



US Forest Service International Programs

## Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP)



DASP was created in 1985 to provide the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) with technical support in disaster response, management, planning, operations and disaster risk reduction.

### Methodology and Systems

The US Forest Service developed and is the largest single user of the Incident Command System (ICS), the U.S. Government's command and management system to organize emergency response. DASP has accessed this expertise to develop, manage and continually update many critical systems, procedures, guides and other tools to enhance and facilitate OFDA's disaster planning, management and response.

Significant examples include:

- Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART);
- Field Operations Guide (FOG); and
- Response Management Team (RMT).

To ensure broad-based support and successful implementation of these systems, DASP develops and provides training and briefings to 200 – 300 USAID and other USG staff and partners each year. DASP also conducts 3 – 5 After Action Reviews for OFDA each year, with an eye toward improving future operations.

### Resources

The DASP enhances and supports OFDA's capacity to respond to disasters by mobilizing a roster of up to 250 disaster management experts from the Forest Service and other domestic agencies. Detailers provide OFDA with short-term emergency surge capacity, averaging 50 work assignments each year. This is the equivalent of 4 full-time staff in support of disaster responses such as the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti and the tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan. Forest Service employees are particularly well-suited to this work due to their familiarity with ICS and, in turn, their ability to quickly and seamlessly integrate into OFDA's operational systems.

DASP provides access to substantial capabilities in wildfire management, which OFDA has mobilized to coordinate complex wildfire responses in countries such as Russia, Israel, Mexico and Greece. Other skillsets include logistics, operations, geographic information, disaster risk reduction, planning, programming, disaster assessment, facilitation, training, watershed management, engineering, forestry and a variety of other disciplines.

Finally, DASP accesses domestic supply caches and purchasing mechanisms to provide specialized equipment that fulfills OFDA's emergency response commitments worldwide. For example, DASP planned and mobilized substantial airlifts of wildland firefighting equipment in response to wildfires in Russia in 2010. DASP also helps to meet the support requirements of OFDA's field teams by providing necessary personal subsistence, safety and survival supplies and equipment.

### Mission Disaster Preparedness

In partnership with OFDA's field staff, DASP is leading efforts to ensure that US Missions and the interagency community understand their own roles, the role and capabilities OFDA, and the processes and mechanisms for providing USG assistance in response to international disasters. These efforts enhance OFDA's ability to ensure timely, effective, and appropriate use of USG disaster response resources.

### Disaster Risk Reduction

DASP provides access to Forest Service experts to plan and implement capacity building initiatives in target countries as part of OFDA's global strategy for disaster risk reduction. The programs increase resiliency by bolstering domestic disaster response capabilities and regional interoperability, helping host governments to better meet the needs of at-risk populations in crisis situations.

### Contact Information

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