

SUCCESS STORY

Southeast Europe Distribution System Operator Working Group Addresses Emergency Response and Preparedness in Response to Balkan Flooding



The Working Group was established by USAID, the United States Energy Association and the electricity distribution system operators in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia to improve the electricity service on the “last mile” of networks delivering electricity to residential, commercial and industrial consumers.

The Working Group’s Benchmarking Study provides a set of transparent and readily visible metrics that participants are using to identify companies with outage management best practices that may be replicated region-wide.

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Recognizing the impact of the recent flooding in Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, USAID convened the Southeast Europe Security of Supply Distribution System Operator (DSO) Working Group to assist electric companies in the region improve their capability to manage service restoration to millions of electricity consumers. In coordination with United States Energy Association and utility regulators in Southeast Europe, the working group focuses on improving the capacity of regional distribution system operators to reduce outages, integrate variable renewable energy, and mitigate the effects of climate related outages by hardening their networks, developing business continuity plans, and supporting mutual aid to accelerate restoration of service.

Member of the Working Group reported that damage to distribution networks from the recent flooding will require hundreds of millions of dollars for reconstruction. The economic value of resulting from inability to deliver electricity to customers could be substantially higher. DSO’s reported wide-spread use of costly emergency mobile diesel generators. And while restoration continues, it is delayed by a lack of spare poles, conductors, transformers and meters. In this context the Working Group members will commence examining the legal, regulatory and financial pre-requisites of establishing a mutual assistance program in Southeast Europe.

With assistance from volunteers from American Electric Power (AEP) of Columbus, Ohio, the Working Group recently completed a benchmarking study comparing outage management metrics between countries in the region and with AEP. Among others benefits, the benchmarking study provides participating utilities with a set of metrics on the frequency and duration of weather (and non-weather) related unplanned outages to identify best practices. The benchmarking process will improve as the data acquisition and dissemination deepens and best practices continue to be identified.

American Electric Power also volunteered to assist and develop business continuity plans containing management, engineering, procurement, financial and safety strategies used by utilities during emergency situations to quickly stabilize businesses operations.