



European
Commission



FACTS & FIGURES

More than **65%** of all EU humanitarian projects include disaster preparedness activities.

In 2017, thanks to EU-funded disaster preparedness activities approximately **21 million people** worldwide are better equipped to face disasters.

Every **€1 spent** for disaster risk reduction and preparedness **saves between €4 and €7** in disaster response.

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European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Disaster preparedness

What is it?

Disaster preparedness refers to measures taken by governments, organisations, communities or individuals to prepare for, and mitigate the impact of, natural or man-made disasters. Simple initiatives can go a long way, for instance training and field exercises, establishing early warning systems, contingency planning, or making shelters safe. Preparedness against disasters also plays an important role in building the **resilience** of vulnerable communities.

Why is this important?

With increasing global population, mega-cities, climate change and poverty, a growing number of people face the impact of catastrophes. In particular, many hazards occur in fragile states and conflict-affected situations, accounting for a high proportion of disaster-impacted populations each year. Countries experiencing violent conflict or fragile governance are less able to respond to disasters and adapt to climate change.

However, natural hazards are often predictable and recurrent; data highlights where people are vulnerable, to which hazards, and why. Instead of costly emergency response, international efforts should help governments and societies to address extreme poverty and vulnerability, invest in risk management and build capacities for pre-emptive and early action. Better knowledge, practice, and response mechanisms through preparedness interventions, can save lives and improve communities' ability to recover from a disaster. Additionally, disaster preparedness programmes are cost-effective and save aid money. On average, every euro spent for reduction and preparedness activities saves between four and seven euros that would have been spent in response to the aftermath of disasters.

These concepts are agreed and firmly embedded into international commitments, including the **Sendai Framework** for Disaster Risk Reduction, climate negotiations, **Agenda 2030**, the **New Urban Agenda**, and the **Grand Bargain** commitments.

How are we helping?

The European Commission is at the forefront in promoting risk reduction and pre-emptive actions. In 2016, the European Commission agreed an Action Plan on Sendai implementation, supporting a disaster risk-informed approach to all EU policies. The EU focuses on vulnerability and not just on hazards. The EU is pursuing a wider approach to risk mitigation, taking into account man-made vulnerabilities and ensuring conflict-sensitive actions.

Over the past years, risk management and resilience have been systematically integrated into EU humanitarian aid programmes and projects, across all sectors. In 2017, 65 percent of all the EU-funded humanitarian projects included a disaster preparedness component.

Additionally, the EU allocates a part of its annual humanitarian budget (€50 million in 2018) for targeted disaster preparedness projects, focusing on [Sendai Priority 4](#) (to enhance disaster preparedness for effective response with applying a multi-hazard approach). This funding strengthens the ability of national and local preparedness systems to respond earlier and better, so emergency response is "as local as possible, as international as necessary."

The EU invests in early warning systems, in monitoring and building national and local capacities for response – as exemplified by the EU response to El Niño in the years 2015 and 2016. The EU supports partners in developing cost-effective methods to mitigate risk and in collecting the evidence to justify preparedness for early action.

Some examples of disaster preparedness in EU-funded humanitarian aid interventions include:

- strengthening the response capacities of first responders at the regional, national, and local levels after [hurricanes swept through the Caribbean](#) in 2017, and developing resilience-building strategies;
- developing mechanisms and targeting for shock-responsive social safety nets able to deliver an early response to needs in a number of countries (for instance, Niger, Somalia, Burkina Faso, and Malawi), jointly with development partners;
- cholera preparedness in Yemen;
- developing systems for an early response based on weather and risk forecasts in Vietnam.

Each disaster preparedness strategy and funding allocation include a defined exit strategy, where local capacities are deemed adequate or where local governments or development partners are able to take over.

Additionally, the EU engages and supports local and national government structures in all countries worldwide through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), notably within the areas of prevention and preparedness.

Finally, the [EU Aid Volunteers](#) initiative, which provides opportunities for European citizens to get involved in humanitarian aid projects, aims to strengthen the capacity and resilience of vulnerable communities in non-EU countries, through the implementation of joint actions between experienced humanitarian operators and local organisations.

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