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WORKING DOCUMENT

Regional IPA Programme 2015 on risk assessment and mapping

The objective of the working document is to stimulate exchange of views regarding the potential for developing a new Multi-beneficiary programme for the EU candidate countries and potential candidates in the field of risk assessment and mapping to be financed with the 2015 budget of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Countries are invited to share information on their current status regarding national risk assessment and mapping, and collecting of disaster loss data, and express their needs. In order for the European Commission to start preparing a new programme it will need to receive a confirmation of the countries' interest through their national IPA coordinators.

Based on the needs of the countries and on the availability of IPA funding a new regional IPA programme could be developed in the course of 2014, financed by the 2015 budget and launched in the second half of 2016. The programme can consist of three complementary elements:

- Risk assessment
- Disaster loss databases
- Risk mapping/electronic regional risk atlas

Risk assessment

As a part of the new EU Civil Protection legislation which came into force in January 2014 the Participating States to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism are required to develop risk assessments at national or appropriate subnational level and make available to the European Commission a summary of the relevant elements thereof by 22 December 2015 and every three years thereafter. So far, the Commission has received a contribution of 17 EU Member States and Norway. Out of these 18 contributions, 11 are complete or well-advanced national risk assessments which can be used as a source of good practices and expertise.

Creating an open platform for national risk assessments is improving the coherence and consistency among the risk assessments undertaken in the Participating States and will allow them to join forces to overcome future national or cross border challenges caused by natural and man-made disasters. At national level risk assessment will help improve the awareness and understanding of the risks a country faces and will create a better position for the decision makers, stakeholders and other parties to agree on preventive measures that need to be taken to avoid the most severe consequences of upcoming hazards. The decision makers will be better informed on how to prioritise and allocate investments in prevention preparedness and reconstruction measures.

In view of the current or future participation of the EU candidate countries and potential candidates in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and in general in view of the countries' approximation to the EU some support could be needed and provided in order for the countries to be able to respond to the same requirements which the EU Member States are facing in the field of risk assessment and achieve the same progress for their own benefit and for strengthening regional cooperation.

Disaster Loss Database

Risk assessment requires accurate recording of previous disasters and in particular the associated losses in terms of human casualties, property and environment damage as well as economic loss. The collection of data and the assessment of disaster impact could be a challenge in many countries since it involves different institutions and actors, and requires consistent application of an agreed methodology. In addition, from European prospective countries' methodologies for assessing losses could be quite different and there is no common approach that would enable the databases to be combined and provide a trend at European or global level.

A step ahead in addressing this issue was the publication of the Recommendations for a European approach on recording of disaster losses in 2013 by the Joint Research Centre. The document defines a conceptual framework for the utility of loss data by considering loss accounting, disaster forensics and risk modelling as key applications. Beginning of 2015 JRC is planning to step-up the work and produce EU loss database guidelines. On the basis of the guidelines and with the help of this IPA programme interested countries from the Western Balkan and Turkey can decide to further develop/revise/improve the national data collection and processing, and eventually the sharing of information on impact of disasters.

Risk mapping and electronic regional risk atlas

Once risks are analysed in detail, it will be possible to plot risk maps as one of the outputs of the risk assessment. Risk maps are an important tool for developing risk management strategy and are beneficial for a large number of sectors. In the countries participating in the 1st phase of the Programme for Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters in the Southern Neighbourhood some efforts towards development of risk atlas have been made. A similar programme for the Eastern Partnership countries took a different approach and is collecting the data per GIS points not areas and it is leading to more comprehensive results. The electronic risk atlas combines hazards maps with vulnerability and asset maps, and it is connected to the national and European monitoring tools and early warning systems which upgrades it into operational tool for disaster response. The software is being currently installed in the emergency centres of the beneficiary countries.

Supporting questions:

- Has your country developed a national risk assessment or has it started such a process? If existing, is the national risk assessment comprehensive enough or it requires further development? Does it follow the EU guidelines for risk assessment?
- Is there national legislation and national methodology on disaster loss data gathering? Does a well-developed database exist or in order to have one further effort and support would be required?
- Is there national/subnational risk mapping available in your country? Would an electronic regional atlas with national component linked to monitoring tools be of interest to you?