



Action Programme

Swedish National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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Summary

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) has been commissioned by the Government, together with relevant authorities and organisations, to establish a national platform for the managing of natural disasters. The aim is to prevent and reduce the effects of natural disasters in line with Sweden's commitments according to the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Sweden's National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was officially inaugurated in conjunction with the DG meeting of 13th September 2007.

The operational ideas of the Swedish national platform are:

***To create** a safer Sweden by reducing the risks of natural disasters and enhancing society's ability to cope with them*

***To act** as an arena for cooperation between organisations and existing networks in order to enhance the collective capacity of societal actors.*

***To support** the relevant actors involved with base-data for their work on natural disasters at local, regional and national levels*

The overall aim of the work of the national platform is to prevent and reduce the effects of natural disasters by improving cooperation on local, regional and national levels. In order to achieve this, work is conducted within the following three priority areas of activity, for which strategic objectives have been set:

1. Cooperation and coordination between authorities and organisations
2. Effective provision of data
3. Research, development and provision of knowledge

A separate Activity Plan provides the strategies for how work within the platform should be conducted, in order to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of the Action Programme. This work is conducted in activities to which participating authorities contribute resources, activities with the authorities involved or through the participation of other actors. The nature of the activities varies (e.g. seminars, investigations, projects) and they are directed towards different target groups.

The structure of the national platform is as follows:

- **The steering group** - responsible for the direction and overall management of the work. The participants are the Directors General (or their equivalent) of the organisations which are members of the platform.
- **The authorities' network** - carries out the routine day-to-day work of the platform. The authorities' network consists of one appointed representative per authority or organisation, plus a deputy for each representative.

- **Focal point and secretariat at the MSB** - responsible for coordination, communication, international contacts, reporting, and administration of the platform's work.
- **Working groups** - may be appointed for specific tasks.
- **Reference groups** - may be established to meet special needs.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Natural events such as cloudbursts, storms, floods, erosion and landslides are natural phenomena which have always existed. Such an event becomes a natural disaster when something of value suffers as a result of the event and causes injury to people and damage to property, the environment or causes other economic damage.

Compared to many other countries, Sweden has been more or less spared from natural disasters. Nevertheless, natural disasters cause great damage to society, the economy and the environment, and affect people in different ways. The vulnerability of society and people in the face of natural disasters is also expected to increase as a result of climate change, population growth and urbanisation. In today's climate, with its variations, critical infrastructure, such as power and water supply, is already vulnerable.

Climate changes will affect all the systems and sectors of society to varying extents. Adjustment to these climate changes is essential. The Climate and Vulnerability Investigation (SOU 2007:60) estimates that a certain continued warming is unavoidable, but that it is still possible, to a certain extent, to protect society and the economy from its effects. The efforts to limit the effects of climate change must be two-fold: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting society to a changed climate. According to the Climate and Vulnerability Investigation, the benefits of early intervention far outweigh the economic costs of doing nothing.

To create a society which remains robust in the face of natural disasters and is adapted to future conditions demands efforts on international, national, regional and local levels and by individuals, on the basis of a common understanding. To achieve results, political alignments and decisions are essential, in order to execute preventive and damage-limiting measures. It is also necessary for society to adjust to a changed climate and that all affected parties contribute resources to this work.

1.2 The UN and the Hyogo Framework for Action

Extensive work is being carried out by the UN in order to prevent natural disasters and to reduce their effects. At the UN's world conference in Kobe, Japan, in 2005, delegations from 168 countries gathered and adopted a ten-year plan – the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 – with the aim being to make the world more resilient to natural disasters through work for a reduction of the risks and effects of natural disasters. The main objective is to

significantly reduce the loss of life and of social, economic and environmental assets by 2015.

Among other things, all member countries have agreed to follow the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and to establish a national platform for their work on disaster risk reduction (DRR)¹. The work was initiated by the UN agency International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

The UN's work places a lot of focus on the developing countries and the ISDR has highlighted the importance of reducing the risks and effects of natural disasters as a way of breaking the "vicious circle". The "vicious circle" refers to situations where relief efforts and humanitarian aid are often wiped out by new natural disasters. For the UN, the work on disaster risk reduction plays an important role in the attaining of the millennium goals².

Each country decides itself how its national platform will be formed. Some countries structure the platform as cooperation between authorities, others as a separate NGO (non-governmental organisation).

The Hyogo Framework for Action specifies five priority areas for the work on the reduction of risks and effects of natural disasters:

- Ensuring that the work on the reduction of risks of natural disasters is made a priority both on a national and local level
- Identifying, evaluating and monitoring risks, and increasing early warnings
- Using knowledge, innovations and education in order to improve security and endurance at all levels
- Reducing underlying risk factors
- Strengthening preparedness for operations and recovery at all levels

1.3 The MSB's task

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) has been commissioned by the Government to run a national platform for work on disaster risk reduction. This is expressed in the government's letter of instruction to the MSB for 2009:

¹ *The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events. (Källa: UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction ,2009)*

² The seven millennium goals were adopted by the UN in 2000. This refers mainly to goal number 7 – sustainable development.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency in cooperation with other relevant authorities and organisations, shall through the national platform improve coordination of the work on preventing and reducing the effects of natural disasters. The aim of these measures should be to fulfil Sweden's commitments to the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Swedish platform was officially established in connection with a DG meeting comprising 16 authorities, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Defence on 13th September 2007. In December 2007, the MFA officially informed the UN/ISDR³ that the Swedish Rescue Services Agency would be the focal point for the Swedish National Platform. Today the MSB is the focal point for the Swedish National Platform when it comes to national commitments to the HFA, whereas the MFA is responsible for other aspects.

1.4 Delimitations

The UN defines three main groups of natural events that can cause emergencies and disasters:

1. Geological
2. Hydrometeorological
3. Biological

These main groups are in turn divided into sub-groups. This UN recommended classification, with minor adjustments for Swedish conditions, is used as data for the structuring of the work.

Swedish conditions mean that not all natural events, according to the UN/ISDR definition, are relevant. Those events that have been assessed as being the most important on which to focus further work in the next few years appear in **bold text** in the table. As a result of ongoing climate change it is important that long-term work monitors events that can be expected to be more common in the future and to adjust society accordingly.

Biological events can result in emergencies but can also be the consequence of other natural events. Until further notice, events of a biological nature will not be included in the platform's priority areas as they are dealt with in other contexts.

³ The overall responsibility for other parts of the follow-up and implementation of the HFA, i.e. those parts which do not concern the national work, and the main dialogue with ISDR, falls however on the Foreign Office (with the support, among others, of Sida and SRV).

Table 1: Types of natural event. Bold text indicates the types of event on which the platform is currently working.

Geological	Hydrometeorological	Biologiska
Earthquake	Flooding	Epidemic
Tsunami	Storm , cyclone, tornado	Infectious animal and plant diseases
Volcanic eruption	Extreme precipitation – rain, hail, snow, ice storm	Insect swarms
Landslide – earth/rock	Thunderstorm	Infestation by noxious or verminous insects
Erosion of coastlines and inland watercourses	Drought	
Avalanche	Heat wave	
Mudslide	Extreme cold	
	Forest fire	
	Desertification	
	Avalanche	
	Mudslide	

1.5 Current situation

1.5.1 Global

In recent years, several large-scale natural disasters have occurred both in Sweden and internationally. Because of climate changes and societal developments it is likely that the frequency and the effects of natural disasters will increase both in Sweden and elsewhere. Reports by the UN and other organisations show a growing trend in the number and the extent of natural disasters.

Continued emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases at or above the current levels will lead to further warming, which will probably result in greater changes to the global climate in the 21st century than were observed in the previous century. This is likely to lead to, among other things, heat waves, more rain, less snow in wintertime, and also a rise in the level of the oceans and a displacement of large-scale weather patterns like the west wind zone⁴.

(The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the UN's Climate Panel 2007: The scientific basis. Summary for Decision-makers. Report 5677, February 2007.)

1.5.2 Europe

During the years 1998-2002, more than seven million people in Europe were affected by natural and other disasters to a value of at least €60 billion. The natural disasters included floods, forest fires, landslides, avalanches and erosion. Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Europe and accounted for 43 per cent of all disaster events during the years 1998-2002. Europe was hit by around 100 floods, which caused around 700 deaths, forced around half a million people to leave their homes and led to economic losses of at least €25 billion for insurance companies. An area measuring approximately one million square kilometres was hit by floods (this includes areas which during this time were hit by repeated floods and were counted more than once). Around 1.5 per cent of the population of Europe was affected.

Natural disasters often have a great impact on the environment, which can be both positive and negative. Negative as they can lead to great injury and damage costs to people and property, but positive due to the long-term renewal of the natural ecological system.

1.5.3 Sweden

In recent years, several extensive natural disasters have occurred in Sweden. Examples of events that have impacted upon and exposed critical infrastructure to major disruptions, and also afflicted individuals, are:

- Flooding in southern Norrland in the summer of 2000, and also in Värmland and western Götaland (Glafs fjorden and Vänern) in November - December 2000.
- A cloudburst in Bohuslän (Orust) in August 2002 and in Värmland (Hagfors) in August 2004
- An extensive period of precipitation and high water-levels in south-western Sweden in December 2006
- Storms in southern Sweden - *Gudrun* in January 2005 and *Per* in January 2007
- A forest fire in Norrbotten (Bodträskfors) in August-September 2006
- A landslide by the E6 in Bohuslän (Småröd) in December 2006

Observations and lessons learned from natural disasters have been discussed at seminars, and also documented in a large number of reports. Below is a list of problems and needs which have been highlighted:

- A lack of coordination between authorities
- Ambiguities surrounding the responsibilities and roles of the authorities
- Ambiguities in legislation, for example, regarding reimbursements
- Shortcomings in the application of knowledge
- The need for improved preparedness and warnings
- The need for unambiguous planning conditions, for example, during construction and infrastructure planning
- The need for improved cooperation for research, training/education, and the feeding back of observations and lessons learned.

The expected impact of climate change in Sweden has been examined thoroughly by the Climate and Vulnerability Investigation (2005-2007). The investigation has produced two reports:

- Partial report; "Flood threat, risks and measures for Mälaren, Hjälmaren and Vättern" (November 2006)
- Final report; "Sweden and climate change – threats and possibilities" (October 2007)

These reports present a number of important conclusions with regard to natural events and natural disasters and the effects of climate change on

society. The investigator also suggests tasks for the authorities, changes in legislation and the funding of measures. The need for cross-sector cooperation is emphasized, as is the need for coordination, for example, through the establishment of a national platform for work on natural disasters.

2. Purpose, operational concept and strategic objectives

2.1 Purpose and operational concept

The overall purpose of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the creation of national platforms for work on natural disasters is that loss of life, social, economic and environmental assets due to natural disasters shall have markedly decreased by 2015. The national platform shall contribute to improving cooperation and coordination between authorities and organisations, without depriving anyone of their responsibilities. The platform shall cooperate with or complement other networks.

The operational concept for the Swedish national platform is:

To create *a safer Sweden by reducing the risks of natural disasters and enhancing society's ability to cope with them*

To act *as an arena for cooperation between organisations and existing networks in order to enhance the collective capacity of societal actors.*

To support *the relevant actors involved with base-data for their work on natural disasters at local, regional and national levels*

2.2 Strategic objectives

The overall aim of the work of the national platform is to prevent and reduce the effects of natural disasters by improving cooperation on the local, regional and national levels. In order to achieve this, work is conducted within the following three priority areas of activity, for which strategic objectives have been set:

1. Cooperation and coordination between authorities and organisations

The objective is increased and broader cross-sector cooperation and improved coordination between authorities and organisations to obtain a broader and more comprehensive picture of the risks, possible measures and their consequences, and to result in needs-based support, primarily for the municipalities, county councils and county administrative boards for matters related to natural disasters.

2. Effective provision of data

The objective is to identify society's needs for data and base-data for planning, to improve accessibility, and facilitate the exchange of information. This will promote a common understanding of the situation, which may constitute a

basis for decisions by those actors involved in the work on preventing and reducing the effects of natural disasters.

3. Research, development and the provision of knowledge

Via research, development, information and education the objective is to strengthen societal capacities for the prevention and handling of natural disasters.

2.3 Strategies and activities

A separate Activity Plan provides the strategies for how work within the platform should be conducted, in order to contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of the Action Programme. This work is conducted in activities to which participating authorities contribute resources, activities with the authorities involved or through the participation of other actors. The nature of the activities varies (e.g. seminars, investigations, projects) and they are directed towards different target groups.

3. Participating authorities, activities and forums for cooperation

3.1 Introduction

Prior to the establishment of the national platform for disaster risk reduction, studies, among other things, were carried out on the work of the participating authorities in connection with the natural disasters sorted into the five HFA priority areas, and also on existing forms of cooperation, councils and delegations connected to the field of natural disasters. With this stocktaking as a foundation it was clear that there was a great need to strengthen cooperation and work in the field of natural disasters by establishing the national platform.

3.2 Participating authorities

The network of authorities for the national platform includes 16 authorities and organisations working together. In addition to the authorities listed below, the Swedish National Board of Forestry is also prepared to participate on certain issues.

- Swedish National Rail Administration
- Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
- Swedish Energy Agency
- Lantmäteriet (Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority)
- Swedish National Food Administration
- The county administrative boards of Sweden
- Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
- Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare
- Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
- Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute
- Swedish Geotechnical Institute
- Svenska Kraftnät (the national grid of Sweden)
- Swedish Geological Survey
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
- Swedish Road Administration

4. Structure and forms of work

4.1 The structure of the Swedish National Platform

The UN guidelines emphasize that a national platform should have a broad approach and operate across sector boundaries, encompass many interested parties and include knowledge and science from different fields. The Swedish National Platform is a network that consists of government authorities and the organisation, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, which represents the municipal level. The regional level is represented by a representative from each of the county administrative boards. The direction and the overall running of the platform's work is conducted by a **steering group, - the DG meeting**, consists of the directors general (or their equivalent) of the organisations which are part of the network. The chair of the steering group is the Director General of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

The authorities network is made up of one representative per authority/organisation, and appointed deputies. The representatives must have a broad knowledge of their authority's/ organisation's work on natural disasters. They should also have a mandate to represent their own organisation, and to incorporate the platform's work into its work, and to initiate decisions and work in accordance with the platform's intentions. Cooperation and coordination in the authorities' network should aim to provide common learning and the feeding back of experience on "best practice" from prevention work and events that have occurred. The work of the authorities' network is led by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

The authorities' network may be supplemented with **reference groups**. In the first instance existing networks within the specific field should be used as reference groups. But where no suitable network exists, a specific reference group may be appointed.

The authorities network may create **working groups** for limited tasks, should the need arise. These may consist of a sub-group of representatives from the authorities' network or of individuals from outside the authorities' network. The composition of each working group is determined by what is suitable for the task in hand. However, a working group must always be led by a representative from the authorities' network.

The national HFA focal point and secretariat for the national platform is the MSB with personnel and services for coordination, communication, international contacts, reporting, and administration.

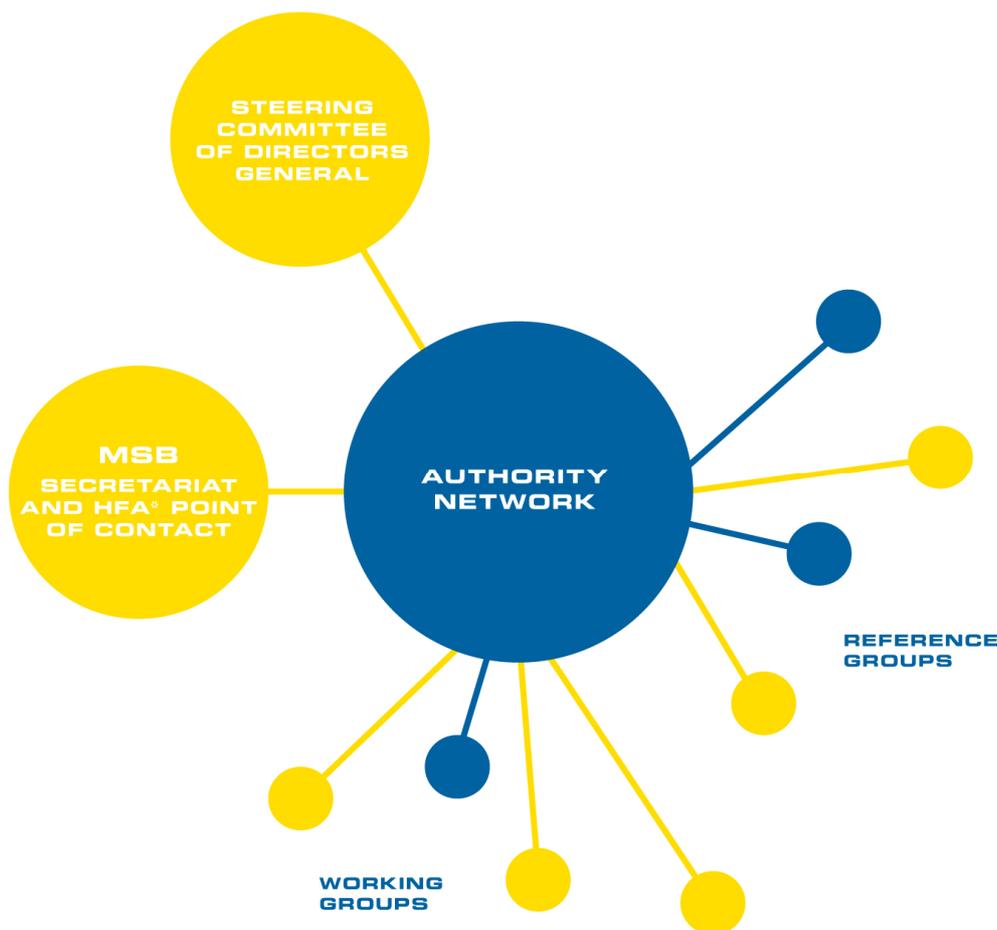


Figure 1: Structure of the Swedish National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

*) For Sweden's international undertakings within the HFA the contact point is the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

4.2 Responsibility and tasks

4.2.1 Steering group – DG meeting

The steering group meets annually on the second Wednesday of October (International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction – held by the UN since 1990). Additional meetings can be called at the request of members of the steering group. Among the tasks of the steering group are:

- To provide overall direction and frameworks for the work
- To approve an action programme
- To approve an activity plan
- To approve the annual report
- To decide on new members for the authorities' network

4.2.2 Authorities' network

The authorities' network meets at least twice a year. Its main tasks are to:

- Draw up objectives for the platform's work (Disaster Risk Reduction) in Sweden

- Draw up action programmes, including strategies and measures in order to reach the objectives
- Follow up on completed activities in relation to the objectives
- Contribute to and check the annual report
- Draw up an activity plan
- Report back to the steering group
- Suggest authorities and organisations which ought to participate on the national platform

4.2.3 Reference groups

The main tasks of the reference groups are to:

- Contribute to broad anchorage and communication between the central authorities/the authorities' network and other relevant sectors and areas of society
- Contribute to the process of drawing up objectives and action programmes by functioning as a consultant body/sounding board

4.2.4 Working groups

Working groups are appointed when necessary, for example, in order to arrange seminars, develop suggestions for the action programme, indicators and so on.

4.2.5 The tasks of the secretariat

The main tasks of the secretariat are to.

- Coordinate and run the work of the platform
- Coordinate the meetings of the authorities' network
- Provide basic data and background documents
- Make proposals for the annual report
- Be responsible for documentation
- Be responsible for information about the platform
- Maintain contact with the ISDR and the national platforms of other countries
- Arrange seminars
- Prepare steering group meetings

4.2.6 Guiding documents

The guiding documents for the work are:

- The action programme
- The activity plan
- The annual report

The above documents must be approved by the steering group. Additionally, the authorities' network and the secretariat will prepare the documents necessary for the execution of the work.

4.3 Information och communication

Work on the national platform must be generally accessible and be communicated to the surrounding world. Objectives and activities for communication should be described in the activity plan and primarily include the work which is conducted jointly by the national platform.

In general, the following applies:

- The action programme, the activity plan and the annual report shall be accessible via a portal or a dedicated address on the MSB's homepage
- Minutes from steering group meetings, reports, documentation from seminars, etc, shall be published on the website mentioned above
- Working material and notes from authorities' network meetings and working groups must be accessible to the authorities' network via an internet solution provided by the MSB.

4.4 Financing

4.4.1 Steering group and authorities' network meetings

The annual steering group meeting (DG meeting) and the authorities' network meetings are financed by the participating authorities and organisations (working hours, travel etc.).

4.4.2 Secretariat

The MSB is responsible for secretariat costs, administration and for information and communication as specified in the action programme.

4.4.3 Activities

Activities initiated by the platform and which aren't included in the ordinary work of the authorities' network ought to be conducted within the framework of the national platform. Such activities can be, for example, conferences, seminars, development projects, and training courses. Financing should be conducted through agreements within the platform for each individual case, via cooperation with the other organisations (in Sweden or overseas), or by participant fees.

Activities are carried out by the working groups with representatives from network authorities, possibly, when needed, supplemented by other resources.

Activities which normally fall within the area of responsibility of an authority are carried out by that authority and are inserted into the follow-up prior to the reporting of Sweden's work to the ISDR. Each organisation finances such activities in its own area of responsibility.

4.4.4 Reference groups

In those cases when reference groups are formed, participating organisations finance their own participation.

5. Reporting and follow-up

5.1 Steering group

Completed work by the national platform for disaster risk reduction must be reported once a year in an annual report prior to the steering group's annual meeting. Reporting can also occur on a specific request from the steering group.

5.2 Participating organisations on the Swedish National Platform

Progress reports to the participating authorities are the responsibility of each authority's own representative.

5.3 The Swedish Government

The MSB reports on its task with the national platform in the annual report and following any special request from the ministry/government.

Participating authorities report on their own spheres of responsibility in accordance with the wishes of each commissioning body.

5.4 ISDR

The authorities participating in the platform contribute to reports within their own spheres of responsibility. The MSB is responsible for the compilation of reports and the final report to the ISDR. Reports should normally correspond to the priority areas set by the Hyogo Framework for Action (see item 1.2).

