

CASE STUDY

International data policy for improved flood forecasting and water management



CUSTOMER

World Meteorological Organization - United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

DELIVERABLES

First ever policy in the Sava River Basin on the exchange of hydrological and meteorological data

OUTCOMES

Improvements in flood risk management, water resources and transport, and assistance with decision-making

KEY PARTNERS

Sava River Basin Commission,
World Meteorological Organisation,
Other hydrological and meteorological services

PROJECT DATES

2013-14

The challenge

The Sava River in South-East Europe is the largest tributary of the Danube. Its catchment covers five countries, and it is home to over 8 million people. The region is vulnerable to flooding, however - floods in 2014 caused the deaths of 79 people and an estimated €3.9 billion of damage in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, forcing thousands more to leave their homes.

Flood forecasting, as well as environmental protection, transportation and energy production, requires those who manage the river to coordinate their hydrological monitoring and share the resulting data. Efficient, effective collaboration between the countries that share the Sava River Basin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Montenegro, is therefore crucial for reducing flood risk and implementing effective water management strategies.

The research

The Centre for Ecology & Hydrology worked with the Sava River Basin Commission under a joint WMO-UNISDR project, providing technical expertise to improve hydrological data sharing. We examined requirements for, drafted, and negotiated the agreement of an international policy on the exchange of Hydrological and Meteorological Data and Information in the Sava River Basin.

This work included assessment of the current national hydrological monitoring and information management practices. This allowed for the identification of key data sharing requirements to improve integrated transboundary river basin management. We then developed a new international policy to improve information exchange and access, and facilitate agreement of the technical and political elements via workshops for National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and other related organisations.

The impacts

This project assisted with the development of the first ever policy in the Sava Basin on the exchange of hydrological and meteorological data. This policy now underpins improvements in decision-making for flood risk management, water resources planning and transportation. As a result, water management organisations in the region are now working on further developments of the data exchange system, coordination and harmonisation of measurements at border stations, and the upgrade of the existing hydrological and hydraulic models.

