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POST-EARTHQUAKE HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION SUPPORT

The April and May 2015 earthquakes in Nepal damaged or destroyed over 755,000 homes, making housing the single largest reconstruction need and the Government of Nepal's (GON) highest priority. USAID is funding a number of complementary initiatives to help meet this need and support the GON's owner-driven housing reconstruction efforts. USAID has provided over \$23.3million supporting to the housing sector to date.

Guided by international best practice, the GON owner-driven housing reconstruction program empowers and supports homeowners, allowing them to build back safer. The incentive program provides technical assistance; training and market facilitation; and cash-based assistance provided in tranches upon certification of building to earthquake-resilient standards.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Training and technical assistance allows households to continue incremental construction with improved techniques, leading to greater resilience throughout the reconstruction process. USAID supports training and technical assistance through three different projects valued at nearly \$14 million. Building on more than two decades of investments in disaster risk reduction, these projects will train nearly 20,000 construction professionals and educate more than 225,000 affected homeowners on building earthquake-resistant homes. Since the earthquake, USAID programs have trained more than 8,100 construction professionals on safer construction, nearly 2,300 GON officials, and oriented more than 54,000 homeowners on how to ensure their homes are reconstructed to withstand the next

earthquake. USAID is providing technical assistance to more than 2,500 households resulting in thousands of seismic resistant houses, with this number increasing every day.

- *Baliyo Ghar (Strong House)*, a five-year, \$10.3 million project implemented by the National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET), provides training and technical assistance for construction professionals and homeowners on how to build earthquake-resistant homes in the most devastated earthquake districts—Dolakha, Dhading, Nuwakot, and Kathmandu. Baliyo Ghar is closely aligned with the GON Housing Assistance Program and has established district- and local-level reconstruction technology centers, construction models, and demonstration homes. Project mobile units provide technical assistance to homeowners at the household and community level. Each household receives on average 10 direct one-on-one interactions with a mobile unit before and during construction. At the national level, Baliyo Ghar supports the GON in developing improved and standardized training curricula and procedures to be used during masons and engineers training and while orienting homeowners.
- *Sabal*, an ongoing resilience project implemented through a consortium led by Save the Children, uses a similar approach to Baliyo Ghar. With \$2.7 million in funding, Sabal is training construction professionals in seismic resistant techniques in Sindhupalchok and Kavrepalanchok districts.
- *Building Code Implementation Program in Municipalities of Nepal (BCIPN)* is a \$1.7 million, five-year project supported by USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. BCIPN provides training courses on seismically safer construction practices for technical personnel, including building contractors and masons, and helps build the capacity of 30 municipalities throughout Nepal – the majority outside the earthquake zone – to implement and enforce building codes. Once trained, these masons often move to earthquake-affected areas, particularly in villages that do not have sufficient masons available.

CASH SUBSIDIES FOR HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION

In conjunction with training, homeowners will receive a subsidy for housing reconstruction in three tranches, upon proper completion of various stages of construction, as certified by a government engineer. The tranching subsidy will incentivize owner-driven reconstruction adherence to seismic safety standards. USAID/Nepal contributed \$9.6 million to the World Bank's Earthquake Reconstruction Multi-Donor Trust Fund. This contribution supported the implementation of the government led beneficiary survey which was instrumental in determining eligibility for assistance and supports cash grants in Dolakha, Dhading and Nuwakot districts.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Timely, coordinated communications to affected homeowners is vital to ensuring affected populations know how to access reconstruction services and build back safer. With over \$800,000, USAID/Nepal is meeting this critical need through the following activities:

- With \$400,000, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is supporting the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) to develop and implement a strategic communications plan that includes messaging for earthquake recovery and reconstruction to affected populations, under the direction of the NRA. NDI also assists the NRA in hosting Town Halls and sending SMS communications to further increase awareness.

- With USAID’s \$465,000 support, BBC Media Action uses radio, social media, and other platforms to share simple, actionable information regarding shelter and housing reconstruction, including where to access services and resources. During peak listenership, the project assisted 11 local radio stations in 11 districts in self-producing segments on reconstruction twice a day, six times a week.
- The Baliyo Ghar project supports a campaign to raise awareness among Nepalis about the importance of hazard-resilient reconstruction and safer construction techniques. Components of the campaign include street drama performances and outreach through radio broadcasts in the 14 districts and national television broadcasts, social mobilizers, print and online media.
- USAID’s Sajhedari Bikaas project uses local and national radio, and works with District Disaster Relief and Village Development committees in six earthquake-affected districts to share reconstruction messaging from both USAID and the GON.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

USAID continues to provide support to GON entities and the National Reconstruction Authority, in particular, through secondment of reconstruction experts.

- At the GON’s request, USAID supported two trips for Retired Lieutenant-General Ishfaq Nadeem Ahmad, who led Pakistan’s reconstruction efforts. He advised on challenges associated with managing the complicated, multi-year process of reconstruction. Through USAID programs, NSET and NDI seconded staff to the NRA, providing 45 person months of housing technical assistance guidance and strategic communication support.
- Seconded professionals from key USAID partners provide national-level training and technical assistance to the NRA to address challenging reconstruction issues. For example, seconded staff are helping to inform GON guidelines for retrofitting of partially damaged structures, as well as working to identify solutions for rural and high-altitude home construction that is both culturally appropriate and adheres to safety and building codes.
- The U.S. Government provided a seismologist and civil engineer to support the GON in developing a multi-hazard risk assessment manual and process which guided the GON’s assessment of 507 at risk settlements.

USAID Housing Reconstruction Projects

