MTR process.

**Findings**

Overall, the MTR found that the project is on track to meet most of its targets, despite significant operational and geopolitical challenges. A brief overview of the achievements is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for the CBDRM Project

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **MTR Rating** | **Achievement Description** |
| **Project Strategy** | N/A | As an initiative to introduce the concept and demonstrate CBDRM approaches to reduce threats to human life during disaster, it has proven to be – and continues to be even more so – a highly relevant initiative for the country. Site selection was therefore based on Ris which were at high risk and unlikely to receive support through other projects, given the increased cost in both time, human resources and money to implement activities in remote communities. This goes to the heart of disaster risk management and the importance of targeting the most vulnerable. The project RRF focuses heavily on quantitative indicators which do not provide space to analyse effectiveness and sustainability, and recommendations to improve the RRF have been made by the MTR. |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Output 1 Achievement Rating: 5 | All of the targets under Output 1 have been achieved, however, as noted above, the absence of qualitative indicators has led to a lack of systematic monitoring on the knowledge retention and use, which questions the sustainability of the changes effected to date. |
| Output 2 Achievement Rating: 4 | All of the targets under Output 2 have been achieved or are likely to be achieved. However, questions of sustainability and impact related to the DLDD and CBDRM Framework activities come into question, as with Output 1, the absence of qualitative indicators to assess the wider change that the activities implemented create, mean that it is difficult to understand how sustainable any changes will be. |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | Achievement Rating: 5 | The project team should be lauded for its capacity to identify implementation efficiencies and adjust work plans according to opportunities and constraints present in the operational environment. Delayed procurement processes inadvertently increase project management costs as activity implementation can slow down, while project staffing remains the same. The project team has made significant effort to off-set slower implementation periods by focusing on knowledge-based activities, by delays do more harm to project finances as well as project morale. Partnerships with other UN agencies and organizations such as IFRC are informal at the information sharing level but are not sufficient to be considered having an impact on project efficiency and effectiveness. |
| **Sustainability** | Rating Scale: 2-3 | Currently, the biggest risk to the sustainability of the changes effected to date is if the project or country office was to be closed due to operational constraints. With 17 months remaining in project implementation, there is sufficient time and resources to consolidate the gains made in knowledge and skills in the target communities, and to provide supplementary training and awareness sessions to deepen understanding of CBDRM and stimulate interest in the issue in surrounding communities. However, if viewed from the aspect of the communities, a major risk is the inability of UNDP to complete the procurement of materials for structural interventions for DRR and agro-forestry, which are highly regarded in the community and are important for both moral and demonstration effect. |

The CBDRM project is making a vital contribution to the UN Strategic Framework 2017-2021 (for DPRK) in relation to outcome 3.1 and 3.3. Specifically, the awareness and knowledge tools imparted by the project to communities for DRM planning and, in particular, for early warning and preparedness will have a positive impact in the target communities (in particular vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women and young children who were not specifically catered for in the past). While capacities for response and recovery are important, it is the early warning and preparedness which will save lives and reduce the impact on livelihoods, particularly among the most vulnerable. The project’s contribution to improved coordination on CBDRM across a number of government and UN agencies, among others, with the CBDRM Programme Framework, cannot be underestimated, although with the restrictions on working with national level government institutions, it will be a slower moving process to improve the day-to-day coordination of this cross-cutting sector and integrate it with issues around environment and climate change.

Overall, the results achieved by the project to date are considered to be sustainable, particularly at the community level, with some initial quick wins/short term impact in relation to the provision of materials for risk monitoring and early warning, as well as the reduction in the loss of lives and livelihood assets where DRR interventions have taken place. Although impact will be limited to the communities where activities were implemented, from a humanitarian perspective, this is significant as the ability of a community to protect the lives of its members during times of crisis is truly the main objective.

**Recommendations**

Improved Monitoring. The MTR has frequently noted that limiting monitoring and data collection to quantitative approaches only undermines the ability of the project to capture the qualitative change created and the potential impact of the project in the short and medium term. Providing analysis of qualitative change can also demonstrate the importance of the project despite the significant operational challenges, not least procurement challenges, which have caused delay in the implementation of some activities. The MTR recommends including a number of qualitative indicators at the sub-output level.

Revised Output Targets. Although initial project targets were set within the previous sanctions regime and were highly likely to be achieved, given the fluidity of the current international environment regarding DPRK in mid-2018, it is difficult to determine whether or not the project will be able to achieve its present targets by end 2019 when the project is scheduled to close. Moreover, current targets are entirely quantitative in nature and do not provide the necessary evidence that the activities implemented have resulted in any meaningful change, they only reflect the activities completed. The MTR recommends sub-output targets for the supplementary qualitative indicators accordingly.

Standardized monitoring tools. A standardized quarterly monitoring report should be used to consolidate data from the BTORs on a quarterly basis only, providing ease in data analysis. The report should be completed by the project team (lead by the Project Manager), with quality assurance of the data and analysis undertaken by M&E Specialist. This also provides a clear delineation between the role of the project and programme in monitoring and reporting at the project level.

Communication of project results. With the inclusion of more qualitative indicators at the output level, it is hoped that more meaningful analysis of the humanitarian importance of the project will be captured, and it is recommended that the UNDP Country Office put significantly more effort into communicating these results within the wider UN system in order to reinforce why UNDP’s presence in DPRK is essential.

Managing community expectations. While plans for structural interventions were agreed with target communities, delays in procurement undermine community commitment and ownership to the initiatives. The project needs to find a way to better manage community expectations related to structural interventions, perhaps by only discussing these plans once procurement is approved based on previous needs assessments.

Focus on soft interventions. Based on the on-going delays in procurement, it will be important for the CBDRM team to prepare a work plan which puts significant effort on soft-activities including technical assistance which consolidate knowledge transfer at the county level. The planning of these activities could be guided by UNDP’s Capacity Development toolkits/handbooks, particularly focusing on individuals and institutions, to understand where knowledge transfer gaps may take place, and target activities to address such gaps.

Consolidating CBDRM commitment at the national level. The sustainability of current results and possible future scale-up of CBDRM relies heavily on the capacity of SCEDM to take ownership of DRM coordination in the country. It is recommended that the project team facilitate more knowledge transfer and leadership skills to SCEDM, using the CBDRM Programme Framework as a launching point for improved coordination of the cross-cutting sector.

Exit Strategy. It is recommended that UNDP identify an agency to take over the responsibility for coordinating the CBDRM Programme Framework after the project is complete as it is unlikely that SCEDM capacity to take on that role will be sufficient by the time the project ends, as well as work closely with participating counties for the formal handover of products such as the DLDD and CBDRM Programme Framework for the improved ownership and continued learning of county officials related to risks, vulnerabilities and community-based disaster risk management.