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BUREAU FOR CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY TEAM
CAPACITY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION INITIATIVE**

Disaster Risk Reduction Capacity Assessment Report
For Albaniaⁱ

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Prepared by:
Geraldine Becchi
Vanda Dias Dos Santos
Hachim Badji

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ACRONYMS

ARC	Albania Red Cross
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
CDG	Capacity Development Group (of UNDP)
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EW	Early Warning
GRIP	Global Risk Identification Programme (of UNDP)
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICOLD	International Commission on Large Dams
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDO	National Disaster Observatory
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
SEE	South-East Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The capacity assessment mission for Albania is implemented at the request of the regional project for South-East Europe (SEE) and Turkey on Disaster Risk Management (DRM). Similar capacity assessment missions are also conducted for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Turkey, Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro out of eight of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) beneficiaries of the project (with the exception of Croatia). The assessment is meant to complement the needs assessments conducted in all eight IPA beneficiaries of the project conducted in 2010 by both a regional and local consultant in each location.

The purpose of the disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity assessment is to identify capacity gaps related to risk reduction, understand desired capacities and propose recommendations on how these capacities can be achieved. Results of the DRR capacity assessment will contribute to the development of strong national components as part of the regional capacity development proposal – to be submitted to the European Commission and potentially other interested donors for Phase II of the regional DRM project for SEE and Turkey.

NOTE TO THE READER

The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) recognises that findings of the initial DRR needs assessment conducted between August and October 2010 provide a basis to look into capacity development aspects in order to advance DRR in Albania. Where relevant, extracts of the needs assessment report may be used in this report to show some of the challenges also identified to affect capacity development aspects. Regarding recommendations, the report will only propose actions that can realistically be implemented in the next three to five years, based on the existing in-country capacities to absorb them. There is a list of annexes at the end of the report with, for example, the report by World Meteorological Organization on capacities of the Hydro-Meteorological Services.

One particular element, regarding the legal system needs to be explained here as this has a very important impact in advancing DRR in Albania.. In Albania, as well as in other countries of Former Yugoslavia, you are not authorised to initiate activities of general interest unless there is a law, with all steps and activities defined, which authorises you to do so. The general finding is that although many laws are drafted, implementation is a huge challenge due to various reasons, including funding.

CADRI CAPACITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH

This capacity assessment is conducted by a joint initiative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), CADRI, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

It uses the methodology developed by the UNDP Capacity Development Group (CDG) and is adapted for the DRR sector by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of UNDP and CADRI. The methodology was first piloted in Armenia in 2010 and adapted to the regional context of Balkans in 2011 by CADRI and the regional project management for SEE DRM.

CADRI's capacity assessment is conducted with a clear focus on national capacities for DRR. The assessment will look into five technical areas of capacity development: ownership, institutional arrangements, competencies, working tools and resources, and relationships.

Within the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), and specifically regarding HFA Priority 1, the assessment will focus on ownership as a basis for setting the right enabling environment for DRR, in order to guaranty sustainability in developing capacities. It will also look at the overall institutional arrangements for DRR set in the legal base, and the level of financial resources allocated to DRR as a sign of a strong commitment.

Within HFA Priorities 2–5, the assessment will concentrate on capacities related to institutional arrangements, competencies, working tools and resources, and relationships specific to these thematic areas.

In terms of recommendations, concrete capacity development actions will be proposed at the end of each of the HFA Priorities 1–5 to address any challenges identified. The level of proposed actions will take into consideration the country's real capacity to implement them within three to five years.

ALBANIA NATURAL HAZARD PROFILE

Albania is a disaster-prone country and exposed time after time to the following hazards:

Natural origin: Geologic (earthquakes, rock falls and landslides); hydro-meteorological (flooding and torrential rains, droughts, snowstorms, high snowfall and windstorms); biophysical (forest fires and epidemics); and avalanches;

Man-made origin: Dam burst, floods and technological risks.

Disasters arising from the above threats tend to result in: morbidity and mortality among people and livestock; damage and destruction of property; damage to the agricultural sector; damage to infrastructure and the economy; damage to the environment; and reversals in social and economic development gains. The cost of damages has a negative impact on the macroeconomic situation of the country. Albania ranks 41st in the world in terms of vulnerability to landslides, 43rd in terms of earthquakes and 58th in terms of drought risks.¹

Albania is also exposed to a spectrum of environmental problems inherited from the previous period of the planned and centralized economy. These include: the deterioration of bio-diversity (deforestation and loss of flora and fauna); soil erosion; specific sectoral problems (water, air and land pollution); and the continued existence of high-risk areas (hot spots) with respect to environmental pollution. Currently, these problems arise mostly as a result of shortcomings in the implementation of legal and institutional frameworks.

The effects of disasters may reach severe proportions for various sections of the community due to:

- Mass migration from rural to urban areas resulting in high population density in unsafe zones (e.g. Durrës city located in a high seismic risk area);
- Increase of private investments in marginal lands (including downstream land near dams) becoming assets subject to relatively higher levels of loss and replacement costs;
- Degradation of certain natural resources (e.g. overgrazed pasture and overexploitation of forests and riverbeds);
- Unsustainable development practices in marginally productive lands;
- Insufficient DRR training of local people, and lack of community participation in disaster preparedness/response planning;
- Inadequate disaster forecasting, warning, alerting and monitoring systems;
- The considerable number of poor people that are exposed to hazards;
- Inadequate capacities to manage mass information on disasters, etc.

SEISMIC RISK

Albania is characterized by a high rate of seismicity. Albania, together with Greece, Montenegro, Macedonia, southern Bulgaria and western Turkey (all located in the same region), experience almost annual occurrences of at least one earthquake of magnitude ≥ 6.5 . Albania is characterized by intense micro ($1.0 < M \leq 3.0$), small ($3.0 < M \leq 5.0$) and medium-sized ($5.0 < M \leq 7.0$) earthquake activity, and rarely by large ($M > 7.0$) earthquake events. Tirana accounts for more than one quarter of the urban seismic risk, perhaps considerably more if the official population is an underestimated figure. The seven largest cities at risk in Albania account for more than

¹ 2009 Global Assessment Report

75 percent of the urban risk.² Earthquake risk reduction is crucial as most strong earthquakes have been accompanied by extensive land instability (such as liquefaction, ground subsidence, surface cracks, landslides and rock slides), and can, at times, be held accountable for small tsunamis.

FLOOD RISK

The Albanian river system poses the highest risk of flooding to the country, generally of pluvial origin. The hydrographic basin encompasses an area of 43,305 km², of which 14,557 km² belong to the watersheds of the Drini and Vjosa rivers, which encompass parts of Greece, Macedonia and Kosovo. The eight main rivers in Albania are grouped into six watersheds that transverse the country from east to west. Their mean annual discharge is 1,308 m³/sec, which corresponds to the discharge of 30 m³/sec/km². Floods are more frequent during the November–March period, when the country receives about 80–85 percent of its annual precipitation. Due to topographic patterns, these floods occur rapidly after water has run through the main river hydrographic network for around 8–10 hours.

DRR primarily has to deal with preventive, preparative and reparative measures aimed at flooding of the Buna, Drini and Semani river basins. In these areas the expected number of flooded buildings (100 year returned period) ranges from 15,500 to 24,000 (± 10 percent), which would cause demands for shelter and/or other forms of assistance for an estimated 84,000 to 172,000 (± 10 percent) people. The implications of disaster related to other river basins are considerably lower, ranging from about 4,000–8,000 (± 10 percent) affected buildings and corresponding shelter and/or other forms of assistance for 25,000 to 50,000 (± 10 percent) people.³ The 100 year return period of West Plain Flooding would adversely affect 20 Districts (out of 36), 341 villages (out of 2,962), 110 Communes (out of 308), about 85,500 buildings covering 7,900,000 m² and 565,000 people.

LANDSLIDE RISK

Albania is characterized by land instability caused by natural factors (e.g. mechanical action of surface and underground water, precipitation, seismic action, physical and chemical conveyance) and anthropogenic factors (e.g. engineering interventions on slopes, the construction of dams, large water retention reservoirs, roads, tunnels and other related infrastructure facilities). The Albanian territory is divided into three zones of natural slope stability – stable, relatively stable and unstable, corresponding respectively to 56.6 percent, 33.6 percent and 9.8 percent of the total territory of the country. Land instability in Albania primarily occurs after massive torrential rain or snowfall. Various types of landslide (rock falls, topples or torrent deposits) are often recorded along disturbed slopes on national and regional transportation routes, in the irrigation water usage or other engineering works.

In addition, hydro technical works either interrupt the weak equilibrium of geological formations or accelerate existing landslides. Consequently, the largest landslides have developed in the

² Probabilistic seismic hazard maps for Albania, 13th World Conference on Earthquake Engineering, 2004

³ Risk Assessment Study of Natural Disaster in Albania, 2003

basins of the main hydropower plants of Fierza (the Porava landslide), Vau i Dejes (the Ragami landslide) and Banja (the Banja landslide).

DAM-BURST RISKS

Dams and reservoirs in Albania are primarily constructed for: agricultural and irrigation needs, flood control, hydropower and recreation. Presently there are 630 dam reservoir systems in the country, of which 307 are recognized as either high dams (height \geq 15 m) or large dam reservoir systems.⁴ Among the 82 ICOLD members, Albania ranks first place in number of dams per 10,000 inhabitants. The height of the majority of dams ranges from 10–30 m (524 dams) to 30–60 m (77 dams). Six dams are higher than 60 m, of which two are higher than 100 m (the Koman DAM, 115 m and the Fierza Dam, 167 m). At a height of 167 m (Table 30) the Fierza Dam is the highest dam of this type in Europe. All high dams in Albania are earth-filled.

Migration and urban expansion have led to increased concentrations of populations and material property in such downstream areas. In the event of dam bursts: 246 (57 percent) could affect a population larger than 100; 56 (36 percent) could impact areas with more than 500 inhabitants; and any of the other 57 would affect villages with a population in excess of 2,500. Burst of eight out of those 57 dams could affect the entire towns of Elbasan (population over 100,089), Lushnje (population over 37,829) and Divjake (more than 10,000 inhabitants). Albania is planning to build new small hydropower plants – currently only 40 percent of country hydroelectric potential is exploited. Therefore the risk is expected to increase in near future.

SNOWFALL RISK

Snowfall risk occurs mainly during the period from November to March, and in the mountainous northern, north-eastern, central and southern parts of the country. Typical high snow hazards are road blockage (due to the lack of maintenance and poor conditions of roads) and avalanches. The population residing in these areas (at least 30 cm snow-depth) ranges from 11.6 percent (355,000 \pm 10 percent) to 31.3 percent (1 million \pm 10 percent). Disaster preparedness planning is needed for such situations that last longer than 30 days (taking into consideration conditions like household food reserve levels or seriously ill patients).

EPIDEMIC RISK

Epidemic risks in Albania are classified as follows: diarrheal diseases (water-borne, food-borne, etc.); viral hepatitis; airborne infectious diseases; infectious diseases of the National Programme on Immunization (mostly via airborne transmission); tuberculosis; zoonoses (of veterinary control and prevention); infectious diseases with natural foci; parasitic infectious diseases; sexually transmitted infections; and HIV/AIDS, among others. Although the present situation is relatively favorable, a number of problems still arise due to unsolved hygienic-epidemiological conditions that result in infectious diseases, water, air and soil pollution, inadequate capacities and functioning of district microbiological laboratories for confirmation of infectious diseases. Respiratory infectious and diarrheal diseases persist at relatively high incidence rates. Epidemic risk may also occur after disasters. It is important to provide epidemiological services to contribute in DRR strategies, initiatives and approaches.

⁴ ICOLD World Register of Dams, 1998

WILD/FOREST FIRE RISK

Forests occupy roughly 29 percent of Albania. Most of the forestland (77 percent) consists of low productivity degraded forests like oak forests (31.8 percent) and scrubland (25.6 percent). Forest areas can be divided into two basic functional categories: productive forests (some 900,000 ha or 86 percent of the total area); and protected and recreational forests, (some 140,000 ha or 14 percent). The forests of Albania are prone to fire, especially at the end of spring and during dry summers.

Among Mediterranean countries, Albania is one of the most affected by forest fires. The total area burnt during 2007 reached 127,000 ha, whereas the figure in 2008 was significantly lower at 19,254 ha (11,389 ha burnt in forest or wooded land and 2,080 ha was agricultural land). Fire causes are of both anthropogenic origin (human negligence, pasture burning and, to a lesser extent, arson) and natural origin (lightning). Human misuse of fire, accompanied with deforestation and grazing practices, are no doubt largely responsible for the forest destruction. For DRR management, more training of fire-fighting personnel is needed.

TECHNOLOGICAL RISK

The technological hazards for Albania are considered to be: industrial pollution, toxic wastes, transport accidents, factory explosions and chemical spills. The 2008 explosion at an ammunitions dump near Tirana caused 26 deaths, injuries to over 300 people, the destruction of 2,300 buildings and the displacement of 4,000 people. Although the country is well endowed with natural resources – such as oil, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, nickel and timber – technological risks do not pose a significant threat to the population (except in the case of accidents) due to a low level of industrial activity. However, as hazardous materials, substances and products do remain in stock in different parts of the country, DRR preparedness and response is needed for properly managing the risk of technological disasters.

THE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

HFA PRIORITY 1

Ensure that DRR is both a national and local priority, with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

The most important requirement for sustainability on any work on capacity development is ownership. For DRR, ownership starts with authorities showing a strong commitment to engage on a long-term approach in addressing disaster risk resulting from the exposure of populations and their assets to natural hazards. Ownership is initially shown by making DRR a priority through national legislation, by drafting a DRR strategy, putting in place adequate institutional structures to address priority risks, and allocating financial means to support national institutions to implement national strategies. In Albania one could feel a genuine will from national authorities to engage in DRR with a long-term approach.

Presently, the main legislation for disaster management is the law on ‘Civil Emergency Services’ – Law 8756 from 2001 (from now on referred to as ‘the current law’). The current law intended

to address prevention, response and recovery. However, its content focuses mainly on response and in defining the institutional structure for civil emergency response at central level. The current law is under revision. It is expected to be approved by the parliament within the next six months and will be called the law on 'Civil Protection' (from now on referred to as the draft law).

The draft law includes elements of DRR. The definition of risk is improved and the content under the heading 'Civil Protection' shows intention to work towards risk reduction. The draft law also mentions the need to 'cope with the recovery of the affected areas'. In general, the existing legal documents highlight a few challenges regarding a common terminology – not only for DRR but for disaster management in general.

In terms of policies, strategies and subsequent operational plans, Albania developed a 'National Civil Emergency Plan' in 2004, in line with the current law. The drafted law does not mention a national policy for DRR or DRM. However, it mentions that civil protection work should be guided by the following documents (which also need to be revised or redrafted): The 'National Strategy on Civil Protection'; a 'Risk assessment at national level'; a 'National Plan for Civil Protection'; a 'National Plan of Civil Protection Education'; and a 'National Platform for Reduction of Risks from Disasters'. There is no specific policy, strategy or plan of action for DRR – although there are elements of DRR included in these various documents, there is no evidence to suggest that DRR elements will be included in the development plans of various ministries.

The current law also refers to the participation of civil society through volunteer services. The draft law adds to this a specific reference to the Albanian Red Cross (ARC) as the main civil society partner. However, the participation of civil society is narrowed to disaster response, with a specific mention of 'provision of humanitarian aid in the system on non-profit organizations'. There are also no indications of special attention given to gender, marginalized and other vulnerable groups in either the current or new draft law.

In terms of Institutional arrangements and coordination, and in accordance with national legislation, a Department of Civil Emergency Planning and Response is established in the Ministry of Interior. This Department is divided into three functional structures as follows: Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning and Coordination, Directorate of Fire Protection and Rescue and the National Operations Centre for Civil Emergency.

The Directorate for Civil Emergencies is the key institution for disaster management and is best placed to enhance the inclusion of DRR in the existing legislation and management system. The Directorate has no direct responsibility for the work of the line ministries, but does have a responsibility for ensuring the effective coordination of all ministries, institutions and other bodies in matters of civil emergency management, including those of mitigation and preparedness. The Directorate is also coordinating all full-time civil emergency officers employed by all 12 Prefectures (Qarks) of Albania. In addition, the municipalities that are under

the Qark have their own civil emergency officers who are currently under the legal department. These officers have no decision power in terms of disaster management. The exception is the municipality of Tirana, which has its own department for civil emergencies (constituted of 11 sub-municipalities or units) – providing the municipality with the authority for decision-making. Many municipality authorities have mentioned the need to have this same prerogative extended to them.

There is no National Platform for DRR. In general there is, before all else, a need to improve capacities and coordination in the disaster management system. This could be achieved through an improved culture of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders before the establishment of a DRR National Platform. Specifically, the State could clearly appoint or clarify which were the leading agencies in the different areas. One of the challenges encountered was water management – different ministries are responsible for water management. In the event of a disaster, each ministry needs to be aware of their responsibilities in order to be better prepared to respond.

The legislation and institutional framework does currently focus on disaster response. However, national authorities are becoming more aware of the need to develop long-term risk reduction approaches. The main challenge is increasing the level of understanding of DRR concepts – in order to shift perception of DRR from ‘disaster response’ towards ‘risk reduction’ this needs to be addressed within long-term development plans.

Regarding financial resources, the current law mentions that the State budget is the ‘primary financial resource for civil emergency planning and crisis management’. The law also mentions that the Ministry of Interior, as well as other ministries, should have an annual budget for civil emergency planning and response within their respective field of activity. However, there was no clear indication on the amount or percentage of their global budget. In the new draft law the section is substantially improved as it is mentioned that line ministries and central institutions should have a separate budget line for Civil Protection at the rate of 0.3 to 1 percent of their total budget (hopefully also for DRR aspects). The draft law also mentions the need for local governments to receive financial support from the central government for civil protection work, but also the obligation to use some of their incomes and to fundraise through donations.

HFA PRIORITY 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organize an awareness campaign on DRR with an emphasis on prevention with high-level representatives of line ministries. The awareness campaign can be backed by a visit from the Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations for DRR, a half-day workshop with the ministers and/or a conference. The Ministry of Finance should be specifically targeted.

2. Advocate for the inclusion of DRR concepts into the drafted law on Civil Protection with clear roles and responsibilities for coordination from central down to local level, and the creation of a DRR national platform.
3. Develop a national gender sensitive DRR policy. The process of development will need, among other things, to define: the timeframe; the kind of participation envisaged from central- and local-level governments and civil society; the extent of the policy document; and the dissemination strategy of the policy.
4. As part of the UNISDR 'Safer Cities' campaign, organize a one-day workshop for Qarks Prefects and Municipality Mayors on DRR/Urban Risk. This will be also an occasion for their cities to join the UNISDR 'safer cities' campaign.
5. UNISDR terminology guide on DRR should be translated and proposed for adoption in the country.
6. Regarding funding, advocate for the 0.3 to 1 percent of the global budget to also be used for risk reduction activities.

HFA PRIORITY 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

The current Law on Civil Emergencies Services defines risk as 'exposure of the people, animals, property, cultural heritage and environment from dangerous effects of natural and other disasters'. Moreover, the current law appoints the Ministry of Interior as responsible for conducting risk assessments in conjunction with ministries and institutions upon which national emergency plans are made and presented to the Council of Ministers for approval (article 8, point 6). Based on the current law, a national risk assessment was conducted for Albania in 2003 but has not been updated since. The risk assessment was a result of the cooperation between Albanian Academy of Sciences, UNDP and the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization. This risk assessment did address landslides, earthquakes and floods (including dam-burst), high snowfalls (including avalanche), forest fires and epidemics, but not man-made disasters.

The new revised drafted Law on Civil Protection improves the definition of risk as referring to 'imminent losses that may derive from a potential phenomenon and exposure of elements to it such as human lives, assets (buildings or livestock), infrastructure elements (roads, communication lines, etc.) as well as economic and social activities'. Moreover, risk assessment refers to 'the expected amount of damage determining the level of negative effects on the living of a certain population or its assets following the exposure to a potential situation of risk'. This revised drafted law includes also the definition of 'vulnerability' and dedicates an article to 'risk planning and assessment' (article 5). The draft law requires a risk assessment to be conducted for all the Albanian territory as well as each of the 'specific natural disasters and other disasters'.

Following the 2003 risk assessment, there were national response plans prepared by various institutions for various hazards. However, the plans are not regularly revised as there was no regular risk monitoring or new assessments in order to update the country risk profile. In

addition, there is no risk observatory set up in the country. In order to update the 2003 assessment, there is a need to clarify for many institutions the concept of risk assessment. What many call risk assessment is most of the time just hazard mapping that does not include a clear analysis with different disaster scenarios and the level of exposure of people and their assets to each of the scenarios. Personnel of various institutions need to be trained for conducting a risk assessment using modern methodologies.

Another challenge is linked to early warning (EW) as it is not mandated by the current law. In the revised drafted law, EW is contemplated under article 35 'State of alert'. The Chairman of the Civil Protection National Agency is responsible for activating the EW or following his notification by the County Prefect or the respective local authorities. Private company managers are also bound to install EW and should activate themselves if risks are identified arising in the territory or stemming from the activity they exercise. It is of the responsibility of the Council of Ministers to approve the types of alert signals for different types of disasters. In general, EW is understood as warning about an imminent accident or disaster. There is no clear system of a long term risk monitoring in order to identify developing trends and provide EW information to national authorities so that they can be addressed by the country's various sectoral development plans. There is a need for a database that compiles all data on regional disaster risks, impacts and losses, and it needs to be regularly updated by local authorities.

The current law does not mention any role or responsibility for municipalities to conduct risk assessments and thus they do none. This has been improved as the new draft law mentions risk assessment to be conducted at local level, giving the responsibility for it to local government units in cooperation with regional and local responsible institutions, depending on ministries and central institutions.

There is no official agreement or mechanisms for information transfer between the General Directorate of Civil Emergencies and the Institute of Geoscience Hydrology, Institute of Energy, Water and Environment, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment. Data collection and sharing is one of the major challenges in the country. The main activity of the Institute of Geoscience, Hydrology, and the Institute of Energy, Water and Environment (from now on referred to as 'the Institute') is monitoring and collecting data. It is focused on research and provides data in hard copy, sending daily information to the General Directorate for Civil Emergencies. However, due to equipment and staff constraints there is a challenge with sharing information. In the past there was a person in charge of Information Technology, who ensured information was digitalized – but currently, although the data exists, the channels to share information need to be improved. The Institute is currently under the Polytechnic Institute of Tirana but there is no apparent collaboration between both institutes. Almost all existing staff has no specific expertise in hydro or meteorology areas as they come from different backgrounds such as civil engineering, mathematics and physics, among others. There is a need to ensure that the new generations will *de facto* assure the continuation of the smooth functionality of the

Institute. The other challenge is the downsizing of staff – from approximately 70 staff in the past, the Institute is now down to 25 staff.

The Institute of Geoscience has a monitoring network (13 stations but only 7 have been upgraded and equipped). They monitor seismic activity, which is transmitted to the institute by satellite and sent to the Ministry of Interior. The institute has received training from NATO but more training is needed as the existing staff (6 people) are trained in mathematics, physics, civil engineering etc., but there are no seismologists *per se*. During the recent floods, the existing digital equipment stopped working. In the event of a disaster, a phone is used to communicate information – field visits have not taken place for years. The World Bank is expected to strengthen the capacities of the institute as well as providing training and equipment.

The relationships between different national, regional and communal institutions that should be involved in risk monitoring, risk assessment and preparing EW is weak. In addition, there should be a better involvement/cooperation with universities in order to develop research and obtain scientific data that would contribute to better risk profiling and monitoring in Albania.

At international level, Albania participates in the regional Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for SEE. It has also established bilateral cooperation with the Italian Government, particularly with the civil protection that provides trainings. In recent years, additional bilateral activities between relevant Albanian Institutions and counterparts in neighboring countries have been organized – and Albania, as a member of NATO, takes part in relevant Euro-Atlantic activities. However, there is a need to improve regional cooperation in terms of monitoring potential hazards such as: hydro-meteorological events, seismic activity, diseases control, forest/wild fires and climate change, among others, as well as for EW. This coordination could be improved through regional bodies/commissions for assessment, monitoring and EWs.

HFA PRIORITY 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct disaster risk assessments in the country – the Government of Albania need to consider developing a National Risk Assessment Framework, to provide an overall guidance for disaster risk assessments. The external support can be from UNDP's Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP).
2. Start implementing the Country Situation Analysis for Disaster Risk Assessments, with a focus on the establishment of National Risk Information System, with technical support from GRIP.
3. Establish a National Disaster Observatory (NDO) to enhance Albania's capacity for disaster/emergency preparedness and response, with technical support from GRIP. An NDO is an institutional arrangement for systematically collecting, storing, analyzing and interpreting disaster-related data for decision-making in risk and disaster management.

4. Organize technical training courses focusing on risk assessment and decision-making, and aiming towards the standardization of risk assessment methodologies in the country. These should be available for the General Directorate of Emergencies and other relevant institutions (line ministries) at national, district and municipal levels, with technical support from GRIP and CADRI.
5. Establish cross-border partnerships to enhance climate risk assessment and management, with technical support from GRIP and CADRI.

HFA PRIORITY 3

Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

In terms of prevention, the new draft Law on ‘Civil Protection’ includes a section on ‘Education and Training’ as well as one on ‘Public Information’. However, the general population lacks awareness of DRR – as a result, risks and vulnerabilities are not well understood and behaviours are adopted that only increase risk further. There is no recorded awareness raising campaign or systematic information being distributed to the population, neither on DRR measures or disaster preparedness. The attempts to reach the communities are sporadic – such as in 2004 with the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA). The Institute of Public health developed some leaflets on disaster prevention and preparedness, but the Ministry of Health does not have a DRR policy, therefore its distribution is not systematic. There is no regular information passed on from the media on DRR or disaster preparedness –although occasionally the Director of the Civil Emergencies Directorate or the head of the seismology institute are interviewed by the media (especially when national or international events linked to disasters occur).

The school curriculum, which is set at the central level, currently has no DRR or preparedness related courses. There is no element in the curriculum for health emergency preparedness either. However, there are some attempts to integrate disaster preparedness and environmental awareness in schools – an optional module on disaster is available, but teachers have not been trained in its facilitation, which is one of the reasons why it is generally not offered. In secondary schools students do have the possibility to carry out 15 hours of community work and many students complete them within the framework of the ARC.

Leaflets on fire, earthquake and flood preparedness have been distributed in schools, but not in a systematic way and the school coverage was only partial. The leaflets were produced by the Directorate for Civil Emergencies, using internal human resources and comparing their experiences with other available international experiences. This shows that the Directorate has some capacities that could be further exploited for awareness raising campaigns. Currently, the Ministry of Education is developing a new strategy that foresees the integration of disaster preparedness elements into the school curriculum.

At University level there is no faculty that supports the education of seismic or hydrology experts. Seismologists and hydrologists are usually drawn from the faculties of mathematics, civil engineer, physics and geophysics and are then trained in seismology or hydrology. A project of the Institute of Geoscience to collaborate with IIZIS (based in Macedonia) and other university institutes in the region, for providing postgraduate education in seismology, has not yet been implemented due to a lack of funds.

There is no solid culture of volunteerism among the population of Albania, and this is mainly due to the previous centralised State approach to volunteer management. The ARC, with its 90,000 members and a pool of 2,500 trained volunteers that can support emergency relief operations, is the biggest volunteer organization in the country. The existence of 39 ARC branches make it an extremely important DRR actor at community level.

The Directorate for Civil Emergencies has a national training centre where staff from the Directorate have been trained, as well as participating in international training sessions. At present the training targets fire-fighters and is supported by French and Dutch fire-fighters. In addition the centre was able to offer training to private sector workers in issues relating to fire. The training centre expressed a willingness to expand capacities, to provide training on all civil emergencies and DRR. In this regards, it was considered by some that the Italian Civil Protection could be well placed to provide staff training. International cooperation is also fostered by EU and Euro-Mediterranean (EUROMED) funded projects. Looking forward, the training centre could play a central role in training national- and local-level staff in disaster prevention – the new draft of the Law on Civil Emergencies foresees that an Inspectorate for Prevention at national and local level will be created. The staff of the future inspectorate will need to be trained on standards and methodologies to conduct ‘building disaster proof resistance’ assessments.

Training resources are also needed within the specialised institutes (such as the Institute of Geoscience, which currently relies on a staff of 6, or the Institute of Environment, Water and Energy, which counts on 25 members of staff) as they need to actively form their next relays. In addition, these institutes should be provided with the means to make the positions they offer attractive to the new generation, especially in order to increase talent retention.

HFA PRIORITY 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Design and implement a DRR and preparedness campaign, focusing on reducing risk-enhancing behaviours and including the use of the media (radio, newspaper and television) as well as the Internet. All DRR actors (such as line ministries and the ARC) should participate in the campaign, which should ensure that available in-country materials, such as the leaflets on emergencies produced by the Institute of Public Health, and other materials available globally are widely disseminated.

2. Translate the 2009 UNISDR DRR terminology into Albanian and widely disseminate it as part of the above-mentioned campaign.
3. Organise a national event with the Ministry of Education and municipal authorities to share best practices, tools and materials, and agree on a plan of action to integrate DRR into schools.
4. Insert DRR, disaster preparedness and health emergency preparedness into the curriculum for primary and secondary schools.
5. Train teachers in DRR, disaster preparedness and health emergency preparedness (as per the above-mentioned curriculum).
6. Expand the capacities of the national training centre to include DRR and train authorities at national and local level on DRR and disaster preparedness.

HFA PRIORITY 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

Environmental and Natural Resource Management

The Law on Civil Emergencies and the decrees of the Council of Ministries tackle environmental protection, environmental impact assessment and the development and protection of forests. The country also relies on the Law for Environment, Biodiversity and Forestry and the associated national environment strategy and action plan. The Ministry of Environment has six regional branches, which are responsible for approving projects from an environmental point of view.

The environment strategy and action plan will benefit if a national strategy for prevention associated with an updated risk assessment were developed, ensuring sound management of the environment and the natural resources. Unregulated dumping of waste, construction debris and the effects of forest fires and deforestation have created a major environmental problem in Albania.

As a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Albania has been producing national communications to UNFCCC. However, Climate Change Adaptation was not part of the risk assessment (2003) nor the VCA (2004). In order to increase the country's capacity to conduct climatology studies on the variability, extremes and impact of climate change there is a need to strengthen the Institute of Environment, Water and Energy. Currently the institute produces monthly climatological maps. More broadly, only few studies address climate change and very few sectoral studies address the impact of climate variability and/or climate change. There is, however, growing interest within the Ministry of Health – for example, a project was prepared for analysing the impacts of Meteorological and Climate Indexes on health.

The phenomenon of coastal erosion, due to both seismic and foreseen climate change effects, is a challenge for agriculture as well as for coastal villages. Some ministries and local authorities are

starting to think of mitigation measures that could be applied. For example, a current project involves the building of a coastal embankment as part of a developing strategy for coastal protection.

Social and economic development practices

From a social point of view, there is an expectation that once a disaster damages houses, goods, crops and cattle, the government will allocate emergency funds to compensate losses. As neither prevention nor preparedness measures are implemented, the livelihoods of vulnerable people and the poor are especially high risk. At the municipal level 3 percent of the budget is available to compensate (a mechanism to request funds from the national budget exists), with the result that only partial compensation is possible, even though the law establishes that compensation should be given at 40 percent of the loss. For larger disaster impacts, such as agricultural, the agribusiness sector expects the government to fully compensate losses and therefore agro-insurance has not well developed (note that agriculture occupies 50 percent of the population and 7.7 percent of total GDP). The current legislative system does not have a law in place that defines a possible disaster recovery process, or how to conduct a recovery post disaster needs assessment (PDNA).

Illegal housing is widespread and there is little, if no, consideration of reducing risks when building. The seismic code is not applied and there is no systematic monitoring or enforcing mechanism. The country is discussing the project of legalising most of the illegal buildings – this may prove to be very expensive for the country as the government will be obliged to compensate for damage in the case of a disaster.

Agriculture is the most important economic sector and it employs about 50 percent of the population.⁵ Floods are responsible for many of the major disasters in Albania and they occur regularly. In some cases, mitigation and prevention measures such as not cultivating under dams, cleaning the channels and buildings embankments, are carried out – indeed some of the Ministry of Agriculture’s budget is allocated to preventive measures. The management of 300 (out of 630) dams was reallocated to the municipal level – the water was no longer used for agricultural purposes. The already scarce budget capacity of municipalities will have to be used for maintaining the dams. The irrigation system, which appears to have been adequate and well-maintained over previous decades, was reported by some interviewees as no longer correctly used or maintained. In some cases, it is the farmers who create the channel system in fields as it is not done by the government.

Private insurance is not widespread and there is a very limited understanding of the importance of prevention investment. The agribusiness sector expects the government to fully compensate losses in cases of disasters and therefore a very small numbers of businesses and peasants have expressed interest. In addition, the number of ‘excluding clauses’ in contracts further reduces

⁵ Agricultural insurance: Albania and other EU Countries, 2008

interest. Additionally, it should be noted that as flooding by rain occurs at least once every five years, private companies have not expressed enthusiasm to ensure farmers – indeed there is no public insurance scheme for farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Italian Government, have implemented a project for promoting agriculture insurance. The World Bank is also currently promoting a project that will strengthen the insurance sector in relation to disasters.

Land use planning and other technical measures

Albania has spatial and urban plans, however it is not clear at what level the Institute of Geoscience was involved in the planning. In addition, the microzonation of the country was done in the 1970s and 1980s and has not been updated since and the building codes need to be revised and brought up to Eurocodes standards.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has the duty to ensure that buildings are seismic resistant. A good collaboration with the Civil Engineer faculty and the Institute of Geoscience is in place to consult over laws, codes and regulations. The ministry is mandated to provide licenses to geologists and civil engineers to certify the resistance of buildings, however once the license is provided there is little control that the ministry can exercise. The ministry also conducts sample checks of building materials. Due to the previous State-controlled system, the population believe that the government ensures the quality of building materials, however the ministry does not have the means to control them all. In particular, as there is no cement factory in Albania, the cement is entirely imported (mainly from Greece and China).

Not all buildings are checked for their resistance to earthquakes – The Institute of Geoscience only monitors, as required by law, buildings with eight stories or more. This means that many schools, hospitals, rescue centres and bridges etc. are not monitored. The foreseen new Law on Civil Emergencies will create an inspectorate for prevention at national and local level and its mandate will cover the inspection of new buildings, monitor the respect of the building codes and provide prevention recommendations. In terms of international cooperation, there are good exchanges of data with the neighbouring countries and historical seismic data is available and shared.

The management of water is fragmented among different ministries and the lack of coordination that brings can have negative consequences on adopting DRR measures. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for flood protection but it is the Ministry of Environment that has, by law, the mandate to distribute water. Also, due to the fragmentation of responsibilities, no department takes on analysis of water quality. A new Law on water and its management is being drafted and this should reduce the current fragmentation of water management.

The Institute of Environment, Water and Energy's capacity has decreased over the last few decades – both in number of staff and functioning hydro and meteo stations. The Institute of

Environment, Water and Energy holds a lot of data, but it is only partially digitalised and information provided consists mostly in row data. This is due to the fact that the institute has limited staff available to analyse the data. While there is a national agreement on sharing data, there are no agreements with neighbouring countries for regular exchange of data. The Institute of Environment, Water and Energy's component funds from the WB project were reallocated to buy automatic weather equipment. However, it should be noted that current capacity to ensure maintenance is not enough.

Regarding the health sector, there are preparedness plans in health structures and a Unit of Disaster Planning and Response within the Ministry of Health. The Unit developed a framework to design policies and strategies in health for DRR. This framework will, in future, support the elaboration of DRR programmes but currently DRR activities and projects are limited. With the support of World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health has developed a plan that will be finalised in two to three months – it will coordinate the health sector in case of an emergency due to a disaster. There is a need to enhance capacities in programme formulation in the ministry. The Ministry of Health has an emergency staff member in all 36 districts, and 72 commissions have been functioning over the last three years providing a good reach out to the entire territory. These commissions have been trained on the data and vulnerability data. Hospitals have emergency plans in place and a plan for the coordination of the health sector in case of emergency will be produced within the next few months. There is no assessment of hospital resistance to earthquakes, though there are some ongoing discussions on the subject, and no assessment of the hospital functioning in case of a disaster

From an institutional point of view, the lack of a DRR focal point in several line ministries means that neither preventive nor preparedness measures are integrated in sectoral work. The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public Work and Transport do have one person as a focal point and some preparedness activities are done. At the technical level there is some, although limited, awareness of DRR (and in several cases they are not defined as such by those interviewed), with disaster response being the prevalent focus. Many institutions involved in central, municipal and urban development planning do not have the capacity to use the risk assessments and subsequent information on disaster reduction. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that the decision makers at a political level have a good understanding of DRR in order to support DRR strategies, programmes and ensure adequate funding.

HFA PRIORITY 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organise trainings for the technical staff in various ministries (environment, agriculture, water management, energy, tourism, etc.) and also at municipality level in mainstreaming DRR/CCA/ES into their long term plans using the national risk assessment results.

2. Update the microzonation of the territory and integrate the building Eurocodes in the national system. The respect for building codes is an issue that needs to be advocated for. There is a need to conduct a study on how best to influence authorities to ensure compliance with the building codes.
3. Promote the UNISDR campaigns on safer schools and hospitals and define programmes for implementing part of the essentials.
4. Support the World Bank's project for developing disaster insurance mechanisms.

HFA PRIORITY 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

As mentioned earlier, there is a law on Civil Emergencies Services (2001) and a National Civil Emergency Plan (2004). While the term 'preparedness' is not defined in the current law, the new draft law on Civil Emergency Services clearly defines different phases of disaster management including EW, needs assessment, damage and loss assessment, operational coordination, response and rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

Preparedness for response is the area of DRR where the country has, so far, mostly concentrated its efforts. The National Civil Emergency Plan represents one of the key resources in Albania for prevention and mitigation as well as preparedness and response. The plan covers all elements of prevention, mitigation and recovery and it suggests that the main prefecture administrations and municipalities should have developed their own Civil Emergency Plans. However, all central and local plans need to be updated in the near future.

According to the current law, State organs (Council of Ministers, interministerial committee for emergency situations, Ministry of Interior, Department for civil emergency planning and response, technical consultative commission, public institutions and other ministries) are responsible for prevention, response and recovery. Ministries are responsible for developing plans for emergency preparedness according to the type of activity and competencies assigned to them. All plans shall be submitted to the Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning and Response for coordination (article 12). The law also assigns responsibility to the Civil Protection Inspectorate to control and inspect the civil emergencies and preparedness plans at all levels (article 22). The Civil Protection Operational Structures, 'depending on the level of civil emergency or disaster, shall carry out activities separately and in cooperation with each other in accordance with the legislation of the respective area, Civil Protection National Plan, Preparedness Plans, standards and agreements of cooperation signed between them as well as international cooperation agreements.' (article 31).

In general, the new drafted law is clearer in terms of roles and responsibilities. The normal scenario is that in times of large-scale disasters and crisis, the interministerial committee appoints a minister to be responsible of emergency response operations. The Directorate for Civil Emergencies will produce a situation analysis, a subsequent response plan, and will coordinate response operations as well as the reconstruction phase following a damage assessment.

However, most interviewed disaster management actors seemed to lack full clarity on roles and responsibilities in disaster/crisis management. By law, a focal point for emergencies should be appointed in each ministry, but at the moment only three ministries are reported to have them and these persons need training in disaster management and coordination.

In terms of funding, the department for civil emergencies receives an annual budget of 200,000 US\$ and allocates part of the amount to its units. However, the allocation of a specific budget for preparedness and response to other line ministries is highly recommended.

The current law on Civil Emergencies has provisions for the Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning and Response to collaborate with national and international organizations, NGOs, the private sector and volunteer organizations. The law makes no specific reference to the ARC, which has its own law that gives it an important role for disaster preparedness and response.

At a regional and local level, the prefect is responsible for civil emergency planning and response within the respective Qark. Down from the Qark, at Municipality and Commune levels, Mayors and heads of Communes are responsible for civil emergency planning and response, but also for organising and coordinating the development of emergency preparedness measures and the implementation of protective measures (article 16). For disaster response, a local commission headed by the Mayor or head of Commune is established in each Municipality and Commune. In general, the disaster response capacity at Qark, Municipality and Commune levels is very weak and therefore support from the central government level is the only actual solution for any disaster response operation.

The situation in the Municipality of Tirana is quite different from the other Municipalities. It has its own department for civil emergencies and an independent decision-making process for disaster management (set by law). The Municipality of Tirana has 13 units and each one has a representative for civil emergencies. Coordination and information sharing is functioning reasonably and roles and responsibilities are well defined in each unit. The overall head of these units is the director of the department of civil emergencies. In case of an emergency, a commission for emergencies, created in 2000 with the Mayor as Chairman, is convened. The commission has representatives from, among other, the private sector, the ARC, military forces and UNDP and is in charge for response operations' coordination.

In terms of EW there is a small centre for notification in Tirana (with a fax and telephone). There are plans (a World Bank project) to create an emergency call centre that will replace all existing emergency numbers (127 for fire, 128 for health and 129 police) with 112. The Ministry of Health also has an EW mechanism in case of epidemic outbreaks.

Most of the ministries have contingency plans but they need to be updated. The municipality of Tirana has had a contingency plan since 2005, which is updated every year – however, only a few simulation exercises have been conducted since the UNDP project in 2004.

In terms of competencies, the UNDP project of 2002–2004 helped to develop the following training materials:

Fundamentals of Disaster Management in Albania (including the Disaster Management Glossary):

1. Disaster Response Planning;
2. Local Disaster Preparedness and Response;
3. Disaster Damages and Needs Assessment;
4. Coordination of Disaster Response Operations;
5. Disaster Relief Logistics and Distribution;
6. Disaster Management Trainer's Guide;
7. Design Guide for Emergency Preparedness, Desktop Simulations and Field Exercises

All training manuals were made in accordance with national and international civil emergency standards and guidelines, and with the aid of case studies from Albanian experiences. Trainings were conducted at central and local level with the participation of institutions such as Geoscience, Albanian Geological Survey, Nuclear Physics, the Prefectures and various other stakeholders. However, first responders, such as police, fire brigades and other volunteers from the civil society still need training in preparedness and response at all levels and with the support of the existing Directorate's training centre. Moreover, retention of staff was mentioned as a serious challenge.

In terms of contingency planning, the ARC has developed capacities to assist 8,000 people during one month in case of any disaster. The ARC has warehouses with some equipment and food supplies.

In terms of recovery, according to National Civil Emergency Plan, the Directorate coordinates and conducts damage and needs assessment with government funding. The implementation of recovery is the responsibility of ministries or local authorities. However, 'recovery' is not well defined in the legislation and there is no mention of pre-disaster recovery planning.

In terms of relationships, there are Memorandums of Understanding with Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Croatia, Austria and Italy for training and support in case of large-scale disaster response operations. Albania has supported Greece, Kosovo and Macedonia in the case of forest fires

while the same countries have recently supported Albania during the floods in Skroda. However, agreements need to be strengthened for disaster management at regional level.

The World Bank is developing a project to strengthened disaster preparedness in Albania, which will support some of the challenges referred to above. The smooth process of the implementation of this project is highly recommended and various International and Non-Governmental Organizations etc. should avoid any duplication as large amounts of resources are already taken from Albanian authorities to implement it.

HFA PRIORITY 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide tools and training for the establishment of national contingency plans for various types of hazards, and to reinforce the EW mechanism.
2. Review the training manuals of the Albanian Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness programme and provide training at national, regional and municipal levels.
3. Propose a USAID capacity development programme for municipalities in disaster management including the certification process.
4. Develop Standard Operational Procedures for all stakeholders involved in disaster response – clarifying roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
5. Review and establish standard procedures for, and conduct emergency response simulation exercises.
6. Provide tools and training for national authorities on recovery including pre-disaster recovery planning and PDNA methodologies.
7. Support the World Bank disaster management capacity development programme (including the procurement of equipment).

ATTACHMENTS

1. The current law on ‘Civil Emergency Services’, Law 8756, from March 2001
 2. The new draft law on ‘Civil Protection’ from 2009 (not yet adopted)
 3. The World Meteorological Organization, EC and UNDP capacity assessment report on Hydro meteorological Services of 2010
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