SIAP SIAGA
Kemitraan Indonesia Australia untuk Kesiapsiagaan Bencana
Australian Government

Issue Brief No. 1

February 2021

Policy Coherence for More Effective Disaster Management

The OECD defines policy coherence as "involving the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policies across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving a defined objective."

In practice this means looking for **synergies and complementarities** and filling gaps between different policy areas to meet common and shared objectives. For example, the synergies and gaps between policies in the environment, disaster management and social protection sectors.

Considering the significant resources that have been invested in disaster management in Indonesia, particularly since 2005, the disaster management system remains weak in several key areas. As with any system - which is made up of a complex web of policy and regulatory frameworks, governmental and non-governmental institutions, groups, and individual actors - the disaster management system in Indonesia is influenced by numerous factors, not least the incentives and behaviours and interactions of the people within the system.

It is difficult to engineer specific solutions to problems in such a complex and fluid environment. In fact, while a specific solution to a single problem may look good on paper, and be in line with global best practice, if it is not an organic solution connected to the local context, it is less likely to enable the change required and ensure its sustainability. It is also impossible to fully predict unforeseen or unintended impacts of any change.

In Indonesia, what is known is that the component parts of a functioning disaster management system are in place. What is less well understood is why, despite nearly 15 years of investment and capacity building, and some areas of significant progress, the disaster management system still struggles to consistently meet the needs of people at risk of, and affected by, disasters. Addressing policy coherence in the disaster management sector will facilitate the consolidation of the various parts of the system into a more effective whole.

In 2020, the SIAP SIAGA program commissioned several studies on the disaster management system in Indonesia with the aim of exploring the coherence of the system, including the conflicts and trade-offs between policies across key sectoral actors, clarity of roles and responsibilities for the implementation of disaster management services (both government and non-government actors), and assessing the impact these issues have on coordination for planning, budgeting and the quality of disaster management services. The studies resulted in several key findings that link back to a lack of policy coherence, particularly at the national level. The most important of these was that the lack of a formal mechanism to coordinate disaster management across sectors outside times of disaster response and recovery has led to a lack of consistent in disaster risk management mainstreaming at the subnational level and an inefficient use of disaster finance.

With so many actors (at national and subnational levels) involved in and with financial responsibility for disaster management, the lack of clear roles and responsibilities and the absence of a formal coordination mechanism for information sharing and decision making has undermined both the effectiveness and the impact of disaster management in Indonesia.

The two main reasons identified were firstly a culture of sectoral egotism and secondly, the resulting perpetuation of a siloed approach to disaster management. There are approximately 36 ministries/agencies with responsibilities for disaster management programs which access national and subnational budgets, sometimes with separate systems for specific sectors or disaster risks.

This issue is not about the number of actors with disaster management responsibilities; indeed, with the broadening of disaster management to include climate and health crises, the number of actors will only grow. It is that there is a need for a consensus in law and in practice providing a clear and agreed division of responsibilities for disaster management cycle planning and implementation of activities during times of preparedness, response, and recovery. Key to success is acceptance of an agreed, predictable, and consistent coordination hierarchy and system. In short it must be clear where responsibility for leadership lies.

SIAP SIAGA's studies on resilient cities and villages sheds more light on the subnational coordination requirements, particularly in urban areas, and provides an excellent case study on the impact of poor policy coherence.

Resilient city programming is being implemented by several ministries and organizations using different approaches and tools. For example, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNBP) uses two separate sets of indicators to assess city resilience. But other assessment tools are used by other sectors, covering environmental, economic, health and other areas of interest. Cities and districts are required to report on the use of these tools which, from their perspective are not joined up and thus do not add value to provision of meaningful disaster protection. Other ministries also implement city/district resilience programs and assessment tools such as Climate Change Resilience and Kota Adipura-Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Green City-Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing and

Healthy City-Ministry of Health. With different sectoral ministries implementing separate initiatives, line departments at the district and city level can end up duplicating initiatives, or making each other's initiatives redundant, given that these initiatives are rarely coordinated through appropriate channels such as MoHA or Bappeda.

Moreover, the management of disaster management in metropolitan areas is not joined up because the current policy and legal framework is not structured to enable integrated coordination, planning and management of infrastructure and services across administrative boundaries. As such, each governing entity prepares its individual development plans, based on its own priorities, with little consideration of if and how the implementation of those plans will impact on surrounding areas. Similarly, there is no mandated requirement for consultations between governing entities to coordinate. Thus, robust actions synchronizing programs enhancing disaster risk management are either mostly or entirely absent across districts/cities. Potentially protected areas spanning district boundaries cannot be managed appropriately. For example, one district clears mangroves for housing developing, while the neighbouring district starts to experience an increase in flooding and saltwater inundation on agricultural land. This highlights how conflicting can lead to a policy 'trade off'.

Likewise, different actors employ different approaches and strategies in the implementation of resilient village programs based on their respective mandates and objectives. Consequently, strategies are designed to achieve different objectives. In the many types of village resilience programs assessed, there were many differences, but also several commonalities. While the hazards that the approach is meant to address may be different, all have a common aim to assess and reduce disaster risks. However, due to the lack of coordination between ministries, villages can often receive support for different village resilience programs, which often end up working at cross purposes. One example of this is programs on resilient infrastructure (sea walls) and programs on environmental protections (destruction of mangroves/coastal ecosystems). An agreed and predictable coordination system between ministries and institutions is urgently needed to harmonise approaches, methodologies and instruments employed by the different programs, so that they can complement each other, rather than unintentionally, undermining results.

It is evident that there are sufficient tools at hand to address disaster risk and improve overall resilience to disaster, particularly at the local level, but in the absence of formal policy and regulatory coordination, and the persistence of sectoral ego, the application of these programs and tools are having limited impact. The President has stressed that coordination and consolidation are key to all government tasks. Cross institutional and regional policies and programs must be jointly developed and coordinated, allowing for the development of coherent and functional policy for the advancement of the country.

Recommendations:

1. Greater focus needs to be placed on clarifying roles and responsibilities and levels of authority of government actors based on their technical focus.

2. Coordination on planning and implementation of the disaster risk management cycle needs to be agreed at all levels of government, and with civil society partners, with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. In this regard revisiting the 2018 National Disaster Response Framework may be a useful reference point.

3. It is important that coordination mechanisms ensure that implementation of policies are channeled correctly and predictably. For example, instructions and guidance for implementation of sectoral policies from the province to the sub-district level should be channeled through the Ministry of Home Affairs, while village level activities should be coordinated through the Ministry of Villages.

4. Closely linked to the requirement for greater policy coherence is the need to improve the harmonization of approaches for cross-sectoral issues such as disaster resilience. Different sectors have different approaches to city and village resilience with many commonalities but with many missed opportunities to leverage those complementarities to improve synergy and overall impact. Harmonised methodologies and instruments to guide local resilience and measure effectiveness will improve the efficiency of programming and reduce the negative trade-offs between different approaches.

Conclusion:

Policy coherence is a critical issue for a country as developed as Indonesia. While key poverty and development indicators have been achieved, stagnation is a concern unless policy trade-offs are reduced and policy coherence is made a priority.

The impact of capacity building and technical and financial assistance alone are limited. There is a need for a change in approach; effectiveness of development interventions in the disaster management space relies on being able to connect all aspects of and actors in the disaster management system to work as part of a larger whole.

About SIAP SIAGA

SIAP SIAGA is a five-year partnership program between the Governments of Indonesia and Australia. The program aims to improve the management of disasters and increase community resilience in Indonesia and in the Indo-Pacific Region. Our approach is measured, reflective and forward-leaning which helps us to deliver the best results for DFAT and Indonesia's communities.

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