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UNDERSTANDING RISK  
GLOBAL FORUM 2024

TRADITION • INNOVATION • RESILIENCE

Tackling the ‘impossible’: long lead time flood warnings in very fast-responding basins in a low-capacity context – West African experiences

**Speakers:**

Murray Dale. JBA Consulting

(Thomas Lebbie. National Disaster Management Agency of Sierra Leone)

Moussa Sidibe. World Bank Group



# Session overview

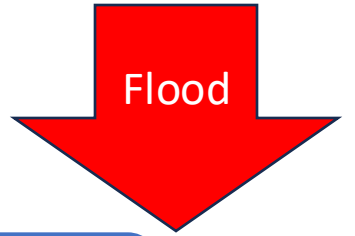
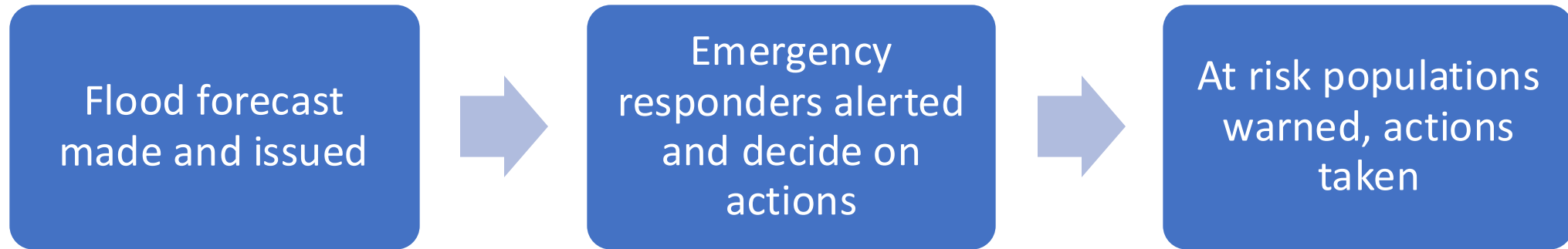
1. Introduction – Murray Dale, JBA
2. Flooding in Freetown: real time challenges – Thomas Lebbie, National Disaster Management Agency of Sierra Leone
3. World Bank views on flash flood risks – Moussa Sidibe, WBG
4. Q&A session:
  - i. What solutions have audience members found are effective?
  - ii. How should the technology and communication challenges be moved forward?

# Why 'impossible'?

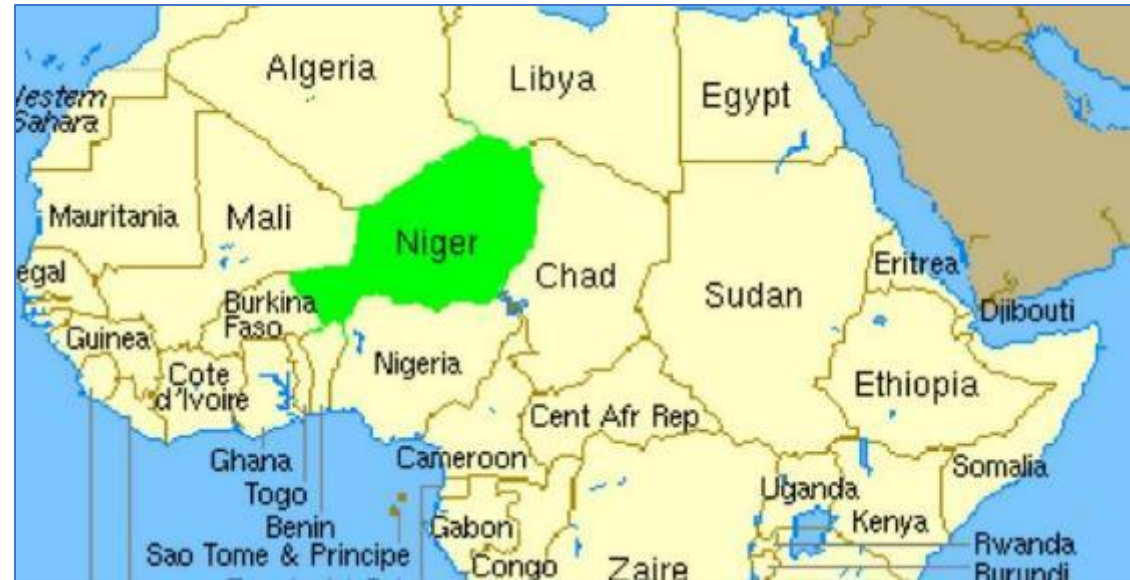
1. Sufficient lead time - 6 hours to 3 days - needed to prepare for floods and take actions. Even 2 hours lead time can be useful.
2. In heavy convective downpours in west Africa, 100mm (4 inches) of rain can fall in one or two hours.
3. In urban areas, especially steep ones, flooding occurs **minutes** after heavy rain.



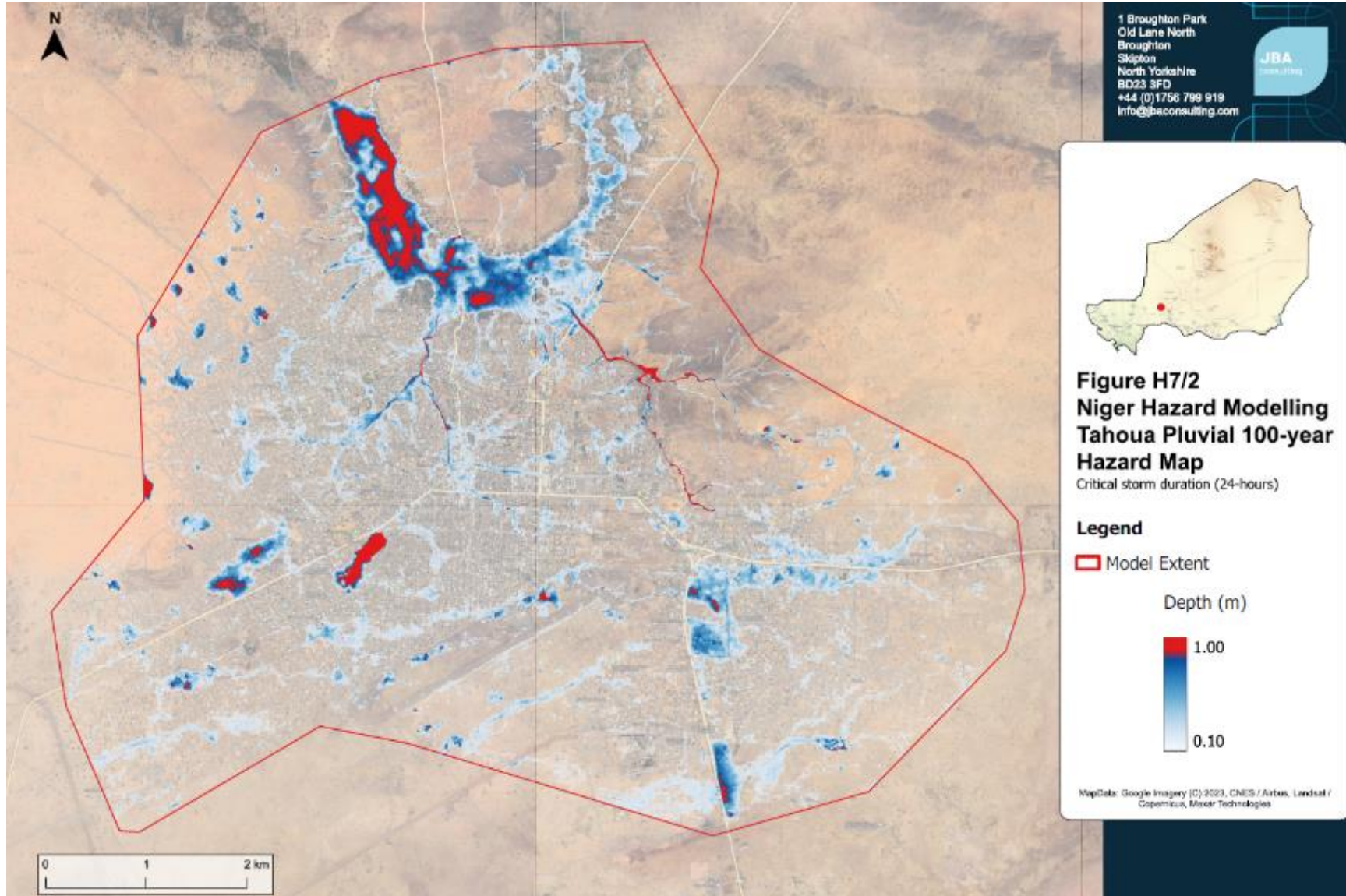
# Why 'impossible' (2)?



# Reference points















# Congo Stream -Freetown





# Freetown, 2019

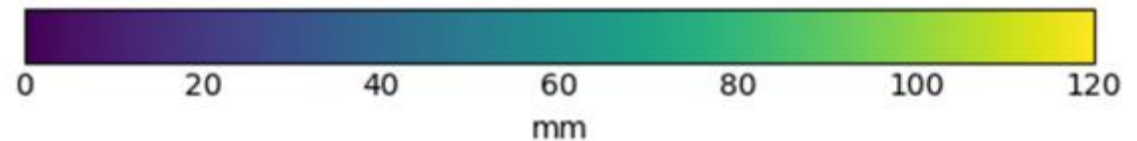
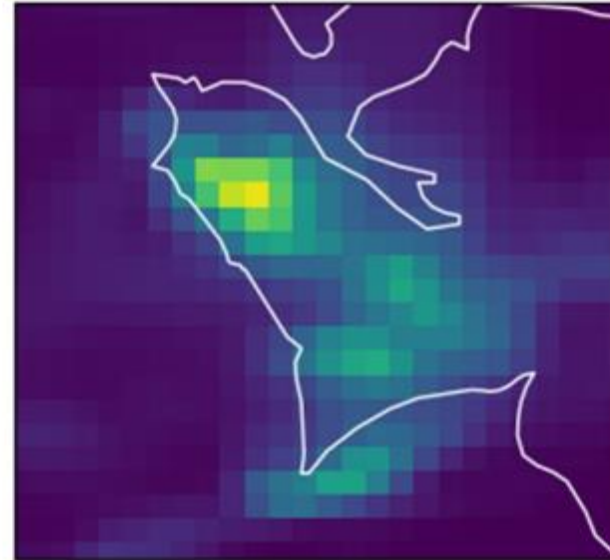




# A solution...

Probabilistic, convective-permitting rainfall forecasts  
... effectively communicated...

Precip: 2023-07-07 05:00:00 e20







There is a MEDIUM CHANCE of LOW-IMPACT FLOODING in the next three days.  
AND  
There is a LOW CHANCE of HIGH-IMPACT FLOODING in the next three days.

There is a MEDIUM CHANCE of LOW-IMPACT FLOODING in the next three days.  
AND  
There is a LOW CHANCE of HIGH-IMPACT FLOODING in the next three days.

- Some communities inaccessible due to flooded access routes or completely cut off.
- Flooding affecting properties and parts of individual or multiple communities.
- Disruption to travel and access routes could be flooded. Damage to transport network.
- Prolonged disruption to utilities and services.
- Water pollution may result in increased water borne disease.

Low-impact flooding (Maps to Incident Level 1, Bronze):

- Individual risk for the more vulnerable or for those making decisions in unfamiliar situations (e.g. when flooded areas).
- Localised flooding affecting individual properties.
- Local damage to structures in poor condition.
- Local / short term disruption to travel.
- Localised / short term disruption to utilities and services.
- Water pollution may result in increased water borne disease.


	Low Impact Flooding	High Impact Flooding
<b>High chance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase level of NDMA preparedness for possible flooding.</li> <li>• Consider whether additional factors will affect flood impact (<u>e.g.</u> long period since last rain and increase channel blockage).</li> <li>• Communicate with professional partners of potential for flood in next three days.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase level of NDMA preparedness for possible high impact flooding.</li> <li>• Consider whether additional factors will affect flood impact (<u>e.g.</u> long period since last rain and increase channel blockage).</li> <li>• Communicate with professional partners of potential for flood in next three days.</li> <li>• Consider advising professional partners to take anticipatory actions such as channel blockage clearance if safe to do so, in partnership with NWRMA.</li> <li>• Issue more frequent flood advice reminders (<b>not flood warnings</b>) via radio, TV, social media.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with NWRMA regarding river levels in Freetown.</li> </ul>
<b>Medium Chance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise NDMA preparedness level above normal level during rainy season.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase level of NDMA preparedness for possible flooding.</li> <li>• Consider whether additional factors will affect flood impact (<u>e.g.</u> long period since last rain and increase channel blockage).</li> <li>• Communicate with professional partners of potential for flood in next three days.</li> <li>• Issue flood advice reminders (<b>not flood warnings</b>) via radio, TV, social media.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> </ul>
<b>Low Chance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise NDMA preparedness level above normal level during rainy season.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise NDMA preparedness level above normal level during rainy season.</li> <li>• Contact and liaise with SLMet on rainfall timing updates.</li> </ul>
<b>No flood guidance issued</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain normal level of vigilance in rainy season and examine SL Met daily forecasts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain normal level of vigilance in rainy season and examine SL Met daily forecasts.</li> </ul>



# Flood Risk Task Force



# Flood Risk Task Force



## Flood Risk Task Force Concept Note

Prepared by: Murray Dale, JBA Consulting, reviewed by Paul Murphy, Independent Consultant to NDMA, and World Bank Technical Consultant Team.

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Version: 1.0

### 1. Introduction

This document has been prepared following a meeting organised by JBA Consulting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 held at the offices of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), involving the three agencies of NDMA, Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet) and the National Water Resources Management Agency (NWRMA). The meeting discussed and gained consensus on a series of proposals for a new Flood Risk Task Force, detailed further below. The meeting was organised within JBA's activities under the ongoing World Bank contract: Provision of advice and support for the development of hydrological and meteorological services including Early Warning Systems and procedures.

### 2. Purpose of this document

This document sets out the overarching principles of a new operational unit, comprised of members of NDMA, SLMet and NWRMA, to provide advice on flood risk in Sierra Leone in real time. This operational unit has been agreed to be referred to and named as the Flood Risk Task Force. This document sets out details of the Flood Risk Task Force's purpose, management and operations. It is designed to act as a briefing and information document for Directors of the respective agencies and their ministers. This document is a pre-cursor to an agreed Terms of Reference for the Flood Risk Task Force. Following Agencies' approval of the details in this Concept Note, Terms of Reference will be prepared by the agreed lead agency of the Flood Risk Task Force, NDMA, with agreement by all agencies.

Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet)

Name: Ibrahim S. Kamara

Designation: Director General

Signed: I. Kamara

Date: 10/01/2024



National Water Resources Management Agency


National Disaster Management Agency

Name: Ht Gen (Rtd) Brima Sejay

Designation: Director General

Signed: Ht Gen

Date: 09 January 2024



3

### National Water Resources Management Agency

Name: Junisa Patrick Bangali Esq.

Designation: Director-General

Signed: J. Bangali

Date: 22-12-2023



# Thomas Lebbie

- Director, Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness, National Disaster Management Agency, Sierra Leone
- Leader of the Sierra Leone Flood Risk Task Force, made up of the National Disaster Management Agency, Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency and National Water Resources Management Agency







# Hydromet and Early Warning Systems



**GFDRR**  
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



Administered by  
**THE WORLD BANK**  
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# Challenges

The importance of Hydromet information and EWS is greater than ever and continue to grow

**Public sector** (NMHS and DRM) is still a backbone of the system but institutional capacity in most developing countries is inadequate due to low visibility and government underfunding

**Significant obstacles** exist for building public-private partnerships

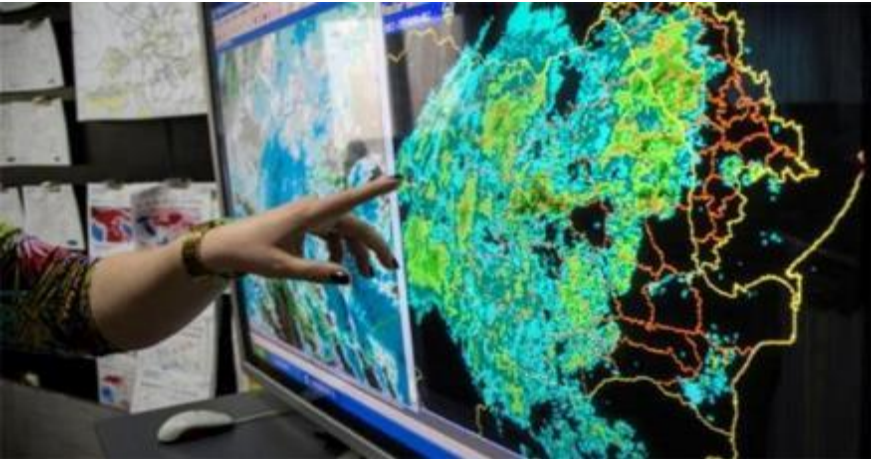
**Capacity Gap** between developed and developing countries is not reducing

**Consequences:** losses of lives and “excessive” economic losses which could have been minimized or avoided





# GFDRR is a focal point of Hydromet and EWS activities in the World Bank



- ❑ GFDRR Hydromet/EWS team was created in 2011 as a service center to provide analytical and implementation support to NMHS in developing countries and WB teams for preparation & implementation of programs strengthening Hydromet services and EWS
- ❑ GFDRR Hydromet/EWS Thematic Area is central in mainstreaming the hydromet agenda in the Bank's operations → **increasing the WB portfolio to USD1 billion (Portfolio review FY23)**
- ❑ The team leads WB Hydromet Community of Practice
- ❑ Three pillars of activities:
  - Support for Hydromet and EWS Investments
  - Analytical Support and Capacity Building
  - Partnership coordination

# The approach for investments is constantly evolving....



## Conventional Approach (1995-2015)



Focus on the NMHS system



Focusing on the public sector



### Modernization of infrastructure

Institutional Strengthening  
Service Delivery



## Emerging Approach



**Focus on national Hydromet and EWS value chain** (including last mile and vulnerable communities)



Public, Private and Academic Sectors as well as NGOs/CSOs



### **Service Delivery and EWS**

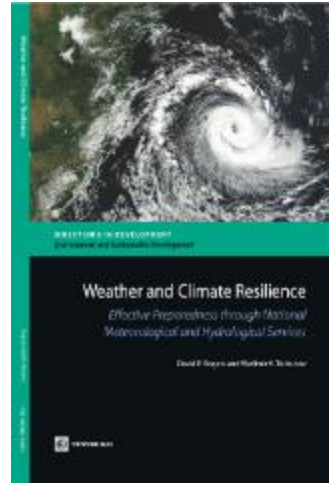
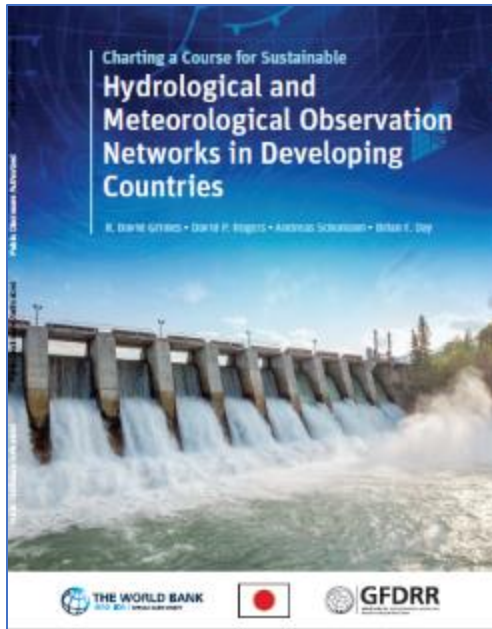
Institutional Strengthening  
Fit-for-purpose affordable infrastructure  
Multi-Hazard Anticipatory and Inclusive EWS



### **Integration with sectoral solutions**

(Agriculture, Water, Social Protection, Environment, etc.)

# The highlights of analytical support





# Partnerships are critical for Hydromet/EWS



❑ **GFDRR is the World Bank focal point for cooperation with partners on Hydromet and EWS programs**

❑ **Main partners:**

- USAID, Japan, EU, Austria...
- WMO, UNDRR, IFRC, GCF...
- Leading NMHSs (UK Met Office, NOAA, Geosphere...)
- Global and regional centers (ECMWF, RIMES...)
- Private and academic institutions (HMEI)

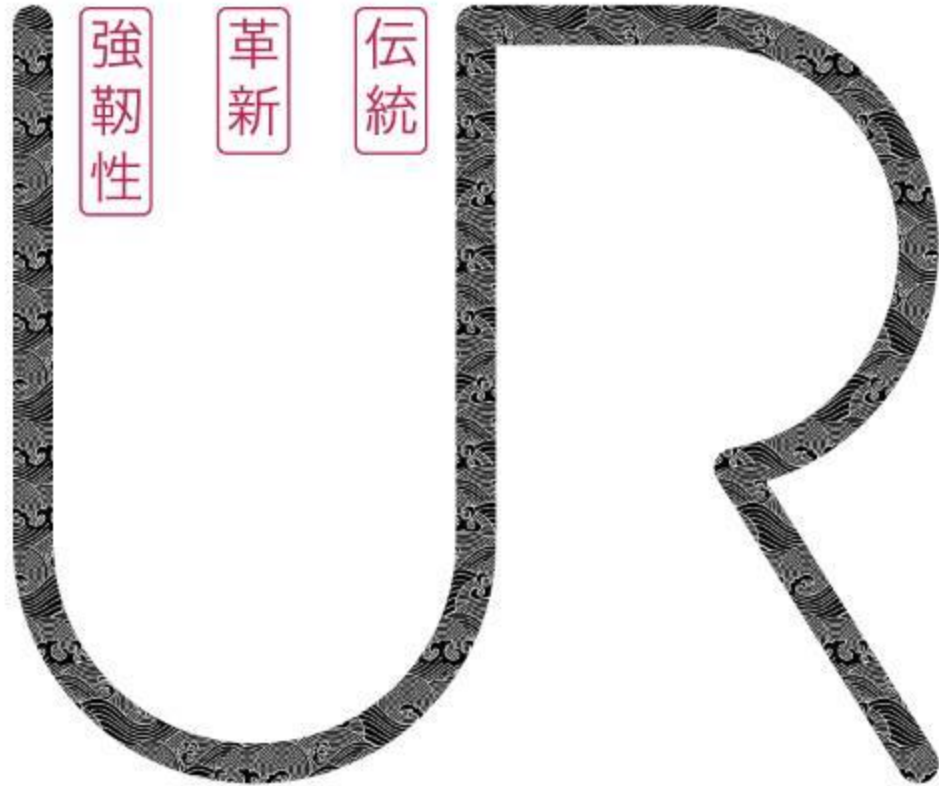
❑ **Main programs:**

- CREWS
- Alliance for Hydromet Development
- Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF)
- Global Weather Enterprise Forum
- EWS4All

# Q&A

1. What solutions have audience members found can be effective?
2. How should the technology and communication challenges be moved forward?
3. Other questions?





Thank you !

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# Additional slides – for supporting questions

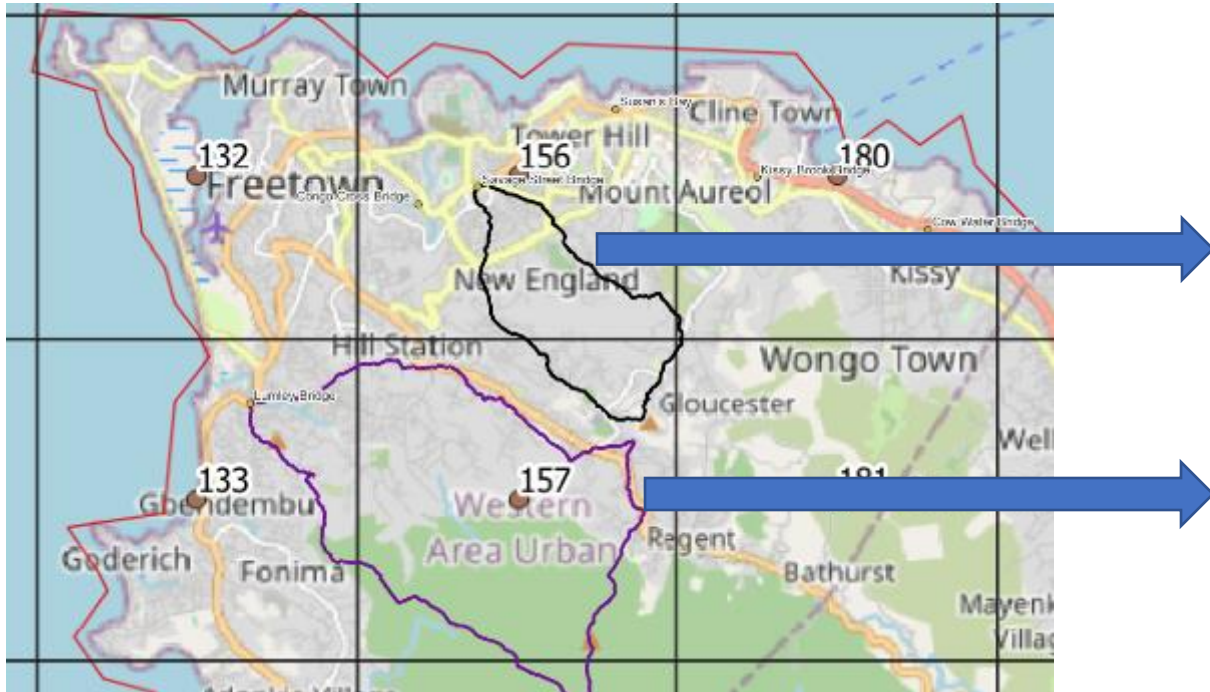


Chance	High		
	Medium		
	Low		
		Low	High
		Impact	

**Overall Flood Risk**

High	
Medium	
Low	

# River level measuring



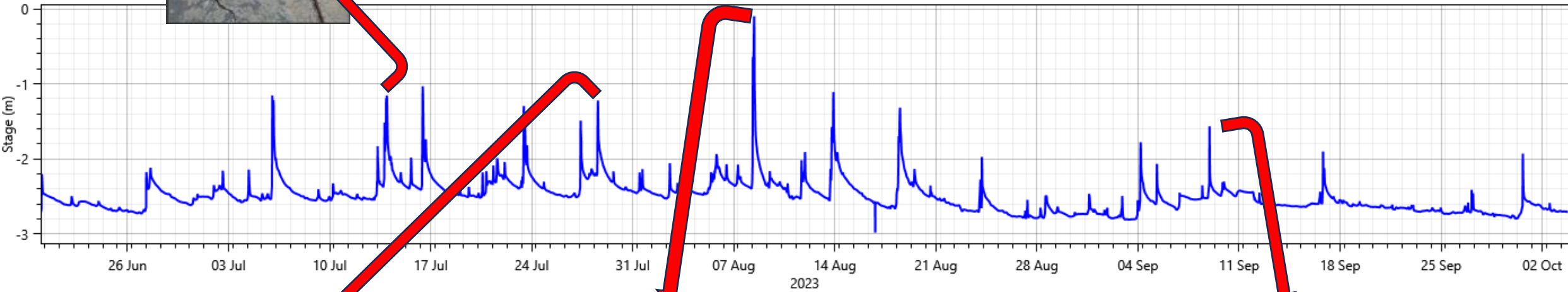
Congo Valley River



Lumley Creek



# NWRMA Lumley gauge data



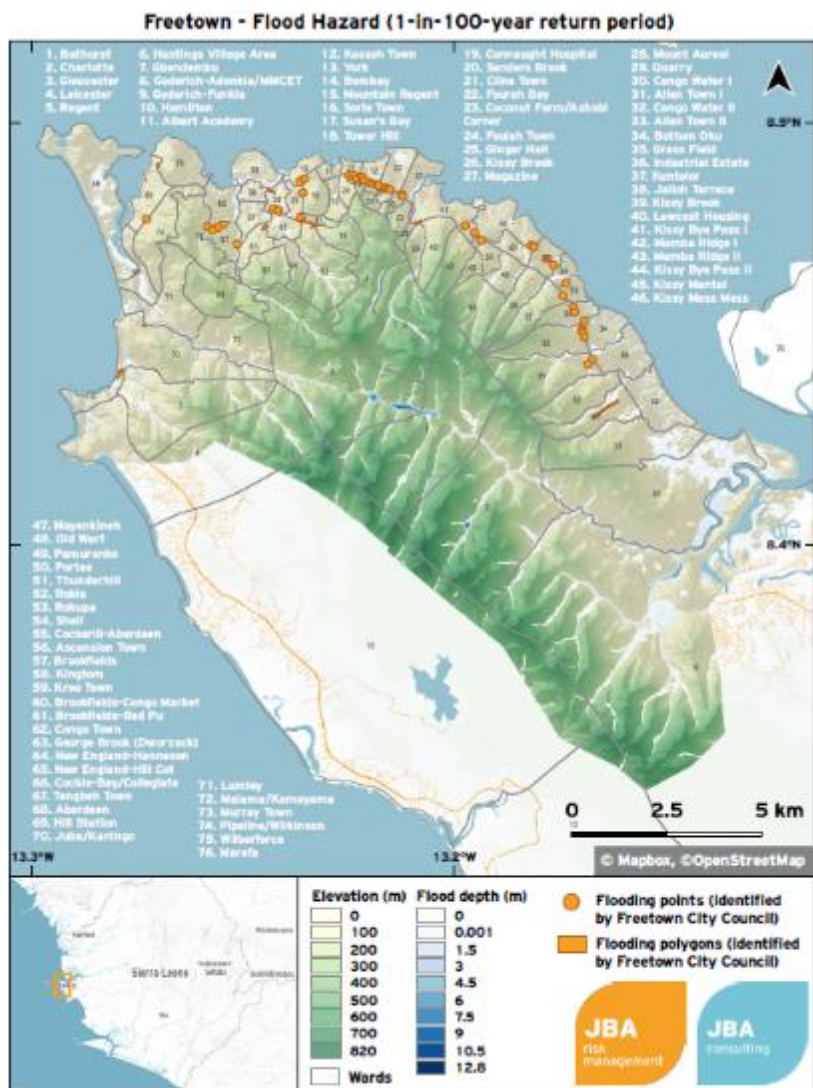


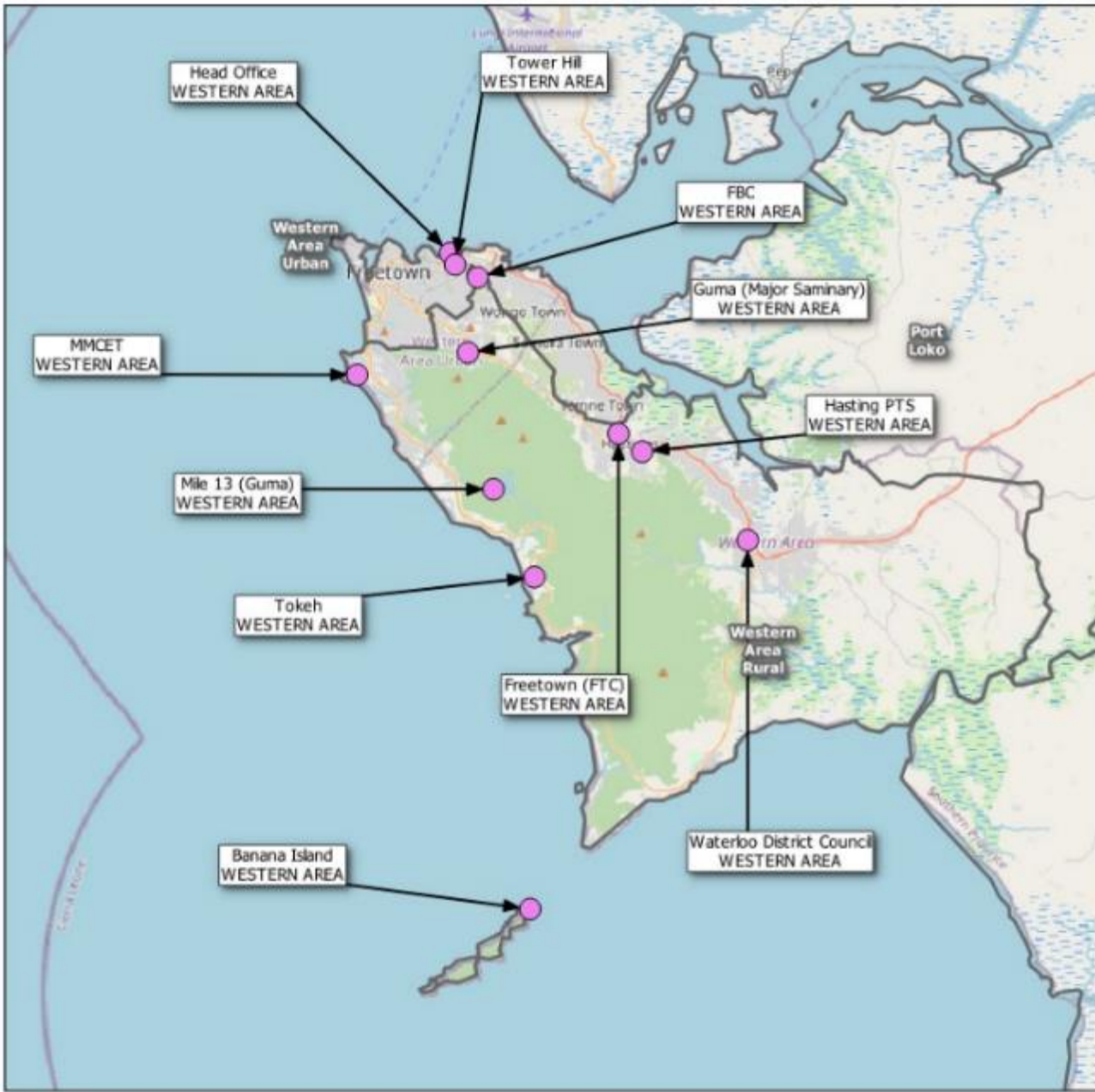
Figure 1: Comparison of JBA's 30m resolution river flood map for Sierra Leone for the 1 in 1,500-year return period (left) against the upscaled river flood map for the 1 in 1,500-year return period using the 1m DEM (right).





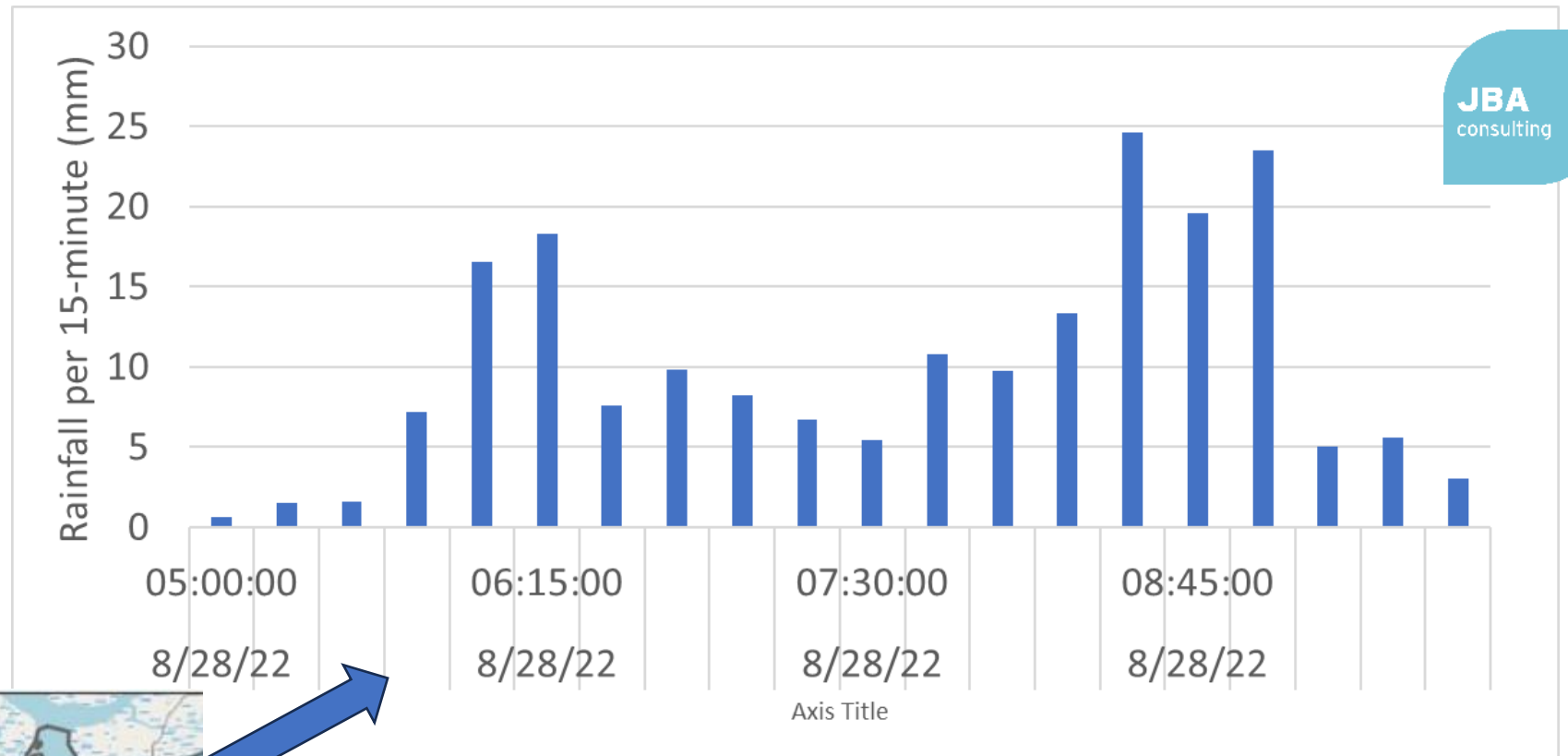
Rain gauge maintenance is important



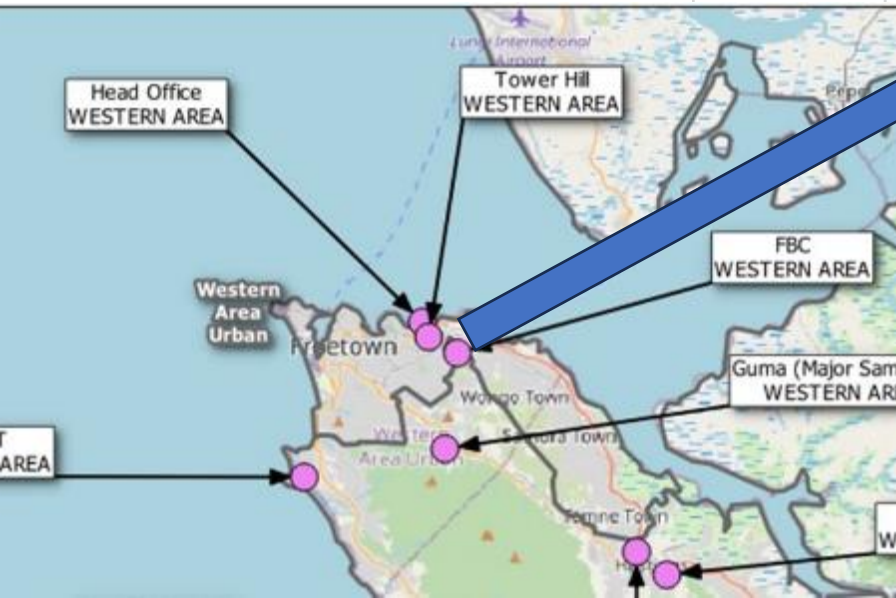


- Rainfall Stations by district
- EAST KAILAHUN- KENEMA
  - EAST KONO
  - NORTH BOMBALI- TONKOLILI
  - NORTH KERENA- FALABA-KABALA
  - NORTH- KAMBIA
  - PORTO LOKO
  - SOUTH PUJEHUN
  - SOUTH- BO
  - SOUTH- MOYAMBA - BONTHE
  - WESTERN AREA

SLMet rainfall data  
15-minute data  
are important!



JBA  
consulting

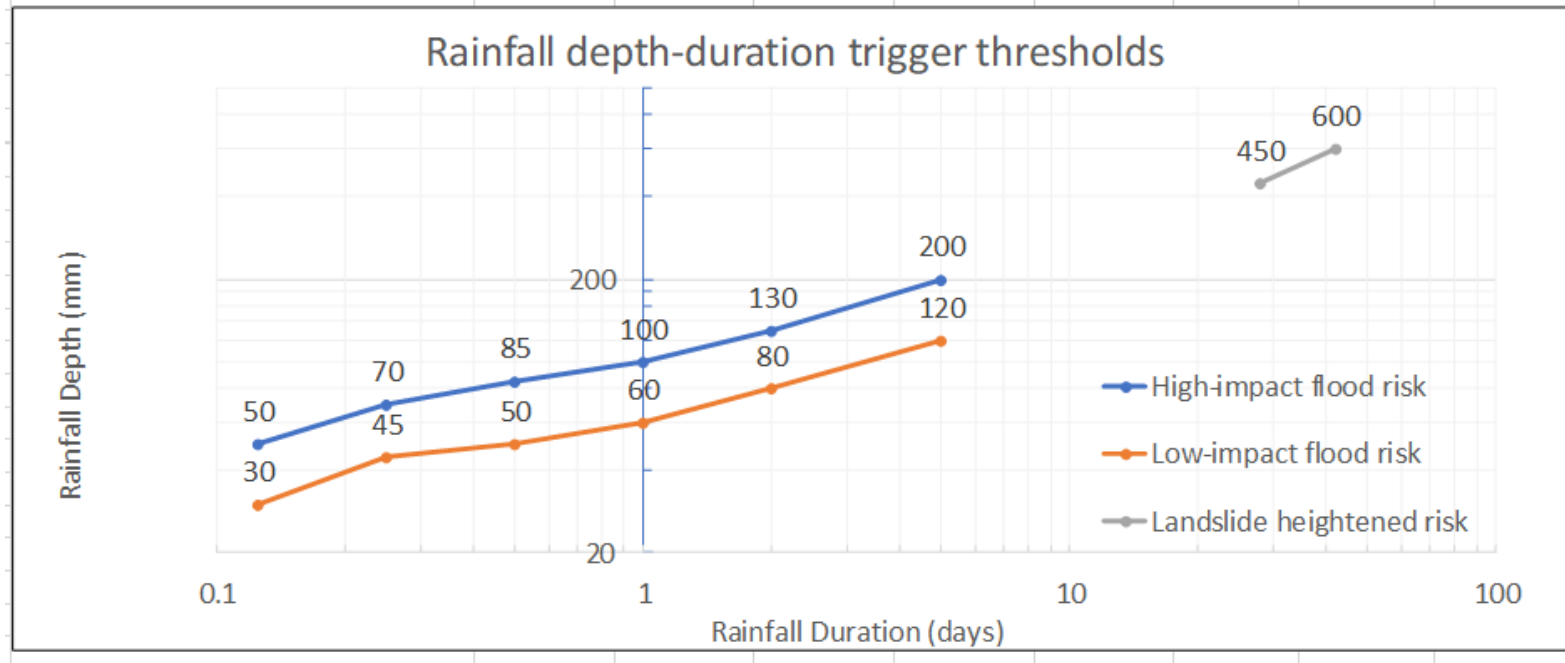


174mm in 3 hours!

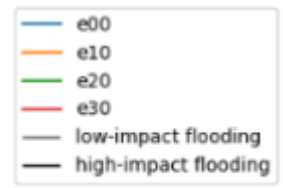
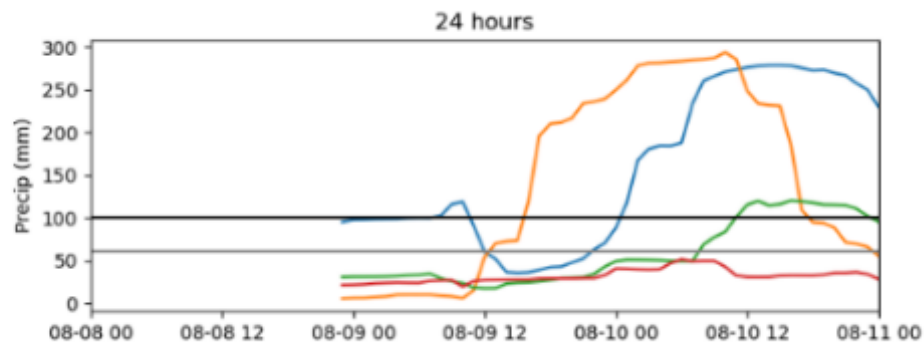
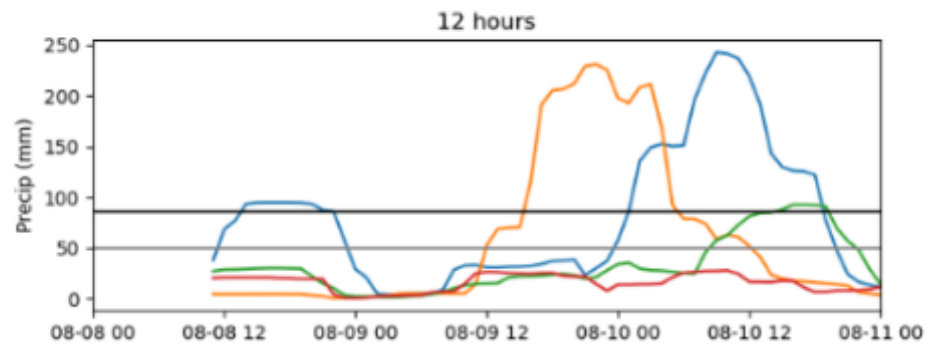
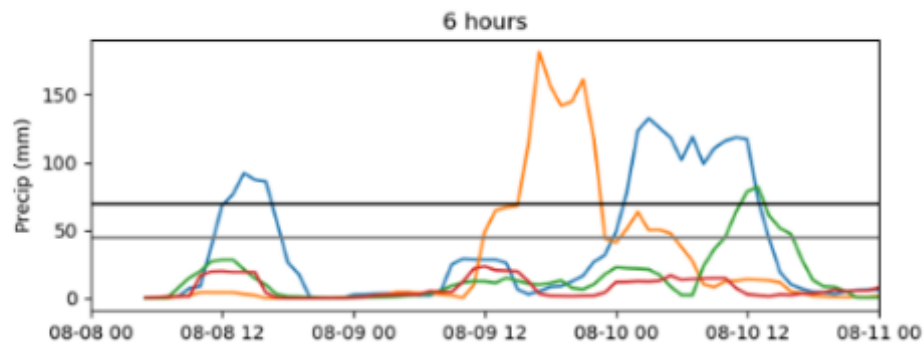
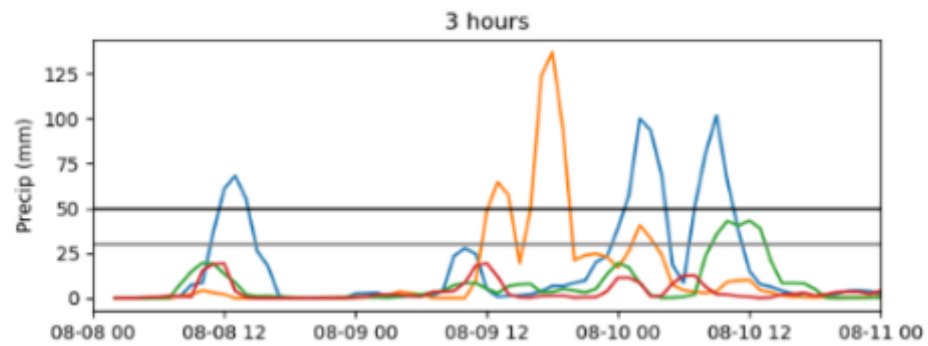
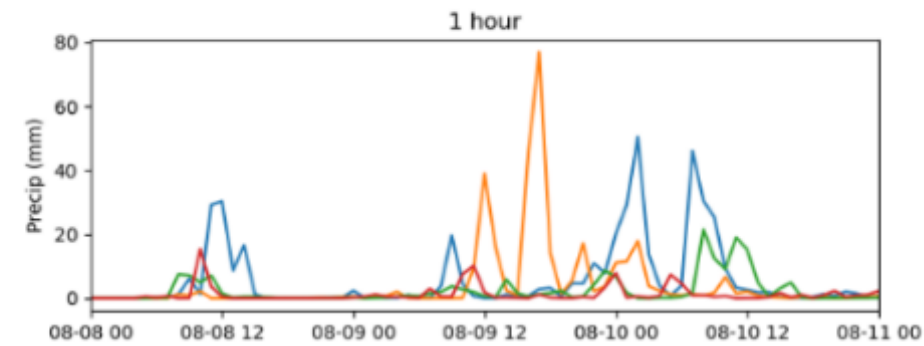
# How much rain in how long causes flooding? Rainfall trigger thresholds

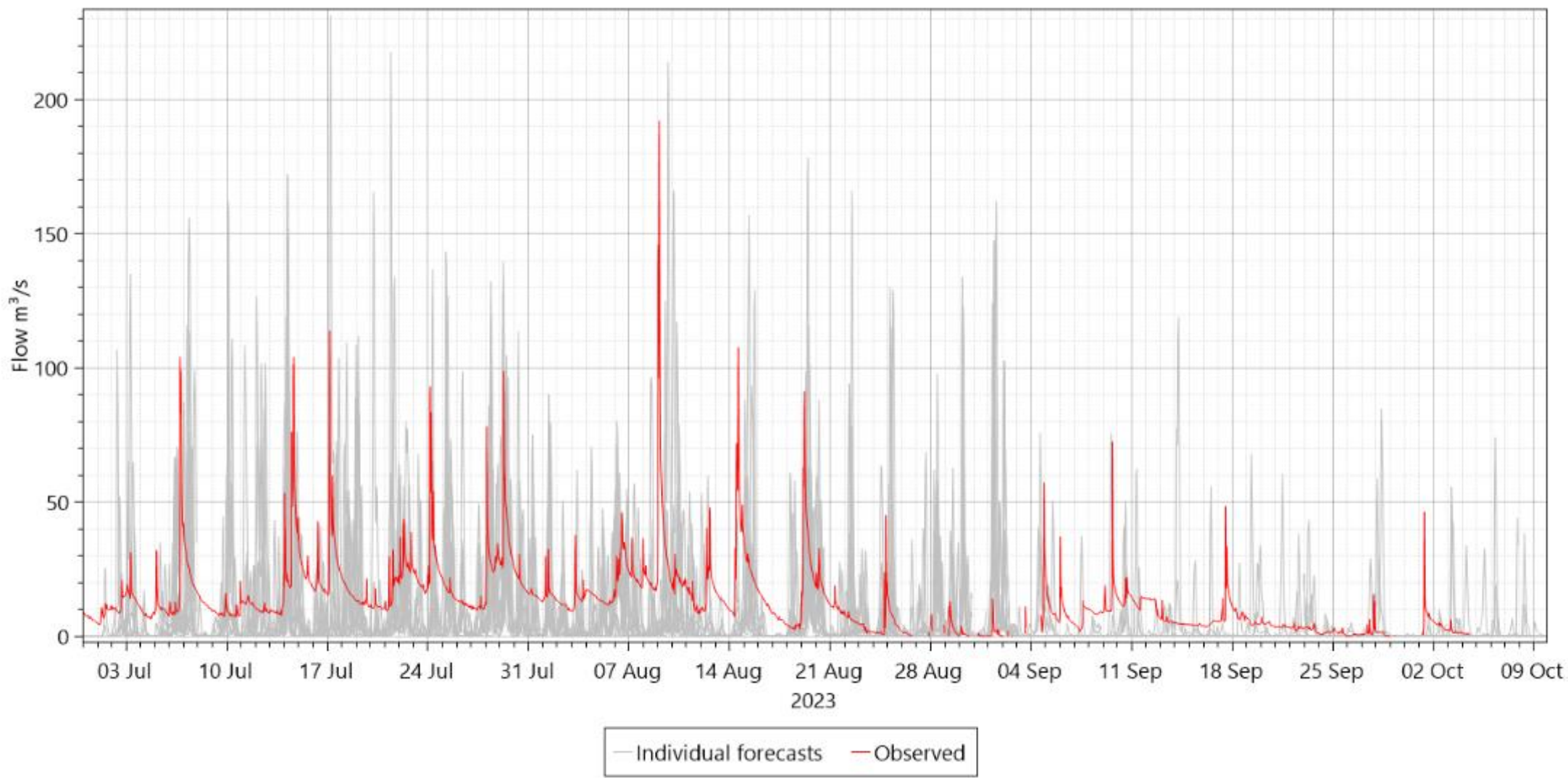


	Flood risk						Landslide risk	
Rainfall duration	3-hours	6-hours	12-hours	24-hours	48-hours	5-days	4-weeks	6-weeks
High-impact flooding expected	50mm	70mm	85mm	100mm	130mm	200mm		
Low-impact flooding expected	30mm	45mm	50mm	60mm	80mm	120mm		
Elevated risk of landslide							450mm	600mm









# Conclusions of trial (JBA)



- Some skill shown in the model forecasts
- Generally, all eight major events forecast, but some timing errors (being investigated)
- Quite high number of 'false alarms'
- JBA's 2.2km rainfall forecast system uses 12km GEFS model data – using 9km ECMWF data might improve forecasts
- JBA has set up a FEWS system that could be run operationally with improved rainfall forecasts



# Recording impacts



							Date of Occurrence	Community/Town/Village	Type of Incident	Cause of Incident	Dwelling Houses	Facility	School	V Business Owners	W Number of Household	X Population Size
A	B	C	D	E	F	G										
Incident ID	Reported	Date of Occurrence	Responsible Directorate	Region	District											
26	210428WSWR005	Open Source	28/04/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western rural	28/04/2021	Regent	Windstorm	Wind	0	Regent Rural community School	1	0	0	236
95	210910FFWR001	Volunteer	10/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western rural	10/09/2021	Pogodon, Cuttinbana, Hamilton	Flooding	Damaged Guma Pipe	2	None	0	0	5	27
96	210910FFWU002	Open Source	10/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	10/09/2021	Congo Bridge community	Flooding	Rain	3	None	0	0	4	37
##	211106WSWU056	Open Source	11/06/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	10/09/2021	Wilberforce barrack	Flooding	Rain	3	None	0	0	0	400
##	210910WSWU055	Volunteer	10/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	10/09/2021	9 Bass Street/Brookfields	Flooding	Rain	3	None	0	0	0	70
##	210915LSWU001	Volunteer	15/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	11/06/2021	George Brook Road	Windstorm	Wind	0	ices Primary School	5	0	3	15
##	210915FFWU003	Open Source	15/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	10/09/2021	Thomson Bay	Windstorm	Wind	0	School	1	0	0	0
##	210915WU004	Volunteer	15/09/2021	R & R	Western Area	Western Urban	10/09/2021	Pademba Road PWD Junction	Windstorm	Wind	0	School	1	0	0	0
##	220505WSWR071	Open Source	05/05/2022	R & R	Western Area	Western Rural	15/09/2021	Lumley	Mudslide	Rain	1	None	0	0	0	0
##	220505WSWR072	Open Source	05/05/2022	R & R	Western Area	Western Rural	15/09/2021	Lumley Regent Road, Jarret Drive	Mudslide	Rain	1	None	0	0	0	0
##	220416FRWR047	Open Source	16/04/2022	R & R	Western Area	Western Rural	15/09/2021	Lumley Amadu	Mudslide	Rain	1	None	0	0	1	0
##	220828FLWO007	DSCOORD	28/08/2022	RR	Western Area	Western Urban	15/09/2021	N/A	Flooding	Blocked Drainage	0	None	0	0	1439	5
##	220828FLWO008	DSCOORD	28/08/2022	RR	Western Area	Western Urban	15/09/2021	N/A	Flooding	Blocked Drainage	0	None	0	0	18	0
##	220828FLWO009	DSCOORD	28/08/2022	RR	Western Area	Western Urban	15/09/2021	N/A	Flooding	Blocked Drainage	0	None	0	0	129	0
##	220828FLWO010	DSCOORD	28/08/2022	RR	Western Area	Western Urban	N/A	Lumley	Flooding	Heavy Downpour of Rain	0	None	0	0	12	0
##	220828FLWO011	DSCOORD	28/08/2022	RR	Western Area	Western Urban	N/A	Lumley Regent Road, Jarret Drive	Flooding	Heavy Downpour of Rain	0	None	0	0	4	0

# Possible future developments, beyond assignment



## **Meteorological forecasts:**

Trial ECMWF global model to drive JBA system

Trial use of more ensemble members

## **Rainfall-runoff forecast system:**

Calibrate Lumley data and trial the FEWS system in real time

## **Operational & capacity building:**

Flooding Task Force meet daily through rainy season 2024 and beyond

Flooding Task Force run / use the FEWS system for Freetown

## **Flood warning:**

Community awareness, vigilance through volunteer WhatsApp group

Involvement of FCC, Red Cross, NGOs etc. +++