

POLICY FORMULATION & IMPLEMENTATION OF RECONSTRUCTION SCHEMES

The devastating earthquake of October, 2005 exposed the inefficiency of the existing system of disaster management in the country. The quantum damage was so huge that a special initiative was required to be taken to meet the challenges of the reconstruction and rehabilitation activity in the earthquake affected areas.

2. As a consequence, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) was created on 24th October, 2005. The basic objective of creating this autonomous organization was post disaster damage assessment, recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the areas affected by the earthquake. In order to meet this objective, the Authority was assigned the task to develop an umbrella development programme consisting of reconstruction and rehabilitation interventions in the following 12 sectors:-

- a) Education
- b) Health
- c) Housing
- d) Urban Development
- e) Transportation
- f) Telecommunication
- g) Government sector buildings
- h) Power
- i) Environment
- j) Water & Sanitation
- k) Social Protection
- l) Livelihood and Tourism

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

3. Soon after the earthquake, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank compiled the damage assessment reports. Based on these Damage Assessment Reports, ERRA initiated a consultative process with the Governments of NWFP and AJK and their attached departments to compile a comprehensive damage assessment for each of the 12 sectors mentioned above.

EARLY RECOVERY

4. Soon after the damage assessment was over, the planning process was initiated. However, it was realized that the reconstruction activity would take years in materializing. Therefore, a need for a transitional infrastructure was felt in order to bring the life back to normalcy at the earliest. For the said purpose, an early recovery plan was devised with the assistance of the respective governments and major donor organizations involved in the reconstruction activity in earthquake region. The State Government of AJK and Provincial Government of NWFP identified their need and donors were requested to finance the identified needs. As a result all essential services including educational and health facilities, government offices were made functional through the provision of transitional structures.

RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

5. The actual reconstruction and rehabilitation process is in full swing in the affected areas, however, there are numerous challenges affecting its pace due to sheer quantum of the work to be executed. To name of few, some of the challenges encounter ERRA include:

- a) Capacity of the line department of the Provincial/State government
- b) Shortage of available funds
- c) Scarcity of qualified contractors in the affected region

- d) Price escalation in the cost of construction material
- e) Heavy reliance on donor funding and ensuring compliance with their conditionalities

POLICY MAKING

6. ERRA has formulated sectoral strategies for the reconstruction and rehabilitation in each sector. These strategies have been conceived after through deliberations with the donor organizations participating in the reconstruction process. These strategies were placed before the ERRA Board which is headed by Chairman ERRA and represented by high level officials of the Governments of AJK and NWFP and the federal ministries of Finance, Economic Affairs Division, Planning and Defense besides the official representatives. This forum has a strong representation of the civil society representatives out of which four are nominated by the Federal Government and one each by the Governments of AJK and NWFP. Each policy proposal is deliberated upon in detail by the Members of the Board before a formal recommendations is made for the consideration of the ERRA Council.

7. ERRA Council is headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and is represented by the Prime Minister of AJK and Chief Minister of NWFP. In addition to them Federal Ministers for Kashmir Affairs and Finance and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission are also Members of the Council. The recommendations of the Board are discussed at this highest policy level forum before it is approved as a policy.

8. The procedure mentioned above indicates that a comprehensive drill is conducted while formulating the policies of ERRA and there is hardly any room for arbitrary decision making. All the major donor organizations whose funds are involved in the reconstruction programme are consulted before conceiving a policy. The draft policies are discussed with the representatives of both the governments i.e. Government of AJK and NWFP and subsequently placed before the ERRA Board and ERRA Council for the final decision.

ROLE OF PROVINCIAL / STATE GOVERNMENTS

9. It is worth noting that besides policy formulation, ERRA has restricted its role to finance, monitor and evaluate the reconstruction activity in the affected areas. The implementation of the approved strategies is governed through a devolved mechanism with extraordinary powers with the Provincial / State / District Governments.

10. At the Provincial/State level, both the respective governments have created Provincial Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (PERRA) and State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (SERRA) respectively. They act as Secretariat to the Provincial/State Steering Committees. These Committees are headed by the respective Chief Secretaries with representation of Secretaries of all the relevant line departments and a representative of the Planning Wing of ERRA. These forums have the mandate to approve the Annual Work Plans of their respective governments forwarded to them from each of the affected districts. They have the financial power to approve any reconstruction project costing upto Rs.250 million. The basic mandate of implementation of all reconstruction projects rests with these forums.

ROLE OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS

11. The Provincial/State Governments have created District Reconstruction Units (DRUs) in each of the affected districts. These DRUs act as Secretariat to the District Reconstruction Advisory Committee (DRAC) which is headed by the District Nazim in each district of NWFP and Deputy Commissioner in AJK with representation of all the relevant line departments of the district. Each DRAC has the financial to approve projects upto Rs.100 million and prioritize the reconstructions activity as per their needs and requirements. They develop the Annual Work Plan

and submit the same to PERRA/SERRA as the case may be. It is pertinent to mention that all the payments made by ERRA pertaining to the reconstruction activity in each district is made through DRUs after their verification.

CONCLUSION

12. The idea of involving the Governments of AJK and NWFP, all the relevant Ministries of the Federal Government and various donor organizations in the policy formulation mechanism of ERRA is to develop a broad based ownership of all the stakeholders in the policies so conceived. This system gives an opportunity to all the players to give their informed input in the policies at the draft stage and vent their concerns. The forums of ERRA Council ERRA Board, Provincial / State Steering Committees and DRACs thrash each policy suggestion and deliberate on it in a holistic manner. The underlying principle behind each decision is that maximum benefit is ensured for the affectees of the earthquake while keeping the sensitivities of donor agencies in view. Similarly at the implementation level, the Provincial / State and District line agencies take the lead and ensure the timely completion of reconstruction schemes with ERRA playing the role of a financier and monitor only.