1. Immediate crisis response packages

Disasters and violent conflicts are increasingly eroding countries and communities’ development gains. Resilience building is identified as one of the key areas of UNDP’s work under the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Outcome 6 of UNDP’s Strategic Plan outlines a strong organizational commitment through Early Recovery to work with communities to recover from crisis and build resilience.

This note is an integral part of the crisis response packages that are being rolled out to support UNDP country offices to design sound early recovery projects and implement them in a timely manner. It provides a brief overview of the importance of Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure (RCI) in immediate post crisis contexts and UNDP’s comparative advantage. It also explains how UNDP plans and implements RCI activities, and presents related processes, tools and capacities available with UNDP to roll out RCI projects.

2. Why is the area of work important for immediate crisis response?

Human development is inextricably linked with the stability and performance of community infrastructure and community-based assets, both physical and institutional. In an immediate post-crisis scenario the devastation of physical infrastructure can quickly trigger severe economic and social consequences. For example, when the only access road or bridge to a community is swept away by flooding or destroyed by earthquake, the population may become isolated from essential services or supplies, including adequate food, water and sanitation, medical care, education, social and cultural support, and employment, threatening their very livelihoods. Without rapid support to restore such assets, in just a few weeks, the level of need can escalate. Evidence also shows that the worst-affected communities and households tend to be the ones that are already the most vulnerable and impoverished, as they have fewer means to cope with the impact of disasters. The repair of community
infrastructure in post-disaster settings is thereby critical for the restoration of social and economic networks. Apart to that, the restoration of equal access to key community infrastructure by various community groups can play a critical role in preventing further conflict situations, delivering peace dividends and promoting social cohesion.

Support to the rehabilitation of community infrastructure is important in particular to:

- Re-establish access to critical (sometimes lifesaving) basic services and access to communities for (lifesaving) humanitarian aid;
- Provide rapid source of income in the direct aftermath of a crisis for affected communities;
- Provide the bases for the economic revitalization of a community/region affected by a crisis;
- Strengthen the social fabric and social cohesion between community members and groups
- Improve resilience by “building back better” through the promotion of building techniques that are more resistant to natural disasters and hazards
- Build the capacity of communities in management and engineering techniques, and contribute to the restoration of state authorities through improved delivery of basic social services.

Community infrastructure rehabilitation projects, if approached comprehensively, can support affected citizens to come together to rebuild their communities, strengthen partnerships with local authorities, reflect their own priorities in broader recovery and development planning and acquire new knowledge and skills that empowers them to expand their opportunities and choices.

3. What is the added value of UNDP?

- Providing rapid and responsive support
UNDP developed the crisis response packages to provide easy guidance, ready-to-use and prepositioned tools for a more predictive and rapid support, for the rehabilitation of community infrastructure. By providing rapid and responsive support UNDP assists governments to reach out and facilitate the participation of local communities in the rehabilitation of their own infrastructure in the immediate aftermath of a disaster or after a conflict. Taking local context, needs and circumstances as the starting point, the overall goal is to improve the social and economic conditions required for long-term human development.

- Linking short term rehabilitation to longer term development pathways
UNDP Integrates RCI in the broader picture of transitioning from immediate relief and stabilization towards a return to inclusive and sustainable development. UNDP implements RCI projects in the framework of its 3-track approach for livelihoods support and economic recovery and ensures that the rehabilitation of infrastructure not only contributes to immediate life-saving and short term livelihoods stabilization of affected communities (through salaries of workers, recovered access to basic social services – health water-, reopening of critical roads, etc) but also opens pathways for sustainable economic revitalization (through for instance improved transport, storage or irrigation infrastructure, and capacity building of the relevant partners).

- Focusing on resilience and building back better
UNDP interventions focus on building back better to support resilience and disaster risk reduction through activities including environment protection like reforestation, embankment consolidation, etc,
which may reduce risks of flooding or erosion, but also by adopting disaster-resistant building techniques. UNDP furthermore supports the communities to play a lead role at all stages of the project in order to properly reflect their values, needs and expectations.

- **Promoting multidimensional and coordinated interventions to maximize impact**
  UNDP promotes a comprehensive approach of community infrastructure rehabilitation projects that will not only contribute to rebuilding roads or schools but also address important issues related to economic development, community governance, conflict prevention, social cohesion, environment and reintegration of displaced population groups and their host communities. In that sense, community infrastructure plays a critical role not only in strengthening the social fabric between various community groups but also by supporting the restoration of state authority through concrete improvements in the delivery of social services.

- **Existing strategic partnerships with national stakeholders and expertise in capacity building**
  UNDP normally has long standing strategic partnerships with national stakeholders and partners in many countries, focusing on coordination support and capacity building. UNDP also delivers, where possible, through local (government) partners. This privileged relationship with the national authorities that are primary responsible for crisis response including on community infrastructure positions UNDP as a good strategic partner for engaging communities in reconstruction processes that are carried out not only in a participative way, but also in line with national policies and integrated into the relevant coordination committees or planning frameworks. Furthermore, UNDP’s core focus on capacity building is useful to have the authorities, communities and partners develop local technical and managerial skills for an effective and successful delivery of community infrastructure rehabilitation.

4. **How does UNDP do it?**

RCI activities are implemented using UNDP’s 3-track approach and are very often integrated with other components related to debris management, emergency employment creation, enterprise recovery, municipal solid waste management, and capacity building. All tracks are started as early as possible in an immediate post crisis phase, but implemented with different intensities.

- Livelihoods stabilization, through rehabilitation of community infrastructure, emergency employment and/or enterprise recovery **Track A**
- Enterprise development and support in rebuilding enterprises and economic infrastructure **Track B**
- Policy level support and development, capacity building **Track C**
Typical RCI interventions can cover a wide range of sectors⁠¹ and include the following generic activities:

| Immediate timeline: 2-8 weeks | - Restore/repair critical communication facilities to support life-saving operations and the supply of relief;  
|                              | - Repair and purify drinking water sources, clean ponds, restore sanitation facilities to mitigate secondary health hazards;  
|                              | - Restore telecommunications networks and early warning systems to support information dissemination and better coordination;  
|                              | - Clear rubble from the community road network and carry out emergency repairs to community roads to facilitate access; and  
|                              | - Begin to develop more systematic medium and long-term recovery plans for damaged community infrastructure including technical designs, drawings etc through a multi-stakeholder approach that engages affected communities in the survey and prioritization of damaged infrastructure. |

| Medium-term timeline: 2-12 months | - Provide support to local authorities engaging with affected communities in order to prioritize community infrastructure rehabilitation, using community mobilization methods and to adopt labour intensive techniques, pro-poor recruitment and management and maintenance plans;  
|                                 | - Provide capacity development and training in the design and implementation of rehabilitation infrastructure;  
|                                 | - Implement activities that support the immediate resumption of community livelihood and economic opportunities;  
|                                 | - Complement spontaneous community efforts for the recovery of minor infrastructure; and  
|                                 | - Ensure alignment with long-term sustainable development objectives as set out in local and national development plans and programmes. |

| Longer-term timeline: 2-18 months | - Build capacity and strengthen community institutional mechanisms for implementation and participatory monitoring of community infrastructure recovery programmes;  
|                                  | - Develop the capacity of local government institutions, NGOs and community based organizations for coordination, planning, implementation and sustainability of infrastructure; and  
|                                  | - Promote community awareness for safety standards, disaster risk reduction and build a culture of resilience at the community level. |

For UNDP, RCI recovery is essentially a community driven process and has the potential to empower the community as well as to recover the losses in human development due to disaster. The affected community is involved and engaged in every steps of the recovery process in CI sector: (i) Community based needs assessment; (ii) Community based comprehensive planning & prioritization; (iii) Local resource mobilization; (iv) Labor intensive public works; (v) Community based participatory monitoring. Local NGOs/CBOs, with proven track record, usually take part in the process as community capacity builders.

UNDP leading role on Early Recovery coordination is a useful complement to the implementation of programs in the affected communities. If needed, an early recovery/livelihoods cluster covering immediate economic recovery (community infrastructure, community engagement, emergency employment, etc) could be activated to strengthen the inter-agency coordination of early recovery efforts.

5. Funding options (CERF, FA, TRAC/major donors)

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¹ Including roads and bridges; water and sanitation; Education and health; social and cultural buildings; energy; economy; ICT and public information.
Major donors in the past for RCI have typically included Japan, Sweden, Canada, Netherlands, United States, EU.

- TRAC 113 - focus on assessment related activities up to 100,000 USD for immediate crisis response settings only

- CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) / Flash appeals - please see general guidance on CERF and FA applications and criteria as well as sample CERF and FA proposals available as part of the crisis response package. With respect to RCI related project submissions, it will be critical to present the activities as life-saving. Based on past experience, this may include for instance:
  - Restoration of access to isolated communities through rehabilitation of roads and bridges, to allow delivery of humanitarian assistance;
  - Restoration of drinkable water and sanitation systems and infrastructure to reduce the risk of diseases;
  - Building retaining and protection walls against floods
  - Procurement of equipment/technologies for local government entities

6. Contacts and additional information

For additional information, please contact:

- Technical support and programme development- BPPS Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Team- Owen Shumba (owen.shumba@undp.org)
- Operations and procurement- BOM
- Request for deployment of MSWM experts from Express Roster- BPPS/CRU