

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

BACKGROUND

Extreme natural or human-induced, sudden or slow-onset extreme events have negative impacts on development; particularly, where the resilience of people and infrastructure is not sufficiently strengthened. In an effort to manage risks for sustainable development, focus commonly lies on single natural hazards hybrid and/or human-made hazards. Considering unplanned urbanization, inadequate health care services, environmental degradation, fragile statehood and violent conflicts, disaster risks become more acute, interdependent, and systemic in character – making them virtually impossible to address retrospectively or in isolation. Climate change and variability also amplifies these challenges.

Disasters wipe out many years of development achievements and reduce the development opportunities of countries and regions. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, illustrates the increasingly interdependent risk landscape all socio-political and economic areas and sectors face. The concept of **risk-informed development (RID)** integrates a broad understanding of risks linked to climate, health, economy, environment, and various other sectors and fields. Addressing the systemic and interconnected nature of risks, RID is an **interdisciplinary, strategic, and flexible guiding principle for decision-making** towards more resilient and sustainable development progress. RID recognizes that risks are influenced by our activities and choices—to become more risk-informed, we need to strengthen our capacities to understand and manage systemic risks.

The Global Initiative on Disaster Risk Management (GIDRM) aims at strengthening risk-informed development with partners in Southern Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Southern African, GIDRM cooperates with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



GIDRM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA – SADC REGION

GIDRM aims to further strengthen the SADC-Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Unit as a competent service provider for

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the inclusion of gender-responsive and RID-based approaches in development activities and apply risk-informed development interventions in two sectors in conjunction with technical cooperation projects, implemented in partnership with the SADC Secretariat or within the SADC region.

In many member states of the SADC, measures tend to neglect risk mitigation, disaster preparedness and prevention, while focusing mainly on emergency response. Adequate coordination between sectors to allow complex disaster and climate risks analysis based on solid data and cross-sectoral exchange of knowledge is central to ensure RID. **GIDRM in southern Africa aims at strengthening the capacities and skills of decision-makers in the SADC region to address complex and systemic risks by mainstreaming risk-informed development including gender equitable guiding principles.** GIDRM focuses on five main areas of intervention by:

- (1) enhancing **disaster risk management capacities** to promote **gender equitable**, risk-informed development into SADC sectoral policies,
- (2) strengthening **systemic risk management** in the SADC region in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and informing the corresponding SADC recovery plan,

- (3) integrating **risk-informed development into the water and urban sectors** through existing development cooperation projects in the SADC region at national and/or sub-national level,
- (4) supporting the **operationalization and sustainability** of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Centre (SHOC)
- (5) **disseminating lessons learned** and good practices on how to integrate risk-informed development in key sectors.

Enhancing disaster risk management capacities

In cooperation with various SADC Directorates and Units as well as GIZ projects, GIDRM ensures that RID and gender-equitable principles are incorporated into SADC sectoral policies, by providing policy analysis, advice and input (e.g., SADC Revised Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2033; SADC Tourism and Crisis Communication and Disaster Management Strategy; SADC Regional Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2030).

Strengthening systemic risk management

The “Understanding Systemic and Cascading Risks: Learnings From COVID-19” (CARICO) approach and methodology developed by UNDRR-UNU will be applied in the SADC region to identify, document and analyze cascading and systemic impacts and risks linked to COVID-19 in two selected pilot countries. With a specific focus on informal contexts, gender inequality, and transboundary collaboration, the process intends to produce recommendations to inform the development of a COVID-19 recovery plan for the SADC region.

Risk-informed development in the water sector

In conjunction with the “Integrated Catchment Management” (ICM) project implemented in the SADC region, GIDRM is piloting a climate risk-assessment tool

with the water sector as an entry point for RID. This process opens avenues for Lesotho stakeholders to contribute to the regional agenda and provide good practices for the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) and the SADC Secretariat. Additionally, GIDRM supports an enabling environment for risk-informed development in Lesotho’s water sector.

Risk-informed development in the urban sector

In conjunction with the “Connective Cities - Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development” the joint initiative on Risk Informed Urban Development (RIUD) in the SADC Region facilitates the development of scalable and/or replicable solutions through a network of cities and experts, addressing multi-actor, multilevel and cross-sectoral interdependencies. Specifically, RIUD enables peer-to-peer exchange on disaster risk management for risk-informed urban development as well as developing project proposals for the “City Climate Gap Fund”.

Sustainability plan and business continuity model of the SHOC

Through GIDRM’s support, the SADC-DRR Unit is developing the “Sustainability Plan and Business Continuity Model” for the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Centre (SHOC) in Mozambique to continue to fulfil its mandate in line with its vision and mission in a quest to provide DRM-sustained coordination services to the region.

Disseminating lessons learned & good practices

GIDRM disseminates and incorporates lessons and practices gained throughout its work in the SADC region. Examples include inter-alia lessons learnt from SADC DRM value chain mapping, COVID-19 responses, and the integration of RID principles into other sectors.

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