Building Resilience to Disasters in Western Balkans and Turkey

1st Design Team meeting regarding designing of regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System

29-30 May 2013, Skopje

MEETING REPORT

1. Background

In the framework of the IPA/2012/290552 multi-beneficiary project "Building Resilience to Disasters in Western Balkans and Turkey", the 1st Design Team meeting regarding designing of regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) was organized on 29-30 May 2013 in Skopje. The overall objective of the project is to reduce vulnerability of IPA beneficiary countries to disasters caused by natural hazards in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action and increase their resilience to climate change. The direct beneficiaries are the national authorities in charge for the disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management and the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

The project activities are grouped in eight tasks, of which four are implemented under WMO management. Under the Task 6 implemented by the WMO, a Design Team regarding designing of regional MHEWS will be established. The aim of the work of the Design Team is to develop a design for regional MHEWS through regional collaboration providing technological and institutional solutions for the system based on the harmonized national Early Warning Systems.

The first technical meeting (Agenda as Annex 1) for the NMHSs was held on 29-30th May 2013 in Skopje. The meeting was hosted by the Hydrometeorological Service and was participated by 13 experts from the project beneficiaries representing the broad spectrum of the activities of NMHSs as well as DRR agencies (participant list is attached as the Annex 2).

2. Activities

Overview of Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) requirements

The meeting was started with an overview of the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) requirements. The design of the MHEWS as part of the project is linked to hazards related to weather, water and climate. In the region these hazards include floods, draughts, heat waves, severe storms, land movements and forest fires. The aim of this session was to introduce a common understanding of what MHEWS means and what are the requirements by NMHSs and DRM authorities.

Effective EWS is composed of the hazard detection, monitoring and forecasting; risk analysis and incorporation of risk information in emergency planning and warnings; dissemination of timely warnings; and community emergency planning and preparedness and the ability to activate emergency plans to prepare and respond.

The mandate for detecting the hazards lies within the NHMSs, and for some hazards is shared with other agencies. Hazard data and forecasting produced by the NMHSs is the crucial starting point for early warnings followed with the developed to risk information. This information should be understandable, timely and reachable by the target authorities in charge of the response to the risks identified. As a part of the project there will be a process for identification of the major hazards and the responsibilities of detecting the hazards within the beneficiary countries. The EWSs require coordination across many levels and agencies in the beneficiaries and the process of the coordination needs to be identified.

The improvement of the warnings that NMHSs are required to produce was discussed. NMHSs are obliged to provide services in support of protection of life and property i.e. warning services related to DRR. Essentially, the warning information for DRR is a forecast or a nowcast which deals with rare events, high impact events or weather extremes. The warning information is provided as an input to the EWS and it triggers a decision-making process, which involves different actors. The quality of this input is essential for the effectiveness and efficiency of the life- and property-saving actions and is directly related to the total loss reduction or risk reduction.

Task 6 – Design of MHEWS for Western Balkans and Turkey

The Task 6 of the project includes a design for a seamless regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) which will be built upon systems of harmonized national EWSs. The regional system is to be designed and promoted for adoption at national and regional level, with proper

consideration of the existing specific needs and situation in the region. The aim of the task is to identify the priority needs related to MHEWS development taking into account the differences (geographical, institutional, developmental etc.) of the beneficiaries involved in the project.

The work for the Task 6 has been started with engaging consultants to review the situation in the beneficiaries related to EWSs. Terms of Reference were developed for the consultancy work (Technical and Organizational aspects) as well as the work related to the implementation of the Task. The design team was formed consisting of the representatives from the NMHSs. The aim is to engage the representatives from the DRR agencies of the beneficiaries in the work of the Design Team.

WMO has developed a questionnaire to document experiences on national capacities, gaps and needs related to MHEWSs and to identify priorities of action for MHEWS development and concrete areas for regional cooperation. The questionnaire was discussed with the beneficiaries and will serve as a tool to start the systematic dialogue in the countries between the different stakeholders. After the meeting the questionnaire will be send to the Heads of the DRR Agencies and Directors of the NMHSs to be completed by a team consisting of representatives of DRR policy and operational side and NMHSs management and operations.

This will be followed by visits to each beneficiary (consultants, WMO) to understand the current system, development needs in the national level, regional analysis of the systems followed by and assessment on how the systems in regional level should be developed.

Country overviews

The beneficiaries gave overviews of the situation related to their EWSs (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). In addition the there was a presentation of measurements at MeteoSwiss and its application for natural hazards.

3. Conclusions and way forward

The preliminary workplan for the implementation of the task:

- Identification of consultants (Milan Dacic and Sergio Pasquini) – March 2013
- ToR for consultancy work and compilation of materials needed for the Gap analysis – April 2013
- Workshop to launch the Activity – May 2013
- Development of the Gap analysis by consultants – May-September 2013
- Field visits to each country, customized based on the circumstances on the individual countries – June-September 2013
- Regional meeting in in connection with the design team meeting – October/November 2013
- Preparation of the final draft of the design document – November 2013-February 2014
- Review and finalization of the document – February-April 2014.
- Regional forum to present the document and promote it for adoption at national and regional level – April 2014.

ANNEX 1

1ST DESIGN TEAM MEETING REGARDING DESIGNING OF REGIONAL MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Agenda

Day 1 – 29 May 2013

13:30-14:00	Registration
14:00-14:30	Opening and Introduction - Dimitar Ivanov, WMO Chief Regional Office for Europe - Maryam Gholnaragi, WMO Chief DRR Programme - Introduction of Participants
14:30-15:00	Overview of Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) requirements
15:00-15:30	Presentation of Task 6 – Design of MHEWS for Western Balkans and Turkey
15:30-16:00	Coffee
16:00-16:30	Task 6: Implementation approach, methodology, field activities
16:30-17:45	Brainstorming session on Implementation of task 6
17:45-18:00	Wrap-up of Day 1

Day 2 – 30 May 2013

09:00-11:00	National and regional discussions on MHEWS
11:00-11:30	Coffee
11:30-12:30	Presentations on good practices (Croatia, Switzerland)
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	Discussion on the Implementation Plan – Institutional and Technical Aspects
15:00-15:30	Coffee
15:30-16:30	Round-table – coordination of national and regional activities, management of task implementation, timeline
16:30-17:15	Wrap-up and finalization of the Implementation Plan
17:15	Closure

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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