

## **International Alert**

### **Strengthening Responses to Climate Variability in South Asia (Grant Agreement Component Code 202125-104, Purchase Order 40047309) FINAL REPORT, OCTOBER 2013**

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#### **Context**

The goal of this project is to promote cooperative and integrated approaches to the double headed threat of climate change and insecurity in South Asia. It aims to address two deficiencies that hamper responses to this double headed threat:

- Gaps in knowledge about the social, political and security impact of climate change in Asia
- Weak Capacity among government and intergovernmental institutions to address these issues.

This project seeks to fill this knowledge gap by undertaking localised research at district level in four countries in South Asia: Nepal, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Through structured, focused comparison within and across case studies, it is intended that lessons can be extrapolated at the local level for each country, and also at the regional level. Further, through engaging partners in the research and advocacy process, the project also aims to strengthen the South Asian Network for Security and Climate Change (SANSaC), knowledge and action network, established in March 2010 to promote peacebuilding in climate-affected contexts, to play a transformative regional role in building knowledge, trust and cooperation to advance 'climate-proof' security and governance practice.

#### **Component 1: Management and Methodology**

This first month of the project was an inception period, where the research design and methodology proposed in the project proposal were revisited with partners in the region. The Principle Investigator and Co-PI lead a two day workshop in Kathmandu with all three partner organisations. At the workshop, the methodology was revised and field research sites identified in each focus country, based on the site selection criteria and a preliminary feasibility discussion.

Contracts including terms of reference and detailed work plans were drawn up and finalised in consultation with each partner. These were signed off in person at the methodology workshop.

International Alert also lead training sessions to orientate all research team members in conflict sensitive research methods. To support partner capacity development as well as for the smooth running of the administrative dimensions of the project, Alert's Senior Finance and Administrative lead a session with the partners on reporting requirements, project management and budget management.

#### **Component 2: Monitoring and Evaluation**

To conduct the end of project evaluation, a framework of analysis, methodology, budget, and workplan were put together. The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold: to facilitate learning by International Alert based on its experiences of designing and implementing the project and ensuring accountability to the project donors, DFID and USAID. The evaluation applied three of the four OECD DAC criteria for evaluations, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability in its

framework of analysis. The report is currently being internally peer-reviewed and will be shared with project donors in November 2013.

### **Component 3 – Research: Conflict, Climate & Development - local case studies**

#### **Activity 3.1 Desk research on the relationship between climate change, development and insecurity at local level**

Desk research into existing literature on climate change and community resilience was undertaken. Subsequently, a two day workshop on coding and analysis was held in London on 21-22nd June 2012. At the workshop, the research team from International Alert London and Nepal worked to verify consistency of coding across the three countries and identify emerging themes, key messages and any information gaps for follow-up research through the field partners.

#### **Activity 3.2 Literature review and analysis of findings**

An internal literature review on the relationship between climate change, development and insecurity was undertaken and an annotated bibliography produced.

#### **Activity 3.3 Field research in Nepal**

The two sites for in-depth research were Rolpa and Dang. An unexpected bandh (strike) was called during the research trip in the second location, which meant that the trip had to be cut short in order to return to the district capital. However, the remaining days were productively used to conduct interviews with bi and multilateral institutions based in the district headquarters.

#### **Activity 3.4 Field research in India**

Initially, research was planned to be done in one site in Orissa state and one site in Assam. However, due to a combination of environmental risk and social unrest in Assam (violent protests and riots were fuelled by community frustration about landslides during the monsoon and lack of state risk reduction or insurance provision), our Indian partner, TERI, advised that any research in Assam during this period would not be possible. Rather than postpone the research until the end of the monsoon when protests may or may not have settled down, based on TERI's and the FCO's advice, the planned research in Orissa was undertaken focusing on two different communities living on different sides of Chilika lake.

#### **Activity 3.5 Field research in Pakistan**

The two sites for in-depth research were Thatta and Badin in Sindh province. Data was successfully collected from all required target groups.

#### **Activity 3.6 Field research in Bangladesh**

Two issues got in the way of the Bangladesh field research going ahead in September 2012. The first, and most significant, was that due to logistical and compelling work pressures, the Bangladesh SANSaC partner, BIPSS, was unable to provide field research support. The contract was accordingly revised following an amicable settlement. This meant that additional time was needed in scoping for a new partner. The second obstacle was that even once an alternative partner was found, the Bangladesh field trip had to be further delayed as the initial time-lag pushed over into the festival season (Eid) in October.

Field research was undertaken over a two week period in January 2013 in Bangladesh. The two selected field sites for in-depth research were Dhaka, the capital city and Satkhira district (specifically, the Unions of Gabura and Burigoalini) in south-western Bangladesh. Through key informant and semi-structured interviews, data was successfully collected from all required target groups, translated, processed and analysed.

### **Activity 3.7 Validation of Research Findings by SANSaC Advisory**

An internal validation workshop for SANSaC partners and an external validation meeting, with all the research teams, partners, broader stakeholders and additional regional experts was held in Colombo on 13-14<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. Colombo was selected for two reasons: i) ease of travel and visa requirements for the various South Asian partners, and ii) unlike Kathmandu (the other option in terms of visa ease), there was no prior discussion on climate change and security in Sri Lanka, and so it was felt that Colombo would be more strategic in terms of creating awareness and understanding of the issue across the region.

The event provided an invaluable opportunity to review and validate findings, internally and externally. The internal workshop gave all research partners the opportunity to meet again after the completion of the field research, and to take stock and review progress. Based on the internal meeting, a number of changes were suggested to the case study template. The event was also an opportunity to review the research framework and methodology, and to develop the analytical framework for the multi-country comparative analysis. Partners used the space to voice views on the research so far and future processes. A plan and timeline was also agreed for the drafting of the academic paper, potential target journals were identified and shortlisted, and roles and responsibilities for drafting were agreed.

The external validation meeting was an opportunity to share emerging findings with regional experts, researchers, international donor representatives and Sri Lankan civil society. A presentation was also given by a Sri Lankan climate change expert who reflected on the implications of the issues raised by our research on the Sri Lankan context. The event was covered in the national Sri Lankan press..

## **Component 4: Research - Development and climate change policy and peacebuilding**

### **Activity 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 Desk based review of how national and district-level climate change response policies have increased/decreased insecurity and analysis of findings**

Desk research on relevant local level policies in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan was conducted in advance of the respective field visits and supplemented with interviews in-country with relevant key informants. The information from this research was included in the case studies drafted for each country.

## **Component 5: Policy Influencing - Developing Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

### **Activity 5.1 National level roundtables (replacing Production of country mappings)**

To produce the country mappings, it was important to identify indicators. However, identifying indicators to serve as proxies for resilience was challenging and time consuming due to differences in data availability across countries at subnational scale. Upon mid-term review, it was agreed by the Alert project manager and both project donors that the production of country mappings, originally designed to visually communicate research findings, would not add value to the project. The country mappings' activity was therefore replaced by national level roundtables as a more effective awareness raising and dissemination strategy of the research findings from the sub-national research.

National level roundtables were held by SANSaC members, Observer Research Foundation, NCCR and University of Karachi in India, Nepal and Pakistan respectively in April 2013. Participants included development actors and practitioners, government representatives, donor institutions, researchers and academics. Based on feedback received during the roundtables, case studies were amended. A questionnaire evaluating the presentations,

discussion and organisation of the roundtable was also administered. Feedback from the questionnaires suggests that, in general, participants considered the roundtables a useful forum to share knowledge and information and build a better and more sophisticated understanding of climate change and its linkages to conflict and security. The logistics and preparation for the Bangladesh National Roundtable had been finalised by SANSaC member BIPSS and the event was scheduled to take place in May 2013. However, political developments and the security situation in the country made it unfeasible for the roundtable to go ahead. The collapse of a garment factory building in Savar, near the capital city Dhaka became a major humanitarian disaster that led to unrest in the country. Additionally, opposition parties had declared a strike/hartal on the day of the event. In consultation with BIPSS, the possibility of postponing the event was explored. However, the likelihood of additional strikes in the subsequent weeks was also quite high, with a major rally by Hifazat-e-Islam, an Islamist group, scheduled to take place on 05 May. Given the prevailing law and order situation in Bangladesh, the National Roundtable therefore had to be cancelled.

### **Activity 5.2 Development of Regional Policy Note**

Findings from sub-national research in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan were written into a policy-oriented executive summary that was published on the Alert website and widely disseminated. The report analyses the root causes of vulnerability and non-adaptation in the four country contexts and explores the opportunities for strengthening resilience to combined risks of climate change and conflict.

### **Activity 5.3 Drafting of an academic evidence paper**

The academic paper reflecting research findings from Nepal and Pakistan, 'Vulnerability to Environmental Risks and Effects on Community Resilience in Mid-West Nepal and South-East Pakistan' was published in peer-reviewed journal Environment and Natural Resources Research

### **Activity 5.4 High Level Regional Dialogue**

The High Level Regional Dialogue took place in Kathmandu on 08 July, 2013. The event brought together 25 experts, policy makers and practitioners from Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, UK and USA to discuss the complex interactions between climate change, development and security and to explore opportunities to promote peace positive responses to climate change.

A [video welcome address](#) by Dan Smith, Secretary General International Alert commenced the roundtable. The roundtable included two sessions:

1. Understanding Complexity and
2. Building Resilience: Building Peace

The sessions were chaired by SANSaC members Lydia Powell from Observer Research Foundation and Major General Munir from the Bangladesh Institute for Peace and Security Studies. Speakers included Mr. Ali Sheikh Director of CDKN and CEO of LEAD Pakistan, Mr. Anil Pokhrel, Disaster Risk Management Specialist World Bank, Mr. Batu Uprety, Expert Member Climate Change Council, Mr. Joydeep Gupta, Project Director of The ThirdPole, Dr. Michael Werz, Senior Fellow Centre for American Progress, Dr. Sabita Thapa Climate Change Advisor DFID Nepal. The day long roundtable discussion was followed by a private dinner that included participants from the roundtable as well as representatives from various ministries and embassies including Government Secretaries from the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. Representatives from the Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian Embassies were also present at the dinner. The keynote address was delivered by Geetha de Silva, Director of Research at South Asia Policy and

Research Institute (SAPRI). A multimedia event report capturing the roundtable proceedings and discussions, with video links to speaker presentations, an audio podcast on climate change and resilience, event photographs has been drafted and widely circulated. The audio podcast is a first for Alert and has been developed with technical expertise provided by the Communications team. Video proceedings of the roundtable have also been edited and developed to share content with a wider audience that was unable to be present at the roundtable. Alert was also interviewed following the roundtable and a [news story](#) featuring the event was published on the Thomas Reuters Foundation website.

### **Additional Project Activities**

#### **Production of four case studies**

Findings from the sub-national research in the four project countries - Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan - were written into a case study reports. Initially, the project only envisaged the production of a regional policy note. However, as the case studies did include information that contributed to a better understanding of resilience at the sub-national level, a decision was made to publish them. So they were peer-reviewed by experts and underwent the necessary publication process, namely proof-reading, editing, design, and layout.

#### **Presentation of research findings at academic conferences and roundtables**

- Findings from the Nepal case study research was presented at the International Conference entitled 'Rethinking Climate Change, Conflict and Security' at the University of Sussex on the 18-19 October 2012 for an audience of policy makers and academics from around the world. More details on the conference can be found here <http://rethinkingclimateconflict.wordpress.com/>
- Research findings were presented at a Resilience and Environment Change in South Asia roundtable hosted by the International Peace institute in New York. Samuel Doe, Senior Policy Adviser and Team Leader, Policy Planning Division, BCPR/UNDP and Michael Kugelman, Senior Program Associate, Asia Program at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars were panel discussants. Warren Hoge, Senior Adviser for External Relations, International Peace Institute chaired the event. Participants of the roundtable included members of UN permanent observer offices, think tanks, UN officials and the media.
- Research findings from the four country research were also presented to a policy audience at a panel event hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington D.C. A summary and archived webcast is available on the Woodrow Wilson event page which can be accessed here: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/strengthening-responses-to-climate-variability-south-asia-3>
- Case study findings were also presented at the academic conference 'Climate Change and Security at the Crossroads: Pathways to Conflict or Cooperation?' The conference was organised by the University of Adger, Kristiansand, Norway on 20 – 21 June, 2013.

#### **SANSaC Website**

The content for SANSaC website created in 2010 was revised and updated with inputs from all SANSaC partners. An external consultant designed the new content management system and interface. The new site was populated with the new material and launched in November 2012.

#### **Radio program**

To disseminate the findings of the Nepal case study research, a radio show program on climate change, migration and resilience was developed in partnership with Equal Access in Nepal and aired through 'Sathi Sangma Man Ka Kura' (Chatting with my Best Friend), a radio

program that targets youth aged between 14 and 29 years. SSMK is broadcast from more than 40 FM stations, reaching 6 million listeners every week.

#### **Dissemination of publications**

- All reports were published on the Alert website as 5 PDF documents (4 case studies and an executive summary) that can be accessed through the [Publications](#) webpage. A news article introducing the research was also made available on the Climate Change section of the website.
- The publications were advertised through International Alert's monthly newsletter in June 2013.
- A mail-out including short summaries of the case-studies was sent out on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 to 1648 recipients interested in Climate Change Security and South Asia, with the email linking to the news article on International Alert's website.
- The publications featured on the Peace and Collaborative Development Network, ECC platform, Eldis website, listserves such as IISD Reporting Services, Alertnet, ESCP news and Climate-L and were also distributed to the DFID PPA Resilience Group.
- The publications were additionally advertised through various social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Scoop It, an interest based publishing platform and LinkedIn.
- The findings from the Bangladesh research was written into [news story feature](#) that was published on the Thomas Reuters Foundation website,