



IPA 2012/290-552 Project

Building Resilience to Disasters in Western Balkans and Turkey

Final Meeting of the Project Steering Committee

14 October 2014, Ankara, Turkey

MEETING SUMMARY



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The IPA/2012/290552 Multibeneficiary Project: “Building Resilience to Disasters in Western Balkans and Turkey” has been approved by the European Commission Directorate General for Enlargement for joint implementation by the UNISDR and the WMO, for a period of 29 months (May 2012 – October 2014). The project is part of the EC DG Enlargement Instrument for Preaccession Assistance (IPA) Programme for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The overall objective of the project is to build the resilience of IPA beneficiaries to disasters caused by the impact of natural hazards in line with the priorities set by the Hyogo Framework for Action

2005-2015 - Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA). Specifically, the project aims at:

- enhancing the regional cooperation and capacity in developing and implementing disaster risk reduction measures,
- addressing emerging disaster risks posed by the changing climate,
- strengthening the cross-border cooperation in disaster risk management, and
- enhancing the national and regional capacity to monitor and predict hazardous conditions and share respective data and products to enable a regional approach to disaster risk reduction.

The Project activities are structured in 8 tasks: 4 of them are led by UNISDR and focus on disaster risk reduction capacity building, knowledge management, disaster risk transfer capacities (insurance for disasters) and community based disaster management. The other 4 tasks are led by WMO and focus on risk assessment, meteorological and hydrological forecast capacities, enabling climate risk management in decision-making, and designing a region-wide harmonized early warning system.

The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee was held on 30th of August 2012, in Zagreb, Croatia. The meeting report is available on the project web site and can be accessed via the following web link:

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/workspace/27746_unisdrwmoproject1stscagreportfinal.pdf.

The second meeting of the Project Steering Committee was hosted by the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in Skopje, at the premises of the M6 Educational Center, on 31st of May 2013. The objectives of this meeting were to review the project Implementation plan and provide recommendations for the way forward. The meeting report is available on the project web site and can be accessed via the following web link:

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/networks/private/ipadrr/>

1.2 Participants

Final Steering Committee meeting of the project was organized on 14th of October 2014 in Ankara, Turkey. The Steering Committee meeting was hosted by the State Meteorological Service of Turkey and was attended by 49 experts from the project beneficiaries, regional partner organizations and international organizations (participant list is attached as the Annex I).

The aim of the final steering committee meeting was to give an overview of the project activities implemented by the UNISDR and WMO, the evaluation of the implemented project activities and opportunities for further initiatives in the field of disaster risk reduction in the Western Balkan region and Turkey. Agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex II.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING

2.1 Opening session

The meeting was opened by Mr. Ismail Günes, the Director General of the Turkish State Meteorological Service (TSMS) who welcomed all members of the project Steering Committee and emphasized the relevance of cooperation. He expressed the hope that the results of the meeting will contribute to the benefit of all IPA Project beneficiaries and that the knowledge will be transferred to the other countries of RA VI. He provided an overview of the development plans of the TSMS for the disaster risk reduction and wished all a productive meeting.

Mr. Halil Afsarata, Head of Strategy Development Department and Coordinator of International Relations welcomed the participants on behalf of the Turkish Prime Ministry, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. Mr. Afsarata welcomed the event, the guest attending the meeting and highlighted the benefit of a regional approach towards building resilience to disasters. He reflected on the project opportunity to enhance collaboration and coordination and indicated that this successful approach to disaster risk management is equally applied at the national level and pointed out as example the strong collaboration with the Turkish State Meteorological Service. He concluded his introduction by emphasizing the importance of the IPA project and its achievements in the region and in the overall European context as the project has increased the institutional coordination efforts, data sharing, innovative solutions for private public partnership and increased awareness on disaster prevention at the local level.

Ms. Paola Albrito, Head of UNIDSR Regional Office for Europe indicated that the cooperative and active approach of the project beneficiary and partners has been at the heart of the success of the project delivery. She emphasized the generosity of the project focal points in embracing the risk reduction dimension and multi-stakeholder exchanges and highlighted the strong commitment of the region in building resilience to disasters. She pointed out that despite the efforts made towards reducing the risk of disasters, the challenges ahead, further enhanced by a changing climate will need even stronger efforts towards this topic and made reference to the recent floods experiences of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. She highlighted the common challenge posed by economic losses due to disasters and the need to enhance investments in disaster prevention. By touching upon the project tasks deliveries she concluded by emphasizing that the project allowed for a true learning experience between beneficiary and the larger European region.

Mr. Dimitar Ivanov, the Chief of WMO Aeronautical Meteorology Division, addressed the participants in the capacity of WMO Project Manager and expressed the words of appreciation to the host institution that organized the three consecutive final events of the project. Mr. Ivanov highlighted some of the main achievements during the project implementation, including the work towards improvement of Early Warning Systems. He introduced Mr. Milan Dacic, the Chief of WMO Regional Office for Europe, who will follow up on the activities arising as recommendations from this project.

2.2 Session II: Review of project results

Mr. Luca Rossi, UNISDR Programme Officer presented the main project outcomes from the activities under the responsibility of UNISDR. He highlighted that the overall success of this project was to build on already existing capacity and experience rather than to import tout court solutions developed in different context. Another important general achievement resulting from this project is the commitment and the cooperation demonstrated by all partners, thus reinforcing the institutional capacity and setting solid base for any future development toward a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction. He indicated that the tasks specified in the project were completed by UNISDR and provided an overview of achievement for each task:

Task 1: The exchange of expert programme enhanced the regional institutional capacity in building resilience to disasters and offered the opportunity to share knowledge developed in each South Europe country with other EU Member States and as such set the base for further cooperation between the beneficiaries and other European countries. The exchange of expert programme provided also the opportunity to view alignment of beneficiary countries institutional capacity with applied European countries EC requirements. The exchange of experts programme involved 16 participants, including 4 Director General/deputy Director General, form 8 countries.

Task 2: The implementation of the Knowledge Management System (KMS) in the Beneficiaries resulted in the enhanced information sharing and knowledge in the region. It allowed for definition of common standards in data gathering and sharing as well as ensuring sharing of lessons learnt. The KMS hosting by Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE) will ensure continuation in its updating and role as knowledge broker.

Task 7: This task implementation contributed towards south eastern European countries moving forward in an innovative way toward the insurance and reinsurance challenge posed by the small insurance penetration and the sharing of reinsurance risk. The activity allowed for the promotion of public-private partnership. The videos and tools developed were shared during the IPA Project 2nd Regional Europa Re Insurance Conference dedicated to the launch of Europa Re's operations. This result was particularly appreciated by beneficiaries affected by the severe flood in May and June, earlier this year, which, in some cases, was estimated to be up to 15% of the GDP for the next 50 years, severely affecting the development capacity of the Country.

Task 8: The compendium of good practices in urban risk reduction was developed through the experiences collected from beneficiary's cities that participated in the world disaster reduction campaign. This overall task helped to increase awareness in disaster risk reduction at the local level as well as to enhance knowledge exchange and contribution of beneficiary's cities in the international context. The contribution from the region city experience was particularly appreciated during the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Finally Mr. Rossi identified some areas of opportunities for further developments building on the success of the project. These included the Exchange of Expert programme towards strengthening disaster risk reduction policy capacity, strengthening of financial risk knowledge and further promotion of risk awareness and education at the national and local level.

Mr. Marco Massabo, UNISDR consultant for the development of the Knowledge Management System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation (KMS) presented the structure and content of the KMS. He reiterated the aim of the KMS as a tool to strengthen the capabilities in knowledge sharing and information organization through a web-based system. The KMS, hosted by DPPI SEE, is a wealth of material produced for Western Balkans and Turkey in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). The KMS addresses the needs to enhance the dissemination capabilities among local, national and international stakeholders which are often not aware of the knowledge products available. The new web-portal hosts a system in which documents, publications and media material dealing with DRM and CCA, can be retrieved using a multiple language interface, helping the coordination among different stakeholders and contributing to avoid duplication of initiatives and studies. It is a repository of documents and material, whose success highly depends on the amount of material provided by the countries and their feedback for improvement.

The KMS has been designed with a participatory approach and aims to target the content of the portal to real needs and requirements of users. The KMS is accessible on the web at: www.seeKMS.dppi.info.

Mr. Ivanov, the WMO Project Manager gave an overview of the project objectives and the main achievements. He noted the relevance of the WMO Office for Resource Mobilization and Partnership Development as well as of the regional partners of the project, in particular of the Operational Nowcasting Center of the National Administration of Romania, the Drought Management Center for SEE and the WMO Regional Instrument Center, represented at the meeting.

Ms. Sari Lappi, the Project Coordinator of the WMO/FMI Regional Project Office summarized the activities implemented by WMO within the 4 project tasks, led by WMO.

Task 3: The task was divided to strengthening the historical meteorological and climate data rescue and enhancement of the climate data management systems, enhancing hydro-meteorological data quality, homogenization and standardization, drought hazard analysis and mapping and the Sava River pilot project on flood hazards. As a result of Task 3 activities, all the beneficiaries have user-friendly digital Climate Data Management Systems (CDMS) that have the possibility to take into account the quality assurance and control aspects. Upgrade of the existing systems was done for three beneficiaries and completely new systems were provided also for three beneficiaries who previously did not have functional CDMSs. In addition to this, training was provided on historical data management including data quality assurance and control, homogenization and standardization of both meteorological and hydrological data. As part of the Task 3 training was organized related to specific hazards, with the organization of the training on application of remote sensing data for drought monitoring and on flood losses assessment. One of the most important results of the project was the development of the Policy on the Exchange of Hydrological and Meteorological Data and Information in the Sava River Basin. The policy has been officially approved and signed by the relevant organizations in the Sava Basin countries.

Task 4: The task concentrated on enhancement of capacity to forecast hazardous meteorological and hydrological phenomena. Within this task the forecasters from beneficiaries were supported to attend the on-the-job training at the National Meteorological Administration of Romania. Forecasters were also supported to attend the European severe weather forecasting testbed organized by the European Severe Storm Laboratory in Austria. In addition to the training related to severe weather forecasting, a workshop was organized on integrated flood management, flood forecasting and early warnings. With the support of the project, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the 34th member of Meteoalarm. With this integration, most of the region is included in the Meteoalarm, with only two of the project beneficiaries not yet part of the platform. The Meteoalarm in Bosnia and Herzegovina has already proved its value, as during the May 2014 floods it was used as one of the main channels in distributing the warning information. With the support of EUMETSAT, the training of the forecasters was continued with the organization of a Nowcasting applications course for DAWBEE meteorological services. In connection to this, the DAWBEE stations were upgraded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. As a part of the strengthening the capacities in quality management a regional workshop in Quality Managements Systems and their application in activities related to DRR was organized. Furthermore, the quality aspects were address by purchasing of calibration kits to be used by beneficiaries lacking national calibration capacities (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Training in calibration and maintenance of hydro-meteorological instruments was also provided.

Task 5: The task concentrated on enhancing the capacities in draught risk management, strengthening the capacities in providing long-range forecasts and related climate services and developing capacities in services for the insurance sector. As a part of the Task 5, support was provided for secondment of experts from four beneficiaries to the Drought Management Centre for South-East Europe for on-the-job training on specialized drought management tools. The organization of two South-East Europe Climate Outlook Forums (SEECOF) was supported. The organization of SEECOF in 2013 was connected with the regional training workshop in the use and interpretation of long-range forecasts, climate watch related aspects, and climate scenarios in application to various user sectors. As one of the last implemented activities of the project, a workshop on the role of the NMHSs in support of DRR-related activities in the field of insurance was organized. Technical support was provided to the South-East Europe Virtual Climate Change Centre (SEEVCCC) by utilizing the expertise of the Barcelona Supercomputing Centre to carry out the optimization of the centres Non-hydrostatic Multi-scale Model.

Task 6: The main focus of this task was to design the regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS). With the support of the established Design Team comprising of experts from the NMHSs and DRR agencies of each beneficiaries, an assessment and Gap analysis regarding national early warning systems for each beneficiary was developed. This was followed by preparation of the design document describing the MHEWS for the region including monitoring networks, forecasting facilities, telecommunications, institutional and procedural aspects and human resources. As part of this task, support was also provided for the organization of the informal conference of South-East European NMHSs Directors.

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2.3 Session III: Evaluation and way forward

In addition to the evaluation of the usefulness, relevance and delivery of individual project activities carried out throughout the project implementation, a comprehensive evaluation of the project activities was carried out before the final Steering Committee meeting. Following findings can be highlighted based on the evaluation results and feedback from the beneficiaries in the final Steering Committee meeting:

- The project was considered as very useful, concrete and with visible results. The project activities were effective and of high quality, and concentrated on the most important issues. Strengthening of the closer regional cooperation with the regional and international partners was considered very beneficial.
- Several of the project activities were considered particularly important, including the design of the regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS), integration to Meteoalarm, development of the Knowledge Management System, the sharing of good practices in DRR among Beneficiaries, the MCR Campaign improving resilience at local level, the development of tools to promote insurance and reinsurance products for disaster risk transfer and calibration and data management activities.
- The relevance of project activities and the project as a whole was assessed as significant. The project activities were designed in a way to ensure relevant response to national risk profiles and complemented current DRR/CRM policies in the beneficiaries.
- The project activities clearly built upon previously implemented regional initiative and work of regional centres/networks (e.g. DPPI SEE, DMC/SEE, ISRBC).
- The project contributed to bringing institutional approaches closer to EU standards.
- Coordinated efforts by UNISDR and WMO, timely deployment of expertise/resources and commitment of the Beneficiaries to support proposed project activities ensured that overall project implementation pace was satisfactory and mostly compliant to the work-plan.
- Good management and governance arrangements were in place and no crucial delays in the implementation of the project activities were noted.
- Good monitoring system by implementing organizations on the progress in each of the project tasks was in place.
- Regional participation in all organized training events was broad and regular and the large majority of participants assessed the positively the events.
- Longer-term goals to which the project contributed in the view of beneficiaries included improved institutional capacities and national normative framework, coordination and knowledge exchange with neighboring countries, financial risk preparedness and strengthening of the capacities of the NMHSs and the enhancement of the regional hydro-meteorological network.
- The project activities were relevant to national DRR contexts and supportive of national DRR policies.
- The ownership of project results by target groups was assessed as strong.

- Project management paid enough attention to encompass sustainability issues in the development of project tasks. Networking promoted by the project was a concrete opportunity to create ground to reinforce long-lasting collaboration and cooperative links also at EU level.
- Maintenance of project outputs strongly dependent on institutional support necessarily combined with the assistance available from international projects/organizations.

3 WAY FORWARD – RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Following recommendations were outlined by the beneficiary and implementing organizations for the planning of future activities.

- Generating appropriate institutional support and prioritizing effective risk reduction actions implies identifying, assessing and monitoring risk patterns along with the trends and severity of disaster impacts (HFA Priority for Action 2 “Know the Risks and Take Action”).
- Comprehensive national/regional risk assessment and mapping – with unified methodology and special emphasis on core cross-border hazards – need to be further supported, through tailored technical assistance and exchange of expertise at EU level, to help implementing evidence-based risk mitigation policies.
- Sustain and continue the development efforts and build the future activities on the project achievements focusing on major hazards.
- Sustain and continue exchange of DRR/CCA expertise with relevant institutions in the EU MSs, allowing also for further approximation and alignment of SEE practices to integrated disaster risk management as approached at EU level and ultimately leads to upgrading national DRR frameworks and legislations. Streamline and leverage development actions to ensure interoperability and seamlessness.
- Intensive regional cooperation is essential. Address the technological gaps of the hydrometeorological systems at national and regional level; Take full advantage of the KMS potential which lays in the framework of next initiatives addressing regional disaster risk management cooperation and increase the level of access to the KMS in the Beneficiaries.
- New small cross border projects are recommended, based on a memorandum of understanding between countries, establishing a system of exchange of information, warnings and consultation in real time.
- Future projects designed to be scalable and innovative – introduce new concepts and services, e.g., impact-oriented services.
- Continue working on institutional arrangements – the role of the NMHSs as a key enabler for successful DRR. Further support to Governments in their efforts to develop national financial risk preparedness (especially if resources are limited to cope with major disaster reconstruction needs and there’s neither enough fiscal capacity nor enough private sector lending to restore assets destroyed by disasters in these countries).
- Homeowners and SMEs need to be further helped with reducing their financial vulnerability to natural hazards. The public at large needs to be increasingly educated on disaster risks and existing mitigation measures, including the need for disaster risk transfer mechanisms.

- There is a strong need to harmonize measurement networks and to establish protocols for exchange of data. Address further procedural aspects, data policy and quality management.
- Maintain and enhance the relations with the DRR stakeholders – develop the concept of Collaborative Decision Making.
- Utilize the potential of the European Meteorological Infrastructure.
- Build a strategy for resolving the NMHS's resources deficits (financial, human).
- Focus should be shifted from response and mitigation to prevention and preparedness, warning dissemination and social awareness of natural threats.
- Need exists for future training, with tailored practical examples from the region in drought monitoring and management, flood management and forecasting, severe weather forecasting, calibration of instruments, QMS etc.
- Implementation of international standards, ISO standard related to hydro-meteorological data as one of them, is deemed necessary for the countries in this region.
- Educating the general public on risk/vulnerability reduction is a key step towards further effective risk governance. Providing information on existing disaster risks and improving societal awareness of relevant mitigation measures contributes to a change in the approach to disaster risk management and creates the conditions to move forward from disaster response to prevention and broader DRR and CCA.
- Additionally, increased public understanding of DRR/CCA-related concepts and the responsibilities in addressing DRR upon different stakeholders, creates clear measures of accountability for the actions taken by governments (with an impact on good governance) and promotes greater focus from governments on DRR/CCA-related investments.
- Key activities to increase awareness of disaster prevention shall be further promoted, including providing information to citizens on disaster risks and means of protection, providing policy-makers with a greater understanding of science, strengthening dialogue and building a team approach among disaster experts and other stakeholders, including DRR/CCA in education curricula and training, developing community-based disaster risk management and engaging the media in DRR awareness activities.

The meeting was concluded at 5.30 p.m. with words of thanks to all participants of the project.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Final Meeting of the Project Steering Committee

14 October 2014, Ankara, Turkey

PROGRAMME

Time	Item	Speaker
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Registration</i>	
14:00 - 14:20	Session I: Opening Session	
	Welcome addresses	<p>İsmail GÜNEŞ, Director General State Meteorological Service of Turkey</p> <p>H. Halil AFŞARATA, Head of Strategy Development Department and Coordinator of International Relations, Turkish Prime Ministry, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency</p> <p>Paola Albrito, Head of Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR</p> <p>Dimitar Ivanov, Chief, Aeronautical Meteorology Division, WMO</p>
14:20 - 15:30	Session II: Review of project results	
14:20 - 14:45	Summary of activities implemented by UNISDR	<p>Luca Rossi, Programme Officer, UNISDR</p> <p>Marco Massabo, Project Leader, CIMA Research Foundation</p>
14:45 - 15:10	Summary of activities implemented by WMO	<p>Dimitar Ivanov, Chief, Aeronautical Meteorology Division, WMO</p> <p>Sari Lappi, Project Coordinator, WMO/FMI Project Office</p>
15:10 - 15:30	Questions and answers	
15:30 - 16:00	<i>Coffee</i>	

16:00 - 17:30	Session III: Evaluation and Way forward	
16:00 - 16:30	Presentation of the final evaluation	Antonio Barbera, Evaluation Consultant
16:30 - 17:00	Discussion on results and lessons learnt	Round table
17:00 - 17:30	Way forward – recommendations and proposals for future activities	Paola Albrito, Head of Regional Office for Europe, UNISDR Dimitar Ivanov, Chief, Aeronautical Meteorology Division, WMO