

Promoting EU and South Asian bi-regional coordination of Science & Technology cooperation

CASCADE Project

CASCADE (Collaborative Action towards Societal Challenges through Awareness, Development, and Education) aims to provide the foundation for a future International Cooperation Network programme targeting South Asian Countries, which will promote bi-regional coordination of Science & Technology cooperation.

CASCADE is an opportunity for raising awareness of the potential for EU-Southern Asia cooperation and stimulating regional and international participation. With the active contribution of South Asian countries, the endeavour will be to pave the way for more advanced, inclusive and innovative societies.

The project coincides with the launch of Horizon 2020, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of just over €70 billion, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to tackle global societal challenges, and create new growth and jobs. International cooperation in research and innovation is an essential element for meeting the objectives of Europe 2020. Recognising the global nature of producing and using knowledge, Horizon 2020 builds on the success of international cooperation in previous framework programmes and is fully open to participation from third countries.

The eighteen month CASCADE project is being undertaken by a consortium of eighteen organisations from five European countries and seven South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

During the project, the team will:

1. compile a regional position paper that identifies global challenges and research priorities
2. map and develop an inventory of national and regional stakeholders related to global challenges
3. raise awareness on research & innovation priorities for fostering cooperation and towards building mutual understanding on how to address common global societal challenges



Photograph: Jerry Velasquez, Chief of the Advocacy and Communications Section and Head of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

Latest News

CASCADE event at major international conference

A CASCADE workshop was held at the 2014 CIB W55/65/89/92/96/102/117 & TG72/81/83 International Conference on Construction in a Changing World, which brought together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines to deal with the major challenges that construction professionals will be confronted with in the coming years. The conference was held in Dambulla, Sri Lanka.

Driven by technology innovation, demographic growth, environmental change, a new economic order and a strong undercurrent of social and political desire for change, the world is changing quickly. Construction doesn't exist in isolation and, in a fast-changing world, the sector has the vital role of providing the requisite built environment to meet the challenges presented by these changes.

The CASCADE workshop captured the views and expertise of the 200 plus international delegates that attended the four day event. The conference was jointly organised by the University of Salford, UK, the University of Huddersfield, UK, and the CIB International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction.

The conference also included a keynote address by Jerry Velasquez, Chief of the Advocacy and Communications Section and Head of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Mr Velasquez spoke about tackling future risks, economic losses and exposure

The workshop outcomes will feed into the regional position paper that is identifying opportunities for EU-South Asia collaboration towards tackling societal challenges.

Work Package Update

Challenge	Country							Total	
	Afghanistan	Bangladesh		Bhutan	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan		Sri Lanka
1	2	6	7	5	4	3	18	2	47
2	2	10	8	7	6	2	19	1	55
3	4	3	4	3	5	2	13	1	35
4	3	3	3	4	4	2	19	1	39
5	5	11	16	7	5	2	29	2	77
6	2	4	9	4	2	4	8	2	35
7	2	4	3	4	4	2	39	2	60
Total	20	41	50*	34*	30*	17	145*	11	348
		91							

Table 1: A breakdown of the interviews conducted across seven countries and covering all seven H2020 societal challenges

National position papers

Seven national position papers (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) are currently being developed, led by the respective national partners. Each paper is addressing the relevancy and the scope of the societal challenge and outline how the problem affects that country, providing high level statistics if appropriate. They will go on to specify the current official position and policies of the country in respect to the issues under consideration, including the major players (key informants), any recent developments concerning the issues under discussion, and the action that has been taken, whether by specialized agencies, regional bodies or non-governmental organizations. Finally, each paper will focus on summarising national priorities associated with the thematic challenge, including specific suggestions and actions that the country will support in providing a solution for the issues in question.

Challenge	Country							Total
	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	
1	2	2	3	2	2	4		15
2	3	4	5	2	2	4		18
3	2	1	2	2	3	1		11
4	1	2	2	2	6	1		14
5	1	3	3	1	2	2	6	16
6	1	7	9	2	4	1		24
7	1	2	10	1	3	2		19
Total	13	21	23*	11*	22	12*	33	135

Table 2: A breakdown of the focus groups conducted across seven countries and covering all seven H2020 societal challenges

Collecting data across seven countries

The work carried out as part of the development of these national position papers has been divided into two phases. Phase 1 consisted of a policy analysis and Phase 2 of the study was carried out using semi-structured interviews and focus groups. During phase 1, a content analysis approach was carried out to analyse available policies in each area of societal challenges to identify the current context, gaps and key informants. During the 2nd phase of the project, 348 semi-structured interviews (see Table 1) across seven countries were carried out with experts in each area of social challenges. In addition to that, 135 focus groups (see Table 2) were conducted with experts from all 7 areas of societal challenges. All the interviews and focus group were recorded and analysed to come up with the overall findings of the project. The experts chosen for the interviews and focus groups were either

from academia, industry or from public organisations (e.g. policy maker or from local authority). To maintain consistency with the approaches adopted, guidelines and templates were developed for all these approaches and then issued to the national partners for use in-country.

Future plans

Over the next six months, the project will start to focus on the development of the regional position paper, and commence a stakeholder mapping exercise. These activities will culminate in a policy brief with recommendations to the European Commission on how to promote bi-lateral cooperation with Southern Asia with a view to tackling key societal challenges of mutual interest. They will also promote Southern Asian contacts among major European stakeholders.

Regional position paper

The regional position paper will identify global challenges and research priorities of mutual interest to the EU and South Asia. The paper will draw upon seven national position papers that are being prepared by local partners.

Stakeholder mapping exercise

The project will identify and develop an inventory of the national and regional stakeholders that can influence the global challenges and research priorities relevant to the South Asian region. National partners will hold expert groups & interviews with key agencies (government, non-governmental, industry, academia) to identify and map stakeholders in each of the target countries, as well as links to regional & international stakeholders. These maps will be analysed to develop an inventory of national and regional stakeholders related to global challenges. The inventory will be used to promote EU-South Asia partnerships that address global challenges.

Recent events

International conference on building resilience

The CASCADE project was a partner in the 4th International Conference on Building Resilience. The conference examined the concept of resilience as a useful framework of analysis for how society can cope with the threat of natural and human induced hazards.

The four-day event attracted more than 350 academics, researchers, practitioners and policy makers. There were four keynote addresses, which provided a global perspective and vision for resilience research. The event was held at MediaCity in Salford, UK.

The conference included a CASCADE workshop aimed at sharing the emerging project findings and gaining feedback that could help shape the planned regional paper. The event also incorporated the 3rd Annual Conference of the ANDROID Disaster Resilience Network. Backed by the EU's ERASMUS programme, ANDROID has 68 partners across 38 countries and aims to promote co-operation and innovation among European Higher Education to increase society's resilience to disasters of human and natural origin. The ANDROID network has been used as an important dissemination mechanism for the CASCADE project.

Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Disaster Risk Reduction commented: "The 4th International Conference on Building Resilience came at an exciting time in global efforts to build resilient communities and a resilient planet. In the UK, dynamic public/private sector partnerships and a vibrant academia have contributed significantly to this international process."



Three dissemination events held in Pakistan

The Local Councils Association of the Punjab held several CASCADE workshops with key stakeholders in Pakistan. These included:

- A workshop for 32 participants on “Local governance in Pakistan” at Lahore on September 15, 2014 at the LCAP office in Lahore. The CASCADE position paper for Pakistan was presented and much appreciated by the participants of the workshop.
- A seminar on “Health and wellbeing of citizens and local governments” for 123 participants was held on August 21, 2014 by LCAP at Lahore. The 1st chapter of the position paper, Pakistan “Health demographic change & wellbeing” was presented by Mr Muhammad Umar. The seminar was attended by the various walks of life including youth, women, students, and government servants from health department.
- A seminar on Growing Food Insecurity in Pakistan was held under by LCAP for 43 participants on October 14, 2014 in Lahore. The Cascade position paper for Pakistan was presented. The participants of the conference appreciated the quality and methods of data collection by LCAP and Cascade.

These are examples of some of the many dissemination events that have been held by CASCADE partners across South Asia.

Safer Sri Lanka - Disaster Management Conference

Commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, an international seminar on Disaster Management has been held to create a dialogue which will develop an effective and viable process for the management of disaster in Sri Lanka in the future. The event was organised by the Government of Sri Lanka and its Disaster Management Ministry officials and was held from 24-26 September 2014 in Sri Lanka.

Professors Dilanthi Amararatunga and Richard Haigh from the Global Disaster Resilience Centre at the University of Huddersfield’s School of Art, Design, and lead partners in the CASCADE project, were invited by the Government of Sri Lanka to speak at this important event. Dilanthi delivered a speech on Emerging trends in disaster management, global frameworks & international best practices, conventions and knowledge transfer mechanisms. Richard delivered an address about collaborative action towards addressing societal challenges, based on the work of CASCADE, with a view to developing sustainable disaster management practices. In addition, Dilanthi and Richard chaired a panel on shared risks to shared value.

Mrs Marina Mohamed, Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management thanked the CASCADE project and Huddersfield Professors: “ your expertise and insights in disaster management and its imperative for sustainable development enriched the discussions of the session. We value your contribution over the last 10 years to Sri Lanka on post disaster recovery process and we look forward to collaborate with you for many years to come”.

Details on the CASCADE project were also published as part of the conference proceedings.



Over 460 local and foreign experts in the disaster management field shared their experiences at the conference. Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said that this international event has helped educate the world on the progress achieved by Sri Lanka in the disaster management field. “Sri Lanka can show its vast experience in the management and mitigation of disasters in Sri Lanka,” she said.

The information derived from the opinions and the suggestions brought forward by regional and global experts in the disaster management field at this seminar, will be presented to the President of Sri Lanka at the National Safety Day ceremony to be held in Hambantota on December 26.

CASCADE Partnership

Europe

University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom
 University of Salford, United Kingdom
 University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom
 Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
 Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania
 Bologna University, Italy
 Foundation for Strategic Research, France

South Asia

Nangarhar Islamic University Jalalabad, Afghanistan
 Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh
 Royal Institute of Management, Bhutan
 Institute of Engineering, Nepal
 Volunteers for Development, Nepal
 University of Engineering & Technology, Peshawar, Pakistan

Local Councils Association of the Punjab, Pakistan
 University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
 Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, Sri Lanka
 Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
 ECO CARE, Maldives

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CASCADE is a project (Contract Number: 609562) co-funded by the European Community’s Programme for International Cooperation under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013). The sole responsibility for the content of this information sheet lies with the CASCADE consortium. It does not represent the opinion of the Community. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.