



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID
OPERATIONS (ECHO)
Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
Prevention and Disaster Risk Management

Concept Note Workshop on UCPM technical assistance tools for investing in disaster risk management

27-28 November 2023

Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette
Rue Froissart 36, Brussels

1. Context and Purpose

This workshop is organised with a view to enhance the awareness of and the access to EU funding and capacity building instruments for disaster risk management within civil protection authorities.

The argument for enhancing the investments in disaster prevention and preparedness has never been clearer. **Investing in resilience** unlocks *social, economic and environmental benefits that outweigh the cost regardless of whether and when a disaster materialises* ⁽¹⁾. In addition, when prevention and preparedness investments integrate “smart” features (e.g. early warning systems, nature-based measures to mitigate the impact of heatwaves and floods in urban areas, combined seismic retrofitting and energy efficiency interventions in buildings, etc.) the return on investment is the highest.

The objectives of this workshop are:

- a) Improve awareness of the **UCPM Track 1 – Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management grants**: by showcasing examples of Track 1 funded projects implemented to date, collecting feedback from national authorities that used this funding instrument, and discussing ways to further encourage the use of these grants for preparing prevention and preparedness investments.
- b) Present the plans for the new **Technical Assistance Financing Facility (TAFF)** that will be launched in 2024 and collect information on the needs of national civil protection authorities that could be supported through TAFF. TAFF aims to provide an additional modality for technical assistance through turnkey projects which are based on a lighter application process.
- c) Raise awareness of short- and long-term **opportunities for EU funding for disaster risk management**.

⁽¹⁾ The World Bank (2021), Investing in Disaster Prevention and Preparedness in Europe Makes Economic Sense, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/wb_ec_2021_disaster_economics_investments_summary_c1.pdf

2. Introduction to the three areas of discussion

a) Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management – Track 1

First introduced in 2019 under the UCPM grants umbrella, Track 1 grants aim to help national civil protection and other disaster risk management authorities fill technical and/or financial gaps to preparing investments or to strengthening their institutional and policy framework for disaster risk management. Between 2019 and 2022, 18 Member States have been awarded 37 grants for a total value of EUR 14,6 million.

By co-financing such projects, the UCPM has made a real impact in accelerating investments for disaster risk management in Member and Participating States. Several examples in this respect will be presented at the workshop.

Applications for the [2023 Track 1 grants](#) needed to address the following objectives:

- To facilitate access to financing for investments in disaster prevention and preparedness, including for the green transition;
- To contribute to new policies, strategies and investment plans for anticipating and managing current and future risks;
- To support the implementation of the EU Wildfire Prevention Action Plan;
- To support the implementation of the Disaster Resilience Goals (four out of the five goals are supported through this call, disaster resilience goal no. 4 is covered by response capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool and rescEU);
- To enhance risk awareness and preparedness of the population and to facilitate public access to disaster risk information;
- To generate evidence and knowledge for improved policy and practice in disaster prevention and preparedness planning, climate resilience and the green transition;
- To increase preparedness for facing the Covid-19 crisis and other major crises of a similar nature.

Applicants had to select only one of the following priorities: 1. Strategic frameworks for disaster risk management; 2. Investments for disaster risk management; 3. Investments to improve crisis management capabilities; 4. Investments to improve crisis preparedness for Covid-19 and other major crises of a similar nature.

These grants will continue in 2024, as included in the UCPM multiannual work programme 2021-2026 ⁽²⁾ (chapter 2.1.2). Objectives and priorities of the call are expected to remain broadly similar to the past, with the exception of priority 4 (NGEU funds will no longer be available).

The workshop aims to present examples of projects already supported by Track 1 (selected from projects that have ended or are in progress), aiming to create connections with and inspire other countries.

Participants will also be asked to reflect through group discussions on the following questions:

- What is your experience in preparing and implementing Track 1 grants?
- Should Track 1 priorities remain the same or be revised? What changes would you propose?

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Decision C(2023) 6621 final, adopted on 6 October 2023.

- What ideas do you take home – e.g. projects that inspire and would be needed in your country?
- What type of support would you require to make this instrument more suitable to your needs?

b) Technical Assistance Financing Facility (TAFF)

To further improve the current offer of technical assistance for disaster risk management under the UCPM, a Technical Assistance Financing Facility (TAFF) will be launched in 2024. The goal is to provide expertise-led technical assistance (TA) to all interested UCPM countries on selected disaster risk management topics.

The TAFF seeks to achieve two specific objectives:

- Strengthening the capacity of disaster risk management authorities in scaling up disaster and climate resilience, in line with the Union Disaster Resilience Goals and the European Green Deal, as well as national and regional priorities.
- Supporting investments in disaster prevention and preparedness through the development of a project pipeline.

While the Track 1 call would continue to exist, under the TAFF applicants will be able to opt for a new, “turnkey” project modality, i.e. technical assistance projects fully executed by a third party. This third party will be the World Bank, which has a vast experience in working on disaster risk management with several EU MS on technical assistance projects as well as with UCPM PS and EU candidate countries. The World Bank, with its global reach and expertise, can also provide cutting-edge disaster risk management knowledge tailored to regional and national contexts of the UCPM.

Under the TAFF a national authority from an eligible country will submit an *expression of interest* for technical assistance in a given area to the chosen technical assistance provider – i.e. the World Bank, which will act on behalf of the Commission (indirect management). The World Bank will deliver to the country the requested technical assistance product using the World Bank’s own technical expertise, procurement and administrative services, etc. while providing the necessary training to build the capacity of the recipient.

The TAFF will operate *in addition* to the current Track 1 call, and MS/PS will be able to choose whether to apply for one or the other.

Thematic focus: The TAFF will be fully aligned to the recently adopted Disaster Resilience Goals (in particular, Goals 1, 2, 3, 5) and will deliver specific DRM products and tools of high value to the UCPM MS/PS. Examples include:

- **Goal 1 - Anticipate – To improve risk assessment, anticipation, and disaster risk management planning:** Technical studies on improved understanding of risk, through modelling of hazards, developing scenarios of impacts, use of risk information for planning of investments, etc. to support the planning and preparation of policies and investments, with a focus on investments that support the objectives of the EU Green Deal (green transition, climate neutrality, nature-based solutions ⁽³⁾).

⁽³⁾ Related to Nature-based solutions, see World Bank. 2022. Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience and Adaptation. [Link](#).

- **Goal 2 - Prepare – To increase risk awareness and preparedness of the population:** activities related to risk awareness and communication, e.g. development of “serious games” on disaster risk to engage specific population groups, engagement of civil society, etc. The World Bank has also developed, together with local administrations, strategies that inform the development of public engagement and communication activities, in order to enhance the awareness and preparedness of local communities to disaster risks, particularly earthquakes.
- **Goal 3 - Alert – To enhance early warning:** technical analyses on various aspects, such as capacity assessment and modernisation of early warning systems, knowledge and access to global best practices via the GFDRR in-house global hydromet program ⁽⁴⁾.
- **Goal 5 - Secure - To ensure business continuity of civil protection systems:** assessments and technical studies to determine the exposure to hazards of critical infrastructure that are key to civil protection systems, planning and prioritisation of investments to increase resilience, etc.
- **Cross-cutting:** training and capacity building in specific areas, such as: nature-based solutions for resilience, private sector’s involvement in disaster risk management, introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in disaster risk management and other topics to be determined based on needs.

The workshop aims to present the plans for the new TAFF, and to collect feedback and information on the needs of national civil protection authorities that could be supported through TAFF.

- c) *Short-term and long-term opportunities of EU funding for disaster risk management*

Financing for investments in disaster risk management and climate adaptation at EU level is available under the Resilience and Recovery Facility (RRF), Cohesion Policy Funds, InvestEU, Rural Development Plans, LIFE, etc.

A recent report on "[Understanding the needs of CP agencies and opportunities for scaling up DRM investments](#)", issued in 2021, already pointed to some structural shortcomings among civil protection authorities, which make it more difficult for these organisations to access relevant EU funding. The evaluation noted that the implementation of prevention and preparedness projects requires significant technical expertise, which is not always available within the civil protection authorities.

While there is a growing awareness and interest in disaster risk prevention and preparedness, CP agencies noted a low political buy-in for investments in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, which is exacerbated by the lack of evidence of their benefits. There was also a perceived limited opportunity for CP agencies to influence the investment planning of other line ministries or different levels of administration.

The workshop will include presentations of the key conclusions of the 2021 report, preliminary insight on new tools being developed, and feedback from participants is

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/hydromet-services-and-early-warning-systems>

encouraged as regards the main challenges of civil protection authorities and other disaster risk management authorities in accessing EU funds.

Relevant other Commission Directorates General will present key tools of funding open to Member States.