



Technical conference

Fostering regional drought resilience in South-Eastern Europe

Key messages

Challenges of Climate Change Adaptation
in South-Eastern Europe

4–6 Feb 2025
Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia



Empowering Drought Resilience in South-Eastern Europe

- **Strengthening Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation**

- Effective drought management requires stronger transboundary collaboration, harmonized policies, and aligned national priorities.
- International organizations (UNCCD, EEA, ICPDR, WMO/GWP) play a crucial role in facilitating dialogue, knowledge exchange, and coordinated action plans.

- **Scaling Up Investment and Implementation**

- Urgent need to transition from short-term project funding to long-term operational frameworks for drought resilience.
- Increased financing, including through international funding mechanisms, is essential to support large-scale adaptation initiatives.
- Climate adaptation strategies should be prioritized in national and regional planning.

- **Enhancing Forecasting, Early Warning, and Decision-Making**

- Using meteorological and hydrological monitoring systems, also those existing at the regional and global level, is key to improving preparedness.
- Accessible data and its translation into information on impact incl. environment, alongside enhanced trust in forecasting tools, will help decision-makers take proactive measures.
- Standardized data-sharing mechanisms and early warning systems must be enhanced to ensure timely and effective responses.
- Stronger public engagement, education, and communication strategies are needed to ensure that drought warnings lead to effective action.

Adopting systemic perspective

*Drought as a **societal issue**, not just an environment issue*

***Integrated Water management** incl. all hazards, not individual hazards separately*

*Collaboration/
coordination of different bodies, instead of finding one perfect authority*

Enhancing Drought Monitoring

- **Improvement of drought monitoring in the countries**
 - Many examples of good practices in drought monitoring have been presented.
 - Many challenges remain for the countries to improve their drought monitoring, including insufficient ground station network, (seasonal) forecasts and connecting drought monitoring products to impacts in various sectors.
- **Implementation of regional drought monitoring tools**
 - Available regional and international tools (provided by JRC, DMCSEE, SEEVCCC etc.) are used in daily operations by the countries.
 - They are mainly useful for providing a "big picture" overview of the current situation.
 - They have to be amended by national products in order to achieve better resolution and more targeted information.
- **Collaboration in development of new drought monitoring tools**
 - New available technologies bring numerous possibilities to improve drought monitoring and forecasting.
 - They bring also necessity to invest resources into development.
 - Regional approaches are needed and collaboration including the Agrometeorological Center in Romania, that is currently being established.
 - Strong collaboration among actors in the region and also assistance from international organizations is needed in order to organize and shape project proposals and search for possible funding opportunities.

Towards stakeholders' needs and usage

*Extending station measurements **network**, to better detect the real situation on terrain*

*To make real use of **drought indices**, they need to be **linked to the impacts caused under their severity***

*Upcoming challenges: **strengthening forecast part of drought detection & focus on full water cycle (atmosphere, soil, hydrology)***

Strengthening Drought Impacts and Risk Assessments

- **The need for regular and systematic impact collection**
 - Countries need to adopt consistent and systematic approaches to collecting impact data, involving local stakeholders like farmers and communities.
 - This regular data collection helps to build a comprehensive understanding of drought impacts, ensuring timely and effective responses.
- **Establishing national impact databases**
 - The establishment of national drought impact databases is crucial for enhancing drought risk management.
 - Tools like the Global and European Drought Risk Atlas and the European Drought Impact Database (EDID) can support countries in organizing, sharing, and analysing impact data to inform national strategies.
- **Robust drought risk assessments for better preparedness**
 - Countries need to implement robust drought risk assessments tailored to their vulnerabilities, particularly in agriculture and water management.
 - The EUCRA methodology and regional collaboration can help build stronger assessments. \$
 - Sharing of current best practices in the region would already be sufficient, no need to reinvent the wheel. Cooperation is the key.

From hazard-based to impact-based risk assessments

Collaboration across sectors for unified drought impact monitoring and collection is needed.

National Reporting Networks: good example of collecting and receiving near real time field observations

Regional drought risk assessments: help raise awareness of global extent of drought risk & leverage the collaboration between national bodies

Advancing Proactive Drought Management

International Cooperation is Essential for Effective Drought Resilience

- Challenges like fragmented policies, data-sharing, limited capacity and financing gaps must be addressed through stronger regional alignment, international support, and innovative platforms (among others UNCCD's CLP and IDRA).
- Cross-border collaboration through frameworks such as UNCCD, UNFCCC, Water Convention, Water Framework Directive is crucial for managing shared water resources and integrating drought resilience into climate policies.
- Access jointly financial resources (GCF, AF, GEF, ...)

Practical Adaptation Measures Must Be Scaled Up

- Nature-based solutions, sustainable agricultural practices, and improved land management play a key role in mitigating drought impacts.
- Countries need to invest in drought-resistant crops, alternative water sources (e.g. rainwater harvesting, wastewater reuse, flood water sequestration/controlled drainage), and Small Water Retention Measures to enhance water security and resilience.

Innovation and Technology Are Transforming Drought Monitoring

- Advanced satellite data, EWS, and digital tools are revolutionizing drought assessment and preparedness; promising improvement of real-time drought monitoring.
- Effective integration into decision-making requires investment in training, technology adoption, and transitioning from project-based funding to long-term operational implementation.

Shift towards integrated management response

Regional Drought Resilience is only as strong as individual country's resilience capacity – strengthen national collaboration in order to achieve regional resilience

Exploring options for measures that address both sides of the water extreme, sustaining nature

"It's not about which measure is the best, but which set of measures can work together best"