

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

COUNTRY PROFILE

5.7

After the economic reforms undertaken in recent years in a stable political environment, the Dominican Republic has undergone a sustained pace of economic growth leading to increased domestic consumption. However, the current economic crisis has adversely affected the country because of its dependence, in large part, on foreign investment, remittances from and exports to the United States.

5.7.1 SELECTED RTU



RTU Duarte

A mountain range and the Yuna River run through the Province of Duarte. Composed of seven municipalities, this region has a population dependent primarily on agriculture (coffee, cacao, banana and rice), as well as cattle farming, trade and industry. Frequent floods cause constant

damage to productive infrastructure due to poor soil drainage capacity, slope inclines and the low-lying river delta area. These characteristics cause the rivers and streams to overflow, especially in rainy season. There is also a high-risk of earthquakes due to the region's location along the northern fault.

RTU Barahona

This province, composed of eleven municipalities, is characterised by its strong economic development in agriculture, mining, industry and tourism activities. There are also economic activities related to the industrial port and the textile industry. It is highly exposed to hurricanes, tropical cyclones and floods, caused mainly by deforestation (of particular concern in the *Yaque*

del Sur river basin) and its position close to the sea; soil erosion and the proximity of the Cabral lagoon, which is in constant danger of joining with the *Yaque del Sur* River and flooding the towns and communities in between. Desertification is also a serious threat, and although located on the *Trinchera de los Muertos* seismic fault, it is only at a medium risk of earthquakes.

RTU Distrito Nacional

Originally, the capital of the Dominican Republic was Santo Domingo. However, the National District (*Distrito Nacional*) has become the nation's capital, and Santo Domingo is a province consisting of seven municipalities. In this RTU, floods pose a serious threat to the population and infrastructure, especially in the many slums of Santo Domingo located near the *Ozama e Isabela River* and connected creeks and streams. In these areas, the size of the vulnerable population has increased due

to rural-urban migration and the construction of improvised shelters with no urban planning or basic water supply and drainage. The earthquake threat in this RTU is medium, despite being on the *Sistema del Sur* seismic fault that extends to the south of Haiti. In this RTU, cyclones and tropical storms are frequent and droughts occur mainly in the southern region caused by rapid urbanisation and the high demand for water from the new population.

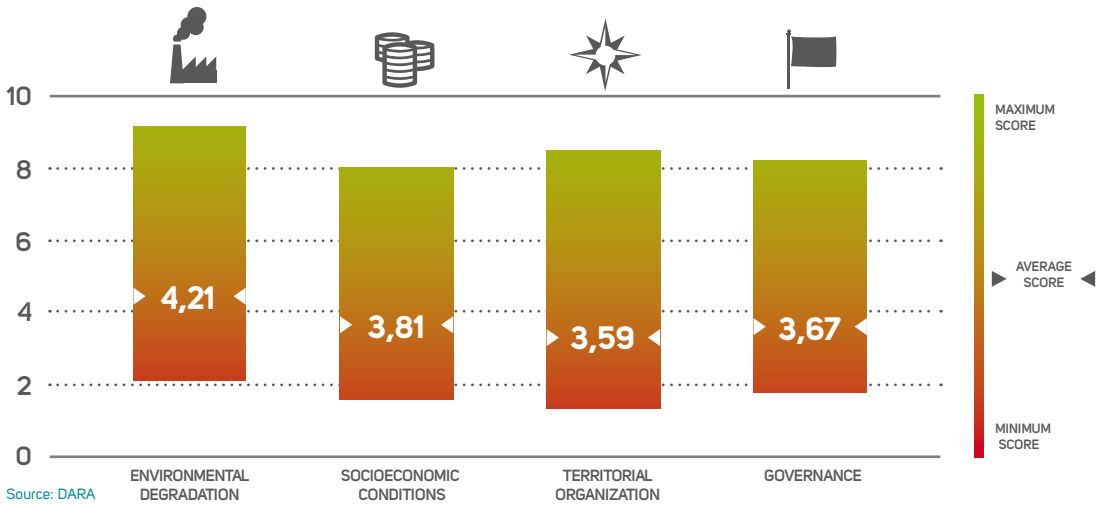
5.7.2 RISK DRIVERS

RISK DRIVER 1: Environmental Degradation

In the three RTUs, the aspects of environmental degradation that most affect risk management are identified as the overexploitation of soil, deforestation and overexploitation of water resources. The government's response to

environmental degradation is considered inadequate, mainly due to a lack of resources. In the three RTUs, climate variations have been noted, especially in precipitation and drought cycles, and extreme and average temperatures.

CHART G: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BY RISK DRIVER



Source: DARA

RISK DRIVER 2: Socioeconomic Conditions

The socioeconomic conditions that undermine the success of risk management in the three RTUs are unemployment, poverty and limited access to water and drainage services. Weaknesses in capacity include the ineffectiveness of social

protection mechanisms to reduce levels of poverty, lack of economic support to improve food security and insufficient financial security mechanisms (insurance, loans) to promote economic development.

RISK DRIVER 3: Territorial Organisation

The main factors associated with territorial organisation that prevent effective risk reduction in all three RTUs include the inappropriate location and low quality of housing and land occupation in unsafe

or fragile areas. The inadequate incorporation of DRR strategies in land use plans and public investments, and non-compliance with construction codes and norms are also negative factors.

RISK DRIVER 4: Governance

Corruption, high levels of bureaucracy, lack of coordination among different levels of government, centralisation in decision-making and lack of institutional capacity are highlighted in all three RTUs as having negative effects on risk management. DRR instruments and mechanisms are considered adequate in the three RTUs, but they are not effectively implemented. Additionally, civil society participation in local development processes is low and decision-making on development issues is not considered transparent.

PROBLEMS INCLUDE POOR INTERSECTORAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION, LACK OF ENFORCEMENT OF RISK MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS AND TOO FEW RESOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRR PLANS

In the Dominican Republic, according to questionnaire results in the three RTUs, the low level of inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination (all levels of government have

reduction risk plans, but they act independently), poor application of risk management regulations and limited budgets to implement DRR plans were identified as the greatest challenges for DRR.

In the Dominican Republic workshop, participants of all three RTUs agreed on the importance of governmental efficiency and effectiveness and coordination among different levels of government. They identified a number of recommendations at the national level:

- Promote DRR as a cross-cutting issue in public policies and allocate necessary financial resources.
- Ensure correct implementation of risk management regulations.
- Improve the level of inter-sectoral, inter-agency and inter-institutional coordination (there are inter-agency coordination structures, such as the National Emergency Commission and the Provincial and Municipal Committees for Prevention and Disaster Preparedness, but they do not function properly).
- Improve institutional capacity for DRR.
- Promote the creation of national and local land use plans.
- Empower local authorities through the decentralisation of resources and decision-making power to improve the efficiency of risk management activities.
- Promote the roles of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in defining a framework for action on DRR and the Ministry of Finance in integrating DRR in ministry budgets.

Based on these recommendations, a few concrete actions are suggested to improve DRR in each RTU:

RTU Barahona

- Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Renewal and Development of Barahona and neighbouring areas.
- Recuperation and dredging of Cabral lagoon.
- Support for environmental projects.
- Capacity building and empowerment of citizens.

RTU Duarte

- Technical strengthening of local governments.
- Promotion of land use and development plans.
- Improvement of citizen training on DRR.
- Creation of a fund to promote risk management.

RTU Distrito Nacional

- Improvement of inter-institutional coordination.
- Improvement of public investment in land use planning.
- Improvement of land use management instruments and sanctions.