

EARLY RECOVERY

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is the main focus of early recovery (ER)?

A: The overall focus of early recovery (ER) is to urgently restore the capacity of national institutions and communities damaged by conflict or natural disaster. It encompasses a broad range of needs in areas such as livelihoods, transitional shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and other socio-economic dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It aims to kick-start nationally owned processes for post-crisis recovery that are sustainable, seek to build back better, strengthen human security and address the underlying causes of the crisis to avoid future relapse.

Q: When does early recovery begin?

A: Beginning in a humanitarian setting, early recovery seeks to build on relief efforts to catalyze sustainable development opportunities. Early recovery represents the first steps of the planning process for longer term development, and as such it should begin early, operating in parallel with emergency activities. Early recovery is not a separate phase in the relief-development continuum, but an effort to strengthen linkages. The sooner work on recovery begins, the sooner the affected areas are stabilized, and the shorter and more effective the recovery process is likely to be.

Q: What are the aims of early recovery?

A: For early recovery programmes to be successful as well as sustainable, they must be nationally owned. In order to generate or reinforce nationally owned processes for post-crisis recovery, early recovery programmes aim to:

- 1) enhance ongoing emergency assistance operations by building on humanitarian programmes;
- 2) support spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities to prevent the reconstruction of pre-crisis risk levels; and
- 3) establish the foundations for longer-term recovery.

Q: How does UNDP promote early recovery on the ground?

A: UNDP provides leadership and support for early recovery by:

- 1) Reinforcing government capacity at the national level to stimulate early recovery and to plan for full recovery;
- 2) Supporting a coordinated approach to early recovery in national processes, as well as among UN and other international players; this includes systematic assessment, analysis, coordination and strategic planning for early recovery activities; and
- 3) Facilitating the early recovery of local administration and of the affected populations through local level support of early recovery activities.

Q: What is the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery?

A: Established in 2005, the IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) was created against the general backdrop of the humanitarian reform process. One of eleven IASC clusters, the CWGER comprises 22 UN and non-UN active global partners from the humanitarian and development communities, with UNDP as the designated cluster lead to coordinate their efforts and cover critical gaps.

At the global level, CWGER focuses on strengthening partnerships, developing early recovery tools and guidelines, early recovery training and capacity building, and piloting an inter-agency surge capacity mechanism to facilitate the rapid deployment of early recovery experts where they are needed.



UNDP Mozambique

enhancing the capacity of local governmental and non-governmental counterparts.

At the country level, the CWGER has provided support to a number of countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia, Uganda, Lebanon, Liberia, DRC, Somalia, CAR, Colombia, Philippines, Mozambique, Madagascar, Bangladesh and Kenya. This support has taken many forms, such as aiding governments in the development of ER Coordination offices and sub-offices; and

Call to Action:

There are no formal interagency mechanisms for **mobilizing resources** for early recovery work. The global community has recognized the importance of early recovery, and must therefore make every effort to ensure its proper funding.

The multidimensional nature of early recovery requires strong **partnerships** in order to make the most of the available expertise and avoid overlap. Humanitarian agencies, development actors, national authorities, international and national NGOs, civil society, the international financial institutions, the private sector and donors therefore need to build stronger partnerships and facilitate communication.

Societies affected by a major crisis tend to seek rapid and visible solutions to recover, often at the cost of more sustainable and durable solutions that address the causes of the crisis. Planning must **avoid the “tyranny of rush,”** following a strategic, field-driven approach guided by a common understanding and analysis of the underlying causes of the crisis.

Operating in tandem with emergency activities, early recovery has a separate set of objectives and mechanisms, and therefore requires a different level of expertise. While the surge capacity network represents an important step forward, more experts in a variety of fields need to join this global team to be available for rapid deployment in the event of crisis.



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National ownership is at the heart of early recovery. It is essential to help build the capacity of national actors and institutions to lead, manage and implement the early recovery process. At the same time, communities must be empowered to participate in decision-making and implementation of local level early recovery programmes.

UNDP in Action:

In **Pakistan**, following the earthquake in 2005, the cluster approach was implemented for the first time as a framework for coordinating humanitarian response. The collective Early Recovery Cluster launched a sizeable portfolio of early recovery programmes for income generation, governance support, health, education, disaster risk reduction, transitional housing, rapid income support through an employment recovery project, and a community-based livelihood recovery project. Furthermore, funding from UNDP and other agencies – including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Development Group Office (DGO) and USAID – provided support for the development of a new government-run institution – the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency.

In **Darfur**, UNDP established an early recovery programme on rule of law based on development principles such as empowerment, capacity-building, inclusion and participation. The programme empowers internally displaced people in paralegal schemes, supports local lawyers to build up legal aid services, and trains the judiciary to recognize and address sexual gender-based violence while also offering legal information services.

UNDP has engaged in multiple early recovery activities in **Somalia**, including establishing district and regional authorities to further the reconciliation process; flood control through diversion gates, irrigation, and rehabilitating water reservoirs with community involvement; providing livelihood opportunities; promoting good governance and rule of law efforts in regions where local authorities have been set up to support them; and focusing on reconciliation in conflict areas.

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