

## Expert Technical Sessions

The three Expert Technical Sessions are plenary-format discussions designed to provide in-depth, evidence-based exploration of specific phases in the Host Nation Support (HNS) lifecycle. They build progressively across the Conference days, drawing on real HNS experiences (particularly from the 2025 wildfire season activations in IPA III beneficiaries) and the updated EU Host Nation Support Guidelines (EU HNSG). Each session lasts 90 minutes, includes presentations from specialists, and emphasizes interactive discussion with Q&A to encourage knowledge exchange among participants. They align with the Conference's guiding question by examining how lessons identified during HNS operations can be analysed, institutionalized, and transformed into embedded practices within national CP/DRM systems.

### **Expert Technical Session 1: Deployment** (tentatively scheduled for Day 1, Tuesday May 19, 2026, 11:30 - 13:00)

This opening technical session focuses on the pre- and early-response phase of HNS, where effective preparation sets the foundation for successful international assistance under the UCPM.

The session examines lessons from preparation for deployment (e.g., pre-identification of entry points, reception facilities, and liaison officers), customs clearance procedures (e.g., expedited border processes, waiver of duties), and coordination among sending, receiving, and transiting countries. Presentations and discussion will highlight what worked well (e.g., streamlined customs in recent UCPM activations) and persistent gaps (e.g., delays due to non-harmonized procedures or documentation requirements). Emphasis is placed on implementing the updated EU HNSG principles to minimize obstacles and ensure rapid arrival of assistance.

The objective is to showcase how HNS experiences have been (or could be) analysed to drive procedural reforms, supports implementation of the revised EU HNSG, and fosters dialogue on embedding lessons into national preparedness (e.g., updating SOPs or MoUs or other legal frameworks for cross-border coordination). This directly contributes to regional interoperability and preparedness for the 2026 wildfire season.

Attendees should leave with practical insights into deployment bottlenecks and solutions, feeding into peer workshops and case studies. This session sets the stage for understanding why some lessons (e.g., pre-deployment planning) are more easily (or not) institutionalized than others.

### **Expert Technical Session 2: Operational Support** (tentatively scheduled for Day 2, Wednesday May 20, 2026, 11:30 - 13:00)

This mid-conference session shifts to the active response phase, addressing real-time challenges during disaster operations when international teams are on the ground.

This session will explore issues such as medical provisions (e.g., legal rights for foreign medical personnel to operate), logistics and transportation (e.g., fuel, accommodation, equipment movement), and single-interface coordination (e.g., one national point of contact for all stakeholders). It will share success stories (e.g., effective liaison officer roles in 2025 wildfire responses) and persistent challenges (e.g., language barriers, supply chain disruptions) from IPA III, Eastern Neighbourhood, and

other UCPM Member States and Participating Countries. Discussion will link these to broader LL processes, such as real-time documentation of issues for post-event analysis.

The session supports institutionalizing lessons by examining how operational experiences influence SOPs, training, and coordination mechanisms. It encourages sharing of practical tools (e.g., templates for single-interface roles) and promotes regional dialogue on embedding learning to enhance efficiency in future activations.

Participants should gain actionable ideas for improving operational support, including innovations that can be adapted nationally. Insights will inform the afternoon workshop on innovations and contribute to recommendations for UCPM frameworks.

**Expert Technical Session 3: Demobilisation and Post-Response Evaluations** (tentatively scheduled for Day 3, Thursday May 21, 2026, 09:30 - 11:00)

As the final technical session, this session focuses on the closure and learning phase, ensuring that end-of-operation experiences are captured and used proactively.

Lessons from demobilisation (e.g., safe withdrawal of teams, handover of equipment, financial settlements) and post-response evaluations (e.g., after-action reviews, evaluation workshops, knowledge transfer to national systems). It addresses balancing reliance on past experiences with proactive thinking for novel or high-impact hazards (e.g., emerging climate-driven wildfires). Discussion will cover how evaluations feed into collective memory and organizational change, including gaps in knowledge transfer.

Directly ties to the Conference objective of transforming lessons identified into lessons learnt by exploring evaluation mechanisms and their institutionalization. It supports future EU HNSG revisions and prepares for wildfire season 2026 by emphasizing anticipatory approaches.

This session synthesizes prior discussions, highlighting how post-response processes can drive measurable change. Outputs feed directly into the outcomes session for drafting actionable recommendations.

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