

Speakers Corner Civil Protection Forum: DRIVER+

Marcel van Berlo, 6 March 2018

How to best support practitioners in their own capability development? How many innovative CM solutions are really getting implemented? What are reasons for that? And how can we improve on this? Difficult questions that do not have easy answers.

One could say that First Responders are overall pretty conservative and reluctant towards innovative solutions. There still is only a rather selected group of practitioners actively contributing to innovative research projects, especially European ones. However, does this mean that the other Practitioner organisations are not interested at all? Possibly they are not even aware of the bare existence of these innovative solutions. Or they perceive the outcomes of research projects as intermediate results which need to be further developed by RTOs and Industries before even considering procuring these. Or it is simply complicated for practitioners to assess whether a solution has added value in addressing their capability gaps.

DRIVER+ is about empowering Crisis Management practitioners in driving their own capability development. To do so, a pan-European Test-bed is being developed in which innovative solutions can be tested in a systematic way during Trials, a Portfolio of Solutions is implemented to store all results and user experiences, and a Community of Practice is established in which Practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, industry and citizens can engage in meaningful discussions. Let me please explain these expected results.

The first part of the Test-bed is a Trial Guidance Methodology and Tool that supports practitioners in analysing their capability gaps, designing the environment and scenarios to test out the solutions, to measure and analyse the performance, and to define the lessons-learned and the way forward.

The second part of the Test-bed is the technical infrastructure consisting of a variety of open source software and hardware to create a virtual space for

testing out the solutions in a realistic environment so that the identified capability gaps are really being addressed. Of course, this virtual environment can be linked to actual physical infrastructure as well.

The Portfolio of Solutions is an easy to access database storing all relevant information on the solutions, the capability gaps they address, as well as the lessons-learned and experiences resulting from the Trials. Tips and tricks with respect to designing and evaluating Trials, and experiences on using the solutions can be implemented supporting other interested practitioners.

A Community of Practice is established to enhance a shared understanding on CM amongst all stakeholders, to contribute to standardization, and to stimulate and support the driving of meaningful innovation.

We are organizing four large-scale Trials and a Final Demonstration in Poland, France, Austria, the Netherlands and Italy, involving solution providers from outside the consortium as well. Moreover, we are establishing a variety of cooperation agreements with other stakeholders and networks, for which you are all cordially invited.

Finally, we do not have the illusion that DRIVER+ will immediately provide the final answers to all the difficult questions I raised in the beginning. Not all practitioners will be using our Test-bed and Portfolio of Solutions automatically and instantly. Therefore, we will be establishing a sustainable network of Centres of Expertise that will implement, maintain and further develop our results, and contribute to the empowerment of the European Crisis Management professionals.