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## Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Floods in the Western Balkans and Turkey – IPA FLOODS

### Second Steering Group meeting

9 March 2016

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Minutes of the meeting

*Purpose of the meeting:* discussing IPA FLOODS implementation progress and the way forward.

*Participants:* Focal Points in the Beneficiaries<sup>1</sup>, EC Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO), Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE), International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), partners of the IPA FLOODS Consortium.

*Observers:* World Meteorological Organization.

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*Welcome speech: Samir Agic, Assistant Minister, Protection and Rescue Sector, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- IPA FLOODS is a key and highly relevant initiative in particular having regard to recent severe flood emergencies that hit the region;
- The importance of the programme lays in the contribution to increased flood response preparedness and improved prevention of flood risk.

*Opening remarks: Luigi D'Angelo, DPC Italy, IPA FLOODS Programme Director and Biljana Zuber, DG ECHO*

- Over the last year and more, the Consortium, jointly with Beneficiaries and through the complementing leadership of partners, has laid the foundations for effective programme development;
- Overall, implementation progress is in line with the work-plan;
- Consortium approach has been based on broad consultation with Beneficiaries and compliance with the relevant EU framework;
- Regional dimension combined with measures tailored as much as possible to needs in the Beneficiaries has acted as a guiding principle throughout mid-term implementation;
- The proactive attitude of target groups is contributing to ownership as appropriate;

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



- IPA FLOODS scope should be regarded beyond the regional dimension. Multinational CP modules developed under the programme, in particular, should possibly become part of the European Emergency Response Capacity in the future.

*Relevant initiatives in the region: Luigi D'Angelo, DPC Italy, IPA FLOODS Programme Director*

- The *BEDRIN* project (*Balkans and Europe for Development of Resilience Initiatives* [www.bedrin.eu](http://www.bedrin.eu)) started implementation in October 2015 (end: September 2017) under the partnership established by Italy, Hungary, Romania, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo, with the aim to improve capacities of volunteer-based organizations in the context of hydro-meteorological disasters;
- The *North Eastern Italy Flood Exercise – NEIFLEX* started implementation in January 2016 (duration 24 months) by the consortium established by Italy, as lead partner, jointly with the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile et de la Gestion des Crises, France, URSZR of Slovenia, Directorate for Emergency Management of Montenegro and Sector for Emergency Management of Serbia. The action is expected to contribute, among other aspects, to enhanced operational cooperation and interoperability of Union CP Mechanism's water rescue modules, improved HNS and SOPs.

*Overview of IPA FLOODS progress: Antonio Barbera, IPA FLOODS Programme Manager*

- IPA FLOODS is on track towards contributing to its overall purpose. Expected results are not tangible yet but prospects are positive;
- The broad consultative process that has taken place so far has contributed to a range of key achievements, including reinforced mutual knowledge and further consolidated trust between the Consortium and the Beneficiaries;
- Reinforced reciprocal confidence has allowed developing all “tools” to support joint work by the Consortium and the Beneficiaries (equipment technical specifications, recommendations for EUFD-related capacity building, etc.) and effective resource planning by/among the Beneficiaries themselves (SOPs, draft border-crossing protocol, guidelines for EUFD implementation, etc.).

*Capacity building for flood response, IPA FLOODS Lot 1: Domen Torkar, URSZR Slovenia*

- The development process of SOPs for national teams and multinational CP modules FRB has been completed, SOPs are available to all Beneficiaries and Lot 1 is approaching the training phase;
- SOPs may be translated into national languages where required;
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia emphasizes that the overall concept of multinational CP modules, along with the arrangements for effective operations in the field, should be further addressed – including through coordination with existing international modules – and underlines that responsibilities of Liaison Officers should be broadened to include other functions which might result necessary during operations (e.g. safety and security);
- THW Germany underlines the importance of addressing as appropriate in SOPs aspects related to the funding of deployment costs within a multinational CP module;
- DG ECHO invites to consider next modules' training cycle under the Union CP Mechanism (starting in June 2016) also for candidate countries (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo);
- Up-coming training events for multinational CP modules FRB include: Training Management Level, 4-8 April 2016, hosted in Slovenia (Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders, Liaison Officers); Operational Training for all staff of multinational CP module Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, 16-20 May 2016, hosted in Montenegro; Operational Training for all staff of multinational CP module Albania, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, 6-10 June 2016, hosted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia requests authorization to register one observer in the Operational Training to take place in May in Montenegro to facilitate preparations for the training in June;
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia illustrates specific actions that are taking place to follow-up with capacities developed under IPA FLOODS. Among them, adjustment of national legislation to take into account newly built FRB capacities, translation of SOPs into Macedonian language, official establishment of national FRB team and a physical training programme jointly with Army and Police.

*Procurement of flood response equipment, IPA FLOODS Lot 1 and Lot 2: Manila Marcuccio, Stidiare Sviluppo*

- The public procurement process of FRB equipment under Lot 1 has been completed (rescue boats and related rescue equipment, personal protective equipment and logistic equipment);
- Stidiare Sviluppo as the procurement contracting authority within the Consortium is signing donation agreements with all Beneficiaries;
- The expected deadline for the delivery of FRB equipment in all Beneficiaries is mid-April;
- Serbia requests that appropriate time is allowed before the operational training phase to ensure completion of procedures required to register equipment according to national legislation;
- The public procurement procedure of HPC-FC equipment under Lot 2 will be set-up in compliance with the relevant EU regulations upon receipt of official approval of finalized lists of materials from all Beneficiaries (ongoing);
- At this stage, the estimated time-frame for the procurement process under Lot 2 is 9 months.

*Border-crossing and HNS protocols, IPA FLOODS Lot 1 and Lot 2: Antonio Barbera, IPA FLOODS Programme Manager and Arabela Vahtaric, Head of International Relations, NPRD Croatia*

- In the *Regional Workshop on Border-crossing protocols and HNS* organized in Montenegro in January 2016, an umbrella *Protocol for the functioning, mobilization and deployment of multi-national CP modules* and *Annex 1 Border-crossing and HNS protocol for multinational CP modules* have been developed in preliminary draft versions to contribute to the appropriate framework for smooth border-crossing and effective delivery of assistance by multinational CP modules developed with IPA FLOODS support;
- Annex 1, in particular, integrates the inputs and recommendations from group discussions to encompass border-crossing and transiting procedures specifically designed to enable multinational CP modules to assemble at designated assembly points for further deployment;
- The Consortium considers that the *Border-crossing and HNS protocol for multinational CP modules*, in combination with SOPs, can ensure an opportunity for smoother cooperation, joint planning and management of resources among Beneficiaries (in the preparedness and response phases), including by facilitating joint participation of national teams in missions and exercises, and contribute to further sustainability of efforts in the region;
- Envisaged next steps are: disseminating a compendium of relevant lessons learned in the region; submitting the draft documents for comments by Beneficiaries; testing the functionality of protocols during the scenario-based *Table-top exercise on Border-crossing protocols and HNS* planned on 10-12 May 2016; adjusting both documents based on the outcomes of the table-top exercise; testing the protocols during the implementation of the *IPA FLOODS CRO 2016* field-exercise (October 2016, Croatia); bringing both documents at high-level attention in appropriate fora (next DPPI SEE meetings) to gain high-level commitment under the *Protocol for the functioning, mobilization and deployment of multi-national CP Modules* by the end of IPA FLOODS.

*IPA FLOODS CRO 2016 field-exercise, IPA FLOODS Lot 1: Tamara Kopal, National Protection and Rescue Directorate of Croatia; Financial arrangements for beneficiaries' participation in IPA FLOODS CRO 2016 field-exercise: Manila Marcuccio, Studiare Sviluppo*

- The IPA FLOODS CRO 2016 regional field-exercise will take place in Croatia on 18-21 October 2016 to exercise regional cooperation among newly established and trained multinational CP modules along with cooperation with incoming international assistance;
- The exercise Initial Planning Conference took place in Zagreb on 23 February 2016. The Main and Final Planning Conferences are scheduled on 24 May and 7 September 2016 respectively;
- The exercise time-table is envisaged as follows: Day 0 – table-top exercise, i.e. request for international assistance; Day 1 – arrival of multinational CP modules, RDC activities, assessment meeting in OSOCC, rescue activities; Day 2 – meeting in OSOCC, rescue activities; Day 3 – meeting in OSOCC, rescue activities, evaluation workshop, closing ceremony;
- Exercise participation will include three CP modules FRB – possibly including a registered module from a Participating State in the Union CP Mechanism – EU CP Team, TAST module, LEMA as well as virtual modules;
- The members of the Exercise Planning Team will be engaged in EXCON during exercise implementation. Therefore it is crucial to avoid that they are engaged at the same time in multinational CP modules' functions and operations;
- All Beneficiaries will be requested to submit preliminary national team members' nominations by the date of the exercise Final Planning Conference;
- Terms and conditions for the envisaged financial support to beneficiaries for their participation in the field-exercise are presented and will be soon finalized, including funding of costs of transportation, subsistence and self-sufficiency during the whole duration of the exercise itself.

*Capacity building and provision of support for approximation to the EUFD, IPA FLOODS Lot 1: Marco Massabò and Stefania Traverso, CIMA Research Foundation*

- Main achievements by programme mid-term implementation include the organization of the informal Advisory Groups in the beneficiaries, the participatory development and prioritization of beneficiary-specific recommendations on potential capacity building actions, the development of the regional open source Flood Risk Information System for preliminary flood risk assessment, the development of the first release of *Guidelines and Good Practices for EUFD implementation* and the regional workshop that preceded the Steering Group meeting on 8 March;
- Recommendations have been classified according to main areas of interest having regard to the main challenges pose by EUFD implementation, e.g. legal and institutional framework, preliminary risk assessment, flood hazard and risk mapping, food risk management planning and data exchange and data management systems;
- Beneficiary-specific recommendations may be translated in national languages where necessary;
- Improved data exchange results to be an area of high interest in all beneficiaries;
- The work-plan shared with beneficiaries ahead of the Steering Group meeting is summarized, including operational Flood Risk Information System, envisaged tailored capacity building actions (training on the job combined with assistance from remote) and the development of the road-map for future actions in flood risk management;
- The main technical features of the Flood Risk Information System which will be made available with IPA FLOODS support are presented;
- DG ECHO encourages the Consortium to address potential human resources-related aspects and financial implications in road-map elaboration and warmly invites all beneficiaries to secure adequate data upload to ensure that the Flood Risk Information System is fully functional and effective.

Capacity building for flood response preparedness, IPA FLOODS Lot 2: Susanne Wacht, THW Germany and David Norlin, MSB Sweden

- The progress in implementation of IPA FLOODS Lot 2 is presented, including the good results from the first working group meeting held in January 2016 on concepts and SOPs of national teams HCP and FC in all the beneficiaries along with the development of relevant technical specifications for equipment;
- At this stage, all beneficiaries cross-checked finalized lists of equipment as resulting from the first working group meeting and are expected to provide their official approval before the Consortium may set-up and start the public procurement process;
- All beneficiaries are as well further working on SOPs at national level;
- Next two working group meetings will be organized on 26-28 April 2016 (finalization of national level SOPs) and 13-15 December 2016 (development of multinational CP modules' SOPs) both in Split (Croatia);
- The training for management staff of multinational CP modules will take place on 13-17 June 2016 in Montenegro (two participants/beneficiaries for both HCP and FC teams);
- Planning for operational training phase will follow.

Regional partners: Ivana Ljubojevic, Head of DPPI SEE Secretariat and Dragan Zeljko, Deputy Secretary for Integrated RBM and Water Planning, ISRBC

- DPPI SEE congratulates for the broad commitment and the cooperative atmosphere perceived around IPA FLOODS and encourages the Consortium to report on key achievements at the 32<sup>nd</sup> DPPI SEE Regional Meeting on 5-6 April 2016 in Slovenia;
- DPPI SEE is pleased to inform the members of the IPA FLOODS Steering Group that the tendering process in the framework of the *Joint Emergency Response Units - JERU* project has been successfully completed. Due date of delivery of the personal protective equipment to the beneficiaries coincides with that envisaged in IPA FLOODS tender. Time-wise this valuable coincidence undoubtedly serves the synergy building between *JERU* and the programme.
- ISRBC expresses appreciation for smooth programme running in a context where a broad number of partners and Beneficiaries are involved;
- Special appreciation goes to IPA FLOODS for bringing together experts with a specific role in the entire flood risk management cycle to have a *forum* for joint discussion;
- ISRBC emphasizes the importance of the *Protocol on Flood Protection to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin* which entered into force in November 2015, including with the scope of facilitating cooperation on the basis of the EUFD and promoting measures for flood risk mitigation and preparedness as well as mutual assistance in the context of emergency situations;
- In this last regard, ISRBC encourages the Consortium to secure synergies between respective relevant protocols. Since the parties of ISRBC, within the joint Sava River Flood Risk Management Plan, must determine procedures for emergency flood defence, ISRBC would highly appreciate if the programme could address the issue in a paper;
- ISRBC stressed the importance of the recently developed Sava GIS and Sava HIS for data and information exchange of the Sava countries. In this regard, provided that there are differences among Beneficiaries, ISRBC believes that it is up to each country and/or individual relevant institutions, to decide on the use of any system for data and information exchange.

Closing remarks: all participants

- Albania underlines the good work being brought forward under IPA FLOODS along with the importance of tailored beneficiary-specific measures. This is the right methodology to follow;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasizes the productive approach adopted within the programme and highlights the contribution made through the donation of the flood response equipment;

- Croatia highlights on the one hand the degree of relevant expertise that is available in the region and on the other the network that is growing even stronger on the basis of the good results from previous experiences of cooperation;
- Croatia stresses as well the complexities in implementing the EUFD-related component of the programme – which represents a good starting point for further initiatives – and highlights the potential expected benefits from the adoption of a common approach in integrated flood risk management. In this regard, Croatia can offer relevant expertise to colleagues in the region;
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia confirms the valuable experience and the added value from the programme along with the smooth communication with the programme management structure;
- Implementing Preliminary Risk Assessment Challenges in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia may imply a number of challenges due to the complexity of the national flood risk management system;
- In this last regard, DG ECHO informs that further opportunities for tailored short-term assistance to Beneficiaries in the form of workshops, exchange of experts and study visits may be available under the *Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument – TAiEX* ([http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/taix/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/taix/index_en.htm));
- Kosovo expresses full agreement with the assessment findings and recommendations on EUFD implementation. Recommendations should be brought at higher level and should find commitment by relevant institutions;
- Montenegro confirms the high added value from the programme and the expectations towards further approaching relevant EU standards;
- Serbia congratulates with the Consortium for the ongoing efforts;
- Turkey highlights the importance of the *Guidelines and Good Practices for EUFD implementation* document;
- All Steering Group members adopt the already shared IPA FLOODS work-plan for 2016-2017 for both programme components and both Lots (annexed);
- The third IPA FLOODS Steering Group meeting is convened in December 2016 and will be kindly hosted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Annexes:

- *List of participants;*
- *Work-plan 2016-2017 - Capacity building for flood preparedness and response (Lot 1 and Lot 2)*
- *Work-plan 2016 - Capacity building for EUFD implementation (Lot 1)*