Category: **Obligation to Make Environmental Information Public**

Sub-Category: Access to Information Relating to Natural/Environmental Disasters

Name of Good Practice: El Salvador’s Environmental Observatory

Key Words: Access to Information, Technology, Internet, Natural Disasters, Monitoring, Participation

Implementing Actors: National Ministry: El Salvador Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN)

Location: El Salvador

Description: Since 2001, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) has operated El Salvador’s Environmental Observatory and its predecessor the National System of Territorial Studies (SNET). The Observatory aims to support environmental management and risk management through systematic observation of potential environmental threats related to meteorological, hydrological, geological and oceanographic phenomena, based on scientific observation techniques carried out by a network of local observers. The objective of the monitoring is to identify early warning of natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and flooding, and to provide information for planning responses in order to minimize the impacts from such threats to life, property, infrastructure, and livelihoods in general.

Notably, this practice combines monitoring at the national and local level. At the national level, MARN monitors for natural hazard threats with advanced technological equipment, such as satellite imagery, weather stations, and seismic detection equipment. MARN also uses advanced modelling techniques to determine the impacts of potential natural hazards on communities, such as the impacts from flooding. MARN disseminates information on potential threats in real time to a network of local and provincial actors that have been trained to interpret the information, including municipalities, governorates, and community leaders, and it also issues news alerts on its website. In addition, since 2002 MARN has trained a network of local observers, such as community leaders of people vulnerable to natural hazards, to monitor rainfall, measure river levels, observe for signs of landslides, and perform other tasks.

MARN transmits information on threats to 88 municipalities, 14 governorates and 6 government institutions that have been provided with equipment and trained in the interpretation of the information. MARN has also trained 600 local observers to participate in the monitoring programme. According to MARN, the network of local observers is vital to supplement the information generated by the central authorities to ensure a comprehensive monitoring programme.

Further Information: On the SNET webpage at <http://snet.gob.sv/>.