

Seismic Safety Improvement Program (SSIP)

The Seismic Safety Improvement Program (SSIP) will support the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted by the Government of Armenia through (i) improving school seismic safety to reduce casualties and damages in schools during earthquakes, and (ii) enabling better use of school buildings as shelters for the general public and as focal points for emergency response after earthquakes. Total cost of the SSIP is US\$107 million, of which US\$88.5 million is a loan provided by the Asian Development Bank.

Within the scope of SSIP the following results are expected:

- ✓ **Increasing seismic resilience of school buildings.** The program will support the strengthening or reconstruction of at least 46 priority school buildings identified under the government's SSRP, in accordance with the updated building codes and the guidelines for school building retrofitting.
- ✓ **Strengthening seismic disaster preparedness and response capacity.** For each school with building/s strengthened or reconstructed under the program, supplementing the existing curriculum on disaster risk education and reduction to further raise the students' and teachers' awareness on seismic risks and to guide them in properly responding and evacuating in the event of earthquakes. In addition, equipment will be provided to modernize 15 seismic observation stations. At least 45 staff in the seismic observation stations will be trained to improve their seismic monitoring and projection capacity.
- ✓ **Improving supportive policies and systems for seismic disaster risk management and reduction.** The program will support (a) the review and update of the country's building codes for schools so they are harmonized with international standards for seismic safety, (b) development of a financing strategy for seismic safety improvement and management of public infrastructure.
- ✓ **Enhancing national capacity in executing and implementing the seismic safety investment programs.** The program will strengthen the ATDF for effective implementation of the program, including provision of additional staff to ATDF, updating of the ATDF operations manual, and development or enhancement of necessary systems and reports for the program implementation and management.

The number of primary direct beneficiaries of the program is close to 58,700 in total, including students, teachers, and other school staff. The program will directly benefit about 18,000 students and 3,100 teachers and other school staff, as well as about 87,500 residents near the schools, by providing temporary shelters for them during seismic events and emergencies.