

STAR-TIDES Overview

STAR-TIDES¹ promotes affordable, sustainable, support to stressed populations—post-disaster, impoverished, or post-war. Situations include: Domestic and foreign, short-term or long-term, military involved, or not. It is a non-profit, international research project² to promote unity of effort among diverse organizations where there is no unity of control. As such it seeks to build bridges across boundaries between business, civil society and government stakeholders who are working toward common goals. The principal means are: (1) trust building and social network development, (2) sharing information and situational awareness, and (3) low-cost logistic solutions.

Trust, social networks and information sharing are critical components of success in economic development, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and post-war stabilization. STAR-TIDES is developing analyses of how to build trust and share situational awareness among disparate stakeholders that could contribute to preparations for disaster responses, food crises, pandemic diseases and armed instabilities.

Moreover, logisticians have noted that government (especially military) contributions to the above kinds of situations often focus on the expensive, deployable systems of record that have to be withdrawn when the government involvement ends. There is a need for equipment that's (1) low cost, (2) appropriate for the stressed population, and (3) able to be left behind with the affected people.

STAR-TIDES thus focuses on seven infrastructures: shelter, water, power, integrated solar and combustion cooking, cooling/ lighting/heating, sanitation and information & communications technologies (ICT). The project aims to provide reach back “knowledge on demand” to decision-makers and those operating in the field. All information collected will be made available in the public domain via the www.star-tides.net web site.

STAR-TIDES analyses are driven by problems of interest to stakeholders. Once examples of low cost infrastructures are identified, “cross-cutting” solution sets (mixes of shelter, water, power, etc.) can be tailored to specific environments. Not all solutions will be suitable for all scenarios: Improving host nation capabilities to build stability in southern archipelagoes calls for different answers than supporting mountain earthquake victims in winter. Analyses also can examine which supplies might best be provided by governments, which by non-governmental entities, and which by commercial supply chains. The project contributes to humanitarian assistance, the Millennium Development Goals, and peace building.

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¹ TIDES (Transportable Infrastructures for Development and Emergency Support) is a project under a broad effort called STAR (Sustainable Technologies, Accelerated Research), hence the STAR-TIDES title.

² STAR-TIDES leverages a network ranging from Iceland to Singapore that includes diverse individual skills and participants from non-governmental organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, US and foreign armed forces, and commercial firms. Network members have offered innovative solutions to problems ranging from Bangladesh flooding to FEMA trailer replacement to Canadian Arctic shelters.