



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

**Emergency Management and rescEU
Capacities and Operational Support**

GUIDELINES

“RECERTIFICATION AND REREGISTRATION”

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

March 2020

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PREFACE

These guidelines aim at providing guidance to the Member States (MS) and Participating States (PS) regarding the recertification of emergency response capacities that are committed to the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP) and their reregistration in CECIS as part of the ECPP. They aim at providing practical information to prepare for, and go through the recertification process, in an efficient and organised manner. These guidelines are for information purposes only and do not replace the possible consultation of any 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
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
PS	Participating State
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
VV	Validation visit

BACKGROUND

Background and Legal Basis

The 2018 Commission Implementing Decision¹ amending Decision 1313/2013/EU determined the need for re-certification ‘at the latest after 5 years’: “*the certification of a module, technical assistance and support team, other response capacity, or expert should be reassessed at the latest after 5 years, if the asset is submitted for reregistration into the EERC*” (Article 16.8).

The recertification and reregistration process are key elements, designed to verify the continuous investments in the development of the capacity, with the objective to ensure that the ECPP’s quality assurance and minimum standards are strengthened and improved.

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

[Guidelines for ‘certification and registration’](#) is a key reference to the present document.

Scope and purpose of these guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the necessary background information and practical guidance to support MS and PS in the renewal of their commitment to the ECPP. The guidelines provide practical guidance on how to proceed for each of the phases and steps of the recertification and reregistration process of response capacities in the context of the ECPP. They also define the roles of MS and PS Civil Protection authorities and capacities’ staff, Commission (DG ECHO) representatives and other experts supporting the process (see guidelines for ‘certification and registration’, p.8).

Recertification process: Objectives and description

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 whole capacity, in the 5 years following certification.

The recertification maintains the certification’s overall aims and key criteria of self-sufficiency, interoperability, preparedness and coordination². The capacity’s certification is the starting base on which the recertification process builds up. Therefore, the capacity’s development in terms of training, exercises, deployment and other investments in the previous five years (period since certification) is taken into consideration when determining the process.

¹ See 15 January 2018 Commission Implementing Decision 2018/142 amending the Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU of 16 October 2014 laying down rules for the implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism

² cf. guidelines for ‘certification and registration’

The recertification process in the context of the ECPP focuses on key criteria, namely:

- Participation in international field exercises (MODEX, full scale, other);
- Engagement in national test operations, e.g. through annual exercises;
- Continued investment in the training of 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;
- Deployments in national and/or international emergency response operations.

Recertification and reregistration process concerns both modules, and other response capacities and consists of three phases, i.e., the renewal of the political commitment and application, the validation visit (hereafter VV), and finally the registration (Figure 1 further below).

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECERTIFICATION AND REREGISTRATION PROCESS

Process overview

1. The Commission sends a “reminder” 12-18 months before the original certification expires and invites the MS and PS for a strategic discussion on the recommitment of the capacity in the framework of the ECPP goals and gaps³.
2. The start of the process is launched when the MS or PS expresses formally the intention to renew of the political commitment for a response capacity to remain part of the ECPP.
3. The next step is to submit an application file including a self-assessment checklist (Annex I), combined with supporting evidence.
4. The capacity will then start the recertification process, which includes a VV in order to validate the self-assessment and agree on the way forward in the process. Based upon the documentation provided and information received during the visit, the Commission will recommend whether the response capacity is directly recertified or whether further actions are needed (e.g. a field exercise is needed).
5. When the capacity is recertified, it should then be registered in the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), as a recertified capacity in the ECPP section of CECIS.

How to prepare

Before renewing the political commitment to the ECPP and formally submitting the application with the items of the self-assessment checklist, the following considerations should be kept in mind:

- The MS or PS responsible for the capacity proposed to be recertified, should be fully acquainted with the self-assessment checklist and the minimum requirements, and prepare all documentation required for the application file.
- If, following the VV, the joint decision is for the capacity to undergo a field exercise, the MS or PS, with the support of the Commission, should communicate with the ModEX consortia in order to enable timely participation of the capacities to be re-certified in a field exercise. Proper arrangement with the consortia

³ See Annex II of the Implementing Decision 2018/142

organising the ModEX simulation exercises should be communicated to the Commission.

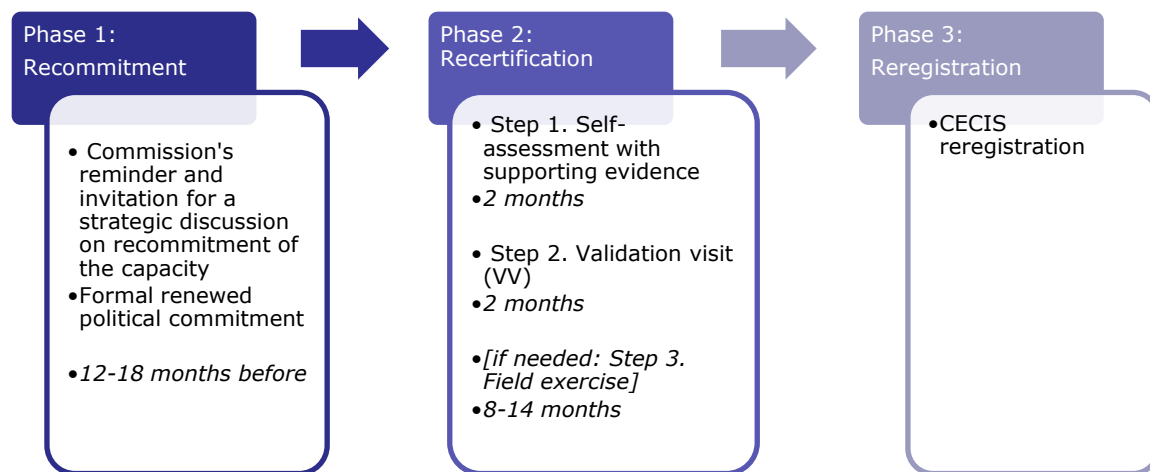
- In case further information and clarifications are needed, at any stage in these preparations (i.e. before, as well as after the political recommitment), please contact the Commission via the ECPP functional mailbox: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

Estimated timeframe

The timeframe will depend on the outcome of the VV, and notably on the decision to confirm recertification of the capacity immediately in its aftermath, or on the decision to take part in a field exercise prior to this confirmation. In the latter case, the Commission will seek to provide optimal support with particular regard to the capacity's integration in the overall ModEX planning or any kind of planning for full scale exercise.

Overall, the recertification process should not take more than 12 months.

Figure 1. Phases and steps in the recertification process



PHASE I. POLITICAL RECOMMITMENT

The recertification process should be launched in due time, with the Commission sending a “reminder” 12-18 months before the original certification expires. The Commission will then invite MS/PS for a strategic discussion on the recommitment of the capacity based on the ECPP goals and gaps. Once validated, the MS/PS should then confirm formally the renewed commitment for the recertification process to be launched.

PHASE II. RECERTIFICATION

Step 1. Self-assessment with supporting evidence

After the confirmation of the political commitment, the capacity seeking recertification, is expected to share with the Commission a self-assessment checklist (annex I), combined with supporting evidence.

The key objective of the self-assessment checklist is to establish that the team has invested in professional development and competence, in terms of training, exercises, deployment and other investments, in the 5 years following the initial certification. The

entire recertification application file is sent to the functional mailbox: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu.

Relevant documentation, for all items of the self-assessment checklist (Annex I), is required to be written in English. This includes the following:

- List of national or/and international exercises the team participated in, followed by evidence of best practices and gaps identified (reports, internal lessons learnt, trainer's feedback etc.);
- Detailed records of key management staff and team members training courses (UCPM, UN, other) undertaken, in the past five years;
- Documented evidence to verify how the team has addressed any 'areas for improvement/recommendations' highlighted in the final report of the initial certification (e.g.; reports, photos, together with SOPs in line with recommendations, factsheet, other);
- Documented evidence demonstrating how changes in the team's equipment, structure, members, procedures etc. have been addressed (e.g.; any changes in the team roster should be followed by appropriate training for the new staff in line with their respective positions within the team; changes in procedures should be reflected in SOPs, changes in ECPP focal points, other...);
- List of national or/and international deployments with relevant documents (mission reports, lessons learnt, other...);
- Updated contact details for ECPP Focal Point and Operational contact point (24/7) for the ERCC, if these have changed.

Timing: at best at confirmation of the political commitment, or, at the latest, 2 months after.

Step 2. Validation visit (VV)

Once the MS/PS has submitted the self-assessment, the Commission will coordinate a detailed assessment of the evidence provided. The Commission, together with (a) peer certifier(s), will then organise a Validation visit (VV) in order to validate the self-assessment. The VV consists of an extended meeting between the Commission and the Member State or the Participating State Civil Protection authority offering a response capacity to the ECPP. The visit has a duration of one to two days (depending on the number of capacities under recertification) and takes place in the country that is offering the capacity.

Based upon the documentation provided and the fulfilment of the minimum requirements, the VV will recommend whether the response capacity is recertified and no further actions are needed, or whether a field exercise is needed to further test and reinforce the response capacity.

Timing: VV will be organised within 2 months after reception of the documents from Step 1.

(Possible) Step 3. Field exercise

The VV may conclude that a field exercise is needed to further test and reinforce the response capacity. The capacity takes part in the field exercise and the recertification is evaluated on the basis of its performance.

For response capacities using the field exercise for recertification purposes, a recertification team is mobilised, consisting of a Commission representative and peer certifier(s). The certification assessment tool is used during the field exercise. For details pertaining to the field exercise, see the '[certification and registration guidelines](#)'.

Timing: the field exercise should take place within 8-14 months following the VV during Step 2.

Recertification minimum requirements

A capacity applying for recertification has already successfully managed its certification procedure, and therefore the recertification process should be lighter. It shall however be recalled that the aim is to assess the capacity's continuous investments in its readiness, its permanent ability to contribute to international response contexts, and its sustained fulfilment of key criteria specific for the ECPP. A minimum number of requirements defined for this purpose, include the following:

1. Whether the team has attended one international field exercise (e.g. MODEX, full scale exercise, other international exercise) in the past 3 years;
2. Whether the team has been engaged in national test operations (e.g. through annual exercises), in the past 3 years;
3. Whether the team has invested in trainings for management personnel and team members;
4. Whether the team has improved areas identified for further improvement in the certification final report;
5. Whether the team has maintained or improved its capacity by introducing new equipment, trainings and other items;
6. Whether the team has been deployed in national or/and international emergency response operations.

Important considerations

The essential prerequisite for a capacity to be considered by the Commission for immediate recertification following the VV, is the fulfilment of the first requirement⁴, and at least three of the remaining ones.

If the team cannot fulfil the first requirement (see footnote 4), the capacity has to go through a field exercise in order to be re-certified.

The MS/PS should provide to the Commission substantial and relevant evidence for each of the requirements outlined in the self-assessment checklist (Annex I), to allow a thorough assessment. It must be noted that the Commission may request additional

⁴ Attendance of one international field exercise (e.g. MODEX, full scale exercise, other international exercise) in the past 3 years

information if needed. During the re-certification process the capacity still remains part of the European Civil Protection Pool.

Derogations from the three-step recertification process can only be accepted for those capacities for which international quality standards are applied (as described in the '[certification and registration guidelines](#)', p.10). It is important to note that for USAR and the EMTs, the political recommitment and the registration in CECIS are still required.

Final recertification report

At the end of the recertification process, a final report is prepared by DG ECHO in close collaboration with the peer certifiers who contributed to the process. This final report will integrate the key findings following the VV, the possible field exercise, including some key recommendations for the further development of the capacity, as relevant.

The final report, together with the certificate confirming the successful finalisation of the recertification process, is sent by the Commission to the offering MS/PS Civil Protection authorities.

In case a capacity is judged not to fully comply with the minimum requirements pertaining to the recertification, reiterations may be undertaken in order to give the capacity more time to make the necessary investments to comply with the European quality requirements.

For capacities that do not make the necessary progress (e.g. poor performance during the field exercise) the Commission may suspend the recertification process, and subsequently the ECPP membership of the capacity. In that case, the Commission may require the capacities to follow the procedures as laid down in '[certification and registration guidelines](#)' in order to be reregistered in CECIS as part of the ECPP.

The Commission may approve a one-year extension for the re-certification, on a case-by-case basis. The same rule applies should a capacity – for valid documented reasons – is not able to undertake the process within the 5-year timeframe.

PHASE III. REREGISTRATION

After sending the final recertification report and the certificate confirming the successful conduct of the process by the capacity, the Commission will distinctly mark it as a recertified capacity in the ECPP section of CECIS. National civil protection authorities, through the ERCC focal point, are responsible to keep updated the latest necessary documentation about the capacity in the CECIS system. The fact of being recertified and recommitted to the ECPP should clearly appear in CECIS.

CONCLUSIONS

This document provides practical guidance to MS and PS wishing to confirm the conservation of a certified emergency response capacity into the ECPP. These guidelines are part of a "Pool Toolbox" that is accessible through the ERCC portal, and which centralises the relevant supporting documentation, including the self-assessment checklist to be filled prior to the VV. 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 I: Self-Assessment Checklist of documents assessed during the Validation visit (VV)

SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

NB: The following self-assessment checklist should be submitted together with all relevant documentation for each of the requirements (see p.8) when a capacity is recommitted to the European Civil Protection Pool.

Requirements	Documentation	Yes/No
1. Preparedness		
1.1. Has the team participated in any international field exercises (MODEX, full-scale, other international exercise)?	List of international exercises followed by relative documents (e.g.; reports with evidence of best practises and gaps identified, photos, internal lessons learnt, trainer's feedback, other). The team is required to have participated in minimum one international field exercise in the past 3 years.	
1.2. Has the team engaged in national test operations (e.g. through annual exercises)?	List of national exercises the team engaged in, with relative documents (e.g.; reports, and photos, internal lessons learnt, other).	
1.3. Has the team invested in the training of management personnel and team members?	Detailed records of key management staff and team members training courses (UCPM, UN, other) undertaken in the past five years. Courses attended by team staff should be related to their respective functions within the team.	
2. Follow-up		
2.1. Has the team improved the issues identified as 'areas for improvement / 'recommendations' in the certification final report?	Documented evidence to verify how the team has addressed 'areas for improvement / recommendations' highlighted in the final report of the initial certification (e.g.; reports, photos, SOPs in line with recommendations, factsheet, other).	
2.2. Has the team maintained or improved its capacity by introducing new equipment, methods, innovation and other items?	Documented evidence on the new items introduced (e.g. new equipment, package solutions, communication methods, new trainings, other) and how the capacity developed.	

2.3. Are there any changes in the team members, structure, procedures, other, as compared to when the team was initially certified?	Documented evidence demonstrating how changes in the team structure, members, procedures etc., have been addressed (e.g.; any changes in the team roster should be followed by appropriate training for the new staff in line with their respective positions within the team; changes in procedures should be reflected in SOPs; changes in ECPP focal points, other)	
3. Deployment		
3.1. Was the team deployed in national and/or international emergency response operations?	Record of national or/ and international deployments with relevant documents (mission reports, lessons learnt, other).	