

Press Release: The ENGAGE project officially started with a two-day kick-off meeting

On July 1st and 2nd 2020, 37 organisations from different countries, met virtually to launch the ENGAGE project, co-funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme (grant agreement No 882850.) The project will run until June 2023.

Engage Society for Risk Awareness and Resilience – ENGAGE

The ENGAGE project addresses research and innovation on resilience: an intrinsic ability of society to adjust its functioning and sustain operations prior, during and after disasters. ENGAGE is a bold project aiming to link the informal resilience naturally inherent in citizens with the formal work of authorities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The 3-year EU funded project will provide solutions to support the engagement of citizens, communities and authorities in a “whole-of-society” approach and capitalise on the knowledge, capabilities and social capital existing at all levels of society.

Natural and man-made disasters remind us that the ability of societies to adapt and prosper depends on the collective action of society. Current knowledge, strategies and methods for societal risk governance are to a large extent focused on the efforts of public authorities to protect citizens from harm and ensure continuity in vital societal functions. This underestimates the fact that citizens themselves constitute sources of resilience, as well as the huge diversity in the contexts in which knowledge, tools and methods are to be applied. In this collective effort, citizens and communities can also play a significant role at a grassroots level, but how can this role effectively contribute to the formal operational practices of public authorities?

The EU funded project, ENGAGE, brings together 14 partners from 8 countries aiming to show how individuals and local practices can interrelate effectively with planned preparedness and response, practitioners, and technology. ENGAGE's mission is to provide knowledge and impactful solutions for exploiting Europe's hidden and unused resource: its inherent resilience.



Figure: In the middle: ENGAGE linking informal and formal work (disaster pictures courtesy of Tel Aviv University for the ENGAGE project)

The project will first identify and gather previous efforts in terms of the knowledge, strategies, methods, tools, and practices used by real world practitioners and citizens. It will then combine and extend them to create innovative solutions for disaster management and new ways of fostering trans-disciplinary collaboration and learning. The solutions will encompass

guidelines, models, methods, practices, processes, strategies, recommendations, and tools that contribute to societal resilience throughout the whole disaster life cycle. Particular attention will be given to solutions that support the engagement and collaboration of the different actors in societal resilience, including the means to transfer research results to citizens, increase risk awareness, and use communication channels such as social media.

The ENGAGE team combines knowledge and exploits the results of research on resilience, social capital, and risk communication. The consortium will work together with a Knowledge and Innovation Community of Practice initially composed of 37 organisations, magnifying the ability to create knowledge and exploit novel solutions. ENGAGE brings together a critical mass, contributing to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Sendai framework to establish a broader, people-centred approach to disaster risks.

Ends

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Dissemination and Exploitation Manager: Alexis Gizikis, EENA

Partners:

- SINTEF AS (STF, Coordinator, Norway)
- Deep Blue Srl (DBL, Italy)
- TECNUN University of Navarra (TECNUN, Spain)
- Tel Aviv University (TAU, Israel)
- Trondheim Red Cross Local volunteers (TRC, Norway)
- European Emergency Number Association (EENA, Belgium)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs Department of Emergency Situations (DSU, Romania)
- Everbridge Norway AS (EVBG, Norway)
- Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS, France)
- Gobierno Vasco – Departamento de Seguridad – Ertzaintza (ERTZ, Spain)
- Cittadinanzattiva Onlus (CA, Italy)
- Local Health Authority- ASL ROMA 1 (ASL, Italy)
- Region Östergötland - Centre for Teaching & Research in Disaster Medicine and Traumatology (KMC, Sweden)
- NTNU Samfunnsforskning AS (NTNUSR, Norway)

Initial Knowledge and Innovation Community of Practitioners:

- 14 Agencies & Authorities
- 10 First Responders
- 7 Non-Governmental Organizations
- 2 Primary and secondary schools and 1 Japanese Academia
- 3 Citizen Representatives