

PRESS RELEASE

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EU, CDRI and ESA Launch Regional Initiative to Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience Through Earth Observation and Climate Services

New Delhi, 7 October 2026: The European Union (EU), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the European Space Agency (ESA) today launched a four-year programme to strengthen infrastructure resilience, support climate change adaptation, and enhance disaster risk reduction across South Asia.

With €19 million in funding from the European Union, the South Asia Disaster Risk Reduction programme will help countries anticipate climate threats, take proactive safeguards, and protect vulnerable communities before disasters strike.

National capacities across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be strengthened to access, interpret and apply Earth Observation (EO) and climate services for risk-informed decision-making, from disaster preparedness to infrastructure planning and climate adaptation.

South Asia is facing an escalating mix of climate and disaster threats, infrastructure gaps, and persistent inequalities. While Earth Observation data can transform how regions plan and survive disasters, its potential remains untapped due to limited technical capacity, unreliable data access and unintegrated decision-making.

To bridge this gap, the programme will focus on two core priorities: strengthening regional cooperation, policy dialogue, capacity building and awareness on disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation; and enhancing access to and use of Copernicus EO-derived spatial information.

Working directly with national institutions across environment, forestry, infrastructure, climate change, disaster management and water sectors, the programme will help countries to help develop national roadmaps to use Earth Observation data in disaster resilience and climate adaptation planning. By embedding these satellite services into everyday policy, the countries can monitor hazards, conduct risk assessment, early warning, adaptation planning and risk-informed infrastructure decisions, strengthening resilience across priority sectors and critical infrastructure systems.

Recognizing that many hazards transcend national boundaries, the programme will promote regional cooperation and knowledge exchange through policy dialogue, technical engagement and collaboration among experts and institutions. It will support the development of national EO champions and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practices through communities of practice and knowledge products.

H.E Jean-Eric Paquet, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to India, said:

"The recent disaster that struck central Nepal is a stark reminder that early warnings can save lives. But it needs to be adapted to local requirements. The new EU-funded programme will help South Asian countries to access world-class European satellite—including Copernicus and build national and regional capacities and tools that actually fit the region's needs. Putting real-time Earth observation and risk data directly into the hands of local decision-makers will also help in climate-proofing investments in energy, transport and communication, while protecting communities, farmland, and essential infrastructure before the next disaster strikes. It's about using better data to build a safer, more resilient future.

Amit Prothi, Director General, CDRI, said:

"South Asia's growing climate and disaster risks demand timely, reliable information for effective preparedness and decision-making. Through this initiative, CDRI will help countries strengthen capacity, enhance regional cooperation, and apply Earth Observation and climate services to turn data into action, building resilient infrastructure and safeguarding development gains."

Benjamin Koetz, Head of Long-term Action Section, ESA, said:

"The European Space Agency is looking forward to working together with CDRI as well as national and regional stakeholders in South Asia to co-design and transfer Earth Observation solutions supporting evidence-based decisions to enable more efficient Climate National Adaptation Plans and more resilient disaster risk management in the region. The European Copernicus programme will be serving as a Global Public Good providing open, free and independent observations informing the relevant national mandated entities with whom we want to cooperate closely."

The launch event, organized by CDRI in partnership with the EU and ESA, brought together representatives from participating South Asian governments, disaster management and space agencies, the EU, ESA, CDRI, and other international organisations.

About SA-DRR

The Support to Disaster Risk Reduction through Earth Observation and Climate Services in South Asia (SA-DRR) programme is a 48-month regional initiative funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by CDRI and ESA. It seeks to strengthen disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and resilient infrastructure planning across seven South Asian countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka - through greater use of Earth Observation and climate services, improved data access, technical capacity, and regional cooperation.

The initiative is funded by the European Union through two complementary components, including a contribution through CDRI's Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund (IRAF). The IRAF-funded component will be implemented by a selected Participating Organization, with CDRI providing technical guidance and support. The ESA component will focus on the generation, delivery, and use of EO & climate services.

About CDRI

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), an International Organization, headquartered in New Delhi, is a global coalition dedicated to enhancing the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks. With 72 Members, it includes national governments, international organizations, and businesses collaborating to share knowledge, conduct research, and invest in disaster resilient infrastructure. Members benefit from access to global expertise, funding, technical support, research opportunities, innovative solutions, and international best practices.

About EU – India

As the world's two largest democracies, the European Union and India share a commitment to a rules-based global order, effective multilateralism, and sustainable development. Since 2004, India has been a strategic partner of the EU, and 2022 celebrated the 60th anniversary of their relations. Through the [EU-India Joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda](#), [EU India Trade and Technology Council](#), [EU-India Connectivity Partnership](#) and its flagship [Global Gateway](#) programme, the EU is partnering with India to drive sustainable development, diversify supply chains, and enhance access to goods, services and investments for citizens and businesses. With over 50 EU India sectoral dialogues, the partnership prioritises efficient implementation to deliver at scale and speed for the benefit of people in both regions. https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en

About the European Space Agency

The European Space Agency (ESA) is Europe's gateway to space. Its mission is to shape the development of Europe's space capability and ensure that investment in space continues to deliver benefits to the citizens of Europe and the world. With 23 Member States, ESA is an intergovernmental organisation working closely with European industry, national space agencies and the European Union, as well as cooperating with space agencies worldwide. ESA has extensive experience in cooperating with partner countries around the globe and international organisations (such as UN agencies and International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) in the development of space-enabled solutions for environmental monitoring, climate action, agriculture, transport, urban development and disaster management.

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