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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS (ECHO)

Emergency Management and rescEU

**A.2 - Capacities and Operational Support**

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### **Terms of reference for Member States and Participating States experts supporting the certification and recertification of capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool**

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#### **1. Background**

Decision No 1313/2013, as amended by Decision (EU) 2019/420, established a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), at the disposal of Member States and Participating States in case a disaster strikes and national response capacities are insufficient. The Mechanism works on a voluntary basis whereby any country may request assistance through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), while Member States and Participating States may offer assistance through the UCPM.

To enhance the predictability of the available response capacities, a European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP or “the Pool”), i.e., a pool of voluntarily pre-committed response capacities of the Member States and Participating States, was created. The Pool includes modules, other response capacities and categories of experts.

In order to ensure common quality standards, all capacities need to undergo a certification process before they can be part of the European Civil Protection Pool. The Pool certification process assesses criteria such as:

- whether the response capacity is self-sufficient during deployment and as such does not cause an additional burden to the host nation;
- how the response capacity ensures efficient coordination with other deployed capacities or response actors;
- in how far the response capacity is interoperable with other deployed capacities;
- the capacity’s preparedness for deployment in terms of financial, legal and administrative aspects, and regarding appropriate training of team members.

The certification process itself consists of three steps: 1) a consultative visit, which is a first encounter with the response capacity and with the authority that would like to offer it to the European Civil Protection Pool; 2) a table top exercise; and 3) a field exercise.

Furthermore, in accordance with the 2018 Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision 1313/2013/EU, the need for recertification for capacities already

certified and registered into the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP) is due 5 years after the initial certification.

The overall aim of the recertification process is to continuously strengthen and improve the quality assurance of the response capacities registered in the ECPP. This should be illustrated by the continuous investment in the professional development and competence of the capacity, in the 5 years following certification. Therefore, the recertification process assesses criteria such as:

- Participation in international field exercises (MODEX, full scale, other);
- Engagement in national test operations, e.g. through annual exercises;
- Continued investment in training the members of the capacity;
- Improvement/maintenance of the team capacity, e.g. through the follow-up of the recommendations of the initial certification, or of internal lessons learned;
- Deployment of the capacity in national and/or international emergency response operations.

The recertification process itself consists of the following steps: 1) self-assessment with supporting evidence. The capacity seeking recertification shares with the Commission a self-assessment checklist, combined with supporting evidence 2) a validation visit (VV) to confirm the self-assessment. It consists of an extended meeting between the Commission and the Member State or the Participating State Civil Protection authority offering the response capacity to the ECPP, and (optional) 3) a field exercise.

The main objective of the national experts participating in the certification and recertification process as “Peer certifiers” is to support the processes by providing the appropriate (technical) expertise and ensuring the necessary quality standards are met in the context of the European Civil Protection Pool.

Peer certifiers are nominated by the Member States and Participating States, in accordance with the terms of reference and the profile requirements outlined below. All nominated experts must undergo a specific training course to be acquainted with the Pool certification methodology. Periodic refresher training courses will also be organised. All training courses are organised by the Commission.

## **2. Terms of Reference for Peer certifiers**

### **2.1 Role and responsibilities**

#### **2.1.1 Certification**

The main responsibility of a Peer certifier is to assess the capacity under certification, based on a grid of pre-defined criteria, and using his/her technical expertise and field deployment experience. The Peer certifier is part of the certification team that is coordinated by a DG ECHO Pool certifier.

It is expected that the Peer certifier:

- anticipates the time needed to properly prepare for the certification mission;

- arrives sufficiently in advance to the exercise location to allow for preparations with the certification team on site. Indications in that sense will be provided by the DG ECHO Pool certifier in the mission preparation phase;
- anticipates to stay at the exercise location a couple of hours after the end of the exercise, to allow time to debrief with the certification team and finalise the assessment grids.

The tasks of a Peer certifier include:

***Before the exercise/certification mission***

- Review all the relevant documentation of the capacity undergoing certification, including the Standard Operating Procedures. The DG ECHO Pool certifier sends all documents in advance of the certification mission.
- Refresh the knowledge of the certification methodology and tools, such as the guidelines for the certification and registration of the capacities in the ECPP, other relevant guidance materials, assessment grids and/or checklists.

***During the exercise/certification mission***

- Participate in the briefings with the certification team and the exercise organisers, prior to the start of the exercise.
- Perform a thorough assessment of the capacity under certification, observe the actions of the capacity according to the exercise design and scenario injects, collect and analyse relevant data and identify good practices as well as areas that require further development or improvement.
- Work closely with the capacity's trainer and co-trainer in order to ensure a coherent and accurate assessment. If needed, arrange with them an opportunity for bilateral clarification of issues, including also the key personnel of the capacity, to get a better understanding of their organisation and performance.
- Contribute to daily debriefings of the certification team and participate in the final debriefing session of the capacities under certification, in cooperation with the DG ECHO Pool certifier.
- Prepare the required certification documents (grids and/or checklists) and submit them to the DG ECHO Pool certifier before leaving the exercise mission.

***Attitude during the certification mission***

- Remain objective in the assessment, adopt a flexible approach and be open-minded to different cultures, working methods and operational procedures.
- Respect the confidentiality principle of the certification process by discussing the findings only with the capacity, its co-trainer or the certification team.
- Be respectful and friendly when providing feedback to or communicating with the capacity representatives.

- Maintain a positive team player attitude by collaborating with other certifiers and following the DG ECHO Pool certifier's guidance.
- Respect the safety and security measures set by the organisers of the exercise.

#### ***After the exercise/certification mission***

- Remain available for possible clarifications and contributions to the final certification report.
- Share the mission experience with the colleagues at home, at the national institute/organisation, to allow for a two-way learning opportunity.

#### **2.1.2 Re-certification**

The main responsibility of a Peer certifier is to assess the technical and logistical capabilities of the capacity being recertified, ensuring compliance with the minimum requirements, as defined in the recertification guidelines. The Peer certifier is part of the team that is coordinated by a DG ECHO desk officer.

It is expected that the Peer certifier

- anticipates the time needed to properly prepare for the Validation Visit (VV);
- arrives on time to the meeting location according to the indications provided by the DG ECHO desk officer in the mission preparation phase;

The tasks of a Peer certifier include:

#### ***Before the VV/recertification mission***

- Maintain familiarity with the recertification guidelines;
- Perform a thorough assessment of the self-assessment check list and the evidence provided by the team under recertification, relative to his/hers area of expertise. The DG ECHO desk officer sends all the documents in advance of the recertification mission.

#### ***During the VV/recertification mission***

- Participate in the meeting with the ECHO desk officer, management staff of the capacity under recertification and representatives from the National Civil Protection authority;
- Assess and verify that the evidence provided in the application file corresponds with the reality observed, in the areas relative to his/her expertise, ensuring compliance with the minimum requirements as defined in the recertification guidelines.

#### ***Attitude during the recertification mission***

- Remain objective in the assessment, adopt a flexible approach and be open-minded to different cultures, working methods and operational procedures;

- Be respectful and friendly when providing feedback to or communicating with the capacity and MS/PS representatives;
- Maintain a positive team player attitude by collaborating and following the DG ECHO desk officer's guidance.

#### *After the VV/recertification mission*

- Prepare a written feedback with the main observations from the VV and submit it to the DG ECHO desk officer;
- Share the mission experience with the colleagues at home, at the national institute/organisation, to allow for a two-way learning opportunity.

## **2.2 Profile and competences**

The nomination of the Peer certifiers by the civil protection competent authority of a UCPM Member State or Participating State should be done in respect of the criteria outlined below.

#### *Experience*

- At least five years of experience in the area of civil protection and disaster management.
- Experience of international field deployment, preferably under the UCPM.
- Trained/exercised under the UCPM, at least MBC level, preferably OPM. Specific areas of competence/expertise, e.g. medical modules, water related modules, CBRN, logistics, TAST, etc. will be defined according to the needs.
- Current or past experience as team leader, deputy team leader, or other key personnel of a civil protection deployable capacity is desirable.
- Previous experience in mentoring response capacities is considered an asset.

#### *Knowledge and skills*

- Good understanding of the international emergency response system.
- Proven written and spoken English language skills and ability to use IT tools.
- Physically fit and capable to work long hours in field conditions and ability to work in shifts, including night shifts, if needed.
- Ability to work in a team.
- Cultural awareness and ability to work in a multi-national environment.
- Good problem solving capacity.
- Excellent communication and networking skills.

## **3. Process for identifying Peer certifiers for certification and recertification missions**

After the nomination of the Peer certifiers by the civil protection competent authorities of Member States and Participating States, and once the schedule of the next cycle of table-top and field exercises is available, including the confirmation of the capacities participating in the context of the certification process, DG ECHO sends out a request for availability. This is currently done on an annual basis. The experts reply to the request,

keeping informed their sending organisation and their national civil protection/ competent authority.

For the recertification process, after the completion of the application phase and the confirmation of the VV, DG ECHO sends out a request to peer certifiers for availability. The experts reply to the request, keeping informed their sending organisation and their national civil protection/ competent authority

The number of required Peer certifiers per table-top or field exercise varies depending on the number of capacities undergoing certification. Indicatively, one certifier per capacity is required for the table-top exercise and two certifiers per capacity for the field exercise.

The number of required Peer certifiers for the validation visit varies depending on the number of capacities under recertification. Indicatively, one certifier per capacity is required. In case different capacities undergo recertification in the same VV, the number of peers may be adapted.

The Commission identifies the Peer certifiers based on the CVs of the candidates that have expressed their availability, taking care of matching as much as possible the specific expertise of the Peer certifier and the type(s) of capacity/ies undergoing the certification or recertification. In addition, a balance in terms of nationality and gender in the certification team is aspired to. However, Peer certifiers cannot have the same nationality as the capacity they are certifying.