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Nepal earthquake: the EU's response

Within the first 24 hours after the disaster struck, the European Commission has dispatched humanitarian experts to Nepal and mobilised €3 million to help address the most urgent needs. Following the joint EU-UN mission, an additional contribution of emergency aid had been made, bringing the total EU humanitarian aid to €6 million.

The €6 million emergency operations are now being implemented by selected humanitarian organisations to address the priority needs (emergency shelter, non-food items, health water, sanitation and hygiene and logistics) in the most hard to reach areas of the most affected districts in Gorkha, Sindhupalchok, Dhading, Dolakha and Kravepalanchok.

Development assistance

When natural disasters of this scale occur, there is an immediate focus on humanitarian needs and the government almost instantly faces a huge and unforeseen financial pressure on the national budget. This is where development assistance becomes very relevant to address such fiscal needs from day one after the disaster. It is in this context that the European Commission provided an advance payment of budgetary support worth €16.6 million to assist Nepal. The funding was made available from the 2007-2013 Development Programme for Nepal under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for activities covering stability and peace building, as well as support to the education sector.

On 25 June 2015 the European Commission pledged €100 million in Budget Support to assist Nepal reconstruction efforts and create fiscal space in the country's budget. Up to €5 million immediate assistance will be available to the Government of Nepal to facilitate disbursement and monitoring of international capital expenditure.

Additional humanitarian assistance

The Commission is providing an additional €6 million for humanitarian assistance, bringing its total humanitarian aid to €12 million. This further support will contribute to the early recovery efforts to address unmet gaps, mainly for shelter, livelihoods, health and logistics. EU funding is helping the most vulnerable groups living in remote and hard to reach rural and mountainous areas as a priority. The aid is channelled via humanitarian organisations operating on the ground.

EU Civil Protection assistance

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated immediately to facilitate the coordination of incoming the assistance offered by the Member States, such as rescue teams, medical teams, advanced medical posts, technical assistance and support team, water purification systems and in kind assistance. Assistance was coordinated through the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre and a large number of participating States offered assistance: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland,

France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom.

A 13-member EU Civil Protection Team was deployed to facilitate the coordination of the in-coming aid. The European Commission co-financed the transport costs related to delivery of aid from Member States with €4.2 million via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and worked closely with UNICEF to bring relief goods to the region.

Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment has just been carried out by the government of Nepal and the Donor Community (including the EU). Key findings of the PDNA, published on 18 June, include:

- 41 of the country's 75 districts have been affected;
- The United Nations estimates that 8 million people – almost one-third of the population of Nepal – have been affected;
- This is the largest disaster the country has faced in almost a century;
- More than 20,000 schools were completely or significantly damaged;
- About a million children and 126,000 pregnant women are estimated to have been affected;
- It is estimated that the total value of disaster effects caused by the earthquake is equivalent to \$7 billion (almost €6.2 billion) (2/3 of it are private damages/losses since the housing sector is the most affected, and 1/3 is public sector) and recovery needs of \$6.6 billion;
- 27% of the total effects are production losses and higher costs of production arising from the disaster.

Main objectives of the EU – Nepal development cooperation 2014-2020

Nepal is dependent on external aid (25% of the budget), with aid disbursements highly contingent upon political developments in the country and the government's absorption capacity.

[The EU - Nepal cooperation programme for 2014-2020 \(known as the Multiannual Indicative Programme\)](#) amounts to a total of €360 million. It has been aligned with the priorities of the government's National Development Plan.

The following have been chosen as **priority sectors** following consultations with the Nepalese Government and other development partners:

1. **Sustainable Rural Development** – to stimulate the sustainable development of Nepal's rural areas by transforming agriculture from a sector largely based on low-value and subsistence production to a competitive, sustainable, and inclusive agriculture that brings economic growth, improved access, improved livelihoods, and food and nutrition security, whilst reducing vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.
2. **Education** – to contribute to equitable access to and completion of quality school education for girls and boys and the provision of literacy and livelihood opportunities for adults, boosting individual, family and wider social and economic development

3. **Democracy and decentralisation** – to continue supporting elections (three elections envisaged during next five years - national, provincial and local), to more generally support the decentralisation process and reduce corruption at national and local level.

In addition, Nepal can benefit from the Asia Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme , specifically regarding Aid for Trade cooperation (€15 million), Aid to Uprooted People (refugees from Myanmar, €2 million), the Asia Investment Facility (blending), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation regional integration (around €25 million) as well as SWITCH-Asia (a grants programme funded through the Development Co-operation Instrument that promotes sustainable consumption and production among consumers, small and medium-sized enterprises and Asian policy-makers in 15 Asian countries), and the thematic programmes and instruments such as non-state actors and local authorities in development (€2-3 million per year), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (€600,000 per year) and Global Public Goods and Challenges.

Ongoing EU – Nepal development cooperation

The majority of resources allocated to Nepal are channelled through bilateral co-operation which is ruled by the Development Co-operation Instrument. The majority of the on-going projects were launched under the previous programming period from 2007-2013.

The total budget for the period 2007 to 2013 amounted to €114 million. The three main sectors of cooperation included: 1. **education** - support for School Sector Reform Programme; 2. **stability and peace building** - support to stability and peace building public finance management and support to the electoral cycle; 3. **trade facilitation** and economic capacity building programme.