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Emergency Preparedness for the mass casualties in urban scenarios – a conceptual study of the balanced scorecard approach

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The purpose of this study is the description of an organizational learning and change strategy for cbrn emergency preparedness. It analyses how a balanced scorecard (BSC) approach can help to gradually build up the level of preparedness with a high degree of participation and performance measurement of different parties involved.

Numerous terrorist attacks all over the world in places such as Tokio, New York, Madrid, London and Istanbul during the past decade have shown that cities in particular are very vulnerable to terrorist attacks and are still struggling to reach satisfying levels of preparedness. Emergency procedure manuals are rarely read or applied in the form of active civil protection exercises involving numerous types of organizations such as offices, hospitals, schools, etc along side with fire brigades, police and EMS units. The legal demands of national civil contingency acts often remain largely unmet.

The balanced scorecard is a practical management tool that has been successfully applied in the business and public management sector. It is a top-down and bottom-up approach that has the capacity to set up new individual goal oriented values linked with strategies (management by objectives, MBO) that follow an overall given vision and mission of the emergency city scorecard. It can monitor and steer the change process which is usually initiated and maintained by teams that aim to efficiently synchronize the interaction among their organizations to increase the flexible response as the ordinary command and control approach of a minority of organizations to cope with an incident is limited due to the complexity of disasters.

The BSC as a management tool allows an open, transparent and more systematic preparedness strategy and continuous performance measurement of existing organisational structures in cities helping them to orchestrate their efforts when changing into an operational emergency mode. It helps to identify and change structural weaknesses of cbrn disaster response to terrorist attacks.