



**Request for Concept Notes
Evaluation of BHA/East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) Region’s Community-Based
Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Programs - Phase 1 Study**

(Only for LASER PULSE Consortium Partner Institutions)

Overview of the call for concept notes

This call for concept notes (CNs) describes the terms of a performance evaluation of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) programming funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID’s) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). The CBDRM programs were carried out in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region during fiscal years 2017 through 2021. This evaluation is intended to provide BHA with both an independent review of funded implementing partner CBDRM programs and an informed basis upon which to plan for future programming.

USAID and [LASER PULSE](#)¹ (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine), hereafter referred to as LASER, seek **four-page Concept Notes (CNs) of main content** from multidisciplinary teams of researchers and practitioners from LASER PULSE consortium partner institutions (Purdue University, Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame) to conduct evaluations of BHA’s CBDRM programs in the EAP region. This call for CNs is administered by the LASER PULSE consortium led by Purdue University and funded through USAID’s Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub. The project period is five (5) months (**July 1, 2022, to November 30, 2022**) with a total funding amount up to US \$172,000.

¹ LASER PULSE is a five-year USAID-funded consortium that supports the research-to-translational value chain through a global network of universities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector for research-driven, practical solutions to critical development challenges in USAID interest countries (UIC). LASER supports the discovery and uptake of research-sourced, evidence-based solutions to development challenges spanning all USAID technical sectors and global geographic regions.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Problem Statement

Over the past ten years, the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region has experienced a growing number of disasters triggered by geophysical hazards and a rising number of climate-related events—droughts, extreme temperatures, floods, and storms. Environmental degradation, unplanned urbanization, and climate change have exacerbated vulnerability and risk in the region, resulting in approximately 19 million people being affected by disasters every year. According to the 2020 World Risk Report, six out of the top 10 countries most at risk of experiencing extreme disasters are located in the EAP region. The primary responsibility for disaster response and management rests with the governments of affected countries and country-level disaster management capacity varies widely throughout the region, but increasingly, there is a willingness and commitment to manage disaster responses on their own.

BHA's programming in the EAP region is field-driven, responding to needs identified by the BHA regional office in Bangkok, and the Regional Advisors located in Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta, and Hawaii. BHA's EAP division has disaster response and early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) programming through its partners in 26 countries in the region. BHA's disaster risk reduction (DRR) portfolio aims to support government and communities to lessen the impact of disasters through support to three key areas: (1) building capacity of first responder agencies through technical assistance to national disaster management offices (NDMOs), national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, search-and-rescue teams, and local organizations; (2) expanding and enhancing end-to-end early warning systems covering all major hazards; and (3) improving preparedness in at-risk communities through CBDRM partnerships focusing on an inclusive, whole-of-community approach to preparing, planning, and practicing for disaster events. DRR aims to ultimately increase resilience to adverse transitory or longer-term events and obviate the need for the U.S. Government (USG) and other external disaster assistance. Implementing partners consist primarily of international NGOs and public international organizations (PIOs), such as agencies of the United Nations; however, these partners can, and often do, engage sub-awardees in carrying out their programs. For the period of interest, fiscal years 2017-2021(inclusive), approximately 80 awards were marked as Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practices (DRRPP) sector and building community awareness and mobilization subsector. The evaluation will need to address a wide variety of BHA/EAP-funded programs such as risk mapping and analysis, risk mitigation measures, early warning systems, preparing contingency plans, practicing for disaster events, training and capacity building of responders, and policy formulation.

The evaluation focuses on CBDRM programs, BHA/EAP's third area of programming (i.e. improving preparedness in at-risk communities through CBDRM partnerships focusing on an inclusive, whole-of-community approach to preparing, planning, and practicing for disaster events). Yet the success of these programs is contingent upon supportive government policies, preparedness, and capacity of first responders. Therefore, the evaluation will also consider BHA programs that build capacity of first responder agencies through technical assistance to NDMOs, national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, search-and-rescue teams, and local organizations. Likewise, as early warning systems play a critical role in CBDRM, the evaluation will review programs in this key area as well, primarily programs that focus on the last mile of the early warning systems linked to risk assessment and community early actions.

1.2. Purpose of the Evaluation

This is an evaluation of BHA's CBDRM programming in the EAP region. Through a study conducted in two phases, the evaluation intends to systematically review the award-specific evaluations, progress reports, and results generated by BHA partners, and validate the findings through other data collection methods. The full evaluation study will:

- Assess the suitability and usefulness of these programs in mitigating and improving community preparedness for disasters to proactively minimize the adverse effects of disasters.
- Document the overall effectiveness of partner programs in mitigating and improving preparedness for disasters, as well as building the capacity of community/local organizations and targeted governmental offices.
- Identify lessons learned, specifically the strengths and weaknesses of their design and implementation, including how they contributed to their programs' successes and/or challenges.
- Provide recommendations for the direction, type, and nature of any future CBDRM programming.

1.3. Illustrative Evaluation Questions

1.3.1. During the period covered by this evaluation, has BHA-funded CBDRM programming in EAP resulted in sustainable outcomes which have increased local capacity to better prepare for disasters and reduce the impacts? What evidence supports these perceptions?

- To what extent have CBDRM activities built the capacity of the local partners, systems, and institutions to better prepare and respond to disasters? (Community Disaster Risk Management (DRM) committees, first responders, Red Cross Societies, relevant government offices., etc.)
- To what extent have CBDRM activities improved the government DRM policies and government's outreach to communities (e.g., the institutionalization of CBDRM into local government plans and budgets)?
- To what extent have the programs supporting the DRR committee, risk assessment, development of DRR plans, sustainably improved local capacity and preparedness? Sustainability parameters could be e.g., improved operational capacity, linked to social protection, local government plans, budgets, etc.
- To what extent have early warning systems improved in terms of reaching the communities and being actionable and timely? To what extent were the communities informed of and prepared for the risks and hazards they are exposed to?
- To what extent were gender and other social inclusion factors (youth, age, and disability) integrated into program design and implementation?

1.3.2. During the period covered by this evaluation, have there been any observable decreases in disaster-related impacts from BHA-funded CBDRM programs?

- To what extent have CBDRM activities led to a reduction in humanitarian assistance needs?
- Have there been any case studies and other evidence to compare impacts of similar magnitude disasters with and without CBDRM activities?

- To what extent have CBDRM activities helped the communities, government, and donors (including USG) mobilize and respond to sudden-onset disasters in a more timely and effective manner?
- What are the future data and analysis needs for better learning and evidence building?

1.3.3. To what extent were BHA-funded CBDRM interventions effective and adequate?

- Was BHA funding sufficient and timed appropriately? What type of funding (one year vs. multi-year) is the most effective? What are the other resources that should be leveraged?
- To what extent did BHA-funded CBDRM activities complement, link to, or address gaps of the USAID Mission Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) / Regional Development Cooperation Strategies (RDCS) and other donor-funded longer-term development programs? Are there any examples of BHA-funded CBDRM activities being handed over to the host government or development partners, where it was scaled up?

2. METHODOLOGY

This performance evaluation will employ both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, as appropriate. Inferential statistics may not be necessary, descriptive statistics will be anticipated. Using a mixed-method research approach, this analysis will provide a broad perspective and strengthen the validity of the findings.

- The Evaluation Team will review the EAP region's USAID mission's CDCS / RDCS, and regional disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy and programs.
- The Evaluation Team will review CBDRM activities implemented in the EAP region between FY 2017 and 2021, and narrow them down based on their completeness of information, true work at the community level, and/or geographic representation. The team will select 30-40 activities for further in-depth review. Many of these 80 awards are the continuation of the previous activity, as the most of BHA awards are normally one year.
- The selected activities will form the basis for mapping with the BHA early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) framework and the BHA/EAP Regional Strategy. The team will review select activities' baseline and endline data, semi-annual and annual program performance reports, indicator tracking tables, and evaluations to identify patterns of success and failure, tabulating the commonalities across activities, common challenges, dependent variables, or factors contributing to the success etc.
- The Evaluation Team will meet with the BHA's EAP Washington Team and BHA Regional Advisors to better understand the CBDRM strategy and programming.
- The Team will report on main findings and recommendations based on the first phase of the evaluation.
- Based on the evaluation, as part of their recommendation, the Team will identify gaps in data/evidence where further deep dive in selected activities for the next phase as appropriate and outline the research design for the next phase study if possible.

3. LIMITATIONS

In certain instances, there may be limitations on the availability of previously gathered data from communities and implementing partners. Baseline data, performance monitoring data, and evaluation data may be incomplete or missing for some of the USAID/BHA awards.

Additionally, the data collection phase of this evaluation will take place after some international staff, as well as beneficiaries involved in the implementation of the projects, have moved on. In both instances, the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and activity managers will provide clarification on available project data and beneficiaries upon contract award.

BHA ER4 framework and EAP regional strategy documents are relatively new and some of these CMDRM awards were made before these documents.

4. DELIVERABLES

Please refer to Section 5 for evaluation schedule and timelines for the deliverables.

4.1. Workplan and Schedule

The workplan will be created and submitted to USAID before the commencement of work. The final workplan with a revised schedule will be part of the co-creation with the selected Evaluation Team.

4.2. Inception Report

The Evaluation Team will review the BHA ER4 framework, BHA/EAP regional strategy, CBDRM award documents, and submit an inception report with detailed methods, including logistics, team, selection of CBDRM activities for review, and draft instruments (including, e.g., evaluation matrix, questionnaires, tools, etc. wherever applicable). The inception report or the evaluation plan should include identification of key questions, methods, main features of data collection instruments if any, and data analysis plans. BHA/EAP will review the inception report and request any necessary corrections. Final approval from BHA/EAP is necessary before the next steps.

4.3. In-brief with BHA/EAP

The Evaluation Team will brief the BHA/EAP team (Washington and field team), BHA's monitoring and evaluation specialists, and BHA DRR advisors to discuss the evaluation methods, schedule meetings (if any), share contact information, etc. The Evaluation Team will revise the evaluation plan based on the feedback and discussion with the BHA.

4.4. Draft Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Team will submit a draft evaluation report to BHA/EAP (Washington and field staff) for review. USAID will share the draft of these documents with peers for comment and return feedback to the evaluator for incorporation of any received comments, observations, and suggestions. The evaluation report should include a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

- Findings should be specific, concise, and supported by reliable, valid quantitative and qualitative data.
- Conclusions should be based on identified findings and be adequately supported by the data.

- Recommendations should be supported by a specific set of findings and conclusions, and should be action-oriented, practical, and specific to the purpose.
- The evaluation report should not exceed 40 pages, excluding annexes (site reports, list of contacts consulted, bibliography, maps of areas where consultation meetings were conducted, meeting agenda and summary, etc.) and must be written in English. BHA/EAP will provide comments on the draft report.

4.5. Final Report and Presentation to BHA

The Evaluation Team will submit a revised report and visual presentation on the findings and recommendations to BHA. Once both the evaluation report and visual presentation are complete, the BHA team will invite members of the Evaluation Team to present their evaluation findings and recommendations to BHA Washington and field staff.

4.6. Submission of Final Evaluation Report to the Development Experience Clearinghouse:

Per USAID policy ([ADS 201.3.5.18](#)) the team will submit the final report, executive summary, and presentation along with any dataset generated from this work to the USAID before the end of the project. This information will be shared on [Development Experience Clearinghouse \(DEC\)](#) upon USAID's approval. The final report, executive summary and presentation will be submitted to LASER for Review, four (4) weeks before the due submission to USAID.

5. EVALUATION SCHEDULE (ILLUSTRATIVE)

Evaluation will be completed in 20 weeks in total from the commencement of the buy-in work. The work plan will be created and submitted to USAID before the commencement of work. An illustrative outline of the workplan is in Table 1 below, however the final workplan will be part of the co-creation with the selected team. All the deliverables produced will be reviewed by the LASER PULSE review team before submission to USAID.

Table 1. Evaluation schedule

Timing (Anticipated Duration)	Scheduled Activities	Deliverables
0 weeks	The workplan will be created and submitted to USAID before the commencement of work.	Workplan
2 Weeks	Reviewing the EAP region USAID mission’s CDCS/RDCSs, and regional DRR strategy and programs, BHA ER4 framework, and BHA EAP Regional Strategy for ER4. Also begin the review of the 75 CBDRM activities. Note: the framework and the regional ER4 strategy will be provided to the Evaluation Team.	
2 Weeks	Review the program reports, preparation of the inception report, including work plan, and submission to BHA/EAP for review.	
2 Weeks	BHA/EAP review of the inception report, inclusion and exclusion criteria and evaluation design	Inception report
1 Week	In-brief with USAID/BHA. Revision of the evaluation design.	In-brief session
4 Week	Review of the selected activities’ baseline and end line data, semi-annual and annual program performance reports, indicator tracking tables, and evaluations to identify patterns of success and failure, tabulating the commonalities across activities, common challenges, dependent variables on which success will be dependent on (etc.) Interview Meet with BHA Washington and field representatives. Conduct mapping with BHA ER4 framework, and EAP Regional Strategy.	
2 Weeks	Draft Report preparation and discussion with BHA/EAP	Draft report
4 Weeks	LASER PULSE and USAID/BHA review of Draft Report	
2 Weeks	Incorporate USAID and LASER PULSE comments and prepare Final Report and visual presentation	Final report
1 Week	Present formal evaluation findings and recommendations; submit dataset(s) to LASER PULSE and USAID Submission of final report and data set to <u>Development Experience Clearinghouse</u> (DEC).	Presentation session; Final report with all attachments

6. REQUEST FOR CONCEPT NOTES

USAID and LASER seek CNs from multidisciplinary teams of researchers to undertake the CBDRM program evaluation work described in the previous sections. This call is open to LASER PULSE consortium partner institutions only (i.e. Purdue University, Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame). Other partners can be included as co-leads or consultants. The teams should pay attention to **qualifications, expertise, and experience** in program evaluation related to CBDRM, preferably in the EAP region.

6.1. Qualifications/Expertise Desired

The Evaluation Team should consist of the best composition for completing the evaluation. All team members should be familiar with the USAID Evaluation Policy and be proficient in English. All team members will be required to provide a signed statement either attesting that they have no conflict of interest or describing any existing or potential conflict of interest.

6.1.1. Team Leader (1 person) Qualifications

- The Team Leader must have at least seven (7) years of practical experience in disaster response and disaster risk reduction, including evaluations.
- Have working experience in the EAP region.
- Have excellent interpersonal skills, the ability to identify and manage potential conflicts before they arise, excellent organizational and management skills, and demonstrated ability to solicit and effectively utilize inputs from a wide range of sources and perspectives.
- Have no existing or contemplated fiduciary relationship with any evaluated implementing partner.

6.1.2. Graduate Student (1-2 persons)

Graduate students can be hired during summer (June-Aug) for document review and MEL data analysis

6.2 LASER Requirements

- The full team must register on the LASER PULSE Network at this link (<https://laserpulse.org/join-lp-network/>).
- The research team must complete the following LASER's online training before submitting a CN:
 - [Gender Analysis in Research and Application](#) (30-45 min)
 - [Introduction to Embedded Research Translation](#) (60-90 min)

Note: only registered members have access to the training. The training can be accessed at this link <https://stemedhub.org/groups/laserpulse/courses>.

6.2. Required Documents for Submission

6.2.1. Concept Note Narrative

The concept note must be **no more than four (4) typed pages long**, written in English, with narrative portions prepared in MS Word or Open Office format, using Times New Roman font, size 11, or similar typeset in single line spacing, and must include the following sections:

- A. **Team details:** Full name, position, affiliation, and contact information of Team Leader and all collaborators on the research team. Provide a description of the role of each proposed team member.
- B. **Capacity Statement:**
 - a. A brief description of the team’s related prior research (cite prior published work) and expertise in areas of relevance to this project scope.
 - b. A summary of how the researchers will conduct the work detailed in this call for CNs document. The summary should link the researchers’ expertise to the proposed plan of activities
- C. **Illustrative Work Plan**, in Gantt Chart format and accompanying narrative. Though research will be co-designed with USAID and LASER, the applicants are expected to have sufficient experience to propose an illustrative work plan, with activities and timelines, and a cost for the activity of the work, as described in Section 4 (Specific Deliverables).

6.2.2. Detailed Activity Budget \$172,000 for all activities described in this call for CNs, including direct and indirect costs broken down by institution in case of teams from multiple institutions using the provided template. The final budgets will be decided after the teams are selected, and the project plan is finalized. Budget pages do not count towards the 4-page CN limit.

6.2.3. Full CVs

Applicants must submit up to date Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of the research team. Each CV must be limited to 2 pages, including academic record and most recent list of publications (2000 and later). The CV pages do not count towards the CN page limit (See the 2-page CV template in Appendix 1).

6.3. Concept Note Submission and Questions

Applicants must combine all the application documents listed in 6.3.1, 6.3.2, and 6.3.3 into **one PDF file** and email it to Pamela McClure at awardsmanager@laserpulse.org by **5:00 pm EDT, May 20, 2022.**

Prospective applicants will have one week from the date of the release of this call for CN to submit any questions concerning the CN. Questions should be sent to Leulseged Kasa at lmekonen@purdue.edu. Questions should be received no later than **5:00 pm EDT, May 13, 2022.**

7. CONCEPT NOTES EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

7.1. Concept Note Evaluation Process

The submitted CNs will be evaluated by a committee of peer reviewers, jointly selected by USAID and LASER PULSE.

7.2. Concept Note Evaluation Criteria

- (a) **Clarity and quality of the Illustrative Evaluation and Workplan**, based on how well this corresponds to the requested information and in response to the background information and specific deliverables.
- (b) **Team capacity**: i.e., capacity to co-design and implement the proposed performance evaluation. Experience, skills, cost, and availability will all be considered.

Table 2. LASER Rating Definition for Application Evaluation Criteria.

Adjectival Rating	Descriptive Statement
Excellent (5)	Outstanding CN in all aspects. The CN fully meets all capacities and requirements, and convincingly demonstrates that it will address all aspects of the CN criteria. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Very Good (4)	CN fully meets all capacities and requirements and demonstrates that it will likely address all aspects of the CN criteria. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Good (3)	CN meets all capacities and requirements and demonstrates that it will meet the CN criteria, but shows some weaknesses, yet the positives of the CN outweigh the negatives.
Fair (2)	CN does not meet all aspects of the CN capacities and requirements nor is evidence presented indicating the likelihood of successfully meeting the CN criteria. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strengths presented.
Poor (1)	CN does not meet the CN capacities and requirements and indicates a strong likelihood of failure to address all aspects of the criteria and the information presented.

7.3. Selection of Concept Notes

The evaluation committee will recommend highly ranked CNs to LASER and USAID, based on the evaluation criteria stated in Table 2 in section 7.2. USAID will provide the final review and selection of the winning CN. **The Finalist team will be notified by May 31, 2022 and** invited to an orientation session hosted by LASER. The co-creation among the research team, LASER, and USAID will commence after the orientation meeting to develop an in-depth program description for this activity.

Appendix 1. Illustrative CV Template for Applicants (Maximum of 2 pages)

NAME:

POSITION:

PROJECT ROLE & KEY QUALIFICATION:

EDUCATION:

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE (selected highlights):

LANGUAGES:

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES (selected):

SELECTED RECENT PUBLICATIONS (not more than 10):