



Interoffice Memorandum

A Chhibber

To: Ajay Chhibber
Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Date: 17 November 2009

From: *Fadzai Gwaradzimba*
Chief, South and West Asia Division

Extension:

Subject: Request for Approval of DIM Modality:
Bhutan 2009 Earthquake Response Coordination and Recovery

File:

On 21 September 2009, an earthquake measuring 6.1 on Richter scale occurred in eastern Bhutan. As per the Joint UN-WB-Government Rapid Assessment Report, the earthquake caused significant damage and devastation in 12 districts of the country with total losses estimated at approximately US\$52 million. The earthquake rendered 4,614 homes uninhabitable and leveled many public infrastructure facilities such as schools and basic health units.

The UN assistance in strengthening national capacity for disaster risk management is one of the key priority areas of support under the Bhutan UNDAF/Common CPAP 2008-2012 (UNDAF Outcome 5, Country Team Outcome 2). In this context, the UN system, including the UNDP, has been among the first international partners to respond to the earthquake. UNDP Bhutan has secured funding under TRAC 1.1.3 Category II for support to the functions of the UN Resident Coordinator in response to the request of the Royal Government of Bhutan (attached). The project document alongside a BCPR communication on the approval of US\$100,000 for this project is also attached. The project will address immediate response actions, including support for coordination, needs assessment and resource mobilization. As advised by BCPR, the project funding falls under TRAC 1.1.3 Category II (Immediate Response to Sudden Crisis) and is hence de facto a DIM activity.

In addition, UNDP Bhutan has secured funding for emergency response through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the amount of US\$463,845, which will be channeled through this TRAC 1.1.3 project. This arrangement is agreeable to BCPR. The CERF allocation has been provided under Rapid Response Grant window and will be used primarily for the provision of relief items to address immediate shelter needs in the earthquake-affected areas. The total budget of this project would therefore be US\$563,845.

The support under the TRAC 1.1.3 project (including CERF grant as cost-sharing contribution) is fully aligned with Government's efforts coordinated through the Department of Disaster Management under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, and implemented in close consultation with the UN-Government Environment and Disaster Management Team (UNEDMT) under the auspices of the UN Resident Coordinator.

In view of the nature of the project activities (support for coordination, needs assessment, provision of relief items) and due to the fact that the Government capacity is severely stretched at the moment, the project will be implemented under DIM modality as part of UNDP's Environment and Disaster Management portfolio. In terms of the requisite capacity, the CO has competent finance, administrative and HR staff headed by an



Operations Manager, who have been involved in the successful implementation of a DIM project aimed at supporting the EU Election Observer Mission in 2008.

The Head of Energy, Environment and Disaster Management Unit, who will serve as the focal point within the CO for this project, is a senior ARR-level staff who has been with UNDP for the past one and half years as well as in the Government for several years. Most staff members are PRINCE2 certified and there is an effective internal control framework in place to ensure due accountability under this project. UNDP Bhutan therefore has adequate capacity and experience to implement the project.

The CO is under pressure to immediately start implementing activities under this project so as to address the emergency relief and recovery needs on the ground. Therefore, considering the nature of the project and its objectives, RBAP approval is requested for the direct implementation modality to initiate project activities as soon as possible.

Attachments:

Project Document for "Bhutan 2009 Earthquake Response Coordination and Recovery"

Letter from the Royal Government of Bhutan (25 September 2009)

Letter from BCPR (28 September 2009)