

**Concept Note for Workshop on
“Improving Flood and Drought Governance: Applying the EPIC Response Framework”**

28th April, 2023 – New Delhi

Background

Floods and droughts are some of the most tangible – and devastating – consequences of the climate crisis. They increasingly affect communities across the planet. The toll in human suffering and in economic costs is staggering. It is crucial that societies adapt and that governments prioritize, accelerate, and scale up their response mechanisms in the coming decade.

Societies have long struggled to prepare for and respond to floods and droughts - two hydrological extremes that can happen to the same country and at the same time. Climate change is driving more moisture into the atmosphere, resulting in ‘hyper-charged’ storms, heavy rains, and more intense dry spells. In many parts of the world, these changes to the hydrological cycle mean stronger and longer flood and drought periods, and in other areas, individuals are experiencing these hazards to a significant degree for the first time in living memory. Worldwide, it is difficult to point to a region or country that will not face more challenges in managing these extremes in the years to come.

Countries can harness the power of water for development while avoiding the human suffering, economic losses, and ecological degradation that is associated with the hydrological cycle on overdrive and societies can learn how to embrace the inevitability of floods and droughts, and the drastic alternations between them. This requires innovative governance and risk management approaches that navigate uncertainty, protect communities, economies, and ecosystems, reduce duplication, and improve efficiency of public resource use.

Hydro-climatic hazards do not need to become disasters: Hydro-climatology looks at the interaction between weather, watersheds, and water. Hydro-climatic extremes, such as periods of abnormal dryness or wetness, are natural hazards and are increasing in a warming world. Whether a hydro-climatic hazard results in a flood or drought disaster depends on how society manages these risks.

Flood and drought disasters impose a huge toll: Over the last two decades, at least 1.65 billion people have been affected by floods and 1.43 billion by droughts. The economic costs have been staggering, and the social costs even higher as the poor and marginalized are disproportionately affected. Hydro-climatic disasters can have intergenerational poverty impacts, spur migration, and contribute to geopolitical instability.

Some progress has been made but we have not yet come to terms with enormity of the challenge: Over the last few decades, many countries have made significant improvements in managing hydro-climatic risks, supported by international initiatives such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals. But those are not enough, and we are falling behind. National governments often deal with floods and droughts in a siloed manner, without fully encompassing the complexity and inter-linkages between these two types of hazards.

A new perspective, referred to as an "EPIC Response," offered to better manage hydro-climatic risks: This perspective looks at floods and droughts not as independent events but rather as different ends of the same hydro-climatic spectrum that are inextricably linked.

EPIC Response Report was jointly prepared by the World Bank and Deltares (Netherlands) with support from the Global Water Partnership and WMO. It provides a systematic and comprehensive tool for identifying gaps, constraints, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing a government's flood and drought risk management programs. In addition, it highlights the importance of managing floods and drought together as part of same hydro-climatic spectrum. The tool has also tested in Assam, India. Link of the report is: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/publication/an-epic-response-innovative-governance-for-flood-and-drought-risk-management>

With the above background, World Bank, WMO, Deltares (Netherlands) and GWP is organizing a workshop on **“Improving Flood and Drought Governance: Applying the EPIC Response Framework”** at New Delhi on 28th April, 2023.

Objectives of the Workshop

- To disseminate the World Bank's flagship report on hydro-climatic risk management: “An EPIC Response: Innovative Governance for Flood and Drought Risk Management”;
- Share the EPIC Response Assessment Methodology and its application (Piloted in Assam);
- To present the Global Water Partnership/World Meteorological Organization's Integrated Drought Management Program (IDMP) and Associated Program on Flood Management (APFM);
- Explore governance challenges & generate recommendations for improving flood and drought risk management at the national and State levels in India; and come-up with recommendations for improving flood and drought governance.

Scope of the Workshop

- Presenting the EPIC Response Report;
- Demonstrating the application of the EPIC Response Framework;
- Examining flood governance challenges and opportunities at the national and state level;
- Examining drought governance challenges and opportunities at the national and state level; and,
- Expert Panel discussion on recommendations for improving flood and drought governance.

Outcomes

- Understanding of the EPIC Response Framework and how it can be applied;
- Recommendations for improving flood and drought governance in India; and,
- Recommendations for how international organizations (World Bank, WMO, GWP, IWMI, etc) can help improve flood and drought governance in India.

Participants

In-person participants from the Apex Departments of Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Irrigation; State Water Resources Departments; State Agriculture Departments; State Irrigation Departments; Indian Meteorological Department, State Meteorological Departments; National Disaster Management Authority; State Disaster Management Authorities; National Institute for Disaster Management; Researchers; Academia, Community Based Organizations; Private Companies, River Basin Organizations from India and some on-line participants from the South Asia region and other countries of the World.

Duration: One Day

Facilitated and Coordinated by: India Water Partnership (IWP)

About the Organizers

The World Bank

The World Bank is an international development organization owned by 187 countries. Its role is to reduce poverty by lending money to the governments of its poorer members to improve their economies and to improve the standard of living of their people.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics.

Deltares

Deltares is an independent institute for applied research in the field of water and subsurface. Throughout the world the Deltare work on smart solutions, innovations and applications for people, environment and society.

Global Water Partnership

The Global Water Partnership or GWP is a global action network with over 3,000 Partner organizations in 179 countries. The network has 77 accredited Country Water Partnerships and 13 Regional Water Partnerships including GWP South Asia. The partnership provides opportunities to leverage the knowledge and expertise of GWP and allows development of collaborative programmes and resource mobilization.

About the Facilitator and Coordinator

India Water Partnership (IWP)

India Water Partnership (IWP) is a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting and supporting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in India. The IWP has also been accredited by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) as Country Water Partnership of GWP. IWP works on water security in India. IWP Secretariat is hosted by WAPCOS Limited.