

Low Cost Community Level Mitigation Measures

Proposal for a Pilot Project to ECHO, EU by the Oxford Centre for Disaster Studies (OCDS) and the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)

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7338**

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Background to the Pilot Project

During the IDNDR many developing countries (and countries in transition) are focusing their attention on ways to reduce their risks. A vast array of techniques are being publicised and in certain cases implementation is in progress to reduce hazard impact to vulnerable communities. Many of these measures are costly in terms of cash, expertise, technology, labour or disruption in terms of social acceptability and dislocation. However, a body of knowledge exists within most hazard prone countries (particularly those countries where hazards have a frequent return period) of indigenous survival or coping mechanisms that protect people and their property (Examples are provided in Appendix 1).

There is a need to identify those local level indigenous approaches that require minimal levels of professional expertise and financial outlay and that may have a wider application both nationally and internationally. To fulfil this need a pilot project is proposed to identify these risk reduction measures, test their effectiveness, reach an understanding of those processes which explain their acceptability and devise methodologies for wider applicability.

In recognising the wide scale of such an undertaking it is proposed that a Pilot Project be initiated that focuses on two specific locales, in the Philippines and India, and on those approaches that have proven effective for mitigating risks and adapting to hazards. This will provide the opportunity to explore the use of low cost mitigation measures in specific case studies, and assess whether the general objectives of a wider project are viable. The pilot project will indicate whether the following aims of the extended project are feasible.

Aims

The aim is to reduce risks to local communities and their property at the level of local vulnerable communities. This will require the following:

- Identification of effective mitigation approaches and the methods by which local knowledge and skills evolve and are transferred.
- Testing whether such approaches are effective.
- Examining and devising methodologies to explain why techniques and processes have been adopted.