

GEM Outreach Meeting, 8-10 June 2009, Hohenkammer, Germany

1. 130 individuals, from a variety of backgrounds, attended the GEM Outreach Meeting 2009: (earthquake) engineers, scientists with expertise in the field of seismology, private industry representatives, government officials, professionals and representatives of international organizations. 41 nations from all continents were represented in the meeting, which indicates the worldwide interest for GEM and growing community of GEM supporters. In a time where urbanization is a continuing trend and many countries lack vital information on seismic risk, those present acknowledged the need for a universal standard for calculating and communicating earthquake risk. Practically all participants expressed a clear wish to continue to be involved in GEM and several offered to advocate GEM's cause.
2. The role of different types of participants in GEM and the advantages of partnership were discussed, and the importance of involving a great number of participants was confirmed. Private participants play a major role in making the model possible due to their financial contribution and will ensure the model meets (private industry) end-user needs. Public participants, country governments – who may actually choose to participate through a representative institution – are of major relevance to ensure that GEM outcomes are incorporated in national policies, and also contribute to GEM financially. Associate participants, international and intergovernmental organisations, are important both for sharing their experience/data with GEM as well as contributing to GEM's worldwide outreach efforts. During the meeting, Norway announced its adherence to GEM, whilst the World Bank confirmed its desire to become associate participant, an association that was then approved by Governing Board, who met after the Outreach meeting. A number of other countries (e.g. USA, China, India, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, Luxembourg, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc) have re-iterated their interest in adhering to GEM and in continuing internal discussion in that sense. Some private organizations have also shown interest in joining the GEM endeavour.
3. The progress of GEM1, a 15-months pilot project (January 2009 – March 2010) focused on generating GEM's first products and initial model building infrastructure, was described. A number of seismic hazard and risk codes have been provided by the seismic risk community and are being reviewed and compared in a sandbox testing environment; global models and databases (e.g. seismic source zones, building inventory data) are being collected and archived; standardized data models and data exchange formats are being proposed; the GEM1 portal is being built with free open source software. A GEM1 'wiki' has also been created, and the community re-invited to participate and contribute. There was great general enthusiasm on the progress and results being obtained in GEM1.
4. The current status of GEM's Global Components (Hazard, Risk, Socio-Economic Impact) activities was also presented, noting that Requests for Proposals (RfPs) on five different seismic hazard topics have been launched on May 15th, with a submission deadline of July 15th. Submitted proposals will then be submitted to a peer review system, and the selected consortia should be financed to start their applied research activities at the end of the year. Kick-off presentations and discussions on the Risk and Socio-Economic Impact fronts also took place, with a view to trigger the scoping on possible RfPs in these two areas. Follow-up meetings are already scheduled to take place in September, followed by consensus-building workshops later this year.
5. The progress on the Regional Initiatives (Europe, Middle-East and Arabia, Central Asia, Pacific and South-East Asia, South-Asia, North-East Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean) front was also described; the second day of the event was fully and exclusively dedicated to these. Regional programmes in Europe and Middle-East have already been initiated, whilst funding for the Central Asia programme has been approved. A proposal for a South-America regional project has also been submitted to the Inter-American Development Bank. It is recalled that Regional Initiatives will be carried out under the GEM-umbrella, even if independently financed, thus using GEM standards and tools, and will provide important regional data as input for GEM.
6. Immediate future actions now include:
 - a. enhance national participation in GEM
 - b. finalise global components programmes for risk and socio-economic impact
 - c. define and kick-start regional programmes for "missing regions"
 - d. continue progress within GEM1
 - e. continue dissemination and outreach activities
 - f. increase the community of GEM believers and supporters