



Model National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems Policy

Adaptation Guide

The Adaptation Guide is designed to assist representatives from National Disaster Organisations and their partners in CDEMA Participating States in their quest to adapt the CDEMA Model National Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Policy. It was developed to allow for flexibility in how it is used by all Participating States regardless of where they are in the MHEWS policy dialogue and development process.

Model National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems Policy: Adaptation Guide

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Regional Coordination

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency

Deputy Executive Director
Ms. Elizabeth Riley

Regional Technical Coordinator
Dr. Alexcia Cooke

Prepared by

Mr. Jeremy Collymore

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ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EWS	Early Warning System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	MHEWS Advisory Committee
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MHEWS	Multi-hazard Early Warning System
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PS	Participating State
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

BACKGROUND

The increasing spate of extreme and catastrophic events in the Caribbean, Tropical Storm Tomas in 2010; 2011 April rains in St Vincent and the Grenadines; December 2013 rains in St Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia; Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and rainfall events in Belize and Guyana have re-ignited a dialogue on the adequacy of existing early warning systems (Collymore 2014; Collymore, 2017).

In view of reoccurring concerns over timeliness, adequacy and effectiveness of early warning systems in the Caribbean (Collymore 1989; 2004; 2014; Villagran de Leon et al 2003), interventions are being rolled out to assess and bolster the Early Warning Systems (EWS) in the region. One of the main areas where challenges seem to be emerging is the lack of public policies specifically dedicated to early warning (Villagran et al 2003).

Approximately 70% of CDEMA PS indicated the existence of an early warning policy (CDEMA, 2010). This is because EWS policy guidance is deduced from other disaster risk management related instruments. In reality however, there is no specific national EWS policy.

The purpose of EWS policies is to establish authority for system administration, control, access, maintenance and use of disaster alert, notification and warning systems. A critical priority for effective EWS is *'better integration of early warning (and related disaster risk reduction and management) into development*

processes and public policies' (EWIII, 2006).

An integrated EWS policy would include, motivating long-term political commitment, developing legislation and institutional frameworks with defined gender differentiated roles and responsibilities and sustainable budgets, training, better linking of early warning in national economic planning, and optimizing performance through standards and targets (EWSIII, 2006).

Based on findings from a recent regional study, the absence of a policy framework is constraining Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) at the national level (Collymore, 2016). The study further recommended a revisit of the mind-set that currently drives DRM and EWS Policy in the Caribbean to include issues such as the placement of EWS in the strategic and operational plans of stakeholders at all levels, the embracing of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and standards for measuring performance.

The Model National MHEWS policy details the commitment of Governments within the CDEMA Participating States to ensure public safety, protect human lives and the nation's resource base and productive assets through the articulation of a vision, principles, strategic goals, and priorities for the country's national MHEWS. It provides the strategy for achieving the EWS targets as articulated in the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Results Framework and the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for DRR.

PURPOSE OF THE ADAPTATION GUIDE

Although CDEMA Participating States share many commonalities they differ in terms of size, topography, economic, political, social and administrative structures. This variability is acknowledged and informs the development of this document which provides guidance to country representatives within the national disaster management system who wish to adopt and adapt the CDEMA Model National Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) Policy. Some CDEMA

The objective of this Adaptation Guide is to provide detailed guidance on how to adapt the Model National Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Policy within CDEMA Participating States.

Participating States may have already begun the process or have a suite of policies in place that deal with early warning systems. These Participating States may wish to use this Adaptation Guide to enhance and/or update their existing frameworks so that they are aligned with the Model Policy. Each country will be guided by its own national risk context.

Some Participating States (PSs) may choose to use the Model National MHEWS Policy to guide the process, while others may wish to initiate the process by revising an existing national policy while other PSs may opt to use the model to help formulate EWS legislation. Regardless of the path the Participating States choose, a critical element will be the coordination of the diverse range of stakeholders (women and men, children youth, the disabled and elderly groups), community groups, local government, national government, regional institutions and organizations, international bodies, NGOs, the private sector, science and academia that have a role to play in the EWS agenda in the respective Participating State. This coordination could be done through an existing mechanism, the repurposing of an existing structure or the establishment of an inter-sectoral and multi-agency committee to assist in the policy/strategy formulation. The intent is to promote and ensure the extensive gender responsive stakeholder engagement and consultations in the policy formulation process which includes:

1. Issue identification
2. Policy analysis
3. Policy instrument development
4. Consultation
5. Coordination
6. Decision
7. Implementation
8. Evaluation

The process of policy formulation that is embedded in this Adaptation Guide is embedded in a set of inter-related activities, informed by the Guidance Document developed by CDEMA for the preparation and adaptation of a Model National CDM Policy for Caribbean Countries. Participating States which have adapted the CDM Policy will be aware and familiar with the processes involved in policy formulation.

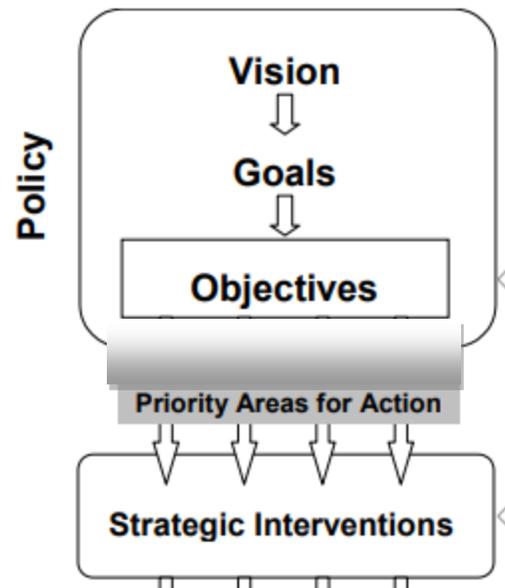
A policy is defined as a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual intended to influence decisions and actions.

The National MHEWS Policy provides guidance on the principles and processes that will inform the design, implementation, management, and monitoring and evaluation of early warning systems in this Country. It provides the framework for defining roles and responsibilities for effective coordination and efficiency in our early warning systems taking into account the diversity of hazards and stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.

UNDRR (2017) defines a MHEWS as one that, addresses several hazards and/or impacts of similar or different type in contexts where hazardous events may occur alone, simultaneously, cascadingly or cumulatively over time, and taking into account the potential interrelated effects. A multi-hazard early warning system with the ability to warn of one or more hazards increases the efficiency and consistency of warnings through coordinated and compatible mechanisms and capacities, involving multiple disciplines for updated and accurate hazards identification and monitoring for multiple hazards.

EWS, as a priority is articulated in the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Results Framework (2014-2024) which provides the framework for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in CDEMA PS. The Strategy provides scope for assessing, analyzing and making targeted interventions to achieve its Regional Outcomes. Priority Area 4 seeks to ‘address community level vulnerability within the overall framework for disaster management’ and the associated Regional Outcome 4.3. ‘Community Early Warning Systems, integrated, improved and expanded’ requires that countries establish early warning systems that are end-to-end, integrated and fully functional to warn the population of impending danger and to take appropriate actions.

The principles and priorities of the Model MHEWS were informed by the CDM Policy, literature review and stakeholder dialogue. The Policy concept consists of three main pillars (i) the four EWS components, (ii) the enabling environment and (iii) guiding principles.



POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

The National MHEWS Policy provides a basis for formulating strategies, plans, legislation and other framework documents to advance the development of early warning systems. While this policy reflects long-term strategic interventions, these may also be subjected to modifications and revisions based on changed circumstances.

The approach to formulating national policies must be participatory, gender responsive, appropriate, systematic, accessible, replicable, adaptable, and amenable to monitoring and evaluation. For the National MHEWS Policy to be accepted and implemented by key stakeholders it cannot be developed in isolation as active buy-in, inclusiveness and participation from stakeholders (women and men, children, youth, the disabled, elderly groups, local government, national government, regional institutions and organizations, international bodies, NGOs, the private sector, science and academia) will determine the degree of its ownership and ultimate success.

The Model National MHEWS Policy Adaptation Guide embraces the CDEMA CDM model policy adaptation process which embraces the following standard steps:

1. Formation of a MHEWS working/expert group which includes key stakeholders that are endorsed by and report to high level inter-ministerial body/directorate.
2. Review of existing early warning sector policies, strategies and legislation
3. Sex and age disaggregated data collection and data analysis to guide preparation of the draft policy.
4. Preparation of Context and Issues discussion paper to guide 'proposed policy directions'.
5. Wider consultations with civil society, stakeholders, target groups, gender experts, local government functionaries and formal & informal local and public and private sector representatives.
6. Revision of the draft using feedback from stakeholder engagement
7. Circulation of the first draft to different Ministries, agencies, groups, institutions and organisations for their review and written comments.
8. Broad based gender responsive consultations on the first draft of the policy.
9. Finalisation of the draft policy through an inter-ministerial meeting after discussing the comments and observations received through the consultations, discussions and workshop.
10. Approval of the revised policy by the sponsoring/parent Ministry
11. Submission of the revised policy to Cabinet/Council of Ministers for endorsement
12. Final approval to the revised policy by the legislative arm of government
13. Publication of the approved policy in the official gazette or related public document
14. Initiation of the institutional and administrative actions for implementation of the Policy by the sponsoring or parent ministry
15. Initiation of the formulation of gender responsive strategies, plans and programs supporting the approved policy by the sponsoring/parent Ministry

Phase 1 – Country Ownership and Leadership Definition

Expected Outcomes from Phase 1

Multi-Stakeholder Oversight Committee	Policy	Stakeholder Analysis	Country Ownership
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Before writing the MHEWS Policy it is important to determine who will form the group to oversee the development of the policy. This is necessary to ensure that there is involvement in, support for and understanding of the policy. Involving a wide cross section of stakeholders at the beginning of the process will make the implementation of the policy easier as there will be understanding of and commitment to the concept of the MHEWS(policy). The first activity therefore will be to identify all persons who are engaged in or should be engaged in all aspects of the early warning system, ensuring a diversity of perspectives, capacities and gender parity.

There are numerous actors involved in EWS in each CDEMA Participating State. Very often these are not coordinated or integrated, either inside or outside of government. Partnership management and stakeholder engagement are areas identified for immediate action. At a minimum, specific activities to be undertaken during this phase should include

- a. Identifying all stakeholders (individuals, women and men, children youth, the disabled and elderly groups, community groups, local government, national government, regional institutions and organizations, international bodies, NGOs, the private sector, science and academia) who have (or should have) a role to play in the national early warning system
- b. Establishing a national MHEWS Alliance within the aegis of the national disaster management system.

The model MHEWS policy recommends that its development and management be embedded within the existing National Disaster Executive Committee of the National Disaster Organization. It further proposes the establishment of a MHEWS Advisory Committee (MAC) that will have oversight for the policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

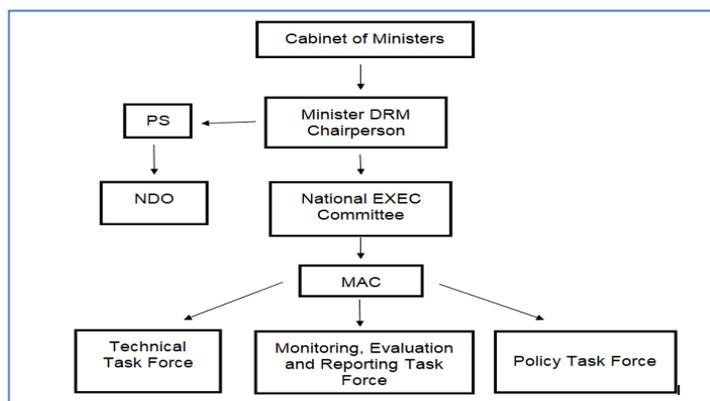


Figure 1: MHEWS Policy Oversight

The National Disaster Office (NDO) will be responsible for its coordination and implementation. The MAC will have three Technical Task Forces –a. Technical, b. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting, and c. Policy. It is important that the technical task forces have appropriate gender representation.

The MAC will meet regularly in accordance with its terms of reference to fulfil its roles and responsibilities, including providing leadership and oversight of the Policy's implementation. The MAC will guide the development of the strategy to support this policy.

Support from government, development partners, civil society organizations, gender experts and higher education institutions will be needed to assist in the operationalization of the MHEWS Policy. Under the strategies in this Policy a programme with clearly defined actions, lead agencies, support agencies, resources, timelines, and monitoring and evaluation measures will be developed by the NDO in cooperation with the other lead entities for EWS. Additionally, MHEWS considerations will be integrated into corporate and business plans of the government entities (Figure 1).

- c. Integrating annual MHEWS multi-Stakeholder gender responsive consultations into the annual proceedings of the national executive committees.
- d. Involving development partners, regional organizations and academic institutions to play key roles in planning, research, outreach and MHEWS policy implementation.

Not all entities involved in the process will be directly involved in writing the policy but every effort must be made to ensure that there is widest possible participation in the policy preparation process. Care must therefore be taken in the building of the policy writing team to ensure that as many people as possible are involved in the process with varying skills set (technical, writing, editorial and organizational). Special attention should be given to ensuring stakeholders have the capacities to integrate human rights, gender and intersectionality approaches.

The MHEWS Working Group (Oversight Committee) must be a cohesive group with the members working well together. The whole group must contribute ideas and suggestions for adapting the model policy and all efforts should be made to encourage continued and active participation throughout the policy development process.

Phase 2 – Country Baseline and Context Setting

Expected Outcomes from Phase 2

Situation Analysis	EWS Gaps and Challenges	MHEWS Conceptual Framework and Guiding Principles
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Critical to the development of the policy is a strong foundation that is based on the country context which articulates the importance of the National MHEWS Policy to the country in social and economic terms and the potential impact of not having such a policy in place. The rationale therefore has to be solid to compel the stakeholders to undertake the various specific actions that are outlined for each strategic intervention.

Determining needs and identifying gaps will require an assessment of the country vulnerability to hazards and opportunities for reducing hazard vulnerability and risk. Where available the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) Roadmap which was developed in response to validated gaps documented in the National MHEWS Gap Analysis Report should be used. The roadmap will help guide national and local actions and investments towards improving EWS for more effective disaster risk reduction (DRR) and to move towards the realization of a more integrated system.

Where the MHEWS Roadmap is not available the supporting data can be gleaned from the application of the MHEWS Checklist which is a non-technical tool designed to assess early warning systems across the four pillars - Disaster risk knowledge, Detection, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting of the hazards and possible consequences, Warning dissemination and communication, and Preparedness and response capabilities.

At a minimum, specific activities to be undertaken by the national team/working group during this phase will include:

- i. Discussing and determining exactly what is meant by early warning and MHEWS within your country context.
- ii. Identifying the diversity of hazards that have the potential to impact the country as well as gender differentiated vulnerability, exposure and risk.
- iii. Developing a risk profile and prioritizing hazards and concerns based on the country's acceptable risk appetite.
- iv. Reviewing existing regional agreements to determine national commitments and opportunities to achieve multiple objectives through the mitigation policy.
- v. Discussing and determining how to integrate a gender and intersectional perspective in the EWS.

- vi. Reviewing national and sectoral policies and enabling frameworks (written and implied) that relate to early warning issues with a view to determining:
 - If these focus in any way on early warning.
 - Adjustments that are needed to have a multi-hazard focus
 - Who has responsibility for EWS activities
 - Whether funds are available for early warning activities
 - If there are opportunities for stakeholder involvement
 - Gaps and areas for improvement and means for integrating these policies into the national development policies or addressing issues, which should be included in a mitigation policy.
 - Current policies and activities that contribute to increased vulnerability to hazards.
 - Current policies and activities that contribute to addressing social inequalities and increasing resilience.
- vii. Examining legislation (include those in draft) which relate or should relate to early warning to identify gaps and to determine the requirements for legislation enhancement.
- viii. Determining the policy context which should set out:
 - The status of EWS and MHEWS in the country
 - The issues that should be addressed in the policy based on the gaps and challenges that exist
 - The conceptual framework and associated guiding principles

Proposed text articulation is outlined in the Model National MHEWS Policy that can be adapted to the specific country context.

Phase 3 – Definition Phase

Expected Outcomes from Phase 2

Policy Vision and Goal	Policy Objectives	Strategic Interventions
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The aim of this phase is to outline why the National MHEWS Policy is needed and its purpose. Answers to these questions will lead to the crafting (or adapting) and approval of the policy’s vision, goal(s) and objective(s).

The definition phase must be underpinned by important elements such as inclusiveness, active participation and transparency within and from all key stakeholders. Proposed text articulation for the policy vision, goal and objectives is outlined in the CDEMA Model National MHEWS Policy and can be adapted to the specific country context.

There are several national, regional and international frameworks and strategies in which the issues of MHEWS are included or relevant. Mainstreaming of MHEWS can be an effective means of integrating into these cross-cutting issues into policy, plans and processes across levels of government, sectors and stakeholders. The MHEWS Policy should:

- i. Promote and operationalize a culture of risk management, resilience and safety.
- ii. Promote inclusiveness, gender equality, social cohesion and social equity.
- iii. Adopt an approach to the design of evidence-based MHEWS solutions based on comprehensive analysis of risk and the access to information.
- iv. Explore options through which MHEWS considerations are integrated across disaster risk management, sustainable development and resilience dialogues, advocacy and education.
- v. Integrate MHEWS resourcing into partner Planning and Budget processes.
- vi. Integrate MHEWS in sector and community risk and vulnerability assessments and standard operating procedures.

Once the policy statement (vision, goal, objectives) have been defined, concurrence should be sought from the key national stakeholders before developing (or adapting) the other parts of the national MHEWS policy. Where needed, guidance can also be sought from the CDEMA Coordinating Unit.

Phase 4 – Development Phase

Expected Outcomes from Phase 4

Draft National MHEWS Policy	Feedback from key stakeholders	Approved National MHEWS Policy
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CDEMA Participating States can task a small working group from the larger leadership mechanism established during Phase 1 or engage a consultant to develop (or adapt) the CDEMA Model National MHEWS Policy. Although the policy direction paper can be developed with a 4 weeks' period depending on if the Model National MHEWS Policy is used, adequate time must be allocated for multi-stakeholder consultation. The hosting of a National MHEWS Policy Adaptation Workshop will generate buy-in from key stakeholders and tap into the collective knowledge of the EWS stakeholder base.

Depending on the size of the country, the early warning context, time and availability of resources, the consultative process may require more than one national workshop, or a series of multi stakeholder gender responsive stakeholder consultations, that culminate into a final national workshop at the end of the process.

The conduct of the workshop and stakeholder consultations is critical to the success of the policy development (adaptation) process. Consideration must be given to:

- i. Ensuring that participants selected to be involved in the stakeholder engagement are representative of the country's age and sex diversity, EWS diversity and all the requisite entities.
- ii. Appropriately briefing and, where possible, providing sufficient information to the participants to allow them to meaningfully engage in the workshop or consultation. Special attention should be given to including women's, men's, youth, elderly or vulnerable groups that might need extra capacity building processes to meaningfully engage.
- iii. Utilising a gender responsive, consultative and participatory approach that effectively balances plenary sessions with working group discussions to engage participant and tap into their collective wisdom
- iv. Engaging the stakeholders after the workshop to highlight how their feedback was incorporated into the post-workshop revised national MHEWS policy

A sample workshop agenda is provided at Appendix I.

Utilising the national workshop approach should in most cases eliminate the need for further stakeholder consultation as the report therefrom should be circulated to all the relevant ministries, agencies, private sector and civil society actors for review and feedback. The feedback on the report should be incorporated and used in soliciting the necessary ministerial and legislative approval.

Phase 5 – Implementation and Evaluation Phase

Expected Outcomes from Phase 5

**National MHEWS
Action Plan with defined lead and
supporting agencies**

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
Framework

Implementation

The aim of the implementation phase is to execute the specific actions outlined in the Policy.

For each strategic intervention and specific action, lead and support agencies, resources and timelines will be further developed to operationalize this Policy. This will be supported by strategies for partnership management and mainstreaming. An Action Plan supported by monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and policy review will support implementation.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

An integral part of the implementation phase is to ensure that a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework is in place to support the policy.

Many NDOs do not have monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) units. Where this is missing the MHEWS Advisory Committee should establish a MER working group to provide this function until the capacity strengthening of the NDO to embrace this function unfolds.

The MAC will, through its Working Group develop a MER framework for this Policy aligning with those standards established in the national system. A MER system is required for the Policy to measure and monitor changes over time including gender indicators, track the effectiveness of the MHEWS Policy and guide future planning.

The purpose of the M&E framework is to inform decision makers whether targets are being met, when circumstances have changed, whether policies are on track, or not being implemented. Information would be provided on which decisions can be made about changes needed in implementation mechanisms. The M&E approach must be practical, taking into account limited institutional capacities and data availability whilst promoting alignment of effort and accountability.

While national level action and reporting is necessary, there is a need to address and report on MHEWS within the regional and global context and on aggregate changes over time. This will need to be integrated into the National CDM, adaptation and resilience reporting processes.

The MAC will oversee reporting on the Policy at its regular meetings, supported by the NDO Secretariat. The MAC will determine the frequency, form and level of detail of reporting it requires on activities under the strategies in this Policy. An annual report on implementation of the Policy will be prepared by MAC and made available to the National Disaster Executive Committee and to the public through the established process.

Periodic reviews of the Policy must be undertaken to ensure it aligns with contemporary MHEWS, climate change, SDG and disaster risk reduction policy and other developments in the country, the region and globally. The leadership mechanism defined during Phase 1 will manage the policy review process.

Appendix I

National MHEWS Policy Adaptation Workshop

1.0 SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To provide the context and outcome of the MHEWS Policy adaptation process
2. To validate the adaptation process for the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Policy
3. To utilize the adaptation guide to develop the policy statement - overarching vision, goals and objective
4. To develop the policy strategy- strategic interventions and specific or priority actions
5. To present the draft Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Policy

2.0 TARGET AUDIENCE

- National level stakeholders (public and private sector, NGOs, CBOs and faith-based organizations with a role and/or interest in early warning system)
- Where possible, regional entities (including academic) and the CDEMA Coordinating Unit should also be included

3.0 PROGRAMME

PLENARY 1: Overview of the (country's) Early Warning System and Programming Framework and how it is understood

Presentations from the MHEWS Working Group

PLENARY 2: Context and approach to the development of the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Model Policy

Session to be led by the MHEWS Working Group, NDO or consultant (if used)

PLENARY 3: Presentation of Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Model Policy

Session to be led by the MHEWS working group, NDO or consultant (if used)

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Adapting the MHEWS Policy for (the country) – Review the Policy Elements

- EWS Policy Conceptual Framework and Guiding Principles
- Policy Statement (Vision Goals and Objectives)
- Policy Strategy: Strategic Interventions
- Sustainability

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Adapting the MHEWS Policy for (the country) – Defining the Institutional Arrangements for the National EWS

- Responsibilities including identification of any relevant oversight and/or governance structures

CONCLUSION AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEXT STEPS

Session to be led by the MHEWS Working Group