

Disaster risk management program

WBI URBAN PRACTICE
Ensuring safe and resilient cities

The frequency and intensity of natural disasters has increased consistently over the past decades.

Urban centers are hit hard by these disasters because of their location (many are located in floodplains or coastal zones) and concentration of economic activity and people. With urbanization continuing at unprecedented rates, exposure is increasing and will translate into heavy loss of life and property unless proactive measures are mainstreamed into urban planning processes.

While there is a plethora of data, maps and information available, the actual knowledge on how to determine appropriate strategies to address and mitigate the risks, as well as to apply them at the local level vis-à-vis other development priorities, remains a challenge.

Our program

Managing risks and increasing resilience is underpinned by detailed assessments of relevant institutions, hazards and climate risks, socio-economic characteristics of city residents, infrastructure and critical ecosystems upon which the city is dependent.

To help policymakers with these challenges, the World Bank Institute Urban Practice responds through its Disaster Risk Management Program. The Program builds capacity among local government officials and practitioners through:

E-learning on Safe and Climate Resilient Cities. This e-learning course will expose city officials and practi-



tioners to cutting-edge tools on vulnerability assessment, policy and programs, stock-taking of policies and programs, and access to financing. It will also help them identify options, establish priorities, and decide what steps to take so that the city is more resilient to climate change impacts and natural disasters.

The e-learning course will be offered to cohorts of city staff (3–5 officials from different departments) who will undertake vulnerability assessments in different sectors and areas and together will come up with a local resilience action plan. This approach will achieve the best results in terms of institutional change, leading to applied actions after learning.

The course attendees will become champions for new measures and programs to enhance resilience in their respective sectors in the city, leading to the second phase of the Disaster Risk Management Program, where a full set of *Local Resilience Action Plans* will be developed.

Fostering the adoption of Local Resilience Action Planning in cities. Effective upstream planning for short and long term hazards offer urban planning a unique opportunity to rethink past development practices, improve the sustainability of human settlements and effectively prepare communities against threats and risks.

Cities may consider developing a *Local Resilience Action Plan* or a similar tool based on the potential impacts of climate change and natural disasters for areas determined to be highly vulnerable and where possible, for the entire city. The plan is a way of taking action to protect citizens, assets, and the city's history.

The action plan would ideally be comprised of both hard (infrastructure and physical investments) and soft (governance, education and awareness) measures to reduce risk, and define institutional responsibilities and preferred sequencing for implementation.

The Disaster Risk Management Program aims to foster the adoption of *Local Resilience Action Planning* as part of sound urban planning.

Three main initiatives proposed are:

- **Networking:** city leaders that effectively started *Local Resilience Action Planning* will be asked to share their experience, describing the scope of the initiatives, objectives, resources involved and expected outcomes (for example, this can be done through South-South exchanges among city officials).
- **Mentoring:** to support *Local Resilience Action Planning* preparation, as well as its implementation, the Disaster Risk Management Program will mentor interested cohorts of city officials and support the development of full Local Resilience Action Plans.
- **On-Demand Knowledge and Capacity Building Support** on priority issues identified by the government and other stakeholders to manage both post-disaster recovery and reconstruction and to identify preventive measures in case of emergencies. This will be done through the use of technology such as videoconferences and the Global Development Learning Network for just-in-time exchanges of information and knowledge in emergency situations.

Contact

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