

Uscore2 Why Peer Review?

EU Civil Protection legislation (2013, Decision No. 1313/2013/EU) advocates that Member States share good practice and help each other to identify where additional effort is needed to reduce disaster risks. Practical translation of this includes cities conducting better risk assessment and developing action plans (also see the EU Mayors-Adapt initiative 2014). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 has one of its seven global targets being to “Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies by 2020” and emphasizes the need to empower local governments to reduce disaster risk. The peer review process will provide feedback to enable this process.

The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) explores the role of peer reviews in the Roadmap for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework:

“Within the Sendai Framework, governments are requested to monitor and voluntarily report on its implementation of the framework. The use of peer reviews to enhance the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and present disaster risk reduction strategies and improve policy-making in disaster risk management has been a very promising initiative. It encourages learning across countries and steers progress in further developing and implementing national and European Union risk management policies and practices.

The peer review process, a governance tool, takes advantage of a policy exchange among peers to facilitate the exchange of best practices, examining the performance of the reviewed country in disaster risk management policy. It helps to strengthen mutual understanding and trust in the results, based on exchange of experiences and non-binding recommendations aimed at policy improvement. Because of the nature and the objective of the peer review process, it is considered to be an important contribution to the overall objective of developing national and local level disaster risk reduction strategies and to strengthen cooperation between countries. Peer Reviews are also an essential element to ensure an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction, linking risk prevention, preparedness and response actions.

The EFDRR will use the results of peer reviews as a mutual learning tool to further encourage Sendai Framework implementation.” (<https://rm.coe.int/1680480466>)

Some of the benefits of conducting a city-to-city peer review are two-way and will include:

- An opportunity to assess the current situation and identify actions that will further improve their city's disaster risk reduction.
- The host team is challenged and supported by a multi-disciplinary, cross-sector professional expert panel that are likely to be from a different country and bring alternative perspectives which further enhance a broader understanding of how DRR is conducted at an international level.
- There is a facilitated exchange of good practice and suggested improvements in city policy and operations through expert review and mutual learning.
- Policy dialogue is nurtured, consistency improved and progress is steered in critical areas for cooperation.
- Peer reviews are an important part of prevention and preparedness in the European Union mechanism which strengthens cooperation between participating states thereby ensuring an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction.
- An opportunity for the peer review team to learn lessons and good practices from the Host Team to further improve disaster risk reduction in their own cities.
- Members of the peer review team will be given the opportunity for personal development by taking part in the peer review process.

Peer reviews are a unique, and privileged, opportunity for peer teams and the host team to engage, challenge and learn about disaster risk reduction. Taking part in the peer review process enables the host and review cities to open dialogue and generate ideas about different aspects of disaster risk reduction. The process is entirely voluntary and its aim is to encourage conversations in order to seek and promote good practice within cities across the globe. The peer review process is not intended to be used as a comparator of one city to another, it is intended to encourage cross-border cooperation and collaboration whilst promoting the understanding and improvement of effective DRR activities. Every city and review team are different and so the outcome of each review will be different. All those involved in planning and participating in the review should keep one question at the forefront of their minds during the review process: "What will most help the city to move forward?" If this is done, it's hard to go wrong. Specific objectives of the peer review process are to:

- i. facilitate exchange of good practices
- ii. strengthen mutual learning and common understanding and
- iii. deliver credible and trusted recommendations