



Announcement

March 2006

FLAPP: Flood Awareness & Prevention Policy in border areas

Public awareness: crucial for effective flood prevention

ENNISKILLEN, Northern Ireland – What to do when a flood occurs? Many people, even those living in high risk areas, often do not know what to do when the water rises up to their ankles. Should the responsible governments be more active in providing information and what can inhabitants do for themselves? What is the best approach to make people aware of the risks of flood? During the third conference of the FLAPP network on the 6th and 7th of April 2006, partners and experts in the field of public awareness gather in Northern Ireland to share their knowledge on flood related topics.

What is FLAPP?

FLAPP stands for "Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy in border areas". It is an EU-funded network through which local and regional flood experts from across Europe share knowledge and experience about how to prevent and forecast floods, evacuate people and limit the damage when floods happen.

Flood maps

Keynote speakers from the Environment Agency in the United Kingdom and the Office of Public Works in the Republic of Ireland will discuss their approaches to raising awareness of floods throughout the Island of Ireland. Also several workshops are organised to discuss this issue. One of them is on how to create effective flood maps, particularly in border regions. Flood maps indicate flood danger in a specific area. These maps are an important communication conduit between local authorities and the general public for raising awareness; once good flood maps are developed, inhabitants can easily find out about risks in their area.



Field excursion with school children

Children from schools in Monaghan and Aughnacloy will show the conference delegates how to make a 'Vital Signs' water record. Vital Signs is a schools education programme which is currently carried out in the Carlingford, Foyle, Blackwater and Melvin river catchments. School children from both sides of the border use PDA technology to record information on their local stream environments. Their data is uploaded onto a website that can be accessed by all participating schools within the catchments. The aim is to develop a sense of shared responsibility for cross-border water resources. This educational programme has proven to be a success; while children see it as an adventurous field trip, they become aware of the environment surrounding them and how to handle it with care. On Friday afternoon there is also an optional field-trip organised to the Marble Arch Caves for the delegates.

Workshops

On day two delegates will get the opportunity to join thematic workshops:

- How to involve inhabitants in developing measures against floods?
- How do other European projects handle public awareness?
- A communication and PR workshop
- Developing a useful manual for citizens how to deal with the consequences of floods.

The results of this conference will be published in Mainstream, the FLAPP newsletter. All newsletters can be found at www.flapp.org.

NOTE FOR JOURNALISTS

All journalists are invited to visit the conference on Thursday. To view the programme, please view the attachment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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NOTE FOR EDITORS

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Partner organisations

The FLAPP network consists of 37 organisations in 14 different countries in Europe. Partners are spread over several catchment areas, amongst which are the rivers Danube, Tisza, Ebro, Meuse, Rhine, Scheldt, Elbe and Oder. Three partners are located in non-EU countries (Romania and Serbia-Montenegro). FLAPP participants range from local and regional water managers on the operational level to university researchers. Lead partner of the FLAPP network is the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (Maastricht, The Netherlands). See map for partner locations and catchment areas.

Expected results

The network operates from January 2005 until August 2007. It develops long-term practical ideas for managing rivers and streams in ways that protect the environment as well as defending Europe's communities and economy. The FLAPP network will produce a flood management guide with some concrete examples of projects in European border areas. Based on practical knowledge and experiences the FLAPP network will also try to formulate an integrated approach to flood management in border areas and produce policy recommendations.

INTERREG IIIC programme

The FLAPP operation has received a subsidy from the programme funds within the framework of the Community initiative programme INTERREG IIIC West Zone. INTERREG IIIC is an EU-funded programme that helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. These projects enable regions to share knowledge and experience that will help them develop new solutions to economic, environmental and social challenges. 98 % of all European Union regions are involved in INTERREG IIIC projects. There are more than 250 INTERREG IIIC projects running involving 2500 local and regional actors from 50 countries; 20 % of these are from new EU Members. More info: www.interreg3c.net

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