Vulnerability and Risk Reduction Through a Community-Based System for Flood Monitoring and Forecasting



Mekong River Commission

4th Annual Mekong Flood Forum - Siem Reap

Improving Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems for Flood Management and Mitigation in the Lower Mekong Basin

18-19 May 2006



CFIS: Community Flood Information System (Bangladesh)

A 5-Year Grant from: USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

OFDA Program: Enhanced Disaster Preparedness in South Asia Through Community-Based and Regional Approaches





Project Team



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Community Flood Information System

Goal:

To reduce flood damage by providing useful, timely and understandable flood information to Bangladesh flood-prone communities



Main Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Develop Pilot Operational System					
Community Mitigation Activities					
Replication in Other Areas					

Lessons Learned Bangladesh CFIS

- Gov't System for river forecasting is wellestablished with good results
- Gov't system for floodplain and community forecasts are non-existent or inadequate
- Communities are accustomed to normal flood, but are extremely vulnerable to v. low esp. to high, damaging floods
- Communities want and use local flood forecast (normal and low/high flood years)

Lessons Learned Bangladesh CFIS (cont.)

- Gov't system for forecast dissemination is overly complex and cumbersome
- For dissemination: use of cellular telephone and SMS offers great potential
- Cooperation among Gov't Agencies, NGOs, Projects, Donors is key to success
- CFIS Project: First end-to-end System for creating and dissemination local forecast to communities

Project Location



Baseline Survey Findings (2003)

River Forecasts were Good (dm accuracy)

However, System of Flood Warnings were:

- Not Area Specific
- Not Relevant to Local Context
- Not Understandable
- Without Any Element of Response Management
- → Led to CFIS Project Design

The CFIS Project Concept



Conceptual Diagram of CFIS



Satellite-Based Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)

- New technology introduced in the 1990s
- Active microwave sensor penetrates cloud cover



Flood Hydrology of Study Area

Jamuna

River

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Flood from Dhaleswari River

Model Schematic





Develop Relationship Between Floodplain Gauge and Government-Maintained River Gauge



WATSURF 2.1



WATSURF is a GIS-based tool written in VB for use as an ArcMap application.

Concept of WATSURF Tool



WATSURF: WL Measurement & Prediction

- 2003 17 gauges
- 2004 18 gauges
- 2005 18 gauges

Key river gauges

- Sirajganj
- Aricha



WL Surface (20 Jul 2004)



Elevations of Study Area





Flood Depth Map (20-24 Jul 04)



Flood Depth Map (1-5 Sept 04)



Send Messages



WATSURF sends flood message by cellular phone SMS.

Flag operator receiving messages



Flag operator
 hoists flags as per message

Local Level Product – 4 (Union)

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Flag Messages (30 Jul 2004)



Community Preparedness and Mitigation (BDPC and CEGIS)





Community Flood Risk Level

Severe Flood	Red						
Moderate Flood	Yellow						
Normal Flood	Green						
			01/01/2002				
Flood levels are being marked on concrete pillar							



Community Flood Risk Map



Household Vulnerability



Warning Flags



Public Awareness Program







Mock Demonstration Program





SUSTAINABLE DISSEMINATION STRATEGY



COMMUNITY

Challenges and Recommendations

- Technical challenges in community forecasting and dissemination are formidable but can be solved
- Current government system for dissemination must be simplified
- Community forecasts must be accompanied by preparedness and mitigation activities
- Sustainability: We must focus on low-cost, lowoverhead system

(cont.)

- Many common issues and challenges in Mekong and Ganges-Brahmaputra and other basins in Asia
 - Hydrology and meteorology
 - Institutions and issues
 - Technical Tools
 - Community needs
- Common Goals: Risk Reduction in Communities
- Recommendation: More Asia Regional Cooperation
 - More Sharing of Information, Experiences, Technical Tools and Approaches, Successes
 - Mechanism: Asia Regional Conference Specific to Community Flood Information??
 - Communities have limited mechanisms
 - Depend on technical agencies, projects, donors, regional

Community Flood Information System



Thank You for Your Attention and Interest !