Interministerial Workshop

Increasing Resilience through Earth Observation for the Skadar area

14 May 2013.Tirana, Albania
Ministry of Interior-Civil protection Department

Rationale

The United Nations and UNESCO support the World Summit on Sustainable Development strategy for further actions to exploit space technology and more coordinative efforts to apply instruments and systems for the monitoring of environment change at global level by the establishment of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO[1]).

The Rio+20 Declaration urged the continuation of a regular review of the state of Earth's changing environment, as well as access to reliable, relevant and timely data in areas related to sustainable development. UNESCO is also contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 by building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in many fields of scientific cooperation. This also includes the strategic goal of development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards by the application of in situ and space-based earth observations, space technologies, remote sensing, geographic information systems, hazard modeling and prediction, communication tools and studies of the costs and benefits of risk assessment and early warning.

The technical workshop which is part of the planned activities of the EU project IncREO - Increasing Resilience through Earth Observation[2]- (FP7-SPACE-2012-1), in full compliance with the above strategic objectives of the international community, the United Nations and UNESCO, is jointly organised by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy), the General Directorate for Civil Emergencies of Albania, the Albanian National Commission of UNESCO and with the support of the Geoville Group (Austria) and CIMA Foundation Albania.

[1] UNESCO is currently member of two committees established by GEO to guide the implementation of the 10-Year plan: the Science and Technology Committee and the Capacity Building Committee.
[2] Besides UNESCO, the official partners of IncREO are: Spot Image S.A. SISA (France- Project Coordinator); Geomer GmbH. (Germany), GeoVille Informationssysteme und Datenverarbeitung GmbH. (Austria); University of Twente (Netherlands), National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology NIMH of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences BAS (Bulgaria); Météo-France (France); Romanian Space Agency ROSA (Romania); and, Infoterra GmbH Ltd (Germany).

IncREO, which has been devised in support of emergency response management and risk-preparedness, aims to provide actors responsible for disaster management, risk prevention, civil protection and also spatial planning with EO-based solutions, contributing particularly to an improved preparedness and mitigation planning for areas highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

The related workshop will involve project partners and end-users in order to assess jointly develop a EO geo-information product for risk prevention and preparedness through EO imagery elaboration in the Region of Skodra. The workshop is an important step to the development of maps to be technically specified and made available to the government of Albania, whose departments and ministries are asked to share their requirements and data with UNESCO and with the product developers partners, test the developed products and employ them in order to achieve higher societal benefits in the flood disaster risk prevention and reduction area.

The region of Skodra has critically and more frequently hit by floods and suffers damages both at material and human level, triggered by a powerful combination of natural and human induced factors related to the social environmental change taking place and impacting the area (climate, hydro geological- systems and management, etc.).

The setting up of multi-stakeholders consultation and cooperation platforms is necessary for fine tuning the user requirements and the mapping system development process in a context where multiple actors interplay, decision making levels are multilayered and different scientific institutions are involved with differentiated sources of information and data base. Therefore, a number of representatives of the epistemic community and emergency responders has been invited to take part in the workshop. Specifically: Ministry of Interior, General directorate for Civil Emergency, Albania; CIMA Research Foundation – International Centre on Environmental Monitoring; Institute of Geosciences, Energy, Water and Environment (IGEWE); Centre of Agricultural Technology Transfer, Military Geographical Institute of Albania (MGI); Agency for Legalization, Urbanization and Integration of Informal Construction Areas; Institute of Transport; Albanian Development Fund; National Agency of Natural Resources; Prefecture of Shkodra; Institute of Statistics; Albanian Power Corporation; National Committee on High Dams; Civil Office; National Territorial Planning Agency; Albanian Geological Service; General Directorate of Water.

Finally, EO applications in the Balkans have not fully matched the challenge of implementing an integrated set of Earth Observation (EO) applications in environmental monitoring and management. As pointed out at the Post-GEO Plenary Workshop on Earth Observations for the Social Benefit of the Balkans held in Istanbul (Nov. 18-19 2012), the deficit in the implementation of EO applications and their use in different societal benefit areas are manifested through the limited synergies among national and regional institutions, ineffective technological means and discontinuous record of participation to international organizations and committees. It has to be reported that Albania with other Balkan Countries are not members of the GEO, therefore INCREO target activities in the Skodra lake with the involvement of national governmental and scientific institutions, will contribute to facilitate the process of strengthening their capacity in EO applications and technology within the European context.

Objectives

- To raise general awareness among professionals and responsible agencies in Albania for the need to jointly work to develop and employ appropriate EO solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness;
- To assess the users requirement specifications necessary to drive the development of EO products and applications in due compliance ;
- Setting up of an effective and coordinative approach for data information collection and sharing process among project stakeholders in Albania. This is to lay the ground for the development of a well tailored EO based product, capable to match its multi-scale definition and the multipurpose applications required by the end users and by the nature of the testing site.

Methodology

The workshop intends to bring main stakeholders, institutions and scientists, operating and involved in the field of DRR and preparedness in the area of Skodra Lake around a common table. This is to present and share the core elements of INCREO project and foremost to acquire in a coordinative fashion, data and information necessary to better orient and shape the EO based product development to be applied to the testing site. This will mainly be done by an open discussion chaired by project partners on two main documents previously shared with stakeholders: the user requirements specifications questionnaire as well as the data search list in relation to flood-hazard in the Skodra region.

With the knowledge derived from these two tools of investigation, and the good will of stakeholders to share their knowledge, data and experience, UNESCO and INCREO project partners will be able to develop applications which are inclusive of user needs and requirements combining the best state of art of EO imagery technology with the usefulness of their application.

Finally, this workshop is in line with a consolidating presence and activities of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe for Disaster Risk preparedness and Reduction in Albania and will be followed by other technical meetings and thematic workshops within the framework of INCREO project for a time span of two years.

Target audience/participants

20-25 professionals (representatives of the EU project Increo, key governmental and scientific representatives of Albania)

Venue

Ministry of Interior - Address: “Sheshi Skenderbej” Nr.3, Tirana, Albania

Organizers

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice - Science Unit
IncREO Project Partner

Mr. Mario Scalet, Head of Unit

Mr. Davide Poletto, IncREO project officer

GeoVille Group, Austria

IncREO Project Partner

Mr. Steve Kass

Ministry of Interior of Albania, General Directorate for Civil Emergencies
IncREO project end user

Mr. Ertust Brahja

Albanian National Commission for UNESCO

Ms. Venera Domi, Secretary General

Working Language

English

DRAFT AGENDA Tuesday 14 May 2013

8.30	*Registration*
9.00	Welcoming speeches Mr. Maksimiljan Dhima, Director of Planning and Coordination of Civil Emergencies General Directorate for Civil Emergencies Ms. Venera Domi – Secretary General UNESCO National Commission for Albania Mr. Mario Scalet Head of Science Unit - UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe Mr. Steve Kass - Geoville Group - Austria
9.00-9.15	*Agenda setting and ratio of the EU project INCREO in Albania&introduction of Stakeholders* D. Poletto UNESCO Venice Office
9.15-9.40	An overview of concrete Earth Observation based applications for DRR and Preparedness developed by Geoville S. Kass, Geoville Group
9.40 -11.00	Open discussion with stakeholders on the user requirements specifications and administered questionnaire
11.00-11.20	*Coffee Break*
11.20-12.40	Open Discussion with stakeholders on the data search list and data sharing in relation to flood hazard in the Skodra area
12.40-13.30	*Lunch buffet*
13.30-14.00	Follow up discussion and roadmap for the upcoming steps
14.00	*End of workshop*

Contact person:

Mr. Davide Poletto
UNESCO Venice Office SC Unit
Email: d.poletto@unesco.org