

Session 9:

Effective risk communication to enhance public awareness and support

1. Goal

- Showing the importance of communication and information flows for effective risk management
- Explaining how to move from unidirectional communication towards active public participation
- Reaching autonomous community adaptation patterns

2. Learning objectives

- Understand the basic principle of risk communication and be familiar with some key communication supports
- Acquire techniques to enhance participation in preparation and response to risk
- Understand the potential and challenges of community based adaptation

3. Key messages

- Climate change adaptation is designed to protect population from the risks related with current and future climate change.
- The populations should therefore be an integral part of such policies, by being correctly informed and associated to the decision making process.
- One of the key climate change adaptation related stakes is managing the unpredictability of local risks trends and dynamics.
- Therefore, information flow is a must to implement effective no-regrets adaptation strategies. We have seen in earlier modules that coordination and information flow within practitioners and managers of the various water sub-sectors at stake were crucial.
- But interactions with the general public is also required in both ways: the public should be informed on the risk in order to be more responsive to and supportive of adaptation strategies, and it should be involved in the preparation of these strategies in order to provide managers with a better understanding of the local threats that may arise.
- This mobilisation should ultimately result in an enhanced anticipation and reaction capability that allows community-driven adaptation. The latter is absolutely necessary if we consider that local climate change related risks cannot be predicted with full certainty and therefore that is extremely difficult to plan appropriate responses to one single event at one particular moment.
- Given the uncertain and dynamic nature of climate change, public communication efforts and community engagement should be a continuous process undertaken throughout the entire life of an adaptation project to

ensure ownership, and not only for gathering information during the initial steps of the project cycle.

4. Resources

- CapNet. 2012. *Training material on Hydro-Climatic Disasters in Water Resources Management* <http://www.cap-net.org/node/1516>
- De Bono, R., Vicenti, K., and Calleja, N.. 2010. *Risk communication: climate change as a human-health threat, a survey of public perceptions in Malta*. The European Journal of Public Health Advance Access. December 2010. 7 pages
- <http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2010/12/01/eurpub.ckq181.full.pdf>
- European Commission. 2007. *Mediterranean Water Scarcity and Drought Report* http://www.emwis.net/topics/WaterScarcity/PDF/MedWSD_FINAL_Edition/
- Global Climate Change Alliance. 2012. *Workshops* http://www.gcca.eu/pages/40_2-The-Workshops.html
- Rodriguez Perea, A.. 2008. *Participation and awareness of citizens in drought plans*. Options Méditerranéennes. Séries 1. No 80. <http://ressources.ciheam.org/om/pdf/a80/00800435.pdf>
- Satterthwaite, D.. 2011. *Why is community action needed for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation?*. Environment and Urbanization. Vol 23(2): 339–349
- [http://www.environmentandurbanization.org/documents/EAU_23\(2\)_Editorial.pdf](http://www.environmentandurbanization.org/documents/EAU_23(2)_Editorial.pdf)
- UNECE. 2009. *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change* (Chapter 4): http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2009/Wat/mp_wat/ECE_MP.WAT_30_E.pdf
- UNISDR. 2012 *Making cities resilient: my city is getting ready* campaign <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/>
- UNISDR. 2012 *Making cities resilient: my city is getting ready* handbook: http://www.unisdr.org/files/26462_handbookfinalonlineversion.pdf
- World Bank. 2012. *Guide on Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Projects* (Guidance Notes 2 and 5) <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=17066>