



Newsletter

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SEERISK

Harmonised risk assessment and enhanced preparedness to
strengthen awareness and efficiency in disaster management in the
Danube macro-region

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Two and a half years long international cooperation ended in December 2014. SEERISK project was the first pilot project of the Danube Region Strategy and was a significant project of the macro-regional level cooperation in the field of disaster management. SEERISK was one of the 8 strategic projects of the total of 122 funded by the South East Europe Programme.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The project's aim was to improve prevention and preparedness for disasters caused or intensified by climate change. The team comprised 19 project partners representing 9 countries, namely Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The consortium was coordinated by the National Directorate General for Disaster Management (NDGDM) from Hungary as Lead Partner. Project activities were focusing on disasters intensified by climate change and are based on the European Council conclusions on „Further Developing Risk Assessment for Disaster Management within the European Union“ adopted in March 2011.

PROJECT STATUS

Joint preparedness for climate change caused risk

In the first phase, the project conducted theoretical work to create the [Common Risk Assessment Methodology](#) for the Danube macro-region for qualitative and quantitative risk assessment and mapping for floods, heat waves, drought, extreme winds and wildfires. Each pilot area prepared a risk matrix focusing on the impact and likelihood of their identified hazard and developed a risk scenario describing the magnitude of the hazard and its consequences. Subsequently a series of [hazard, impact and risk maps](#) was also elaborated for the towns of Arad, Senica, Siófok, Kanjiza, Sarajevo and Velingrad. The novelty of these risk maps is that they present micro-scale impact, vulnerability and frequency data needed for disaster management planning.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project title:
Joint Disaster Management
risk assessment and
preparedness in the
Danube macro-region

Project acronym:
SEERISK

Total budget:
1,974,605.16 EUR

Project funding:
South East Europe
Transnational Cooperation
Programme
(www.southeast-europe.net)

Project duration:
07/2012 – 12/2014
(30 months)

Pilot areas:
Arad, Senica, Siófok,
Sarajevo-Ilidža, Kanjiza
Velingrad

Contact
Agnes Rajacic
Project Coordinator
National Directorate
General for Disaster
Management
hucivpro@katved.gov.hu

www.seeriskproject.eu
www.facebook.com/Seerisk

The social aspects of climate change was revealed by the [Survey on People's Awareness and Preparedness for Climate Change Related Risks](#). The results of the survey showed significant new data about citizen's perception on disasters, which data helped us to compare people's risk perception with the objectively measured risks.

The preparedness of the institutions participating in disaster management work was also analysed by [interviews with Local Stakeholders and by assessing Local Planning Documents](#).

The [Guideline on Climate Change Adaptation and Risk Assessment](#) summarizes the results of the first part of the SEERISK project and presents policy recommendations to improve local adaptation to climate change-related natural hazards.

From the second quarter of 2014 the project started to focus on joint preparedness for climate change caused risk. This thematic work package was created to test the products developed so far in practical disaster management terms.

Prevention and mitigation

The Bulgarian Chief Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection (CDFSCP) organised a workshop in May 2014 (Velingrad, Bulgaria) focusing on two main topics: the use of risk maps and GIS based applications in disaster prevention and in the planning of disaster simulation field exercises as an essential tool of enhancing preparedness.

Collection of GIS best practices in disaster management

The [GIS Best Practices Study](#), a technical tutorial for developing risk maps was prepared by the GIS team of NDGDM. The document presents the risk mapping process applied during the project, including the analysis procedures of different risk types as well as the best practices for solving specific problems such as data storage, data availability, projection and other IT solutions. The development of the online web map application is presented in the Study as well. Furthermore the guideline summarises the results of the GIS Best Practices Questionnaire which surveyed partners' basic GIS related human resource and technical background, as well as the feedbacks of the pilot areas about their developed mapping products.

A basic training of GIS experts from NDGDM was conducted to assist project partners in their work with the GIS maps.

Simulation field-exercises

Three disaster simulation field-exercises were organised during the summer of 2014 at the following pilot areas: Siófok (HU), Arad (RO), Velingrad (BG), while the fourth

exercise took place in Sarajevo-Ilidza (BiH) in December 2014. Partners planned and executed the events relying on an exercise preparation checklist and a Guideline for Exercise Planning, both developed by NDGDM's emergency operations experts. The Final Reports of the exercises included the internal and external evaluation of the exercises which were implemented along with standardised methods.

Each of the pilot areas focused on their special hazard type during the exercises.



Siófok – thunderstorms
and extreme windspeeds

Velingrad - wildfire





Arad – heat waves

Sarajevo- Ilidža – flood



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The fifth exercise was an international one which was a comprehensive „climate change” field and table top exercise in Hajdúszoboszló, Hungary. Due to the experience gained at this event the GIS web application was further developed .



Common emergency communication strategy

The Common Emergency Communication Strategy has been prepared for municipalities to provide possible communication channels and means towards the general public affected by climate change related hazards and disasters. Systematic communication (including preventive information) is extremely important in mitigating the effects of weather related incidents that may impact communities. If sound information about natural hazards are available for the public, the prevention and

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mitigation of disasters could be more efficient. Five, pilot area relevant weather related hazards were analysed: heat wave, drought, wildfire, flood and extreme wind. Communication methods shall be designated for slow- and rapid-onset incidents (e.g. drought vs. wildfire) in a different manner. The strategy demonstrates the communication during the prevention, the emergency and, when relevant, the recovery phase.

THE END

The Final Conference of the project - hosting more than one hundred participants - was organised at different venues in Budapest on the 1st of December 2014.

The event started with a field trip to the Gellért Hill Water Reservoir, where the history and operation of the impressive establishment was introduced. At the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, a presentation on advanced hydroinformatics methods and applications in disaster management was held thereafter by Prof. János Józsa, head of Department of Hydraulic and Water Resources Engineering. The noble building of Hotel Gellért hosted the afternoon session with informative panel discussions on the main results and outputs of the project. ([more](#))



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