

Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

Understanding the Needs of Civil Protection Agencies and Opportunities for Scaling up Disaster Risk Management Investments

SUMMARY REPORT



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STATEMENT ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to substantial restrictions for travelling, the organization of workshops and face-to face meetings. Despite these limitations, the World Bank team, in collaboration with the European Commission and stakeholders, has managed to effectively undertake extensive consultations online to collect data and information as a basis for this work.

¹ World Bank Advisory Services and Analytics for Economic Analysis of Prevention and Preparedness in European Union Member States and Countries under Union Civil Protection Mechanism (P173033).

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Civil Protection
DG ECHO	European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
MS	Member States
OP	Operational Program
PS	Participating States (of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism)
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Institutions and countries use a range of terminologies related to disaster risk management (DRM). The terminology used by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is applied globally. In addition, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and the World Bank use several terms in line with the DRM areas they focus on as part of their work and institutional portfolios (*Table 1*). Moreover, countries follow respective legislative, strategic, and institutional frameworks with their own definitions and understanding of DRM activities and phases, fitting their country context. Within individual countries, some ministries also have specific focus/interpretation of ‘disaster’ or ‘emergencies’ and understand DRM only as relevant to their specific institutional roles or

competencies. This was also observed by the World Bank team during consultations with civil protection (CP) agencies.

In this context, the consultations and this report distinguish between ex-ante (prevention, mitigation/reduction, and preparedness) **and ex-post interventions** (response and recovery) **while being inclusive of the different interpretations among the interventions within these two groups.** The study presented here focuses on understanding the CP agencies’ needs related to ex-ante interventions—disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness—which was the primary focus of the consultations and desk review conducted.

Table 1. Terminology Considered

UNDRR TERMINOLOGY ²
Resilience: The ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.
DRM is the application of DRR policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risks, reduce existing disaster risks, and manage residual risks, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses.
DRM plans set out the goals and specific objectives for reducing disaster risks together with related actions to accomplish these objectives. They should be guided by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and considered and coordinated within relevant development plans, resource allocations, and program activities. National-level plans need to be specific to each level of administrative responsibility and adapted to the different social and geographical circumstances that are present. The time frame and responsibilities for implementation and the sources of funding should be specified in the plan. Links to sustainable development and climate change adaptation plans should be made where possible.
DRR is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks and managing residual risks, all of which contribute to strengthening of resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development. DRR is the policy objective of DRM, and its goals and objectives are defined in DRR strategies and plans.
DRR strategies and policies define goals and objectives across different timescales and with concrete targets, indicators, and time frames. In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, these should be aimed at preventing the creation of disaster risk; the reduction of existing risk; and the strengthening of economic, social, health, and environmental resilience.
Preparedness: The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities, and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent, or current disasters.

² <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>.

Prevention: Activities and measures to avoid existing and new disaster risks. Prevention aims at reducing vulnerability and exposure in such contexts where, as a result, the risk of disaster is removed.

Mitigation: The lessening or minimizing of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event. Mitigation measures include engineering techniques and hazard-resistant construction as well as improved environmental and social policies and public awareness.

DG ECHO³

Disaster preparedness consists of a set of measures undertaken by governments, organizations, communities, or individuals to better respond and cope with the immediate aftermath of a disaster, whether it is man-made or caused by natural hazards. The objective is to reduce the loss of life and livelihoods. Simple initiatives can go a long way, for instance, training for search and rescue, establishing early warning systems, developing contingency plans, or stockpiling equipment and supplies.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness play an important role in building the **resilience of communities**.

Preparedness: Organizational activities which ensure that the systems, procedures, and resources required to confront a natural disaster are available to provide timely assistance to those affected, using existing mechanisms wherever possible (for example, training, awareness raising, establishment of disaster plans, evacuation plans, pre-positioning of stocks, early warning mechanisms, and strengthening of indigenous knowledge).

Mitigation: Measures taken before disasters which intend to reduce or eliminate their impact on society and the environment. These measures reduce the physical vulnerability of existing infrastructures or of vulnerable sites which directly endanger the populations (for example, retrofitting of buildings and reinforce 'lifeline' infrastructure).

Prevention: Activities conceived to ensure permanent protection against disasters. These include engineering, physical protection measures, legislative measures for the control of land use, and codes of construction. These activities reduce the physical vulnerability and/or exposure to risks through infrastructures (for example, dams, flood barriers, and building of refuges) and through improvement of existing infrastructures (for example, restoring original flood patterns of rivers to avoid excessive floods downstream) and sustainable development practices (for example, no deforestation in upstream areas and active reforestation).

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The World Bank conceptualizes DRM into different 'pillars' including (a) understanding of risk, (b) risk reduction (structural and non-structural), (c) early warning and emergency preparedness, (d) financial resilience, and (e) resilience, recovery, and reconstruction. These are broadly aligned with the Sendai DRR priority areas.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/disaster_preparedness_en; DG ECHO. (2006). *Disaster Preparedness and Prevention (DPP): State of Play and Strategic Orientations for EC Policy*. [Link](#).

⁴ World Bank, 2013. *Building Resilience: Integrating Climate and Disaster Risk Into Development*. Lessons from World Bank Group experience. The World Bank, Washington DC.

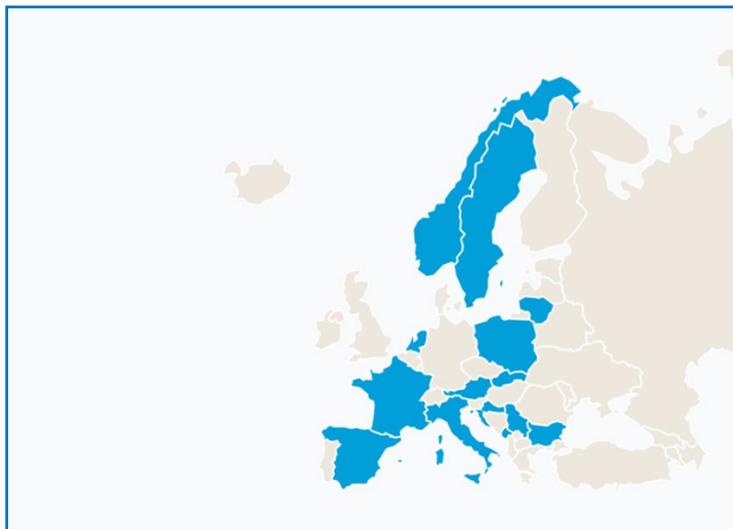
ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was prepared as part of a World Bank technical assistance project ‘Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness’⁵ overseen by the European Commission’s Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and funded through the Annual Work Programme of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

The objective of this report is to summarize insights and provide recommendations related to the challenges and opportunities for civil protection (CP) agencies to leverage investments for disaster prevention and preparedness.⁶ This report draws on the findings of stakeholder consultations and desk review. The consultation process, by design, aimed at

collecting a wide range of views from a mix of selected countries. The results provide a synthetic view of key challenges and opportunities from the perspective of fourteen countries with diverse disaster risk management (DRM) systems, financial mechanisms, institutional capacity, and exposure to disasters. The consultation process was complemented by desk research of relevant national strategic DRM documents, results of previous similar surveys, information on the use of European Union (EU) funds for DRM, and relevant literature. The report’s findings can inform DG ECHO’s discussions and decisions related to funding provided to CP agencies. This summary report is accompanied by a technical background report.

Figure 1. The 14 countries consulted (in blue colour)



Source: Developed by authors.

⁵ World Bank Advisory Services and Analytics for Economic Analysis of Prevention and Preparedness in European Union Member States and Countries under Union Civil Protection Mechanism (P173033).

⁶ As noted in the section on terminology, this report focuses primarily on capacity related to on ex-ante DRM - disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness.

Executive Summary



Key Challenges

A set of overarching challenges for scaling up investments in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities have been identified. These were raised by the CP agencies on a recurring basis during the consultations and confirmed in the desk review process. Often interconnected, these challenges fall under the following three broad categories: (a) the enabling environment related to financial, institutional framework/coordination, and awareness, (b) institutional constraints related to the human and technical capacity of CP agencies for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, and (c) specific constraints related to the access and use of EU financing sources for DRM activities, including DG ECHO funds.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT - FINANCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK/COORDINATION, AND AWARENESS

Funding for DRM is limited, with a high focus and share of DRM funds being oriented towards disaster response. In general, it was noted that financial allocations to DRM are still limited, although there is a lack of data that would allow CP agencies to document expenditure trends on DRM in a comprehensive manner. Based on CP agencies' experience, within existing allocations, it was highlighted that the majority of resources focus on response planning/readiness (such as conducting trainings and purchasing equipment for disaster response), with significantly lower focus on other types of prevention and preparedness, such as conducting assessments of various types of risks, understanding/conducting cost-benefit analyses for DRM investments, and planning for prevention and mitigation investments such as the reduction of physical risk for vulnerable infrastructure. DRM is often only recognized after an event occurs which poses challenges for strategic planning.

While there is a growing awareness and interest in disaster risk prevention and preparedness, CP agencies noted a low political buy-in for investments in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, which is exacerbated by the lack of evidence of their benefits. CP agencies noted that due to a lack of data on DRM

expenditure at the national level and assessments of the efficiency/costs-benefits of DRM investments before disaster events, it is challenging to provide necessary evidence to convince decision-makers (such as Ministries of Finance/Economy/EU Funds) to invest in DRM, especially beyond 'traditional' CP- or security-related needs such as emergency response equipment. As such, CP agencies noted the challenges in convincing key decision-makers to allocate budget for investments that lead to less tangible or visible results, particularly if they do not yield benefits during current political/institutional mandates. The absence of specific financial budget allocations in most of the strategic national documents further contributes to a disconnect between the priorities of the CP agencies and/or in some cases also the line ministries and the actual financial planning.

Linked to their mandate, CP agencies perceived that they have a limited opportunity to 'influence' the investment planning of line ministries or the different levels of administration. DRM is a cross-sectoral agenda where institutions both horizontally and vertically have specific responsibilities. Institutional coordination related to DRM is generally established both horizontally (for example also through national disaster risk reduction platforms) and vertically. While the mandate of CP agencies does not allow them to directly influence investment planning of line ministries or local governments to prioritize financing for DRM actions, their role as advocates for DRM is challenging if they do not have the information and evidence to present to the stakeholders about the benefits of investing in prevention. Moreover, CP agencies do not have specific sectoral technical knowledge to share examples or advice on preparation or implementation of appropriate investments in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities.

INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS – HUMAN AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF CP AGENCIES

There are insufficient human resources within CP agencies dedicated to ex-ante DRM interventions. The pressing needs of disaster response and recovery, as well as limited financial resources mean that only a

limited number of CP staff (or only part of their work time) focus on prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. In many countries, CP agencies move from disaster-response for one event, into the disaster-response of another event, perpetuating the focus and allocation of resources on response. This was noted as a particular challenge for CP staff in the context of increasing numbers of disaster events, and most recently in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response, which is in most countries supported through the CP mechanisms as well.

Many CP agencies face difficulties in collecting and analysing data and information which limits their ability to advocate necessary resources for DRM and developing a strategic approach to DRM. An efficient data collection system and an overview of DRM needs and activities at the national level are seen as critical for preparing risk assessments and encouraging DRM investments based on evidence-based prioritization. It was noted that many national risk assessments and DRM strategic planning documents are more qualitative than quantitative, often because of data and information gaps. It was noted that the lack of risk assessments and impact scenarios (or in general ‘evidence’) inhibits the ability to plan and mobilize funds for prevention and preparedness. A key challenge highlighted by the consulted CP agencies is the limited technical and financial capacity to produce more evidence-based risk assessments and the limited capacity to develop assessments and investment plans that can inform decision-making and budgetary allocations.

CP agencies noted technical capacity gaps to prepare ‘overarching’ strategies, and, importantly, investment plans for prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. While it is acknowledged that DRM is inherently a cross-sectoral agenda carried out by different stakeholders, CP agencies highlighted their difficulties to collect and draw on comprehensive data on disasters (geo-graphically and across sectors) as well as access information about various DRM investments led by line ministries and/or different administrative levels, due to the lack of mechanisms, arrangements, or systems. This limits their ability to understand the scope of disaster risk, assess cost-effectiveness of structural and non-structural measures carried out and develop/monitor overarching strategies/plans. In the context of lacking or limited ‘evidence’ and the assessment of risks and needs across the different stakeholders, it is challenging for CP agencies to make a convincing case for investing in prevention, mitigation, and

preparedness.

CONSTRAINTS RELATED TO THE USE OF EU FUNDS, INCLUDING DG ECHO TRACK 1

Common challenges in accessing and using EU funds for ex-ante DRM investments that were highlighted in the consultations include: (a) difficulties faced by CP agencies to understand and easily access relevant information on funding opportunities provided through different EU mechanisms; (b) institutional and technical limitations, as noted above, that prevent CP agencies from preparing proposals/developing ex-ante DRM projects; (c) limitations to ‘influence’ line ministries or local governments to prioritize financing for DRM actions; and (d) institutional and technical challenges around the promotion of integrated solutions and the ‘mainstreaming’ of DRM into sectoral investments (such as combining energy efficiency retrofitting with multi-hazard structural strengthening and risk-informed rehabilitation of public/private infrastructure).

Overall, DG ECHO Track 1 is considered a highly valuable and successful example of providing “seed-funding” to CP agencies that can leverage further actions. During consultations, a number of potential areas for improvement were highlighted, which could be addressed to further enhance this mechanism, including the following: (a) time constraints to apply for as well as to implement grants, especially in the context of lengthy national approval/procurement procedures; (b) the 5 percent co-financing rule which, while in itself not prohibiting, can trigger extra and time intensive internal approval processes; and (c) eligible expenditures versus needs for financing equipment/software or operating/staff costs. Several beneficiary CP agencies highlighted the usefulness of Track 1 as a source of dedicated funding for CP agencies for technical studies or for activities to improve institutional coordination/stakeholder consultations, for which it may be difficult to secure national funds. Some CP agencies opt for larger sources of financing, such as the EU Cohesion Funds, which allow them to access funds for both technical assistance and equipment/implementation of larger projects, even though these funds are accessed through programs led/overseen by other line ministries. These preferences very much depend on the country’s institutional framework and procedures as well as the way that EU-funded programs are implemented.

Key Opportunities

The following opportunities were identified by CP agencies in response to some of the challenges listed above.

IMPROVE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT - FINANCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK/ COORDINATION, AND AWARENESS

To allow the CP agencies to make a case for investing in ex-ante DRM, specific areas to be further considered by national policy-makers but also more broadly by DG ECHO include the following: (a) improved data collection/systems on past disasters to allow CP agencies better understand trends and model possible future impacts; (b) development/regular improvement of risk assessments and scenarios for various types of hazards to be able to inform prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities; and (c) undertake cost/benefit or economic studies focusing on prevention and preparedness in DRM to extend the body of evidence on investing in DRM. Multiple CP agencies noted the benefits of national DRR platforms, which can help in achieving political buy-in for ex-ante DRM investments. Multiple CP agencies also noted the importance of engaging academia and researchers, especially in the development and application of risk information.

In the long-term, CP authorities saw an opportunity to continue to raise institutional and public awareness of the importance and benefits of investing in risk reduction at different levels. Linked to this, CP agencies highlighted the importance of: (a) increased efforts to raise awareness about DRM as a vehicle also to engage other line ministries, including finance/economy/EU funds ministries; while also (b) continuing to carry out public awareness campaigns and training on both prevention and preparedness for the general public or target groups (for example, vulnerable groups). It was noted that in many countries, volunteers play a pivotal role in disaster preparedness and response, though to a much lesser extent related to prevention (such as data collection) and mitigation

(that is, community-based risk reduction). Cross-border cooperation was also mentioned as critical to building resilience at the regional level with many countries engaging in joint activities with neighbouring countries, mostly funded by the EU.

ADDRESS INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS – HUMAN AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

Related to the technical capacity of CP agencies, it was noted that technical knowledge and assistance is much needed. In order to facilitate the scale-up of investments in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness training for CP agencies could cover technical areas such as: (a) development of robust evidence and information to substantiate the need for investing in prevention and preparedness (to inform project proposals and/or budget proposals); (b) accessing and using risk information for the development of investment plans with information on prioritization/cost effectiveness of priority DRM measures (such as for critical emergency responders infrastructure, transport, education, and health); and (c) project design and implementation of different types of prevention, mitigation, and preparedness measures, including those relevant for specific sectors or levels of administrations.

Forms of knowledge/assistance proposed by CP agencies included: pools of experts available to CP agencies with specific expertise in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, who could be integrated into national CP structures for certain periods of time; peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and peer-review; sharing of good practice examples; research and analytics; information sessions; and access to more structured training/capacity-building. It was recommended that information and training should be open to a range of stakeholders to foster cross-institutional collaboration and unlock investment opportunities led by not just the CP agencies but also other relevant stakeholders.

REDUCE THE CONSTRAINTS RELATED TO THE USE OF EU FUNDS INCLUDING DG ECHO TRACK I.

There are several opportunities related to resources within the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework and other EU instruments. It is expected that substantial resources would be available to invest in prevention and preparedness in the coming years through multiple instruments under the EU programming period for 2021–2027. These include, for example, the European Green Deal Investment Plan to mobilise €1 trillion in sustainable investments over the next decade and the Just Transition Mechanism to mobilise €100 billion in investments over the period 2021-2027.⁷ Another example is the Recovery and Resilience Facility⁸ (RRF) to provide €672.5 billion in loans and grants to support reforms and investments undertaken by Member States (MS) and help them better prepare for a sustainable recovery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure that such opportunities are not missed to expand investment in DRM, DG ECHO could consider the following: (a) share information through a ‘one-stop-shop’ online platform that lists all available

instruments and provides guidance on the application process; (b) provide training about the different funding sources relevant for DRM sessions; (c) provide examples of best practice for preparing funding applications for various types of EU funds and their implementation; and (d) share examples of successful DRM projects/or services provided during such projects (such as peer-to-peer learning).

Specifically related to DG ECHO Track I funds, opportunities include: (a) review/revise wording of the application procedures, and include answers to frequently posed questions, to ensure clarity related to co-financing and eligibility rules; (b) conduct proactive/targeted outreach to CP agencies, sharing relevant good practice examples; and (c) consider feasibility of providing “hand-on” support to CP agencies which could guide them through the funds application process (administrative and project management support) as well as the technical and implementation aspects. The identified main strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and risks related to DG ECHO’s Track I, based on stakeholder consultations are summarized in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Summary of DG ECHO Track I Feedback

STRENGTHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valuable source of funding for activities that may not be easily funded by national budget• Specifically dedicated to CP agencies with little competition with other stakeholders• Easy to implement if scope of activities is clear• Offers the possibility to hire experts for specific tasks
WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tight timeline to apply and implement projects vis-à-vis internal government procedures (which can take up substantial part of implementation)• Lack of clarity over some aspects (e.g. procurement, beneficiaries, co-financing, and eligible activities⁹ such as purchase of equipment, conducting, or cross-sector activities¹⁰)• Reporting/audits that may not be proportionate to the size of the grant

7 European Commission. The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism explained. [Link](#).

8 European Commission. Recovery and Resilience Facility. [Link](#).

9 Note that under DG ECHO, allowed are direct eligible costs including technical personnel, administrative personnel; travel and subsistence; sub-contracting (i.e. consultancies); and other costs. This may not have been clear to all consultations’ participants.

10 Track I grants provided by the UCPM offer the possibility for implementing cross-sector activities, also operational costs are covered. See overview of projects under Track I and II. [Link](#). This may not have been clear to all consultations’ participants.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Clarify specific aspects and/or prepare detailed guidance/frequently asked questions with examples for Track I applicants
- Clarify/expand the range of eligible activities to be funded in line with purpose of mechanism (i.e. small equipment/software)
- Enhance support to applicants during the application process, including sharing of good practice examples and options for grant activities
- Provide dedicated support for beneficiaries during project implementation, including different forms of capacity building, such as peer review, information/technical sessions
- Broaden the topics for technical capacity-building activities in line with the duties of CP agencies
- Allow staff across various ministries to attend information/training programs, in addition to CP staff
- Decrease intensity of reporting/auditing and increase time to produce audit
- Include condition on innovative elements (e.g., partnerships with academia)

THREATS / RISKS

- While different in nature, other funds available with larger resources and perceived flexibility for eligible activities
- In some countries, certain DRM activities (e.g. fire or flood prevention) are tackled by other line ministries simply depending on institutional set up

Source: Developed by authors

Looking Ahead

Considering the presented challenges and opportunities, DG ECHO could support the scaling-up of investments in disaster prevention and preparedness in the following way:

Short-term actions:

- **Track 1 instrument:** Build on the lessons learnt and progress made under the Track 1 instrument and continue to provide support through this valuable and successful instrument.
- **Knowledge and awareness:** Continue to invest in gathering evidence and good practice to fill knowledge gaps on disaster prevention and preparedness. Disseminate and communicate evidence and knowledge through various forms among CPs and also more broadly among Ministries of Finance/Economy/EU Funds, line ministries and bodies that represent local governments/regions, to raise awareness on the importance of investing in disaster prevention and preparedness.

Medium-term actions:

- **Knowledge and awareness:** Ensure that prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities form substantial part of the *Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network's* activities, covering a range of topics including technical and project management, such as using risk information to inform investment planning, understanding economic justification/analysis of costs and benefits of investments, opportunities for mainstreaming DRM within different subsectors, planning/implementing DRM projects at different levels (central/local level), and so forth.

- **Technical assistance:** Support scaling-up of DRM investments by establishing complementary forms of technical assistance that could provide “hands-on” and just-in-time technical assistance to CP agencies meeting their specific needs and priorities without needing to undertake lengthy application and/or procurement activities. The design of such technical assistance facility could respond to challenges and needs of the CP agencies identified above, UCPM objectives, DG ECHO’s priorities and budget allocations within the Multi Financial Framework 2021-2027, and consider activities planned under the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network.

In summary, financial, and technical support as well as with evidence-based advocacy are necessary to promote ex-ante DRM investments. Awareness-raising needs to engage a wider group of stakeholders. While this is to be carried out by relevant authorities in each country, DG ECHO should continue to strengthen these efforts, especially by formulating evidence-based arguments to support CP agencies, and reach also stakeholders/ authorities involved in the management of specific hazards/sectors, management of operational programs, and public finances. This would help develop an enabling environment for the CP agencies and facilitate inter-institutional dialogue to scale up efforts beyond ‘traditional’ focus on disaster preparedness and response to taking a more proactive and strategic role related to prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, in line with country-specific DRM context and institutional mandates.

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