

# Enhancing Synergies for Disaster Prevention in the European Union

## The ESPREsSO Project

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Newsletter July 2018



**ESPRESSO**

Enhancing Synergies for disaster PREvention  
in the EurOpean Union

### Table of Contents

Editorial .....	p 1
The 2nd ESPREsSO Think Tank .....	p 3
The 2nd Think Tank: Results and Feedback.....	p 4
The 3rd ESPREsSO Think Tank .....	p 6
The 3rd Think Tank: Results and Feedback.....	p 7
Action Database .....	p 9
Imprint.....	p 8

Dear Colleagues,

In the past few months we conducted the final Think Tank Meetings in Zurich (Think Tank 2) and in Naples (Think Tank 3). As in the first Think Tank in Berlin, two scenario exercises were developed and conducted with stakeholders from different fields of expertise.

At this stage of the project, a final effort to deepen on social, cultural and political issues is needed in order to integrate political, scientific and public commitment at all levels, including local, transnational and climate change related issues (ESPRESSO challenges 1, 2, 3).

The contents of Think Tank discussions and suggestions from

key actors in DRM will join the record of documents produced within the ESPRESSO consortium and from other relevant institutions/organizations operating in the fields of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, thus contributing to the implementation of the Guidelines for Risk Management Capabilities and the Vision Paper on future research strategies to be included in the next “Horizon Europe” Framework Programme.

These two final documents are now in their implementation phase and will benefit from the contribution of all ESPRESSO partners and relevant stakeholders involved within the Stakeholder Forum, the Think Tanks



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and the many networking activities carried out by the project, which will participate to the review and dissemination process. ESPREsso Vision Paper and Guidelines will be presented at the Final Stakeholder Forum and Final Project Meeting which will take place in Brussels on 18th and 19th October 2018.

## Announcements

Kristian Lautu, Kristoffer Albris and Emmanuel Raju from the University of Copenhagen and ESPREsso partners have contributed to the volume Natural Hazards and Law with a chapter entitled “Mind the Gaps: Addressing the science and policy nexus for disaster risk reduction in Europe”. Based on insights from the ESPREsso project, the chapter has been translated into Spanish, and will contribute to disaster risk discussions in the Spanish context. The book will be out in the near future by the publisher Dykinson.

## The 2nd ESPREsSO Think Tank: Transboundary Management of Crises

ESPREsSO's Think Tank II (TT2) took place on Wednesday 24th January 2018 at Swissotel Oerlikon, in Zurich, Switzerland, hosted by ETH Zurich, leaders of Work Package 1 for ESPREsSO. The workshop was attended by 23 ESPREsSO partners and stakeholders to discuss ways of improving trans-boundary management of crises. Countries represented at the event included Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Poland, Israel and UK.

The day was split into two sessions, firstly, stakeholders were split into 3 teams, each taking part in a role-playing scenario, "Ramsete II", which is the second edition of ESPREsSO's Risk Assessment Model Simulation for Emergency Training developed by the project team, for our stakeholders to play. The exercise was based on the fictitious cross-border region of Barisstia, between the nations of Latteia and Macchianstein, an area that hosts critical infrastructure both countries depend on, as well as a great deal of cross-border economic activity.

During the game, both countries sharing the common border were subjected to a range of natural hazard events, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, storms with varying knock-on impacts. The participants of the exercise were tasked with responding

to the series of extreme events pre-selected by the project team that required a cross-border response. The ultimate aim was to minimize consequences of the events that have occurred by carrying out the most effective response.

There was a total of six participants to each game, two for each country representing government at both local and national levels, one NGO representing both countries, and one EC representative. The exercise ran over 3 rounds, each dealing with a different disaster, with each round containing three phases: a policy and preparedness phase, a response and recovery phase, and a debriefing phase.

The exercise required participants to choose what policies best serve their country's Disaster Risk Management needs, then to respond to the cross-border crisis by ensuring affected assets were restored, preferably following a "build back better" policy.

In the afternoon session, feedback from the game was collected and a discussion session identifying the needs and gaps of trans-boundary policies, and potential solutions to these gaps then followed, with a brief musical interlude for participants to enjoy!



Figure 1: Introduction of the 2nd Think Tank (Source: L. Booth).

## The 2nd ESPREsSO Think Tank: Results and Feedback

The RAMSETE II and the following discussions among the involved stakeholders have highlighted many different and interesting points. The issues emerged during the working day held in Zurich on 24th January 2018, reflecting the point of view of the invited Stakeholders, involved in the field of Disaster Risk Management with diverse roles and backgrounds. Key discussion points can be summarized as follows:

### **Institutions involved in transboundary crisis management**

NGOs:

- Strong coordination by national authorities is needed to minimize potential conflicts due to different visions, interests and mandates. This also supports the official integration of NGOs in crisis management structures and prevents so-called double efforts. Also, NGO representatives should be represented within the EU system.
- The culture of volunteering is changing: people stop volunteering for an organization (old model), they volunteer for a task (new model). There is not a lack of will but a task-oriented approach with a change in the time horizon.

Public/private:

Local level governance structures and coordination should be strengthened to increase response capacity and long-term resilience. This especially applies for Critical Infrastructures (CI) as CI are usually private owned.

### **EU and international collaboration**

- Bilateral local agreements and informal agreements and collaborations foster local knowledge and local capacity to act
- Sovereignty of the state should remain intact; the EU has no power to impose some form of organization onto a state. The EU can only interfere by request. In case of health issues, report to the EU is mandatory and different policies cannot be afforded. In case of natural hazards, the impact is rather local affecting most one to

two countries.

- There is a discrepancy in the amount of investments per citizen in Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management by EU governments.
- If we create transparency in policies across borders, it would create incentives for neighboring countries to follow suit. We need to therefore remove regulatory obstacles.

### **Politics and policies**

We need agreements on priorities in specific geographical area. This must also involve communications with the public.

### **Risk data assessment**

We need to begin to have a common understanding of risk.

Standardization of data is crucial, but this is not clear cut, since there are very different types of data depending on what kind of information is relevant to different authorities. We therefore need to decide collectively on what kind of data and information we need. In some cases, data will hold an economic value and will have an economic impact.

Encouraging the scientific sharing of data and communication of standards is crucial. There is a need to create shared disaster risk memory across borders. Data protection issues in sharing across borders therefore also needs to be addressed.

We need to think in probabilistic terms, in order to develop effective simulation models supporting the decision making process. Decision makers can then implement Disaster Risk Management policies based, for example, on the “most damaging” disaster and not just the “most probable” (e.g. in the case of Vesuvius volcano, Italy).

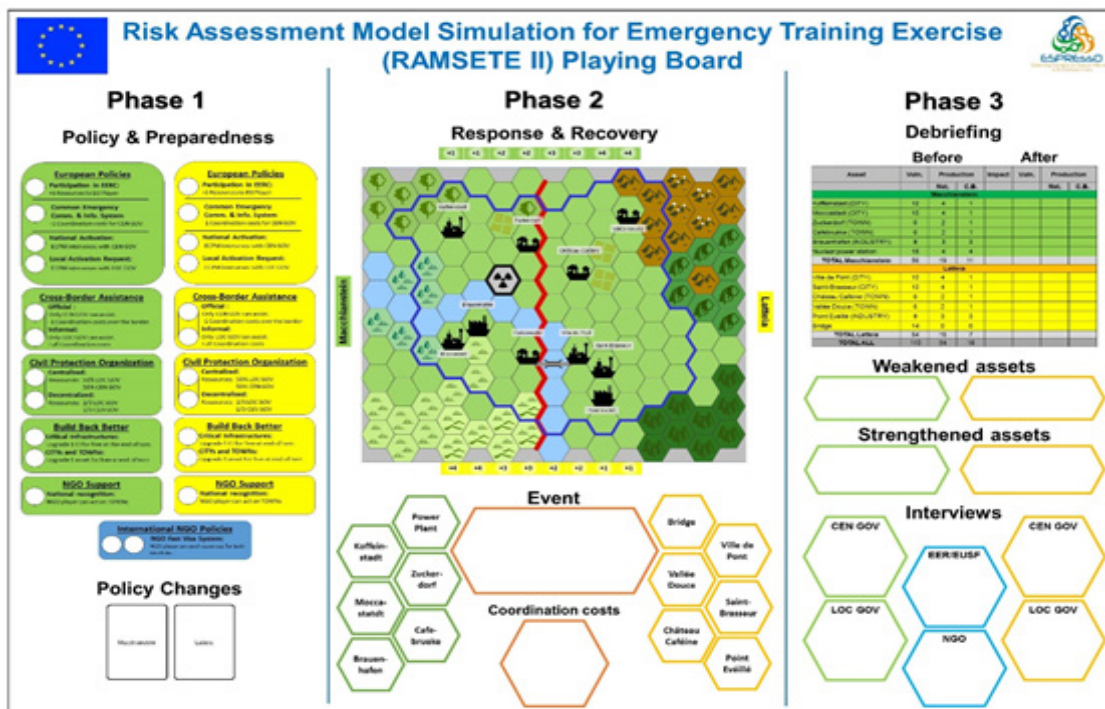


Figure 2: The table sheet used during the RAMSETEII exercises conducted in Zurich, Switzerland as part of the 2nd ESPRESSO Think Tank.

### How can we stimulate authorities to work proactively on transboundary crisis management?

Where shared cultures exist across a border (even if different countries) this greatly strengthens transboundary resilience. National and local governments, and its population need to be organized within each country in terms of strategy, tactics and operations, then the EU (and NGO) support is easier to obtain in a coordinated way. Communication among those levels is crucial.

- We need a strategy and a vision under which you can move on issues. There needs to be long term thinking and proactive decisions.
- Common strategies, understandings and ownership will create common action and coordination.
- Encouraging scientific sharing of data and communication of standards is crucial.
- There is a need to create shared disaster risk memory across borders. Regions share the

same geography and nature. Need to lock this into education.

- A need to address private ownership of infrastructure and natural resources, where data sharing is problematic.
- Data protection issues in sharing across borders also need to be addressed.
- What is relevant data? Sharing more about vulnerability rather than just the hazard profile.
- We need to go through regulations to improve proactivity.
- We need to think in possibilistic and not just probabilistic thinking. Think about the possible disaster and not just the probable.
- We need to create political value and commitment across borders.
- A general emphasis on mainstreaming guidelines and standards, which needs to be a long term strategy, as these take a long time to sediment.
- Standardisation of risk assessments is key.

## The 3rd ESPREsSO Think Tank: Science and Policy Interface/Legislation

The RAMSETEIII exercise was undertaken in Naples, Italy, on the 24th April, 2018. The themes explored dealt with Challenge 2 ‘Issues arising between science and policy/legal in disaster risk management’, with participants from the UK, Italy, France and Denmark. The exercise was centered around the ‘European’ island nation of Espressoland, and involved the elected official (the decision maker) selecting policies proposed to them by their advisors, representing science (concerned with the accuracy/uncertainty that an impending disaster may be known), civil protection (how (quickly) an evacuation may be undertaken), and government (trust in governmental institutions).

Similarly to RAMSETEII, the exercise was divided into three parts: the policy making phase, the crises phase, and the election. In the policy phase, the decision maker chose an overall framework centered on either an environmental platform (benefiting the science advisor), a technocratic platform (civil protection), or a social issues platform (the government spokesman). Based on this framework, the policies were chosen. This was fol-

lowed by the crisis itself, where a balance needed to be found between more information about the coming disaster and when to issue orders (or not) for an evacuation. Several measures were included, resulting in scores towards science knowledge, emergency response and popularity, the final score in the last deciding on whether the decision maker has won or lost the election, the third and last phase of the round.

While evacuations were the center of the exercise, this was by no means meant to suggest that this is the only issue of concern, as quickly became clear during the discussions during and after the exercise. While it was obvious to participants that a more collaborative and consultative approach would lead to better outcomes, one participant commented that an interesting alternative way of playing would be to have the advisors approach the decision maker one by one, without the consultative atmosphere the exercise offered. Regardless, the participants (Figure 2), as in the previous two RAMSETE exercises, found it to be an interesting and engaging experience.

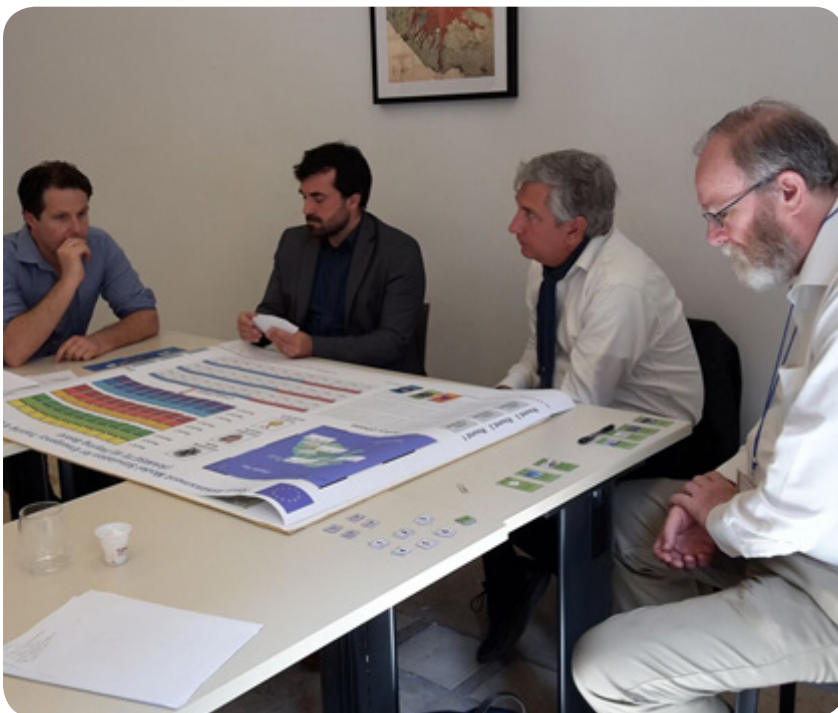


Figure 3: Participants in the RAMSETEIII exercise in Naples, Italy, 24th April, 2018 (Source: L. Booth).

## The 3rd ESPREsSO Think Tank Results and Feedback

The issues emerged during the working day, reflect the point of view of the invited Stakeholders, with diverse roles and backgrounds. Various topics have been extensively debated, reporting real life cases as examples to better understand the importance of decisions and the role of each key actor involved in the disaster risk management cycle as well as the very strong connection between multiple disciplines in DRM.

As it might be expected, from the whole session has emerged that the key to successfully cope with disaster risk strongly depends on the collaboration between different areas of expertise and diverse actors within the decision-making process, both implementing adequate policies and legislation in the long-term to streamline DRR measures, both ensuring effective coordination and operational procedures during emergency management.

The observations and suggestions from the debate, have been categorized in relation to the Sendai Framework priorities, and further processed following observations from the stakeholders' groups in order to have a clear reference framework to be integrated within the final ESPREsSO output: the Vision Paper on future research strategies and the Guidelines for Risk Management Capability.

During the discussions, stakeholders highlighted that engaging with the public and raising the awareness among the general public is essential during all DRM cycle. Thus, communicating the reason of certain choices made during the emergency helps to build the trust of involved communities and general public. Nevertheless, as it was widely stressed, it is important to find the balance between reassuring the public and not “cry wolf” or giving false certainty. It is necessary to demonstrate to people the values of the actions: people won't get involved unless the action has a value for them, in term of preserving life and property.

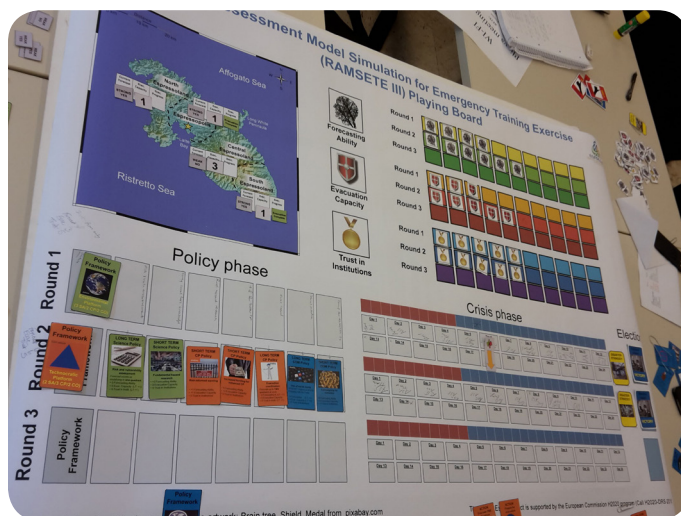


Figure 4: The RAMSETEIII exercise game board (Source: L. Booth).

Main topics discussed and key messages emerging from the discussion can be summarized as follows:

- Probability and scientific uncertainty: forecasting in the short period allows to reduce uncertainties about a coming disaster and a more effective probabilistic approach to impact simulations can support an informed decision-making under uncertainty;
- Public involvement, awareness and communication: citizens and communities are part of risk management processes, multi-stakeholders network can effectively disseminate academic research results linked to the improvement specific policy/legislation domains;
- Risk Assessment and risk memory: risk partnerships can support the improvement of risk assessments at various scales and their standardization, allowing to translate the research into salient credible and legitimate knowledge;
- Responsibility framework: new policy and legislation approaches should include proposals aimed at clarifying responsibilities bet-

- between scientists, civil protection officers and politicians/local administrators in relation to their role in the DRM cycle;
- Multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination: science and policy/legal interface benefits from an effective multi-stakeholder coordination, both horizontal and vertical, through cross-institutional technical tables, think tanks and risk partnerships, also aimed at understanding existing barriers to implementation of effective DRM processes;
- Lessons learnt from past events: more standardized databases on past events are needed, where the information is acquired through specific templates and format, so to allow the standardization of post-event assessments and streamline the involvement of private sector in EU.

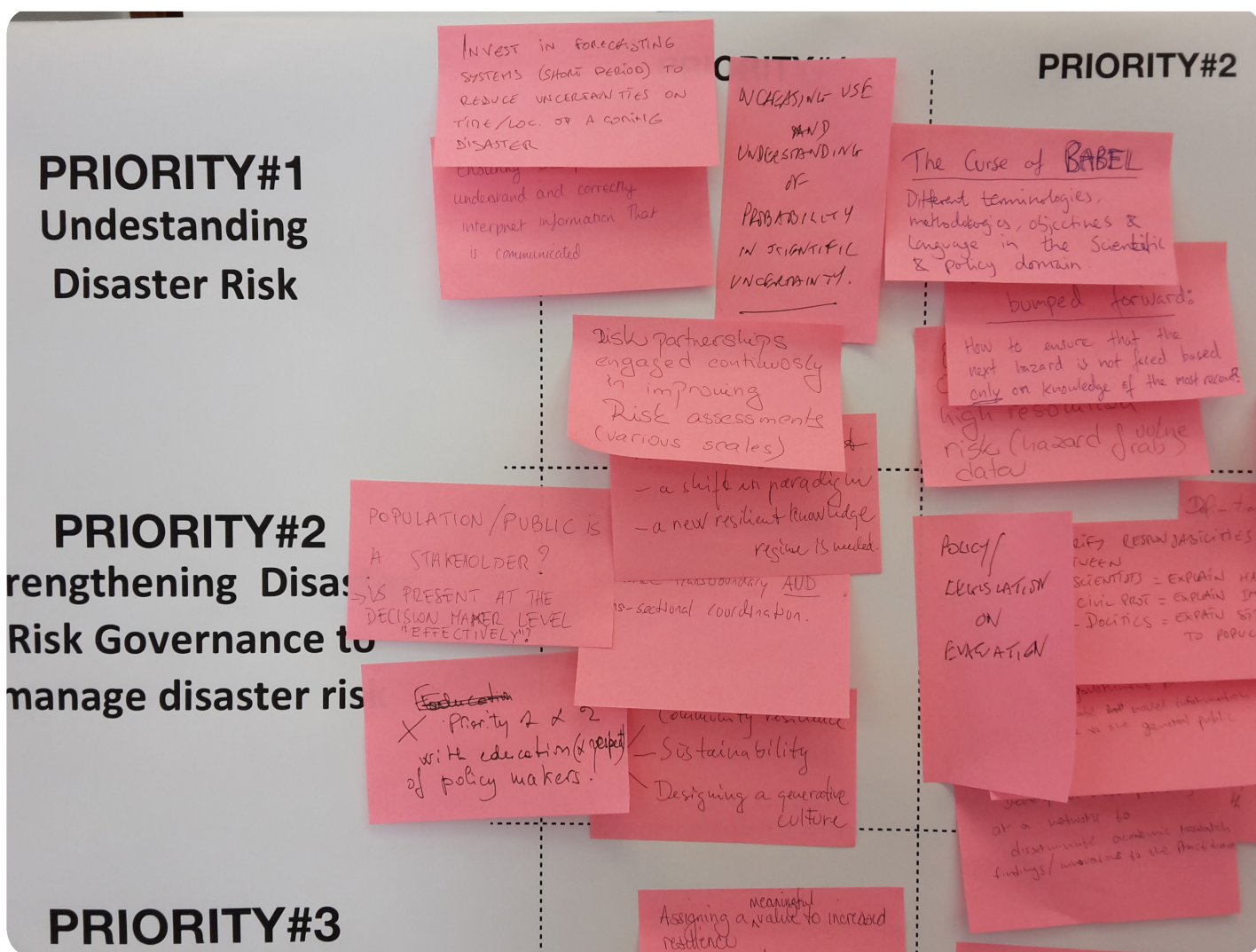


Figure 5: Gaps and needs session during TT3 (Source: L. Booth).



## Action Database (ADB)

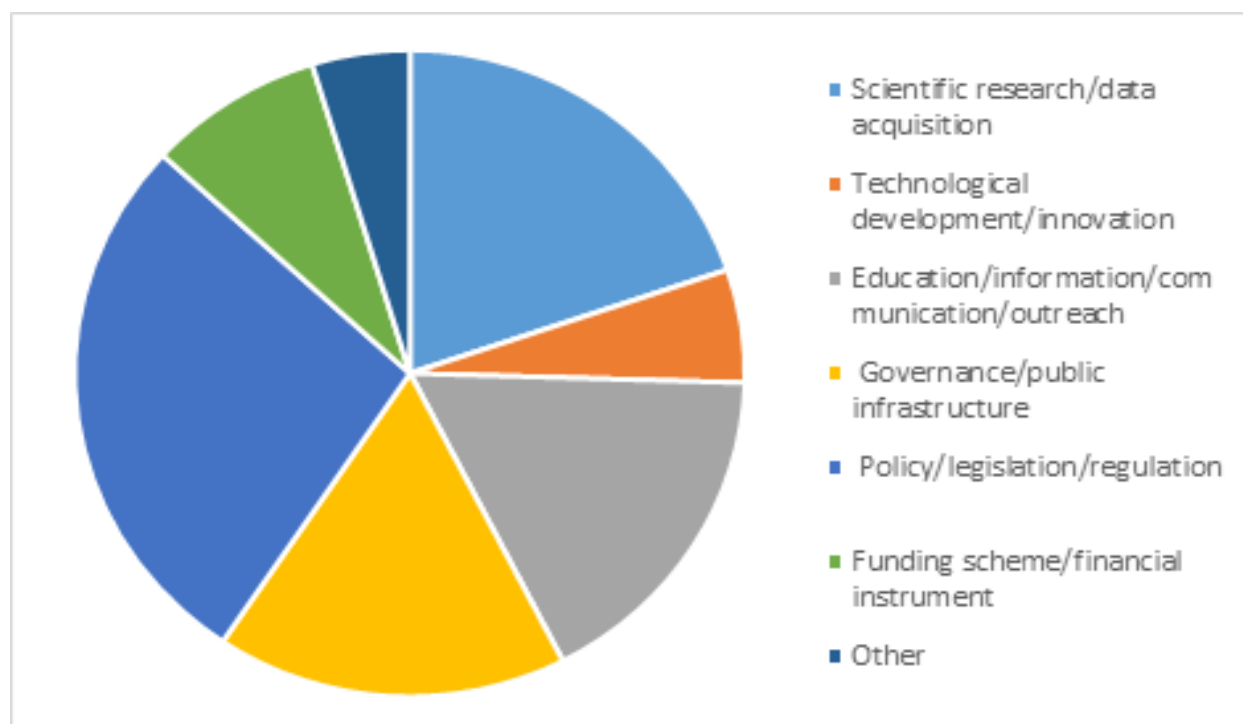


Figure 6: Thematic contexts of the ADB's actions

The ADB is a new tool from the ESPREssO project to collect and evaluate feedback from stakeholders in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and cross border crisis management.

The database relies on a short questionnaire enabling you as a stakeholder to describe any project, program or initiative dealing with the topics of ESPREssO, regardless if the action is big or small, local or international, or even if it was considering a particular effort or the action as a whole.

The ADB adds up around a hundred entries. Each entry presented the detail of the action and its scores according to the Sendai Framework and to

the SHIELD<sup>1</sup> model. It allows the ESPREssO-ADB to propose a compilation of good ideas and effective practices, which can be transposed to other scales or backgrounds, in order to help scientists and decision-makers develop efficient strategies.

**Please feel free to contribute at <http://adb-esspresso.brgm.fr> !**

<sup>1</sup> Sharing knowledge, Harmonizing capacities, Institutionalizing coordination, Engaging stakeholders, Leveraging political commitment and Developing communication

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### Get involved!

Are you interested in getting involved? Do you want to join us for a workshop, a stakeholder meeting or be part of the network?

Send an email to: [info@dkkv.org](mailto:info@dkkv.org)

### Imprint:

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