



ALGERIA

Reducing Natural Disaster Risk

Disaster Context

Algeria is considered a medium human development country, ranked 106 in the Human Development Index. Algeria has been affected by serious natural disasters ranging from earthquakes, drought, and floods, to locust infestation and fires. Algeria is the most vulnerable Arab country to seismic hazards and 90 percent of its infrastructure and population are located in areas of high risk, particularly the north coast. As a consequence of a large number of disasters that occurred in the early 1980s, the government of Algeria approved a National Plan on Natural and Environmental Risk Prevention in 1985.

Levels of vulnerability have been on the increase due to poor land use and poor quality of construction (three quarters of housing does not follow standard codes). Technological risk related to the presence of industries and nuclear installations are also a serious issue.

In November 2001, floods resulted in the loss of more than 800 lives. The management of these floods showed some weaknesses in government response at the local level and the lack of local early warning mechanisms.

Project Titles

- Reduction des Risques Sismiques (ALG/96/004)
- Renforcement du Croissant Rouge Algérien (ALG/02/012)
- Emergency humanitarian response to the earthquake of Temouchent (1999) and the floods in Alger (2001)

Sectors

- Institutional strengthening
- Disaster preparedness
- Response to sudden disasters

Funding

- UNDP contributed \$170,000 from TRAC 1.1.1 funds and the Algerian government contributed \$454,000 to support capacity-building projects (ALG/96/004).
- UNDP contributed \$224,250 from TRAC 1.1.1 and the Government of Algeria contributed \$224,250 (ALG/02/012).
- UNDP executed emergency response activities from OCHA funds: \$180,000 was provided for the Alger floods and \$20,000 was provided for the Temouchent earthquake.

Partners

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Habitat
- Ministry of Interior: Civil Protection Office
- National Meteorological Office
- Algerian Red Crescent

Programme Activities

Project ALG/96/004 involved the following activities:

- Institutional strengthening of the National Centre for Applied Research in Seismic Engineering (CGS, in French)
- Assisting the CGS in completing the seismic and micro-zoning study of the Alger and the Ain Delfa
- Assisting with staff development
- Assisting the CGS in the design of research laboratories

Project ALG/02/012 involved the following activities:

- Building capacity in order to increase the response to humanitarian assistance

- Training and resource management, including the implementation of information technology
- Implementation of a National Information System
- A lessons-learned exercise and building of a platform for information exchange
- Support of communication capacity and sensitisation of those affected by disasters

UNDP implemented humanitarian response whereby several *ad hoc* actions were undertaken in response to the earthquake of Temouchent (1999) and the floods in Alger (2001). Specific support was also given to the Civil Protection Office for the use of a Geographic Information System. Current activities supporting risk mapping are contributing to the identification of natural disaster risk and are informing national land planning and emergency response policies, with a view to take disaster prevention into consideration.