

SECTOR FACILITY PROFILE

THE BAHAMAS

Project name:	Natural Risk Preventive Management	
Project number:	BH-L1008	
Project team:	Javier Cuervo (RE3/EN3), Team Leader; Colin Forsythe (COF/CBH); Henry Moreno (RE3/EN3); Francisco Vieira (SDS/ICT); Bernadete Buchsbaum (LEG/OPR); Yvon Mellinger (RE3/EN3); y Gisella Barreda (RE3/EN3).	
Borrower:	Commonwealth of The Bahamas	
Executing agency:	National Emergency Management Agency	
Financing plan:	IDB:	US\$5.0 million
	Local:	<u>US\$2.1 million</u>
	Total:	US\$7.1 million
Tentative dates:	Principal mission:	Third quarter 2005 (Analysis).
	Approval:	Fourth Quarter 2005.

I. CURRENT SITUATION

A. Disasters and risk management

- 1.1 Natural disasters are a development challenge. The Caribbean is a region particularly prone to natural hazards, which, depending on the vulnerability of the country can result in natural disasters. The consequences are on several fronts - in addition to the loss of human lives, there are economic, social and environmental impacts affecting many sectors, including productive sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure and tourism. Comprehensive attention to the challenge is a long-term process that needs to be built around Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The key elements of DRM are: (i) risk identification; (ii) mitigation; (iii) risk transfer; (iv) preparedness; (v) emergency response; and (vi) rehabilitation and reconstruction. The first four constitute the pre-disaster phase and the last two the post-disaster phase and usually governments have centered their attention to the last phase.

- 1.2 The Bahamas is exposed to the effect of windstorms regularly and during the hurricane season of 2004, The Bahamas was hit by two hurricanes. Although the effect on the different islands varied in intensity and type of damage, the overall effect reflected the need to strengthen The Bahamas' ability to cope with such events. Hurricane Frances first hit The Bahamas in September 2, 2005 moving east west along the archipelago. The effects were felt in Mayaguana, Long Island, San Salvador, Rum Cay, Cat Island, Eleuthera, New Providence, the Berry Islands, Abaco and Grand Bahama. A month had not passed when Hurricane Jeanne made landfall in The Bahamas on September 25th, 2005. Jeanne impacted the northwestern Bahamas, including Abaco, Grand Bahama, Andros, the Berry Islands, Bimini, Eleuthera, Exuma, and New Providence. In some communities floodwaters rose to more than six feet and resulting in severe damage. For example, in the Eight Mile Rock Community of Grand Bahama, over 75% of the homes suffered significant structural damage.
- 1.3 An assessment done by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), at the request of the Government of The Bahamas and with the support of the IDB, showed several areas that are in need of improvement in order to increase the resilience of the country in the face of existing and well known hazards. There is a need for more systematic approach regarding disaster management including the enhancement of the country's response mechanism and emergency management institutional arrangement, namely the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).
- 1.4 Bank experience with the Disaster Prevention Sector Facility: With the objective of strengthening disaster prevention and risk management systems through vulnerability reduction and improved preparedness, the Bank approved in march 2001 the Disaster Prevention Sector Facility. The Bank has approved three sector facilities in the countries of Dominican Republic, Bolivia and recently Haiti. There is also one in the pipeline for Ecuador. Although the Bank has not had a lot of experience with the sector facilities for natural disasters prevention, some lessons have been learned. In particular, there is the need for adequate inter-institutional coordination specially when mandates about emergency preparedness are unclear or overlapping. In the case of The Bahamas, NEMA has a leading role accepted by all agencies.

II. COUNTRY AND BANK STRATEGY

- 2.1 Bank Strategy: The principal areas of strategic focus in the Bank's strategy with The Bahamas are: (i) sustained economic growth and private sector development; (ii) social development and equity; (iii) environmental management; and (iv) public-sector modernization. Regarding Bank's support to The Bahamas, one key feature of the strategy is a shift to focus on smaller projects with high technical assistance content (GN-2290-1). During the Programming mission that took place in December, 2004, the Government requested support in the area of

disaster risk management. The Bank and the Government agreed on three pronged approach in regards to disaster management in the aftermath of the impact of hurricanes Francis and Jeanne taking into account that one of the eligibility criteria for the consideration of the IRF was a demonstrated willingness to strengthened its domestic capacity for prevention, mitigation (risk reduction) and preparedness to tackle emergencies along with an appropriate organizational structure¹. The three prongs were: (i) a new loan operation under the Immediate Response Facility (IRF); (ii) a separate new loan under the Disaster Prevention Facility; and (iii) use of the remaining balance of the Infrastructure Rehabilitation-Phase 1 (in execution). The operation proposed corresponds to the second prong and it relates to the strategy through the recognition that natural disasters present development challenges with severe economic impacts and that their recurrence would affect sustainable economic growth. The operation was included in the Country Strategy Update for Bahamas presented to the Board of Directors on 22-June-2005 (GN-2257-9). Also, the operation is in line with the focus of the country strategy on small projects with high content on technical assistance described above.

- 2.2 Link to the IRF: The present operation is thematically linked to the IRF in the sense that both deal with disaster risk management, however, they each focus on different phases. The IRF focuses on reconstruction while this operation focuses on prevention². This implies a degree of complementation but it should be noted that this operation has a “life of its own” since the need to work on prevention complements the reconstruction task but neither depends on it nor it is solely justified by it. This is so because two reasons. The first is that the key elements of natural risk management are classified in two groups/phases, pre-disaster and post-disaster, and the IRF is part of the second group while BH-L1008 responds to the needs of the first group. The second is that project execution is separate. The IRF’s executing agency is the Ministry of Works and Utilities and BH-L1008’s executing agency is NEMA.
- 2.3 The present operation is consistent with the Bank’s Policy on Natural and Unexpected Disasters (OP-704), which puts disaster prevention and mitigation within the development vision of the Bank. It is also consistent with the Bank’s draft new policy for Disaster Risk Management, in particular with the specific objective of supporting borrowing member countries’ efforts to reduce or avoid disruptions in their social and economic development caused by natural hazards both in public and private sectors.
- 2.4 Eligibility as Disaster Prevention Sector Facility: The Disaster Prevention Facility (GN-2085-5) focuses on five components. Two are basis for BH-L1008: (i) Preparedness which includes strengthening of communication systems, equipping and training, strengthening of emergency responders and enhancement

¹ Project Report PR-2921 (BH-L1007).

² In addition to the thematic complement, this operation helps also to demonstrate Bahamas’ willingness to work in prevention of natural disasters as required by the IRF.

of identified facilities and organizations of shelters; and (ii) Systems for Risk Reduction to support new policies, legal and regulatory framework, institutional arrangements and building of technical and operational capacity.

- 2.5 Country Strategy: The Government of The Bahamas is committed to taking a proactive, comprehensive and sustained approach to disaster management. The strategy focuses on reducing risks and vulnerability – the loss of life, economic disruption and damage to the environment and property. The approach is to fully integrate comprehensive disaster management into sustainable development planning. One of the pillars is the National Disaster Plan. The purpose of the NDP is “to establish a process and structure for the systematic, coordinated and effective delivery of National assistance to address the consequences of any major disaster or emergency”. It is built around two sections, one deals with the policies and concepts of operations that guide assistance to disaster-stricken areas and the second summarizes planning assumptions, response and recovery actions. The project BH-L1008 is strongly grounded on the plan because preparedness improvement (communication, community work and shelters) is strongly linked to the first area, the component on legal and institutional issues relates to both areas, and the Country Risk Profile relates mainly to the second area of the plan (see paragraph 3.2).

III. OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Objectives

- 3.1 The goal of the proposed project is to contribute to sound disaster risk management by establishing a well functioning system for disaster management to provide appropriate response and recovery efforts following a disaster. The project focuses on the aspect of preparedness. A secondary objective of the project is to develop a Country Risk Profile to orient actions in other areas of disaster risk management that would be helpful to launch larger programs shown to be beneficial to The Bahamas when it comes to meet risk reduction objectives.

B. Activity areas

- 3.2 Recent assessments done for UNDP, CDERA and the Bank (see paragraph 1.3) show that The Bahamas has made good progress with respect to its capability to respond to natural disasters³ but that this progress needs to be consolidated with actions in specific issues. In particular there is a need to work on the following five components around which this project is designed:

³ For example, the average number of dead people in The Bahamas as consequence of windstorms is 3, while this number is 26 for Jamaica, 10 for Barbados, 204 for Belize, 253 for Dominican Republic and 758 for Haiti. *Source: ËM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database. Université Chatolique de Louvain – Brussels.*

- a. Legal and institutional framework: This component will finance technical assistance to build up the institutional capacity of the principal agencies participating in the National Disaster Plan where NEMA is the core agency but sector ministries and local governments also participate. The project will focus on equipping NEMA's facilities (including the national emergency operation center), technical assistance to improve and structure the legal framework to support NEMA, and capacity building around disaster risk management. Resources for the building of the facility may be considered for local counterpart funding depending on cost dimension of the components of the project.
- b. Communications: The emphasis of this component will be on (i) communication protocols between local emergency command centers and the national emergency operation center; and (ii) communication between chief commander of local emergency command centers and relevant parties such as shelter managers. This component may also include equipment and training. Compatibility with current operating systems will be a selection criterion.
- c. Shelters: The project will include support to provide shelters with necessary supplies to meet the needs of the population during emergencies. Also part of the project will be retrofitting of shelters based on the development of a national shelter policy and needs assessment that will take place as part of the project. Notwithstanding this, a set of critical shelters will be identified during analysis for retrofitting and upgrading early in the project.
- d. Community preparedness: This component will emphasize effective partnerships with civil society and local governments in aspects of public education and training, and protocols for the transmission of information prior to, during and ex-post disaster events. This component will also complement the shelter component with adequate training of shelter managers and public awareness related to shelter use. It also includes an awareness campaign and education programs.
- e. Country Risk Profile: This component will finance a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of Disaster Risk Management in Bahamas (see paragraph 1.1) to identify actions that would reduce risk to acceptable levels.

IV. EXECUTION PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

- 4.1 The Bank Team and the local authorities will study the viability of the following institutional and execution arrangements during the project's principal mission.
- 4.2 Executing Agency and Project Implementation Unit: The Government confirmed the role of NEMA as responsible for the technical execution of the project.

Currently NEMA functions as a unit within the Cabinet Office, which will operate as the executing agency for the project. To facilitate a simplified and agile execution, there will be a small project-coordinating unit. NEMA will partner with other relevant government agencies in carrying out its technical responsibilities. Cabinet Office, the executing agency, will provide administrative support.

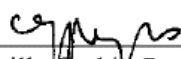
V. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- 5.1 The present operation does not have significant negative environmental or social impacts. No major works are envisioned. The works associated with the retrofitting of shelters may have some minor construction impacts that will be mitigated by following environmental guidelines. The operation is expected to directly reduce the loss of lives resulting from disasters as well as contribute to risk management capacity in the country, by equipping the country with hazard identification and tracking system. On the social side, the challenge for this operation is to incorporate good practice in communication (message and technology) to reach at risk populations, which are most often from the poorest stratum of society. This challenge will be tackled directly in the design of the project by reaching these populations through public education, workshops and awareness campaigns.
- 5.2 Poverty Targeted Investment: The program does not classify as a Poverty Targeted Investment.

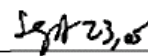
VI. PREPARATION STATUS AND ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 With the collaboration of NEMA, technical assistance will be provided to support the design of the project. The technical assistance has two parts. The first relates to communication, the hardware and software to adequately link NEMA and other central agencies with the units that will operate in the islands through out the country. The second part deals with the design and dimension of components 1 and 4 by prioritizing actions.
- 6.2 The Project Team will process the operation under the Sector Facilities guidelines that provide for fast track processing, aiming for approval in the fourth quarter of 2005.

Approved by:


Camille Gaskin-Reyes, RE3/DEP

Date


5/18/23