



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

Emergency Management and rescEU
Capacities and Operational Support

GUIDELINES

“CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION”

OF RESPONSE CAPACITIES IN THE EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION POOL (ECPP)

November 2023

Document history

Version # - Date	Changes made
Version 1 – October 2019	Set-up of certification guidelines
Version 2 – November 2023	Minor updates and edits

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PREFACE

These guidelines aim to provide guidance to the EU Member States and UCPM Participating States regarding the certification of emergency response capacities that are committed to the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP or “the Pool”) before their registration in the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) as part of the Pool. They aim to provide practical information to prepare for, and go through the certification process, in an efficient and organised manner. These guidelines are for information purposes only and do not replace the possible consultation of applicable legal sources.

For additional clarifications, questions or suggestions for improvement of the guidelines, please contact the relevant colleagues in DG ECHO via ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

ABBREVIATIONS

CECIS	Common Emergency Communication and Information System
CP	Civil Protection
CV	Consultative Visit
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECPP	European Civil Protection Pool
EMT	Emergency Medical Team
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
FX	Field exercise
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
MS	Member State
MODEX	Module exercise
OSOCC	On-site Operations Coordination Centre
ORC	Other Response Capacity/ies
PS	Participating State
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TTX	Table top exercise
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
USAR	Urban search and rescue
WHO	World Health Organization

BACKGROUND

Context and Legal Basis

The EU's competences in the area of Civil Protection are embedded in Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, stating that "*Union action should aim to [...] promote swift, effective operational cooperation within the Union between national civil-protection services;*" as well as "*promote consistency in international civil-protection work.*"

The legal basis is Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, referred to as Decision 1313/2013 in this document. The overall objective of the UCPM is to strengthen cooperation among EU Member States and UCPM Participating States in the field of civil protection, with a view to improving prevention, preparedness and response to disasters. All EU Member States participate in the Mechanism, as well as the following Participating States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Moldova ⁽¹⁾, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Ukraine and Türkiye. **In this document, EU Member States and UCPM Participating States are collectively referred to as "Member States".**

The Mechanism is at the disposal of Member States, as well as third countries, when a disaster strikes and national response capacities are overwhelmed. It works on a voluntary basis whereby any country may request assistance through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). Member States then decide whether or not to respond and offer assistance to the requesting country.

To enhance the predictability of the available response capacities, the ECPP, i.e., a pool of voluntarily pre-committed response capacities of the Member States, was created ⁽²⁾. The Pool includes modules, Other Response Capacities (ORCs) and categories of experts (for definitions see Annex 1 - "Definitions"). When a disaster strikes, the ERCC, in close cooperation with the Member States, facilitates a coordinated deployment of the response capacities. In addition, financial support is available for the upgrade and repair of capacities offered to the Pool, as well as for covering operational and transport costs in case of deployment. ⁽³⁾

To strengthen the overall quality of the offered response capacities, Decision No 1313/2013 further tasks the Commission with establishing and managing a process for the certification and registration of the response capacities that Member States make available to the Pool ⁽⁴⁾. Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU, as amended by Commission Implementing Decisions 2018/142 and 2019/570 (hereafter "the Implementing Decision"), sets out in more detail the registration process and the three steps of the certification process, i.e. a consultative visit (CV), a table-top exercise (TTX) and a field exercise (FX) ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ on 1/1/2024, after the ratification of the UCPM Agreement

⁽²⁾ See Article 11 of Decision 1313/2013, 2019/420 and 2021/836, respectively.

⁽³⁾ See Article 21 of the Decisions and the Regulation.

⁽⁴⁾ See Article 11.4 of the Decisions and the Regulation.

⁽⁵⁾ See Article 16 and Annex V of the Implementing Decision.

The certification and registration process should be seen as a key element of the quality assurance of ECPP response capacities. Other elements of the Pool's quality assurance include the training of team members, regular exercises of the capacities, expert exchange among peers in Member States...etc...

The guidelines are part of a broader "Pool toolbox" which centralises all relevant information and tools that pertain to the Pool, in relation to certification and registration, recertification, the possibilities for financial support through adaptation (upgrade and repair) grants, policy support aspects, etc.. This toolbox is a dynamic platform, available on the [ERCC Portal](#).

Certification process: Objectives and description

The overall objective of the certification and registration process in the context of the UCPM in general, and of the ECPP in particular, is to ensure that the capacities in the Pool properly function during international deployments - in close coordination with host nation authorities and with other deployed capacities.

Accordingly, the certification and registration process specifically aims to:

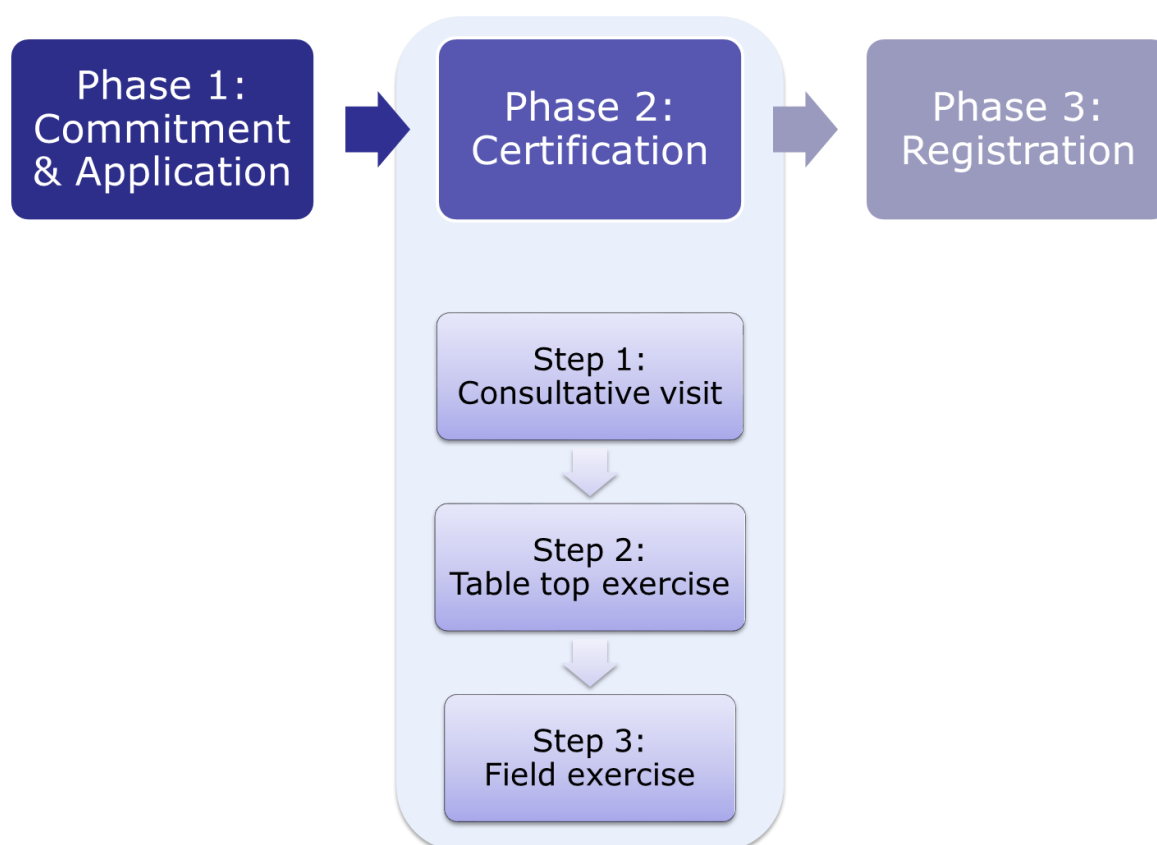
- 1) guarantee that the capacities registered in the ECPP meet the quality requirements for international deployment, and support the capacities to reach this goal;
- 2) strengthen the knowledge-base among Member States on the modules and other response capacities, such as the quality requirements, standard operating procedures (SOP), technical and operational best practices, etc.

Therefore, the certification and registration process for the Pool focuses on key criteria, namely:

- 1) logistical, financial, legal and administrative provisions for proper preparedness for mobilisation and deployment in international contexts, including appropriate training of team members;
- 2) self-sufficiency, i.e. whether the response capacity is self-sufficient during deployment and as such doesn't cause an additional burden to the host nation;
- 3) interoperability, i.e. in how far the response capacity is interoperable with other deployed capacities;
- 3) coordination, i.e. how the response capacity ensures efficient coordination with other deployed capacities or other response actors.

The certification and registration process consists of three phases, i.e., the political commitment and application, the three-step certification process, and finally the registration (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Phases and steps in the certification and registration process



Scope and purpose of these guidelines

The guidelines provide practical guidance on how to proceed for each of the phases and steps of the certification and registration process of response capacities that Member States commit to the ECPP, and describe the respective roles of the Member States' Civil Protection authorities and capacities' staff, Commission representatives and other experts supporting the process.

In particular, the guidelines intend to be a working tool for:

- Member States that intend to commit response capacities to the Pool;
- Representatives, and in particular the management team, of response capacities that (are planning to) undergo certification;
- The team of certifiers, i.e. peer certifiers and DG ECHO Pool certifiers;

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Member States' commitment to register a response capacity in the ECPP entails some responsibilities: capacities in the Pool shall be available for response operations under the UCPM, unless in duly justified circumstances, and fulfil the agreed minimum quality requirements for international deployments ⁽⁶⁾.

Member States

National civil protection authorities of the Member States have the exclusive responsibility to commit response capacities to the ECPP. This means that any entity – be it public or private - having a response capacity and which is interested in committing it to and registering it in the Pool should have the prior approval of the national civil protection authority, that will coordinate the communication with the Commission in this regard.

National civil protection authorities have the responsibility of ensuring that the response capacities to be committed to the Pool perform in accordance with national standards and are (or preparing to be) ready for international deployments in the context of the UCPM. Accordingly, they provide the capacity with the necessary support to go through the full certification and registration process.

Member States may also support the ECPP certification and registration process, by making their experts available in the role of peer certifiers. The peer certifiers actively contribute to the certification process.

Focal point for the capacity under certification

Each response capacity committed to the Pool is expected to have a dedicated focal point, who centralises the exchanges during the certification process. It is recommended that the focal point ensures that the national civil protection authorities are kept informed on the progress of the certification process.

Team of certifiers

The certification and registration process is led by the Commission; a DG ECHO Pool certifier is assigned to lead this process and acts as main interlocutor for the capacity and the ECPP national focal point during the process.

In addition, experts from Member States are nominated by the civil protection authorities as peer certifiers. The peer certifiers are trained by the Commission, before becoming part of a peer certifiers' roster. They assist the Commission with parts of the certification process, i.e. the table-top and the field exercises.

Experts outside the peer certifiers' roster may be selected on an ad hoc basis by the Commission, to certify capacities for which the required expertise is not available in the roster.

⁽⁶⁾ See Article 11 of the Decisions and Article 15 of the Implementing Decision.

Table top and field exercise actors

Trainers

The trainers coach and mentor the capacities participating in the exercise, by observing, analysing, reviewing documents and giving feedback. They cooperate with the certification team to ensure a coherent and accurate assessment of the capacities undergoing the certification.

Exercise providers

Exercise providers are in charge of the overall exercise organisation (typically MODEX simulation exercises). Their role is to facilitate the certification process during the design, planning and conduct of the exercise and to ensure that the certification requirements are embedded in the exercise and are addressed in the scenario, events and injects.

Commission expert group on Capacities

The Commission expert group on Capacities is a registered Commission expert group. It was established to ensure the continuous improvement and strengthening of the UCPM capacities in general, and to develop the certification and registration process and the tools used for this purpose in particular. The terms of reference and rules of procedure of this expert group are available on the [register of Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities](#).

European Commission (DG ECHO)

The European Commission coordinates the certification and registration process for all response capacities that are committed to the Pool. The Commission provides the necessary support to ensure that all steps in the process can be finalised in a reasonable timeframe and manages the MODEX simulation exercises as a key platform supporting the process. Annex 2 (Planning of the ModEX exercises) provides more details on the organisation of the MODEX exercises.

In addition to the administrative support, the Commission makes its staff available to lead the certification team in each step of the process. The Commission organises training courses for Member States' experts before they join the pool of "peer certifiers".

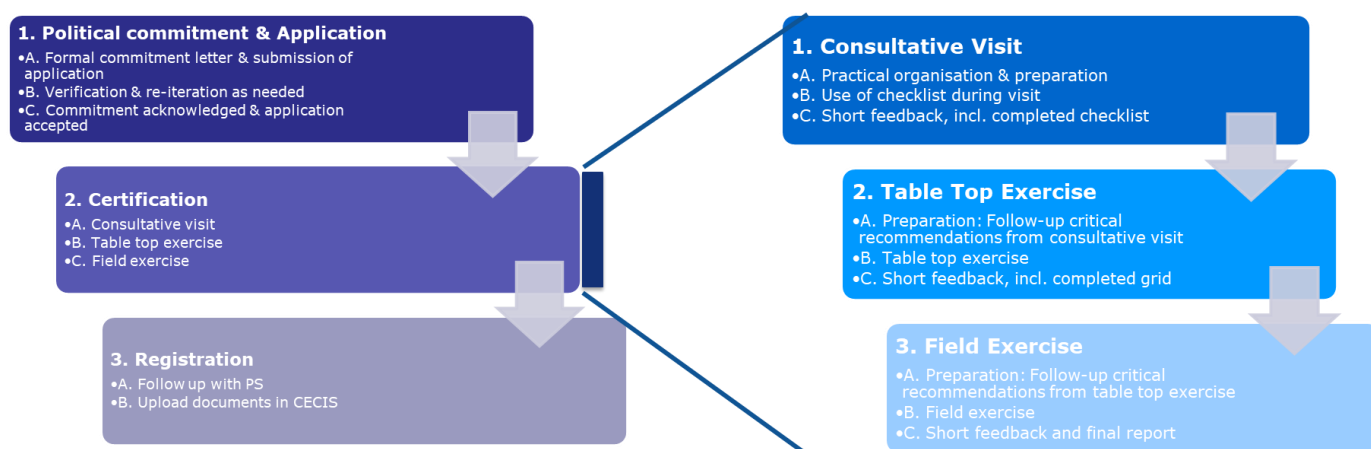
Unless otherwise specified, all communication with the Commission relating to the certification and registration process are addressed to a dedicated functional email box: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION PROCESS

Process overview

1. The process is launched when a Member State expresses its political commitment for a response capacity to become part of the ECPP. The political commitment is materialised by a letter of the Director General of the national civil protection authority to the Director General of DG ECHO. This political commitment shall be accompanied by the application file, with all the necessary documentation on the capacity ⁽⁷⁾;
2. Upon acceptance of the application, which is formally notified by DG ECHO, the capacity starts the certification process, which includes a consultative visit (CV), a table-top exercise (TTX) and a field exercise (FX). At the end of the certification process, a final certification report materializes the acceptance of the capacity in the ECPP;
3. After completing the ECPP certification, the Member State must register the capacity as part of the ECPP in the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS).

Figure 2: Elements of the certification and registration process



For the capacities to get maximum benefit, the sequence of the three-step certification process should be respected. Derogations from the three-step certification process are accepted only for those capacities for which international quality standards exist ⁽⁸⁾.

This is the case for:

1. Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) teams (medium and heavy), which are subject to the INSARAG Classification;

⁽⁷⁾ See Annex V of the Implementing Decision.

⁽⁸⁾ See Annex V of the Implementing Decision.

2. Emergency medical teams (EMT) (types 1, 2, 3 and specialised care), which are subject to the classification process of the World Health Organization (WHO).

It is important to note that for USAR teams and EMTs to be registered in the ECPP, the political commitment, the factsheet and the application form are still required, as well as the registration in CECIS once the UN classification process is finalised.

How to prepare

Before committing the capacity to the Pool and formally submitting the application, it is recommended that the Member State ensures optimal preparedness of the concerned response capacity. This includes:

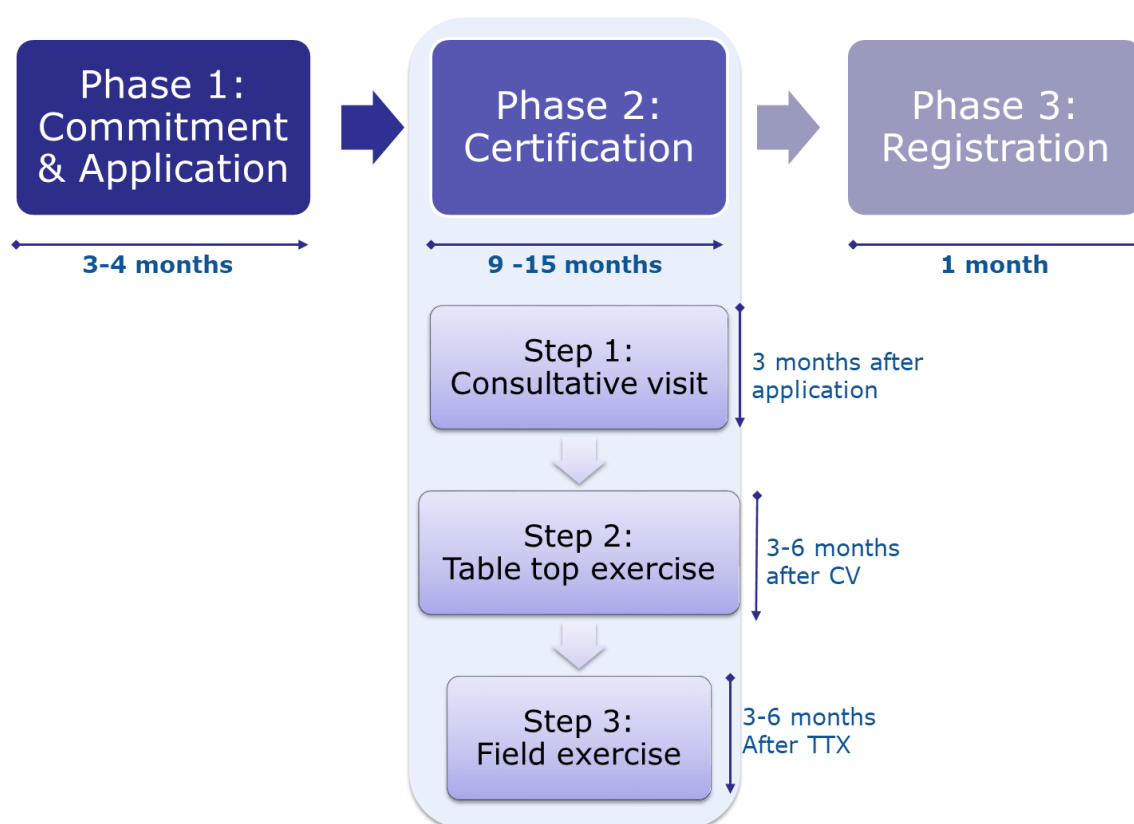
- The applicant Member State should be fully acquainted with the capacity's expected requirements and standards as outlined in Decision No 1313/2013 and its implementing rules, ensure that the capacity complies with those and verify that all documentation that is required for the application is ready and complete. In addition, the management staff of the capacity should be familiar with the [certification grid](#) used during the certification process (see Pool toolbox on the [ERCC portal](#)).
- Particular attention in these preparations should be given to the ECPP certification key criteria, i.e., self-sufficiency; interoperability; logistical, financial, legal and administrative provisions for proper preparedness and mobilisation in international contexts; coordination with other response actors and response capacities; and minimum technical requirements as defined in the Implementing Decision.
- As a minimum, staff members with key responsibilities in the management of the response capacity should have received the relevant UCPM training, at least the Union Mechanism Introduction Course (UMI). Functional knowledge of English, which is the most used language to interact in international deployments, is also of key importance. National Civil Protection authorities could consider providing a general introductory training on civil protection and international deployments for all the team members of a capacity undergoing the certification.
- It is strongly recommended that a project management approach is applied to the certification and registration process, including a dedicated project management team and appropriate human resources, a dedicated budget, and expected timelines for each step of the process and the corresponding milestones.
- In the project planning, particular attention should be given to the expected timeframes of the table-top and field exercises. It is of key importance to timely communicate this planning to the Commission, to allow for proper arrangements with the consortia organising the MODEX simulation exercises (see also Annex 2).
- Regarding the financial aspects, the team should be aware of the possibility of an EU grant for the adaptation (upgrade and repair) of the response capacities committed to the ECPP. General information on adaptation grants can be found on the [ERCC Portal](#) and information on open calls [here](#).

In case further information and clarifications are needed at any stage in these preparations, please contact the Commission via the ECPP functional mailbox: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

Estimated timeframe

Indicative timeframes are provided below for the different phases and steps of the process with the intention to keep it swift and predictable. This will allow national civil protection authorities to better plan and anticipate the mobilisation of the concerned staff. In addition, the Commission will be able to provide optimal support with particular regard to the capacity's integration in the overall MODEX planning (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Indicative timeframes for the certification and registration process



For the certification (Phase 2), a minimum of three months is required between the different steps, to allow for the integration of the recommendations of the previous step. After each step of the certification process, the Commission provides a feedback report to the response capacity, including recommendations for improvement.

Overall, the estimated timeframe for the certification process is about 20 months, depending on the availability of exercises' slots. In case of significant delays, the Commission and the concerned Member State should consult each other to find possible remedies or reschedule the certification process.

PHASE I. POLITICAL COMMITMENT & APPLICATION

Submission of the application

The political commitment and application of a new response capacity to the ECPP is the first phase of the process. The political commitment takes the form of an official letter to DG ECHO's Director-General to be sent to ECHO-DIRECTOR-GENERAL@ec.europa.eu, with the ECPP functional e-mailbox in copy: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

Together with the political commitment, the Member State sends a complete application file. This consists of a completed application form together with the documentation outlined in Annex V of the Implementing Decision; the template can be found in the Pool toolbox, on the [ERCC portal](#). The entire application file is sent to the functional e-mailbox: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

Already at this initial stage, it would also be very helpful for the capacity to have the project management details ready, as referred to above. The possibility for requesting an adaptation (upgrade and repair) grant should also be considered.

Verification and re-iteration, as needed

Based on the documentation provided by the Member State in the application file, the Commission assesses whether the capacity can be considered for inclusion in the ECPP.

This initial assessment considers: the capacity goals⁽⁹⁾ compared to the capacities present in the Pool; the geographic distribution of the ECPP response capacities; and the relative contributions of Member States.

The assessment is also based on the extent to which the minimum quality requirements for the capacity are reached, as well as the elements indicating self-sufficiency and interoperability. The UCPM-related training of the team management is assessed, and potential training requirements or other follow-up actions to support the certification process can already be identified at this stage.

As relevant, the Commission can request further details or clarifications from the Member State on the received documentation, until the application file is considered complete and the capacity ready to move to the certification phase. During the entire application phase, the Commission remains available to provide support to Member States to complete their files.

Acceptance of the application

Once this first "desk" assessment is finalised, and the documentation provided meets all initial requirements, the Commission accepts the application by sending a formal reply to the offering national civil protection authority. With this communication, the three-step certification process is launched.

⁽⁹⁾ See Article 14 of the Implementing Decision

Timeline

The period between the formal submission of the application by the Member State and the formal acceptance by the Commission is expected not to exceed four months.

PHASE II. CERTIFICATION

Introduction

Scope

The ECPP certification process aims to assess the capacity's ability to contribute to international response in UCPM deployments.

The general requirements for civil protection modules and TAST are spelled out in Annex II of the Implementing Decision ; the [TAST Guidance Document](#) further complements the requirements described for TAST. No minimum requirements for "Other Response Capacities" have been defined.

For all capacities, the certification covers the requirements as identified in the Implementing Decision, as well as the key criteria that are specific for the ECPP, namely:

- Preparedness (logistical, financial, legal and administrative provisions): the capacity should have all procedures in place, to ensure a smooth *preparation* for the capacity's deployment in international contexts, for the actual international *deployment* itself, and for the *return* of the capacity at the end of the deployment. These provisions should cover the management of human resources, as well as of the equipment, and the necessary logistics and administration around it.
- Self-sufficiency: ideally, and unless otherwise specified in the Annex II of the Implementing Decision (Annex II), the capacity should be able to cater for its own needs (e.g., food, water, fuel, basic medical support, communication) during a given time after arrival on the deployment site, as defined in the Implementing Decision (Article 12). This is to ensure that a capacity can act in complete autonomy, even in difficult circumstances, without placing an additional burden on the host nation.
- Interoperability: the capacity should be capable to work efficiently with other mobilised response capacities and contribute smoothly to joint operations. This implies a common understanding of basic principles in disaster response operations, effective flow of communication and availability of communication equipment, technical complementarity of equipment, etc.
- Coordination: the capacity should be prepared to coordinate its intervention with the other response capacities that are mobilised (both European and international capacities), as well as with the host nation coordination team.
- On a technical level, and in particular during the field exercises, particular attention will be given to the general requirements of the modules, as defined in Implementing Decision (Annex II).

Process

The certification process itself consists of three steps: 1) a consultative visit (CV); 2) a table-top exercise (TTX); 3) a field exercise (FX). The sequence of the certification process shall be respected to allow for the response capacities to gain the maximum benefit from the process.

The table-top and field exercises are usually conducted through MODEX. (see Annex 2) ⁽¹⁰⁾. MODEX exercises are commissioned by DG ECHO and allow capacities to be certified to test their preparedness for international deployments.

In accordance with the legislation, “*the field exercise may be waived for fire-related modules, emergency temporary camps, medical aerial evacuation modules, and certain other response capacities on a case-by-case basis*”. ⁽¹¹⁾ As for capacities for which an international system exists, namely the urban search and rescue teams (medium and heavy), and the emergency medical teams (types 1, 2, 3 and specialised care), they are considered certified if they have undergone the UN classification process of respectively INSARAG and WHO. No separate nor additional certification process for these types of capacity is foreseen under the ECPP.

A streamlined certification and re-certification process for “twin” ECPP capacities has been defined in [complementary guidelines](#).

Certification team

The composition of the certification team changes in the different steps of the certification process, as outlined in Table 1. At each step of the process, the certification team observes and verifies a series of indicators, as defined in the [certification grid](#). For the table-top and field exercise, the Commission selects peer certifiers from the roster, on the basis of the required expertise and their availability.

Table 1 – Composition of the certification team

Role	Consultative visit	Table-top exercise	Field Exercise	Final report
Peer certifiers	-	Yes	Yes	No
DG ECHO certifier(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Validity

After completing each of the three steps of the certification process, the certification team provides the response capacity with a written feedback, covering best practices, areas for improvement, recommendations. This helps the capacity to move forward in reaching the certification requirements. This feedback takes the form of a certification report when the ECPP certification is successfully completed.

The ECPP certification of a capacity is valid for five years, upon issuance of the certificate. The process for re-certification is defined in the [Guidelines “Recertification of](#)

⁽¹⁰⁾ Other options are also possible, e.g., full scale exercises organised by a specific PS.

⁽¹¹⁾ Annex III of Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/142.

[Response Capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool \(ECPP\)](#)” of March 2020 which can be found on the ERCC Portal.

Step 1 - Consultative visit

Description

The consultative visit is the first step of the certification process and consists of a meeting between the Commission, the management staff of the response capacity to be certified and the Civil Protection authority of the Member State offering the response capacity to the ECPP. The consultative visit takes place in the country that is offering the capacity. In justified cases, it can alternatively be held on-line.

Scope and purpose

The consultative visit aims for the Commission to get a better understanding of the capacity that is offered, and to further assess the information elements provided in the application phase. A particular focus is put on the logistical arrangements, the staff preparedness aspects, as well as financial and legal arrangements in place for international deployments of the capacity. The post-mission phase is also covered during the consultative visit. The list of issues to be addressed during the consultative visit can be found in the [certification grid](#) on the ERCC portal.

In case a country offers more than one response capacity to the ECPP, and these capacities have a number of components in common (e.g., procedures, equipment, training etc.), a joint consultative visit can be organized.

The consultative visit also serves to ensure adequate planning of the next steps of the certification, i.e., the table-top and field exercises, considering the need to allow sufficient time to include the recommendations of the consultative visit and proper coordination with the exercise organisers.

Who is involved?

Usually, the national Civil Protection authority of the offering State hosts the consultative visit, together with representatives from the relevant Ministries who are involved in international deployments. Key management staff of the response capacity is also represented, as are representatives from other ministries in case the response capacity is not under the direct responsibility of the national Civil Protection authority.

The Commission is usually represented by one representative (DG ECHO staff), i.e. the desk officer in charge of the certification and registration process of the concerned capacity.

Timing

The consultative visit should take place within three months after the Commission sent the formal acceptance of the capacity.

Documents to be provided

The civil protection authority of the Member State makes available the latest versions of all relevant information regarding the capacity to be certified, as outlined in Annex V of the Implementing Decision.

Step 2 – Table-top exercise

Description

The table-top exercise (TTX) is the second step of the certification process. It consists in the participation of the capacity in a table-top simulation exercise, together with other international response capacities and following a pre-determined scenario.

A maximum number of five capacities can be certified in a single TTX, due to MODEX requirements. The maximum number of peer certifiers in a TTX is five (plus the DG ECHO lead certifier).

Purpose and scope

The table-top exercise aims to test the management as well as the strategic and tactical decision making of the capacity during an international deployment, e.g., coordination with headquarters and with other capacities, procedures, reporting and other communication arrangements. Other issues covered include situational assessments, definition of objectives, implementation of operations, information management, and monitoring and evaluation as well as the preparations to phase out. Decision-making and managerial aspects in a disaster are directly associated, among others, to the relation with authorities, international coordination, interoperability with other assets and autonomy for carrying out operations.

Who is involved?

The main participants in the TTX are the key management personnel of the capacity. They should bring along all documentation⁽¹²⁾ that is necessary for an actual international deployment.

In addition, it is desirable that the institution owning the capacity sends a headquarters representative to the TTX, so that their supportive role can also be played during the exercise. They are also expected to take part in the feedback sessions to the response capacity, so they can better assist in the further development of the response capacity, including for the field exercise.

The certification team comprises one Commission representative (DG ECHO) and one peer certifier per capacity. The certification team will use the certification grid filled after the CV to comment and rate the capacity's performance during the exercise and will also take into consideration the findings from the consultative visit.

⁽¹²⁾ For example, inventory list, contact lists, customs documentation, SOPs.

Timing

Depending on the availability of slots in a relevant MODEX TTX, the participation in a table-top exercise should take place within three to six months after the consultative visit, to allow for sufficient time to integrate the recommendations from the consultative visit. As needed, the response capacity might delay its participation in the table-top exercise or might be recommended to repeat the table-top exercise, to be able to integrate the recommendations.

Documents to be provided

The capacity should provide all updated documentation related to the capacity, in particular its standard operating procedures, and written material produced during the exercise.

Step 3 – Field exercise

Description

The field exercise (FX) is the third and last step of the certification process. It consists in the participation of the capacity in a field exercise, together with other international capacities and following a pre-determined scenario.

Purpose and scope

The field exercise aims to provide a realistic field scenario for the response capacity to show its performance, in line with the minimum quality requirements as outlined in Decision No 1313/2013 and its implementing rules, and described in the [certification grid](#) available on the ERCC portal. The field exercise focuses on the operational aspects of these requirements during the different phases of an international deployment, i.e. mobilisation/arrival, operations and demobilisation.

The performance of the operational activities might reveal positive actions/ best practices and/or identify potential adaptation needs. As relevant, based on the field performance, consultations with the trainer, and secondary data such as daily reports, e-mails or virtual OSOCC posts, the certification team will make recommendations, if relevant, on how to improve the preparedness and the response of the capacity during an international deployment.

Who is involved?

For the field exercise, the entire capacity and its staff are involved. Furthermore, the presence of a module focal point coming from the institution owning the capacity is recommended.

For each response capacity using the field exercise for certification purposes, a certification team of three persons is mobilised, i.e., two peer certifiers and one Commission representative. In case several capacities undergo certification in the same field exercise, the number of peer certifiers may be reduced. The aim is that at least one of the certifiers has the relevant technical profile for the type of capacity undergoing certification.

Indicative timing

Depending on the availability of slots in a relevant MODEX FX, the field exercise should preferably take place within three to six months after the table-top exercise, to allow for sufficient time to integrate the recommendations from the table-top exercise. As needed, the response capacity might delay its participation in the field exercise, or might be recommended to repeat the field exercise, to fully address the recommendations from the previous step.

Documents to be provided

The capacity should provide all updated documentation related to the capacity, in particular its standard operating procedures, and written material produced during the exercise.

Final certification report

At the end of the three-step certification process, if the capacity complies with the certification requirements, a final certification report is prepared by the DG ECHO Pool certifier. This final report integrates the key findings on the capacity in relation to the ECPP certification criteria, including some key recommendations for the further development of the capacity, as relevant.

The final report, together with the certificate confirming the process was completed successfully, is sent by the Commission to the national Civil Protection authority of the offering Member State.

In case a capacity is considered not to fully comply yet with the ECPP certification criteria at the end of the last step of the certification process, some reiterations of the certification steps may be undertaken, or the capacity should demonstrate that the necessary improvements were made to comply with the UCPM requirements. A follow-up visit by the Commission can be organised before the certification is granted.

For capacities that do not make the necessary progress and are considered not to comply with the ECPP certification criteria, the Commission may revoke the acceptance of the application to the Pool.

PHASE III. REGISTRATION

When sending the final report and the certificate for the capacity, the Commission also invites the national Civil Protection authority to register the certified capacity in the CECIS database as part of the ECPP and to make available the necessary documentation also in CECIS.

In accordance with Implementing Decision 2018/142, certification should be reassessed at the latest after five years.

CONCLUSIONS

This document provides practical guidance to Member States wishing to offer a response capacity to the ECPP. The guidelines are part of a “[Pool Toolbox](#)” that is accessible through the [ERCC portal](#), which centralises the relevant documentation, including the certification grid used in the certification process. All documentation is versioned, and updates are posted as they become available.

For any questions, please feel free to contact the responsible team in the Commission at ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS

Modules

A 'module' refers to a self-sufficient and autonomous predefined task- and needs-driven arrangement of Member States' capabilities or a mobile operational team of the Member States, representing a combination of human and material means that can be described in terms of its capacity for intervention or by the task(s) it is able to undertake ⁽¹³⁾.

The general requirements of the modules identified by the legislation are defined in Annex II of the Implementing Decision (2014/762/EU).

TAST (Technical Assistance and Support Teams)

The primary task of TAST is to accompany experts or teams deployed via the UCPM and to ensure their ability to work by providing support in different areas according to the circumstances and needs of a mission:

The TAST provides or arranges for:

- support for set-up and running of office;
- ICT support;
- logistics and subsistence support;
- transport support on site.

The general requirements of the TAST are defined in Annex II of the Implementing Decision. See also the [TAST guidance document](#).

Other Response Capacities

Under Decision 1313/2013, the “other response capacities” represent the flexible element, in the sense that they do not have general requirements. They often respond to the increasing demand for multi-sectoral assistance and allow the UCPM to contribute to a more comprehensive EU response to disasters and crises. A preliminary list of capacity goals (i.e., type and number of “other response capacities”) was agreed by the Member States and the Commission, however without defining general requirements as was done for the modules ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Member States can offer “other response capacities”, based on the particular disaster-related needs and the lessons identified during previous response operations. The “other response capacities” may comprise resources from one or more Member State, should adhere to established international guidelines, be deployable on very short notice, work self-sufficiently and autonomously, and cooperate with other relevant international actors (cf. Articles 9.1 and 9.4 of the Decision).

“Other response capacities” undertaking the registration process must be clear on their factsheets about technical and non-technical capabilities (e.g., self-sufficiency and transportation).

⁽¹³⁾ Cf. Article 4 of the Decision and Regulation, respectively

⁽¹⁴⁾ Cf. Annexes II and III of the of the Implementing Decision

ANNEX 2: PLANNING OF THE MODEX EXERCISES

MODEX exercises are planned in currently biennial cycles. The table-top and field exercise required for the certification of a response capacity should as much as possible be integrated in the planning of the MODEX cycles.

Capacities

As soon as the planning of the MODEX exercises is available, the Commission 1) contacts the ECPP national focal points to inform them of available slots suitable for capacities under certification; and 2) informs the MODEX contractors of which capacities must participate in exercises for certification purposes, in order to best accommodate them in exercises with the most relevant scenarios.

The planning of the capacities' participation in the MODEX exercises should respect the sequence of the certification process, i.e., first attending a table-top exercise (step 2) and then a field exercise (step 3). Moreover, sufficient time, i.e., a minimum of three months, should be kept between the different steps of the certification process, to allow the capacities to integrate the recommendations from the previous step.

Certifiers

When the MODEX exercise dates are available, the Commission invites peer certifiers to express their availability to be part of the certification teams. The Commission selects the peer certifiers from the roster, considering availability and expertise, and avoiding possible conflict of interests (e.g., peer certifiers should have different nationality from the teams undertaking certification). Other selection factors are the prerequisite participation in a certification workshop, a balanced mix of nationalities in the certification team, proximity to the exercise location, previous experience as certifier, profile of the other candidates, etc.

Conclusion

The final schedule of planned capacities and certifiers for each MODEX exercise represents a firm commitment for all involved to participate in given exercises. Member States' Civil Protection authorities should ensure availability by relieving the concerned persons and teams of other commitments during these times.

In case of international deployments, changes to the planning may be requested. In those cases, the decision of when to undertake certification will be re-evaluated by the Commission in coordination with the Member state.

ANNEX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS ASSESSED DURING THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

During the different steps of the registration and certification process, several documents will be assessed.

The table below provides a list and is intended as an operational tool to support the capacities undergoing the certification. Concerning the Standards Operating Procedures (SOP), the reference document is the [EU “Guideline for Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\)”](#).

Relevant documentation list	Available (Y/N)	Comments
Political Commitment		
Application form		
Capacity factsheet		To be up-dated for any specific deployment/exercise (contact details, transport, radio frequencies, requested area for BoO, fuel, subsistence,...)
Templates and checklists to be annexed to the Standard Operating Procedures		cf certification grid