



The Evaluation of DIPECHO Action Plans in the Caribbean Region

Final Report

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Table of contents

1	Executive Summary	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Purpose and Methodology	2
1.3	Main Conclusions	3
1.4	Recommendations.....	5
1.5	Guidelines for ECHO's DPP strategy.....	6
1.6	Lessons Learned.....	8
2	Context.....	10
2.1	European Commission mandates on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness.....	10
2.2	Preparedness within ECHO's mandate	10
3	The Programme Performance	12
3.1	Evaluation criteria.....	12
3.1.1	Relevance.....	12
3.1.2	Coherence and complementarity.....	14
3.1.3	Coordination	14
3.1.4	Monitoring and Control	15
3.1.5	Performance of the Partners.....	15
3.1.6	Visibility	16
3.1.7	Coverage	16
3.1.8	Effectiveness	17
3.1.9	Efficiency.....	17
3.1.10	Impact	17
3.1.11	Sustainability.....	18
3.1.12	Connectedness.....	18
3.2	DIPECHO's relationship with DEV/AIDCO policy formulation	19
3.3	Gender Issues	21
4	Evaluation of projects	22
4.1	Haiti.....	22
4.1.1	Red Cross projects	23
4.1.2	OXFAM.....	25
4.1.3	UNDP.....	26
4.2	CUBA	26
4.2.1	Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro	30
4.2.2	Movimiento por la Paz el Desarme y la Libertad	32
4.2.3	Save the Children.....	34
4.3	Dominican Republic	36
4.3.1	Movimondo.....	36
4.3.2	UNDP.....	37
4.4	Jamaica.....	38
4.5	Saint Lucia	39
4.6	Dominica.....	40
4.7	Barbados (CDERA)	41
5	Conclusions and Recommendations	42
5.1	ECHO's strategy	42
5.2	DIPECHO's Appropriateness and relevance.....	44
5.3	Replication and dissemination	45

5.4	Partnership	47
6	Guidelines for ECHO's DPP Strategy (a proposal).....	48
6.1	Introduction.....	48
6.2	ECHO's Policy and Strategy	48
6.3	Identity and niche.....	49
6.4	The program basis.....	49
6.5	Strategic issues.....	50
6.5.1	Vulnerability and Geographical priorities	50
6.5.2	National institutional capacities and support to decentralized response.....	51
6.5.3	Partner's proposals or strategies	51
6.5.4	Permanent situation analysis.....	52
6.5.5	Thematic Priorities.....	52
6.6	Re-establishing partnerships	53
6.6.1	Partnership base	53
6.6.2	Special agreements.....	53
6.7	ECHO'S advocacy.....	55
7	ANNEXES	
7.1	List of organisations consulted	
7.2	Terms of Reference.....	
7.3	Map of the areas covered by the operations financed under the action	
7.4	DIPECHO Action Plans.....	

Acronyms

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AIDCO	Europe Aid Cooperation Office
APS	Associazione per la Partecipazione allo Sviluppo
ANNF	Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro
CARDIN	Caribbean Disaster Information Network
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIPEDA	Caribbean Peoples Development Agency
CBDP	Community Based Disaster Preparedness
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
CDM	Centro de Desarrollo de la Montaña
CDMP	Caribbean Disaster Management Programme
CENAI	National Centre for Seismic Research (Cuba)
CEPRENAC	Central American Natural Disaster Prevention Coordination Centre
CLAMED	Centro Latinoamericano de Medicina de Desastres
CRC	Cuban Red Cross
CRF	Croix Rouge Francaise
CRH	Croix Rouge Haitien / Haitian Red Cross
CRID	Regional Disaster Information Centre for Latin America
DEV (DG-DEV)	Directorate General for Development
DFID	Department of International Development (British)
DIPECHO	ECHO's Disaster Preparedness Programme
DIU	Disaster Information Units
DPC	Directorate for Civil Protection (Haiti)
DPP	Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
DR	Dominican Republic
ECHO	Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FRC	French Red Cross
IFRCS	International Federation of Red Cross Societies
INDAC	Dominican Republic NGO
INDESOC	Dominican Republic NGO
IFRC and RC	International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent
IOVs	Indicators of Verification
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LRRD	Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development
MdM-E	Medicos del Mundo, Espana
MOVIMONDO	Italian NGO
MPDL	Movimiento por la Paz el Desarme y la Libertad
NATHAZ	Caribbean Natural Hazards and Disasters Database
NDO	National Disaster Office
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation

OAS / OEA	Organisation of American States
ODPEM	Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
PCDPPP	Pan Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project
RELEX (DG)	Directorate General External Relations
RSTS	Relief Supply Tracking Software
SC	Save the Children Fund
SITICH	Sistema Territorial Integrado para la Ciudad de la Habana
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction¹

1. The Caribbean Region is highly prone to disaster, mainly to hurricanes and recurrent flood events. On some islands, volcanic activity is also a hazard. Additionally, socioeconomic factors are decisive in accounting for its high vulnerability: high population density, high annual demographic growth, high levels of poverty and socioeconomic inequality. All these factors combined result in the formation of extremely vulnerable groups of the population with little coping or resilience capacities in the event of a disaster.

2. Since 1995, ECHO has allocated approximately € million for disaster related response in the region. Considering this recurrent problem –frequent disaster strikes and then ECHO’s necessary reaction– disaster preparedness becomes an activity of paramount importance for the institution.

3. In 2003, ECHO called for a better definition and distribution of risk reduction activities among the external services of the Commission (between DEV/AIDCO and ECHO). Consequently, ECHO will henceforth focus on preparedness activities in areas already affected by natural disaster or neglected by authorities. DEV/AIDCO however will support programmes that are implemented more efficiently at national or regional level, where appropriate disaster management institutions are involved.

4. A first overall evaluation in 2000² allowed for a better definition of the strategies and has confirmed the relevance of the programme.

5. After four successive plans in the Caribbean region, ECHO considered it adequate to analyze the relevance of the orientation as well as the impact of the programme. With that purpose in mind, an evaluation has been carried out through AGE G e.G. from Germany.

6. For strategic reasons of timeframe and logistics, the consultants visited the projects and countries separately. In coordination with the Santo Domingo regional office, a certain number of projects and countries were chosen.

7. The whole evaluation process was strongly affected by the hurricane season. Two major cyclones had hit the islands, and relevant interview partners in the region were preoccupied with immediate response and rehabilitation. The majority of visits were characterized by a tense situation in which key persons to be interviewed were otherwise occupied, too tired to respond to questions or unavailable. For the same reason it has been impossible to organize the planned country workshops with stakeholders, with the exception of the Dominican Republic.

¹ Information based on the Evaluation Terms of Reference.

² First DIPECHO evaluation in the Caribbean, contract No ECHO/EVA/2000/0100

8. Another key hindrance in the process was obtaining a Cuban visa. At that time the situation of diplomatic relationships between the Cuban Government and the EU delayed the authorization of the mission considerably. Nevertheless, after a strong coordination effort, a two week mission to Cuba took place.

1.2 Purpose and Methodology

9. Article 18 of Regulation (EC) 1257/96 establishes that the “Commission shall regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations”.

10. Furthermore, Article 7 of the regulation states that administrative, financial, technical and logistical capacities and experience, among other factors, shall be taken into account for the determination of a non-governmental organization's suitability for Community funding.

11. Following this mandate, the evaluation has been appointed with the purpose of assessing *the appropriateness of DIPECHO's actions, in accordance with ECHO's mandate, in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives, they have pertinent strategies and finally to produce recommendations by country within the regional, national and local context, depending on the conclusions, for an exit strategy or for improving the effectiveness of future operations in the Caribbean region.*

12. The evaluation methodology consisted in:

- an analysis of relevant information in ECHO's headquarters in Brussels, as well as interviews with key personnel of ECHO 1, 3 and 4;
- a profound desk study of the program information available in the Santo Domingo Regional Office, as well as interviews and consultation with their staff;
- selection of particular projects, partners and countries to be visited, with the advice of the Santo Domingo office³;
- field visits to projects: Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Dominica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Barbados and Cuba;
- application of the partner's evaluation appraisal forms provided by ECHO Evaluation, in a strong participatory fashion (utilization-led approach);

³ It was considered impossible in the given timeframe to visit all projects of the four action plans and therefore a selection had to be made.

- the development of different levels of analysis (global, operational and sectoral) according to the Terms of Reference; and
- the presentation of the report in a debriefing meeting in Brussels.

1.3 Main Conclusions

13. Even though institutional commitment and reinforcement at the regional and national level is increasing, it is still far from adequately responding to the concrete needs of communities, population and civil society. In general there are some indications of improvement in institutional capacities, but scope for communities' resilience and capability to cope with disaster is still quite low. The impact of the top-bottom approach mainly based on institutional strengthening will take a long time to affect community needs and it also faces unpredictable political risks.

14. Programmes that directly support communities and their basic organizations (bottom – up approach) have proved to be the better way for immediate reinforcement of coping and resilience capacities.

15. DIPECHO is not only oriented towards a specific and vital need, but has also found a niche, which is not covered by any other international agency with the same level of profoundness. The DIPECHO programme is pertinent and appropriate with regards to the regional situation.

16. ECHO at the moment is rather the only agency to fund community based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) in all the countries of the region. Regarding the high and growing level of national and local vulnerability, and the still unconsolidated governmental prevention and mitigation policies, disaster preparedness has a high **relevance** for the vulnerable population.

17. The question of whether or not coping strategies of the affected population were supported by ECHO-financed interventions can definitely be answered affirmatively.

18. The DIPECHO action plan IV did support the preparedness of communities and mainly developed the following activities:

- organization of Community Disaster Response Committees;
- creation of functional teams responsible for the preparation and the implementation of immediate responsive action in case of disaster, i.e. evacuation, shelter management, transport, nutrition, education etc;
- training of community members and staff of public institutions (mainly National Disaster Organizations (NDO)/civil defence, municipality, Water and Meteorological offices);

- elaboration of vulnerability and capacity maps;
- elaboration of community emergency plans and in some cases household emergency plans; and
- in some cases installation of early warning systems and organization of community based groups able to maintain these systems.

19. Although it is difficult to measure the impact of these activities because of the different character and consequently different impact of any disaster and because of a lack of clear indicators of measurement yet to be developed, experience has shown that the above-mentioned elements are the most essential to guarantee an effective reduction of loss of lives.

20. With the implementation of the CBDP projects, DIPECHO IV has found its niche. The projects meet essential needs, and their methodology and techniques are consistent with local organization and culture. They are highly accepted among the target population. Related institutions and local staff have been trained and can be employed in future projects.

21. Micro-projects (mainly drainage, reforestation, small protection works) serve as a medium to support preparedness activities. Although encountering various difficulties during implementation, they had an overall positive effect. They raised acceptance of DPP within the population and thus facilitated the sensibilization and mobilization of the communities. Partners specifically appreciate their pedagogic effect: through the micro-project people learn that effective mitigation can be achieved with limited resources thus reducing their vulnerability.

22. Early warning systems (EWS), when simple and easy to maintain by communal groups, are very efficient tools for the reinforcement of coping capacities as they allow for timely evacuations.

23. ECHO's time limit for project financing (12-18 months) clearly indicates that expectations on sustainability of financed operations cannot be too high. A "project approach" with this limited time frame yet with ambitious and complex objectives cannot be realistic, if it does not contribute to the local actors' objectives and if it is not linked to a long term partner in the intervention area. Partners' proposals should clearly identify those contributions as well as the sustainability criteria.

24. Some of the projects, in particular the UNDP radar project, and MOVIMONDO in the Dominican Republic, included components of high technology scientific studies (seismic micro zonification, flood modelling, etc) or high technology EWS (radars, telemetric systems, etc) that could hardly be absorbed, or even operated by the type of beneficiaries towards which the projects were oriented. On the contrary, Cuban projects have included technological solutions adequate to beneficiaries' capacities for operation, maintenance and development.

25. In general, projects are not adequately considering the aspects of replication, and integration into partners' and beneficiaries' activities.

26. Limited success in replication and dissemination is resulting from the partnership concept itself. Projects that are isolated from the partners' core activities can hardly be replicated. In cases where partners are not willing to replicate or disseminate the experiences even within their own organization, it is highly unlikely that they will start to do so in the projects.

1.4 Recommendations

27. DIPECHO's distinct identity and niche should be preserved. It is vital to avoid overcharging the program with expectations and responsibilities belonging to other actors or structures of the EC. DIPECHO should continue to be a budget line that supports community capacities for coping and resilience, through non-governmental actors.

28. ECHO should strengthen its advocacy pillar, and establish a clear strategy with necessary resources. This strategy should be established at all levels of EC operations: central (for policy making, follow up, planning, and evaluation), regional and national. It is strongly recommended that the Santo Domingo office initiative for a "*Regional ECHO Strategy*" should be continued and consolidated.

29. DPP should be inserted better than at present into the agenda of development services of the EC. Delegations should be asked to carry out an annual situation analysis and issue strategic recommendations. Procedures should be developed to define communication and cooperation between ECHO's regional offices and delegations (regular strategy consultations, meetings etc.).

30. Risk reduction criteria need to be included into the formulation of related development projects (especially of infrastructure, rural and urban development, poverty relief etc).

31. For all these reasons it is highly recommended that the programme be continued until national institutions and the international community include the subject in their agenda and until the achieved results are consolidated.

32. An additional result should be required from the partners (and be included into the calls for proposal): an assessment of existing local and national institutional structures and capacities as well as a plan which contains proposals on how to develop a follow up of the projects, in order to consolidate them and guarantee their sustainability.

33. CBDP projects should therefore include in their activities, to a higher degree than in DIPECHO IV, EWS in communities that are prone to sudden floods. Calls for proposals should encourage partners for the application of EWS in their projects.

34. DIPECHO should give priority to mid- or long-term activities, making use of the partner's work plan in the countries. The achievement of planned objectives and results, management of time constraints and follow up would then be possible.

35. Funded activities must strictly strike a balance between technological tools and local capacities for their best operation and maintenance. Countries and partners should be encouraged to integrate projects with higher technological requirements in their proposals for DG DEV or other international community actors.

36. The partnership concept should be redefined. The evaluation has shown that this relationship is not fully adequate for the programme needs. A potential capacity to develop and implement DPP projects is not sufficient to become a DIPECHO's partner. Participation of *Development NGOs* should be encouraged.

37. The partnership concept should include the concern of replication and dissemination. Partners should not be treated and think of themselves as mere sub contractors or implementers of the projects; instead they should also feel responsible for the achievement of DIPECHO program goals.

38. The partnership should be based on the complementarity between DIPECHO and the organizations, and agreements should clearly identify and establish common objectives, specific strategies and methodologies developed, and common investments.

39. Conditions and capacities to replicate and extend CBDP to a wider range of vulnerable communities should be analyzed. As an additional project result, a concept for this extension should be developed. Partner's proposals should clearly identify how replication to other communities could be addressed in terms of methodology, systematisation, and institutional needs. The monitoring and evaluation process should produce guidelines and orientations to other actors (institutions, NGOs and community based organisations previously identified) for the continuation and eventual expansion of the experience.

40. Activities that reinforce partners' strategies and specific plans in the scope of DIPECHO will have priority. It means that in potential calls for proposals, those oriented to complement midterm intervention projects merit particular attention. Partners will be encouraged to present proposals with this orientation.

1.5 Guidelines for ECHO's DPP strategy

41. DIPECHO's strategy will be based on the following axis:

42. Supporting community based and non-governmental actors. Funded projects should be restricted to community based organizations and non-governmental partners. Nevertheless, the liaison with national and local institutions (such as Municipalities, National Emergency Organizations, National Meteorological Services) should not be neglected.

43. Supporting programme components and strategic operations instead of projects. DIPECHO should give priority to already identified mid or long-term programs, that are

part of the partner's work plans in the countries. Consequently, objective achievement and flexibility for managing time constraints will be the partner's main responsibility.

44. Impact measured on indicators developed by partners or beneficiaries. Activities supported by DIPECHO will be evaluated in terms of their contribution to the local actors' objectives. Partner's proposals should clearly identify those contributions as well as the sustainability criteria.

45. Avoid technological dependency. Activities supported should observe a strict balance between technological tools and local capacities for their operation and maintenance.

46. The scope of action will be oriented as follows:

47. Vulnerability and geographical priorities; the funding should continue to support projects in high-risk level communities where capacities for coping with disaster can be strengthened at community level. Action plans should consider recent impacts and give priority to communities with lesser capacities for coping and resilience, due to disaster strikes.

48. For a new plan, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica should be prioritized for project implementation. Small islands with high volcanic activity should also be considered when necessary.

49. National institutional capacities and support to decentralized response: the programme should prioritize countries where governmental commitment with community preparedness is still weak. DIPECHO's capacity to respond directly at the grassroot level is more important for communities where expectations of institutional support are still very low. This should not become an incentive for lower institutional commitment, but should be regarded as a special attention to those with fewer possibilities to survive and cope.

50. Partner's proposals or strategies: projects that are part of a larger operation of the partner should have more weight in the process of approval.

51. The regional plan of the International Federation of the Red Cross should be strongly supported; based on the partnership aspects that will be discussed afterwards.

52. Permanent situation analysis: ECHO should undertake regular and updated analysis of the regional situation. Windows of opportunity that are usually opened after disaster strikes, political agreements and government changes can open up or close possibilities for action. Considering the 12-18 months interventions span, a flexible approach guided by the regional situation should be possible.

53. Thematic Priorities: Considering regional conditions of risk, DIPECHO should pay attention to specific aspects where they can have a significant impact. Two thematic considerations shall be prioritized: Rapid urban growth in the Caribbean; Floods and Hurricanes.

54. The partnership basis should be re-established: The new partnership shall be built on the basis of actual operations, plans and objectives. Partners should be actively involved in DPP in the countries willing to be supported. The absence of DPP in partners' development or strategic plans should be a criterion for exclusion. Partners that are not directly working on DPP, transversally or specifically, should not be supported by DIPECHO funds.

55. Activities that reinforce partner's strategies and specific plans in the scope of DIPECHO will have priority.

56. Taking advantage of differences in partners' profiles, DIPECHO's strategy should be based on operational plans that take note of this situation, and exploit it. The Red Cross movement and "well networked NGOs" should be approached in that sense.

57. ECHO should develop an advocacy strategy, which should be mainstreamed in DEV operations. Experience of DG RELEX could be utilized as an aid to decision-making, in order to promote similar activities for the Caribbean Region. ECHO should start with the development of an analysis of the main sectoral and regional investment and cooperation strategies, in order to identify possibilities, opportunities, and needs for the integration of risk reduction criteria into development operations.

58. A toolkit for the mainstreaming of DPP into Development should be elaborated, in an ECHO/DG DEV joint effort. It should contain checklists and guidelines for project formulators, in order to facilitate the design process. Delegations should also give support in the negotiations for National Action Plans.

59. Advocacy actions should draw on DIPECHO's lessons and experiences. As a result of lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation processes, methodologies and implementation tools should be adapted in order to better select and design the advocacy activities to be promoted by the decision-making process.

1.6 Lessons Learned

60. Each visit and analysis of a DIPECHO project yields important lessons that should be systematized by the partners, and shared with the "DIPECHO Community". In an effort to sum up some of the main and common factors/elements, the following issues are set out:

1. The Community-based preparedness approach becomes an efficient tool for the strengthening of the population's coping capacities. Short time scale interventions, low-level technology and a strong participatory approach have proved to be successful in reducing the loss of lives. This lesson should be a beacon for national and international risk and disaster reduction strategies.

2. Working at community level requires a balance between direct intervention with end users and population and – at least – a minimum of coordination with official / governmental institutions. Precisely, what this minimum coordination will be like is directly proportional to Governmental commitment to their own communities. Ignoring or bypassing the governmental institutions, even if it is for the sake of projects' efficiency, will sooner or later become a menace for continuation and sustainability.
3. Community-based disaster preparedness projects in general – and DIPECHO's in particular – should be developed in a partnership of local instances and community groups with international actors that have experience and vast knowledge of the stakeholders' reality and capacities. Ad-hoc interventions, with international NGOs inexperienced in the context with limited access could be neither sustainable nor replicable.
4. CDBP projects should be implemented through partners working at local and communal bases. International or regional organizations, even if they are totally valid and important actors in the DPP promotion context, do not have the best profile for this type of project execution.
5. Technology should neither be excessively praised nor neglected. Every intervention should develop a deep analysis of the technological level suitable for each particular case and counterpart. Cuban projects have shown that the use of a well-dosed level of technology could be successful, while other projects – with good institutional and financial possibilities –failed in the application of technology for CDBP.
6. Regional exchange of experiences, dissemination, replicability or development of common tools or technical solutions (considering comparative advantages and complementarity) cannot be duly addressed by the inclusion of a *last result* in project proposals. In the projects' time frame and with the conditions that partners face (often isolated of regional activities) it is difficult to achieve these types of objectives. Regional institutions (CEPREDENAC, CDERA) dynamics, where exchange is one of the main lines of work, show that this objective requires a specific approach, budget and coordination efforts.

2 Context

2.1 European Commission mandates on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

61. Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (DPP) is gradually becoming an important issue in the European Commission's mandates and strategies. Several communications and political agreements have clearly stated compromises and guidelines for action.

62. Cotonou, the Partnership Agreement signed between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States in 2000, stipulates that cooperation activities shall support a wide variety of functional and thematic fields, including "*regional initiatives for disaster preparedness and mitigation*".

63. The Commission Communication on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (*LRRD*⁴) identifies disaster preparedness as an issue that requires "*increased attention both in humanitarian assistance, and particularly in development co-operation strategies and programs*".

64. The Commission Communication on a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (2002)⁵, highlights that it is imperative *to design appropriate development policies to reduce disaster risk*, and the Commission committed itself to "*integrate disaster prevention into European Union development and environment policies*".

2.2 Preparedness within ECHO's mandate

65. ECHO's mandate for preparedness is based on Article 1 of Council Regulation N° 1257/96 of June 20, 1996, in which the terms "prepare" and "prevent" are both used in relation to humanitarian aid.

66. In support of the UN declaration of the *International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (90-99)* ECHO created the DIPECHO program, aimed at reducing disaster impacts.

67. ECHO's strategy for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention has been built on three pillars:

⁴ "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development-An Assessment" COM (2001) 153 final, 23.4.2001

⁵ "Towards a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development" COM (2002) 82 final, 13.2.2002

68. The DIPECHO program, which is oriented to finance programs in the area of disaster preparedness. The Program operates in the form of Action Plans focused on geographical zones in areas with high risk and low coping capacities.
69. Mainstreaming of DPP in all of ECHO's emergency activities.
70. Advocacy, where ECHO is supposed to advocate the key services in the area of development cooperation and external relations (DGs DEV, RELEX, AIDCO) in order to integrate DPP into their own programming and operations.

3 The Programme Performance

3.1 Evaluation criteria

3.1.1 Relevance

71. The Caribbean is a region highly prone to disasters, due to its geographic characteristics, and its socioeconomic conditions. The 2004 hurricane season is an unquestionable example for the real need of strong cooperation in risk reduction and disaster management. The continuous impact of disasters on people and their livelihoods, infrastructure and high scale development investments clearly justifies ECHO's DPP approach and strategy.

72. Awareness levels of national and regional decision makers are rising, yet the situation differs between countries and "sub regions". Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), CDERA and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) for instance, are deeply committed to DPP policy promotion and decision-making.

73. Even though institutional commitment and reinforcement at the regional and national level is growing, it is still far from responding adequately to the concrete needs of communities, population and civil society of the most vulnerable areas. In general there are some indications for an improvement in institutional capacities, but the impact in communities' capacity for resilience and coping is still quite low. The impact of the top-bottom approach – that is mainly based on institutional strengthening – will take a long time to fulfil community needs and faces unpredictable political risks.

74. Programmes that directly support communities and their basic organizations (bottom – up approach) have proved to be the better way for immediate reinforcement of coping and resilience capacities.

75. DIPECHO is not only oriented towards a specific and vital need, but also has developed a niche, which is not addressed by any other international agency with that level of grass-root approach. The DIPECHO programme is pertinent and appropriate with regards to the regional situation.

76. The question whether coping strategies of the affected population were supported by ECHO-financed interventions can be answered affirmatively.

77. The IV DIPECHO action plan supported the preparedness of communities and mainly developed the activities stated below.

- Organization of Community Disaster Response Committees;
- creation of functional teams responsible for the preparation and the immediate action in case of disasters i.e. evacuation, shelter management, transport, nutrition, education etc;

- training of community members and staff of public institutions (mainly National Disaster Organisations (NDO) / civil defence, municipality, Water and Meteorological offices);
- elaboration of vulnerability and capacity maps;
- elaboration of community emergency plans and in some cases of household emergency plans; and
- installation of early warning systems and organization of community based groups, which are able to maintain these systems.

78. Although it is difficult to measure the impact of these activities because of the different character and in consequence different impact of every disaster and because clear indicators of measurement of impact have not yet been developed, experience has shown that the above mentioned elements are the most essential to guarantee an effective reduction of loss of lives and livelihood.

79. As a matter of fact the implemented system in the communities in the north east of the Dominican Republic, has proved its effectiveness in the floods caused by Hurricane Jeanne. People were evacuated on time and the early warning system installed in the basin of Salcedo proved to be functional. During the Fond Verrets (Haiti) 2004 disaster, actions taken within the 'Help Age' DIPECHO project, have also contributed to a better local response. As reported by an ECHO monitoring visit: *"Because of the training, some of them (beneficiaries) went out of their homes before they were swept along the river"*.

80. Policy assessment and sector reviews have not been carried out due to the reasons outlined before. Projects followed rather a bottom up approach without analyzing national politics and sector characteristics in detail, leaving out at this stage the question of continuity, sustainability, replication and dissemination and furthermore the question of how the approach was developed, how it was put into practice by partners and how it will be absorbed by national structures.

81. Generally prior consultation was undertaken with relevant people on the spot (with an emphasis on the community population), national and local authorities, and other donors and aid organizations, though not in a very systematic way and not very well documented. In the course of implementation of the projects, relationships and interaction with related organizations developed more intensively, especially with the Disaster Management Institutions, the Meteorological and Water Resources offices, the Municipalities, local Social Development Offices and Universities. In one case the Office for women's affairs was also included (MOVIMONDO).

82. The risk of overlapping action has been practically inexistent, because at the moment - as has already been mentioned - DIPECHO is nearly the only fund to finance community based DP projects in the region.

83. The aspect of exchange of experiences and methodologies between different partners and actors has been promoted greatly by the regional ECHO office that organized various meetings (e.g. between NGOs working in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic).

3.1.2 Coherence and complementarity

84. DIPECHO's implementation, development and success strongly depend on partner selection. These actors provide knowledge of country and communities' conditions, the perception of windows of opportunities; and methodologies and techniques for the concrete application of the Program strategies and objectives.

85. Framework agreements established between ECHO and the partners are based on their expertise, field experience and knowledge of the country and community situation. In general, DPP integration into the partner policies and missions is a prerequisite for partnership.

86. On the other hand, DIPECHO's calls for proposals are not considering whether the proposed projects are part of the NGOs' regular operations in the country. Coherence is only considered in terms of mandates or potential capacities, not in terms of real integration of the subject into regular operations or plans of action.

87. A Partnership framework is established with emergency oriented NGOs, which is coherent with ECHO's mandate on Humanitarian Assistance. Nevertheless, considering DIPECHO's nature (operating in a HA scenario, with development instruments and objectives) development NGOs are not participating, and their potential for complementarities with DIPECHO has not been tapped. The "development link", where preparedness should contribute to create conditions for prevention and mitigation, tends to be not well covered with actual participating NGOs.

88. The "partnership" is limited in itself to implementation. In general, one could hardly find a profound knowledge of ECHO-DIPECHO-EC policies, strategies and the *raison d'être* of the program among the partners. For instance, partners are continuously questioning aspects of DIPECHO (such as time frame or the type of activities that can be supported) that have already been made clear in the call for proposals and in the program strategies.

89. In most cases, partners do not develop a concept for consolidation, continuity, sustainability, replication and extension of community based projects financed by DIPECHO.

90. Financed Organizations mainly see DIPECHO/ECHO as a typical funding agency, and not as a partner for exchange of visions and strategies and as the key implementing agents of its strategy.

3.1.3 Coordination

91. ECHO's office in Santo Domingo has a solid position in DPP regional context, (both with international actors, and national institutions). Donors and technical agencies that operate in the same subject (such as OAS, OFDA, PAHO or DFID) recognize ECHO's

role and importance of their actions. The coordination level with these actors is good. This position could be a solid base for the advocacy pillar of ECHO's strategy.

92. ECHO's coordination with other EC instruments – in DPP promotion and advocacy - is not satisfactory. Relations with Delegations seem to be polite but are not really instrumental for DPP objectives (with the exception of Haiti⁶). The effort made by the Santo Domingo regional office, trying to approach the Delegations, and even trying to establish a coordination framework is noticeable. DG DEV/AIDCO's lack of interest shows the need for a stronger work on advocacy, and the definition of a clear promotion strategy. This is a key aspect that needs to be improved, and it is crucial for LRRD and for the introduction of DPP in development activities.

3.1.4 Monitoring and Control

93. All projects generally carried out a process-monitoring following the advance of implementation of activities comparing planned time limits and quantitative goals with the achieved ones. This data served as the base for the quarterly reports partners had to deliver to ECHO. What seems to be missing is a qualitative measurement of achieved items and impacts (for example quality of VCA, functionality of working groups, shelters, equipment etc.) as well as indicators of the organizational aspect within the communities and of the development of links and the relationship with institutions and civil society. Some partners have also shown effective control performance. OXFAM and UNDP in Haiti and MOVIMONDO in the Dominican Republic have changed coordinators as a result of monitoring and control.

3.1.5 Performance of the Partners

94. The implementation of DIPECHO action plans has passed through a process of "partner screening". Learning from experience, the program has been evolving continuously in strategic terms, and therefore, in the profile of partners required.

95. The majority of DIPECHO IV funded NGOs showed an adequate capacity for channelling funds. The quality of financial administration has improved considerably in DIPECHO IV, in comparison with the first action plan. IFRC for example has completely updated its system, providing external auditing and accountancy to the national societies.

96. National and international NGOs can give DIPECHO a solid added value: the proximity to local organizations and communities. In these terms, these organizations present the best profile for DIPECHO's objectives.

97. International organizations, such as UN or Inter-American organizations are usually removed from the local level. For the implementation of CBDP projects, they have strong

⁶ EC Delegation in Haiti is playing an important role in the integration of DPP criteria within the *Intermediate Cooperation Framework*.

limitations. On the other hand, institutional strengthening, policy promotion related to the Program objectives and regional exchange could be very well covered by these types of institutions.

98. The Red Cross movement (Caribbean National Societies, IFRC and European National Societies) is marked by one particular characteristic that makes it a potential key partner for DIPECHO's implementation: It has an extended presence in all countries throughout the region, and its technical profile is ideal for disaster preparedness activities. Their continuous presence is guaranteed, and that is a key point for sustainability (Red Cross presence in the countries is permanent and does not depend on the existence of international resources).

99. Nevertheless, according to several interviews with Red Cross actors, and the Santo Domingo Office, the Red Cross movement in the Caribbean still requires strong coordination efforts among its members (European National Societies, the Federation and National Societies) as well as a deep effort on capacity building at the national and local level.

100. In the majority of visited cases, the partners are contributing technical capacities to the host countries and counterparts. Nevertheless, in some particular cases, the partners limited their participation to the role of "mediator" and funds manager.

101. In comparison with DIPECHO II, and I, the quality of international staff has improved considerably in DIPECHO IV.

102. Most of the partners have developed and documented highly valuable methodologies and instructive material that have proven to be functional.

3.1.6 Visibility

103. In all of the projects visited a very good level of visibility could be observed. Maybe with the exception of UNDP (as observed by regional field officers in monitoring visits) partners are making efforts to demonstrate DIPECHO's support to the projects.

104. In the field visits, people at local level were informed as to DIPECHO's role, and in some cases (like in Cap Haitien OXFAM project), local committee members showed a deep knowledge of the program.

3.1.7 Coverage

105. Considering the financial limits of the program, coverage is very small taking into account the total of vulnerable communities in all countries. Projects until now have been justified as pilot projects with a demonstration effect. Nevertheless, both DIPECHO's nature and its type of intervention do not have the capacity to assure replicability. Therefore, the pilot project description is not realistic.

3.1.8 Effectiveness

106. Generally most projects achieved the intended results (with some exceptions, such as the Radar Project and CDERA Project in Dominica), although all projects needed a time extension of some months. Appropriateness of response seems to be one of the greatest achievements.

107. Nevertheless, there are some weaknesses, mainly in the field of VCA mapping and in the quality of emergency plans. In a lot of cases the step from the community emergency plan to the vulnerable families and how families / households will prepare themselves is not clear. In the case of Dominica it could be observed that households depend on a family emergency plan.

108. Projects and their developed methodology have generally been perceived very positively by key stakeholders (community and vulnerable families) and by national and / or local authorities (mainly by National Emergency Offices / Civil Defence). The population feels better prepared and staff feels better trained. Assumption and risk analysis in most cases showed to be realistic, although in some cases a Logical framework has not been elaborated (Radar Dominican) or has only been carried out at the regional level and without knowledge of the implementing national societies (IFRC / St. Lucia).

109. Unplanned wider effects: Community groups in some cases started to discuss matters of general development of the community and pursue them. This is especially evident in the case of the groups of projects in the north east of the Dominican Republic (Red Comunitaria). Likewise, social development officers in the English speaking islands are using results of needs and capacity assessment for the purpose of planning their community development action.

3.1.9 Efficiency

110. Operational capacity of IFRC and European NGOs has been shown to be good. There has been a quarterly follow up of activities. In case of MOVIMONDO (Dominican Republic), UNDP and French Red Cross (Haiti) an internal evaluation has been carried out. UNDP showed weaknesses. All projects needed a prolongation because planned results seemed to be too ambitious.

3.1.10 Impact

111. The impact of the program should be analyzed under the following aspects:

- impact on the target population;
- impact on the local institutions; and

- impact on the national institutions and on national DPP politics

112. The projects achieved a high impact. At the community level, populations of the vulnerable communities have developed their capacity to respond so that the poorest and most vulnerable families are better prepared and less vulnerable and so that preventive actions will be taken in order to reduce the number of victims and material damages in case of natural disaster.

113. A rather high impact on local institutions regarding the acceptance of the proposed and applied methodology in the projects and their willingness to replicate them in other communities could be observed. Local and national institutions also benefited from the training given by the projects

3.1.11 Sustainability

114. Although community based groups developed strongly in the time of implementation of the project it might be questionable whether they are sustainable if national institutions and municipalities do not pursue a process of consolidation and extension to other communities. At this stage, developments depend totally on the initiative of community members and of local organizations like the Civil Defence and the local civil society.

115. National institutions up to now do not develop plans to carry out community based DP on a broad level. Disaster Management Organizations are generally poorly equipped.

116. The implementing partners themselves did not include into their activities a systematic analysis of this aspect of sustainability nor did they develop concrete proposals as to how to organize a follow up of achieved results at the community level. Additionally, a concept of institution strengthening at national level does not exist. It might be a good sign that implementing National Red Cross Societies committed themselves to carry on with training and other activities on request (in part there were signed memoranda of understanding), but their fulfilment still needs to be achieved.

117. From a financial point of view, community-based projects are sustainable because initial inputs have been made and only few resources are needed to keep DP groups alive. Installed local early warning systems mostly depend on voluntary monitors.

118. Training staff in all cases is at national level and it can be used in the future for updating and extending to other communities.

3.1.12 Connectedness

119. An analysis of connectedness, links to local capacity, its plans and aspirations, and local capacities for absorbing the aid has generally been carried out by the individual projects. Projects are in some cases well linked with local response structures like National

Emergency Offices / Civil Defence and in most cases with municipalities, with meteorological and water resources offices and universities and on the English speaking islands also with the local social development officers. These links and the resulting cooperation raised the awareness of these institutions for DP and greatly increased expertise among their staff (through their participation in the training courses), but it is almost certain that the motivation and good practices developed are not sufficient to enable them to now take over and consolidate the achieved good practices, to replicate and extend them to other communities. Although the response institutions show great motivation and willingness to consolidate, replicate and extend the model of the beneficiary communities (as in the case of the provincial Civil Defence of Dominican Republic), there are limitations because of the centralistic and vertical structures of these institutions.

3.2 DIPECHO's relationship with DEV/AIDCO policy formulation

120. One of the main questions (see Terms of Reference) is if "... DIPECHO has been instrumental in the formulation and implementation of DEV/AIDCO disaster reduction activities in the Caribbean?". This question highlights important expectations of this relationship. Therefore, before trying to find the answer it is important to clarify the elements of the relationship.

121. DIPECHO is a fund with a strategic orientation and not an institutional actor. This assertion must be well understood internally by EC services and partners. Therefore, DIPECHO's impacts on policy-making processes are limited to the frame of the specific projects it finances.

122. DIPECHO's main objective is to address DPP within a regional framework, targeting the most vulnerable populations in the main disaster-prone areas in the world. Its four action plans have evolved in accordance with precedent experience. Initially, projects with regional and institutional actors were not only supported, but prioritized. Regional and international organizations, such as CDRA or UNDP, put a strong emphasis on the strengthening of coping capacities. Nevertheless, their institutional framework and agenda – they are obliged to work through the governments for instance – was not clearly adequate for DIPECHO's purposes. Gradually, DIPECHO action plans moved to projects focused on local impacts and non-governmental counterparts.

123. DIPECHO's methodology and mandate do not include promotion and advocacy activities at internal EC level. Its characteristics are focused on communities and civil society actors.

124. EU delegations have only tangential contact with DIPECHO projects. Implementation, follow up, and insertion into the national cooperation scenario is not a direct responsibility of the delegations. ECHO is a centralized entity and DIPECHO projects are thus institutionally isolated from the local EC activities coordinated by the

Delegations. During visits, many delegation officials stated that though they are aware of DIPECHO activities in their country they hardly understood them, let alone follow up.

125. According to ECHO DPP definition of responsibilities (see 2.2 Preparedness within ECHO's mandate) and operational structure, ECHO has to promote DPP in DEV/AIDCO policy making or project implementation.

126. As stated in the ECHO's assessment of the Commission Inter-Services Coordination Concerning DP Activities⁷, it is "... clear that the main responsibility for DP (Disaster Preparedness) should lie with those in charge of a sustainable development policy, involving DG DEV, RELEX and AIDCO".

127. Having clarified some necessary elements of DIPECHO and development activities of the Commission, we can now answer the introductory question: DEV/AIDCO does not give priority to disaster reduction within its strategies and investments (in the Caribbean) and DIPECHO has no possibility to play a key (active) role in that respect, because it was not designed for that purpose.

128. EC cooperation with other regions (such as Central America or the Andean Region) is already investing important amounts on funds in DPP–Development activities. With the exception of the Regional Radar Project and some investments on protection works, the Caribbean Region is not really including DPP investment into their cooperation framework.

129. In the Cotonou agreement framework it is established that only the national governments can define the themes to be included in National or Regional Indicative Programs. This situation represents an important limitation for the EC services or delegations, which are not allowed to integrate DPP activities directly into the negotiations, if this is not a priority presented by the countries. With the sole exception of Haiti's IFC⁸, there is no evidence that the subject appears in regional negotiations.

130. Even if the Cotonou Agreement provides for disaster preparedness and mitigation as activities to be supported, the lack of instruments for this policy implementation is one of the main constraints identified. Policy guidelines and orientations are clear but putting them into practice is not accompanied by concrete DPP indicators or planning and implementing tools (guidelines, procedures, models, check lists) in other EC services.

131. Furthermore a lack of EU internal institutional (operational) instruments to realize the widely requested integration of DPP into development strategies of the Commission can be observed. In general, the investment process conducted by the delegations in the region is not duly considering vulnerability criteria, not even the exposure of the investments to natural or man-made risks.

⁷ ECHO internal document of 19.9.2001. ECHO3/LB D(2001)

⁸ Intermediate Cooperation Framework (Cadre de Coopération Intermédiaire) is the instrument for cooperation negotiations between the Haitian government and International the International Community. The EC Delegation is deeply committed to DPP integration into the program, which has been highly prioritized by the national authorities.

3.3 Gender Issues

132. The application of gender criteria within the project cycle had not been a wide or profound practice. The mission could not identify concrete or systematised means of application of the gender approach, and in the most “typical” preparedness projects (such as Red Cross or Civil Defences through CDERA), the issue is almost non-existent. Evidently, the development of planning and monitoring instruments for the consideration of gender issues into CBDP projects would be essential in order to overcome the described situation.

4 Evaluation of projects

133. The evaluators visited projects in the following countries:

- Haiti
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Jamaica
- Dominica
- St. Lucia
- CDERA as a regional organization (Barbados)

134. The evaluation suffered severe from constraints due to the two hurricanes that struck the region during the process. This led to the necessity of a permanent modification of planning and changes of the schedule of visits. In many cases partners and key persons were not available or their time was very limited, because they were engaged in urgent emergency activities. For the same reason the planned workshops with the main actors could not be carried out in every country.

135. The evaluators interviewed the staff of the projects, visited various communities where disaster preparedness had been implemented and applied the evaluation forms (see annex. The results of the project evaluations are presented by country.

4.1 Haiti

136. Haiti and Cuba are the priority countries for DIPECHO Action Plan IV. For that reason an extensive visit to both countries has been made. The fourth action plan financed the following projects:

ECHO/TPS/219/2003/2003	OXFAM-GB	325,500
ECHO/TPS/219/2003/2004	PLAN UK	367,242
ECHO/TPS/219/2003/2005	French Red Cross	210,960
ECHO/TPS/219/2003/2008	HELP AGE	179,148

137. The DIPECHO financed UNDP regional radar project was also operating in the country.

138. Based on suggestions of the Santo Domingo regional office, the visit was oriented to some of the DIPECHO IV projects, and to two DIPECHO III projects (Dutch Red Cross and UNDP).

139. The visit to Haiti coincided with the passing of Hurricanes Ivan and Jane (mainly the latter), which had a strong impact on the mission. In addition, the situation of the counterparts was very complicated because the country just emerged from a political crisis, which had impacted deeply on all institutional action, particularly during a phase where the DIPECHO projects were about to be completed.

140. In the second part, the impact of Hurricane Jane brought the country into an emergency situation, and partners were totally absorbed by emergency activities.

141. However, despite these constraints, the mission was carried out. It relied on the strong support of an official at the EU delegation, and of an official at UNDP.

4.1.1 Red Cross projects

142. The Haitian Red Cross plays a very important role in the national DPP strategy. They are the only NGO that is formally part of the main structures of the National System for Risk and Disaster Management (National Committee, Permanent Secretariat and Emergency Operations Center). At the local level, the decentralization process, established by the National Risk and Disaster Management Plan, is still taking a long time to be institutionalized (in municipalities and delegations), and access to communities is still very difficult.

143. On the other hand, the National Plan also provides the incorporation of non Governmental actors, mainly for community based action, a key element of the strategy, in which governmental action is still very weak.

144. The permanent presence of the Red Cross National Society offers to the National System the possibility to extend its action to the community level, even if the political process does not have the same dynamics.

145. In this context, DIPECHO projects financed by the Dutch and French Red Cross were launched in a very important time for the development of the national strategy and for the strengthening of the Red Cross National Society.

French Red Cross

146. The project “Strengthening of community response capacity in case of disaster” is the “second part” of an intervention in a key vulnerable region: the Bas Plateau Central and Bas Artibonite.

147. The project was oriented towards communication aspects, mainly through the emission of radio warnings and messages, and the training in the use of high-tech telecommunications (satellites) and to ameliorate Red Cross capacities for rescue services provided to the population.

148. In the first work line, several limitations could be identified; most of them caused more by the narrow timeframe of the project than by the problematic situation itself: difficulties with the radio stations (emission costs, etc), typical training constraints, especially related to the use of high technology instruments in a context of very low material capacities.

149. Sustainability of those activities is questionable, considering the time frame of the intervention and given that follow up responsibility remains with the national Red Cross. Even if the radio emissions could serve as an educational tool, the project does not identify mechanisms for measuring neither its impact nor its continuation.

150. In the case of satellite communications it is even more questionable how the local Red Cross office will be able to implement and multiply that knowledge.

151. On the other hand, activities oriented to ameliorate technical capacities for search and rescue missions seem to be clearly adequate for local needs, and more sustainable. In brief – through not exhaustive interviews and analysis of the implemented training - a very good level of learned skills appropriate for the local context could be observed.

152. The organization of “postes des secours” is adding an important option for the extension of coverage. Groups of technicians have been trained, and they are based on a local level.

153. As a main conclusion one could assert that this project is a good example of the appropriateness of DIPECHO’s approach: strengthening local capacities where other institutional actors are still not present. It also shows the necessity to reduce the scope of interventions, avoiding activities that require strong follow up in the mid term.

Dutch Red Cross

154. The context of the mission – as already described – forced the evaluation team to suspend the field visit planned to the areas covered by the DIPECHO III project financed by the Dutch Red Cross. Instead of the visit, two interviews were held with DRC representatives.

155. Previous monitoring visits, by the Santo Domingo office, reported a positive experience in terms of appropriateness for the local situation and in sustainability of the interventions.

156. An additional aspect discussed with DRC representative is how the project – even if oriented towards the reinforcement of the national Red Cross – has approached communities with a more open participation. Persons trained and committees are not necessarily part of the Red Cross structure.

157. In those terms, the Dutch Red Cross project is also contributing positively to DIPECHO's strategy: the support at community level, via Red Cross units could be very efficient in terms of response capacities, and not exclusively as a part of the National Society structure.

4.1.2 OXFAM

158. The OXFAM project *Disaster Mitigation in Cap Haitien*, is oriented towards the development of DP capacities in urban communities. This project is a very interesting experience for several reasons:

159. The partner has been working in the area for more than 20 years and its level of recognition is very high. Appropriateness of the proposal is the result of a deep knowledge of the communities' situation.

160. The intervention in an urban area with extremely deteriorated socioeconomic conditions presented a high level of difficulty. Nevertheless, the project design has shown to be good, means of implementation and partnership with local actors (KSPDL) have been well chosen and partner monitoring and guidance have been efficient.

161. The change of the coordinator, as a result of performance monitoring shows a high commitment level of OXFAM and an efficient back stopping.

162. The project performance was evidently very good. The visit coincided with the "graduation" activity, which more than 500 persons attended. A field visit to a communal committee demonstrated a very good level of incorporation of local actors into the actions which have changed their vulnerability situation.

163. Technical tools were also appropriate, and the participation of local forces – Red Cross and Firemen – is an important input for achieving sustainability.

164. On the other hand, the team of local trainers showed an excellent level of theoretical knowledge, community understanding, and ECHO-DIPECHO context of cooperation.

165. The sole weak point identified is the relationship of the project with DPC activities and structure. Initial coordination was weak, which has caused many foreseeable problems and confusions (official DPC requirements for the creation of local committees for instance)

166. It will be a fundamental input to the DIPECHO experience if this project's experience could be systematized and disseminated.

4.1.3 UNDP

167. UNDP has provided assistance to the Civil Protection Directorate (DPC) during DIPECHO II and III. In DIPECHO IV, Haiti UNDP has also been involved, which will be addressed in the Radar Project report.

168. UNDP played an important role in the consolidation of the DPC and the National Risk and Disaster Management System. For this process, DIPECHO resources have been fundamental mainly for the national structure reinforcement, and training aspects at local level.

169. On the other hand, components oriented towards direct support to communities did not perform well: an early warning system had never been installed at Artibonite Valley, and the creation of local committees was very unstable.

170. In DIPECHO III the UNDP implementing office entered into a strong argument with DPC, frequently reported by the Santo Domingo office monitoring visits. The situation came under control with UNDP intervention (Program Officer) but the impact on the relationship – and principally on the project – was irreversible.

171. UNDP's experience in Haiti showed that the comparative advantage of international organizations lies not in the field of direct execution of local projects, but in policy promotion and institutional strengthening. The consolidation of the national structure, despite the almost permanent crisis in Haiti, is an undeniable success of the UNDP/DIPECHO cooperation process.

4.2 CUBA

172. The evaluation was carried out in a two week visit to Cuba, one of the program's priority countries. In the DIPECHO IV action plan, three projects have been developed, through the Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro (ANNF), the Movimiento para la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL) and Save the Children.

173. The visit was coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Investment and External Cooperation (MINVEC) and the Civil Defense – at governmental level – and with the mentioned NGOs.

174. The visit suffered important delays due to the visa application process. Furthermore, the visit coincided with the strong hurricane season. The evaluator relied on the strong support of the Cuban Civil Defense in Havana and with that of Cuban Consulates in Costa Rica and in the Dominican Republic.

175. The evaluation started with a coordination meeting at MINVEC and a visit to UNDP in Havana. The working schedule was adjusted gradually, according to the conditions and possibilities of the different actors. Some of the previewed meetings could not take place (EU Delegation, UNDP) but all the projects foreseen could be visited.

Context

176. Cuba is a country with a high-level of physic vulnerability mainly caused by flooding, hurricanes and landslides, and by seismicity in the eastern region (Santiago and Guantánamo). Nonetheless, its institutional vulnerability is exceptionally low (compared to the rest of the Caribbean region), which permits a very efficient level of preparedness and response capacity. Decentralized government, with significant local and regional institutional capacities is guaranteeing an adequate cooperation between state and community that offers good opportunities for resilience.

177. While the National System shows efficiency in preventive evacuations and response management – in general terms – the recurrent impact of disaster is constantly compromising the resilience capacities of the population.

178. On the other hand, preparedness and response capacities are heterogeneous in territorial terms, having zones – including in Havana – where coordination, monitoring of phenomena, alert and warning are realized under limited technical conditions (The MPDL project, for instance, permitted important advances in coordination capacities and response timing amelioration in various Havana municipalities).

179. Cuba has also achieved important advances in “technological dimensioning”; i.e. in the adoption and development of adapted technical solutions that do not fall to temptations of “last generation tools”. On the contrary, technical solutions and local capacities for use and maintenance are well balanced. DIPECHO projects – as will be analyzed afterwards – show a good balance between technology and local capacity strengthening.

180. Consequently, it could be asserted that Cuba is a country with high vulnerability levels, that shows very good capacities of reducing losses in human lives from flooding, landslide and hurricane hazards.

The program

181. The DIPECHO program in Cuba has financed projects in its four action plans (see annex with projects details). In DIPECHO IV three projects have been financed:

- Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro (ANNF), with the Project Hurricane and heavy rains vulnerability reduction in Cuba’s central provinces
- Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL) with the project “Reduction of inundation risk in costal settlements in Havana City”.

- Save the Children UK, with the project “Strengthening community multi-risk management with youth participation through peer education and gender perspective” in Holguin and Guantánamo provinces – Cuba.

182. Due to the relationship situation already commented on, ECHO approved a project that gave UNDP the task to follow-up and evaluate the other DIPECHO projects. This project has not been evaluated.

183. In general terms, common characteristics could be identified between Cuban projects and the rest of the action plan. In all cases, time constraints were characteristic and the explanation, why partners have identified and formulated the projects with so many risks for its implementation, is the same as for the other cases in the region: competitiveness. In order to win DIPECHO’s call for proposals it was necessary to present very complex projects, even knowing from the beginning, that their execution would be almost impossible in the given time frame.

184. Therefore, project implementation has been characterized in all cases by the time pressure, although means of implementation, quality of proposals, logical frameworks and monitoring and management skills differ between the partners (some observations will be presented here afterwards).

185. Orientation towards more vulnerable sectors and towards strengthening coping capacities is also characteristic of the projects. A particularity of the Cuban context is the strong civil defense organization at local level that makes DIPECHO’s projects in Cuba different in comparison to the other countries in the region, where low governmental presence and investment is predominant.

186. The three projects are clearly within the priority scope of the government and the Civil Defense program.

187. ANNF and MPDL projects have included important components of technology, and are oriented towards the reinforcement of local capacities through institutional strengthening. This situation in Cuba should be carefully considered. Because of the Cuban political system and governmental structure it is impossible to compare the model applied in Cuba with any other country in the region.

188. Save the Children has developed a project, that also includes technological aspects, but at a lower dimension. They have concentrated their efforts on developing capacities of the population and on the strengthening of the role of children and young people in preparedness and response capacities. Because it is centered on the educational process, the activities are expected to have a sustainable impact on the change of behavior in the long run.

189. Considering that the Cuban context presents similar conditions for the execution of the projects, some aspects could be analyzed together. In the next chapters some particular observations of the projects will also be presented.

190. The projects are highly relevant in the national context. They have addressed the problem and needs of the particular zones chosen very well. Also, the type of intervention, even if different, showed a good identification of the technical solutions.

191. The projects are well connected to national and local institutions. In the specific case of the project of Save the Children this implies the special combination of an early warning system with the participation of children and young people in the whole process, which was not completely in tune with the EWS models applied and tested by Civil Defense. In a participatory process, SCF and Civil Defense reached consensus and the approach could be satisfactorily applied and tested.

192. In the three cases, the analysis of local absorption capacities has been well developed. The decision making process should still be analyzed and documented in a more complete way. In the case of Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro (ANNF) the decisions on technology relied on the strong participation of the parties, and good decision making criteria

193. Nevertheless, prior assessment and consultation leading to project design, and a more coordinated intervention among the NGOs is rather limited. The short time available for project elaboration and its presentation to the call for proposals does not permit a solid and participatory identification process. On the other hand, the “competition” is not encouraging a coordination process between NGOs who see each other as competitors more than as colleagues during the tender process. This situation has improved during implementation.

194. In terms of early warning it seems that a process of lessons learned analysis has not taken place. EWS is one of the main tools for preparedness, not only in the Caribbean, but in Latin America too. Many projects – some of them financed by DIPECHO – have made very good experiences but it is not obvious that the three projects have profited from them.

195. The projects were closely coordinated with the national organization and shaped to its priorities. Localization of the interventions has been coordinated with Civil Defense, and their coverage is complementing the governmental actions.

196. In general, projects have been executed in time, with a good level of results. Save the Children has shown a particular capacity for monitoring, follow up and evaluation. Also, they started more timely (October) than the other organizations.

197. The expected results of capacity reinforcement (which have been implemented in many ways in the projects) have been achieved. Early warning systems are functional; communication networks, internet and geographical information applications are operational and organization and coordination measures have been duly tested – with very good results – e.g. during the Charlie and Ivan hurricane alerts.

198. However, results oriented towards regional exchange have not been as successful as the other achieved results. Generally this component has been introduced in order to obtain more points in the call for proposals’ qualifications. The activities carried out were mostly isolated and not part of a real regional exchange program. It is very difficult for a project of local nature to promote and develop regional exchange activities efficiently,

because this requires a good understanding of the specific country situation and of the experiences of the counterparts. It also requires a careful adaptation of other experiences in order to avoid “model transplanted” which is almost never successful. It is important to take this into consideration, because regional exchange, as an appendix of local operations, has in most cases shown to be unsuccessful.

199. Another important situation is the quality of the Logical Frameworks and their use as an instrument of project implementation. With the exception of Save the Children, that has established a highly efficient monitoring system; the application of the Log Frames in MPDL and ANNF has not been satisfactory. In the case of MPDL, indicators of verification and the assumptions were not duly identified, and the risk analysis in both projects also showed deficiencies. For instance, the insufficient consideration of the particular market conditions, especially those of acquisition, of the country and the recurrent conditions of the rainy season led to a considerable weakness in the project formulation and affected its implementation. Fortunately – mainly due to the strong involvement and good quality of the counterpart – the products were successfully realized. It should also be mentioned that the strong commitment of the NGOs’ staff, both expatriate and local, has been of key importance for the projects’ success.

200. The three projects were very efficient, and resource management has been appropriate. In all the cases more activities than originally planned were developed. ANNF, for instance, has made good use of the available resources by acquiring less sophisticated technology for the automatic stations. ANNF and Save the Children have acquired equipment at prices much lower than the regular market.

201. One of the common aspects of the projects in Cuba, is sustainability. The operations financed by DIPECHO were part of the priorities established by the Civil Defense and the local counterparts; therefore, continuity of the operations is highly probable. Moreover, all decisions in terms of technology have been made considering sustainability aspects. The case of ANNF has been already mentioned, and in the MPDL project, the software design for modeling sea penetrations has also been adequate to meet local needs and capacities.

202. In the case of the project of Save the Children (Guantánamo), the counterpart (Centro de Desarrollo de la Montaña) and the Ministry of Education are guaranteeing the continuation of the activities. CDM manifested that risk and disaster reduction is now part of their regular priorities.

4.2.1 Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro

203. The project is oriented towards the strengthening of coping capacities in the central provinces (Cienfuegos, Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus) faced with meteorological hazards. The project tried to achieve the following results:

1. Reinforcement of people’s participation and training for severe meteorological risk reduction.
2. Early warning system installation in two of the central provinces.

3. Systematization of experiences on EWS

4. Participation in international workshops and exchange with Haiti.

204. The project is highly relevant. The island is prone to frequent meteorological hazards, and the understanding of its characteristics and the adequate monitoring of its behavior is essential for reducing their impacts. The intervention has approached the situation in terms of problems and needs very well. In this particular case, investing in the strengthening of local (provincial) institutions such as the meteorological office and posts of direction at provincial and municipality level is a good complement to the well-organized civil defense structure.

205. The project was also very well connected to local actors and activities. The provincial meteorological office is in a process of institutional strengthening and they are developing important capacities in technical terms. They have digitalized the analogical outputs of the radar that is located in the province and now all the Direction Posts (municipal) receive the image in real time and are capable of understanding the information.

206. The formulation of “risk reduction” within the general objective of the project instead of “vulnerability reduction” presents a difficulty for the analysis. The logical structure of the project is conceived for strengthening local coping capacities and thus for reducing the vulnerability of the population. In the interviews it was clarified that the objective was not oriented towards risk reduction but towards vulnerability.

207. It should be pointed out, that risk, vulnerability and coping capacities are interrelated terms. Modifying the conditions of one will modify the conditions of the others. In other words, improvement of coping capacities will reduce the risk. The situation clearly shows that there exists a conceptual confusion in the terminology. Nevertheless, it can be asserted that the general objective and the three first results have been achieved.

208. In terms of day-to-day management, ANNF has shown – according to the interviews – enough flexibility and coordination capacity to deal with constraints and risks. Even if project risks have not been duly identified in the Logical Framework, the project administration has performed adequately, and the activities have been developed without major delays.

209. With reference to the costs and value-for-money analysis, ANNF has developed good criteria for defining the needed investment in technology. In consultation with the local institutions and the Civil Defense, they have finally opted for less sophisticated automatic stations which could be bought at lower prices than budgeted. This decision has allowed several important results:

- the selection of a level of technology easily sustainable and in tune with local capacities for operation and maintenance;
- substantial savings for the project, that could be used more adequately; and

- empowerment of the national and local institutions through their real participation in budget issues decision-making.

210. As projects have only recently finished it is difficult to assess their impact. Nonetheless, some aspects can be pointed out:

- the meteorological warning system is functioning appropriately, and the information is received in the municipalities (the evaluation included visits to the provincial direction center and to one municipality center). A clear impact on local capacities of coordination and information analysis could be observed;
- the process of training and support to organizations has shown its impact in the event of Hurricane Ivan, during which the whole system has been tested successfully; and
- the development of a “Web Remota” and the design of the warning system are technological outputs that could be replicated in other provinces.

4.2.2 Movimiento por la Paz el Desarme y la Libertad

211. The MPDL project had the following results:

1. creation of an Early Alert System in two coastal communities of the North Coast of Ciudad Havana;
2. strengthening of local capacity to assist emergency situations and evacuations provoked by coastal flooding;
3. realization of a training program through workshops, campaigns and training in the norms of conduct and answer to coastal flooding; and
4. realization of vulnerability diagnostic of the Coast communities of the North of Ciudad Havana with the elaboration of danger maps.

212. The project is also highly relevant for the problematic situation the city frequently faces: sea penetrations with a high impact on the communities. The project has invested in the elaboration of an information system that models the sea penetrations according to the particular geographic and urban conditions. The system provides zonification data that gives key information to decision makers in order to develop preventive evacuations.

213. The project was very well connected to local actors and national authorities. The participation of several scientific and technical institutions and their ownership of the project have been a key aspect for success. For instance the determination of an adequate dimension of the technical solution has also been the result of well-coordinated action.

214. The project has achieved its results, according to counterparts’ information (MPDL, EMNDC and visited institutional and municipal actors). Despite the late start and

logistical problems, the majority of activities have been completed. Nevertheless, project formulation, and the logical framework were very weak. IOV's were very confusing and thus it is difficult to use the logical framework for the evaluation of achievements. The project document has also suffered from several changes in the negotiation process with ECHO, and there are some inconsistencies (for example the project document is always speaking of 5 municipalities, whilst the indicators in the logical framework state 2).

215. Field visits, interviews with the institutions and the "test" given by Hurricane Ivan, all confirm the assertion that results have been duly achieved.

216. It is important to remark that a high level of coordination between the actors, flexibility and an open-minded management by MPDL, as well as a strong commitment of the Civil Defense have been key elements for the project success.

217. The project has been managed with good cost-benefit and value-for-money criteria. The good level of appropriateness of the institutions has been very helpful in that sense:

- the technical-scientific groups have discussed and chosen adequate means for achieving the results and for the studies to be carried out, the necessary and appropriate technology to use and the products to be delivered to end-users;
- the acquisition process, that at first instance has been considered a constraint, has finally resulted in the purchase of very good equipment at much lower costs than on the international market;
- SITICH has developed an informatics tool for the municipalities that is very useful, user-friendly, appropriate and inexpensive; and
- the project's efficient financial management has permitted to finally reach 5 municipalities (as originally foreseen) instead of 2, widening the impact on the population.

218. In general terms, project resources have been used in an appropriate way, always looking for the right level of investment and not falling to technological temptations thus creating a high possibility for the achievement of sustainability.

219. The project has only recently finished, which makes it very difficult to assess its impact. Nonetheless, some aspects can be pointed out:

- the elaboration of zonification maps has supported the decision making process, and has permitted to validate empirical information used by the municipalities;
- the reinforcement of the direction posts, training, and the "test" provided by Hurricane Ivan has resulted in several decisions to improve the coordination. In most of the cases, the site of the direction post has been changed and the municipalities provided more and better space; and
- the coordination between municipal authorities and communal leaders has also been strengthened.

4.2.3 Save the Children

220. The project had established the following results:

1. a natural barrier created through forestation of riverbanks using bamboo, in order to mitigate against river overflow in the last DIPECHO funded project (2002-2003) followed up and maintained by the young people and local organisations in Holguín province;
2. community motivated to adopt best practice in relation to risks of flooding, earthquakes and forest fires through an educational campaign designed, implemented and evaluated by boys, girls and young people, based on a former KAP study with gender perspective;
3. school emergency preparedness plans reviewed and strengthened through the formulation of local multi-risk maps undertaken by girls, boys and young people in Holguín and peer educated young people of Guantánamo;
4. early warning system strengthened through effective communication of rainfall and hydrological level of the river at different highland locations to the low-lying town of Mayari in Holguín province towards flooding and forest fires;
5. response capacity of local health system strengthened to help persons affected by flooding, earthquakes and forest fires through provision of first aid to those evacuated and located in shelters in Holguín and Guantánamo; and
6. project experience evaluated, systematised, and disseminated, especially in Haiti with the participation of young people.

221. The relevance of this project should be evaluated under two aspects:

- the educational approach adopted, which is oriented towards long term impacts and focused on gender, children and young people; and
- the technical actions developed: early warning system, training and mitigation.

222. The project should be considered as highly relevant, because it addresses sensitive aspects like the strengthening of coping capacities (training, EWS, protection works against flooding) through an educational approach focused on the necessary changes in people's behavior directed towards a "preventive culture". This approach goes further than the preparedness approach that has a good performance in Cuba, but is limited to reactive actions.

223. In the province of Holguín, where flash flooding is usual, early warning has been prioritized, and in Guantánamo, training and updating of school maps and plans have been targeted.

224. The project has focused on long term impacts as well as on short-term ones. Moreover, the project combined response activities with educational ones. In those terms, an important investment has been made with risks that should be controlled.

225. The project performance has been excellent, due to a very good planning and control process, to the engagement of regional – counterpart – institutions, and to a good level of negotiation and discussion with the Civil Defense:

- children at the schools are operating the monitoring system (pluviometers and telecommunications), together with adults (mostly teachers) who operate them when the children do not attend school; and
- The provincial meteorological office has accepted to incorporate data sent by children into their system.

226. The project has achieved the expected results with a very good performance. Save the Children has established a follow up system that played a key role for the implementation. As a result, the project showed good management of the time frame and of intrinsic difficulties of operation (techniques of elaborating the maps, the need to coordinate with other provinces due to the scale of operations, etc).

227. As in the other projects, Hurricane Ivan served as a test for its functioning. In the discussions on site about the achievements of the project everyone coincided that a stronger coordination between stakeholders and a different behavior at family level due to children “advocacy” has been reached.

228. As already stated, Save the Children has established an efficient and adequate M&E system, and the coordination with local institutions has been very close. The use of resources has been carried out with strict attention to the needs, resources and absorption capabilities.

229. In this case, the balance between instruments such as acquisition, operational and training activities was different. The emphasis was not centered on equipment, which had been difficult to negotiate between the counterparts. The general decision making process relied on a high level of consensus among the actors.

230. As in the other cases, it is complicated to assess the impact of a 12 months project approaching its end. Nevertheless, the field visit has been extremely helpful to perceive the impact of the project on certain situations:

- a significant impact at institutional level. The counterpart in Holguín has itself contributed to the extension of coverage (in territorial and instrumental terms) The same can be said about Guantánamo, where the Centro de Desarrollo de la Montaña has included risk reduction within its scope of priorities;
- the inflow of information to the Meteorological office in real time, providing pluviometric information, as a basis for alert and warning;

- the updating of school maps and plans, within a process of training and education; and
- the active role actually played by children and young people in the whole process of preparedness and response, proven in the event of Hurricane Ivan evacuations.

4.3 Dominican Republic

231. In the Dominican Republic two projects have been evaluated:

- the awareness of the risk as a starting point for disaster prevention in the north east Region of the Dominican Republic (Movimondo); and
- - Radar Assisted Early Warning System, capacity Building in the Caribbean (UNDP).

232. Apart from this, meetings have been held with the officer in charge for training and 4 provincial directors of the Civil Defense of the area of intervention of the project (one province is without a director). A meeting with representatives of various institutions and NGOs has been held in Sto. Domingo.

4.3.1 Movimondo

233. The project is highly relevant because the island is prone to frequent meteorological hazards. The creation of awareness within the population, the creation of functional local committees and working groups, the installation of a simple and sustainable - under local conditions - EWS and the introduction of local emergency plans are key issues for reducing the impacts of these hazards. The intervention has approached the situation very well in terms of problems and needs. The project invested in strengthened local (provincial) institutions such as the meteorological office and staff at provincial and municipality level mainly by training. Training and some equipment have significantly strengthened local and provincial Civil Defense. The methods introduced are highly accepted at the provincial level and the wish was expressed several times to adapt the developed methodology on a national level.

234. The project has created strong local committees, which in nearly all cases went beyond the field of disaster preparedness and assumed tasks of local development. This, and the integration of national trainers who can be used in future activities, indicate good prospects for sustainability. Nevertheless structures, methods and social techniques should be consolidated in another phase if possible. Coverage should be extended as well. The project included 20 communities of which 19 responded positively.

235. It is doubtful whether seismological studies and micro-zonification should be continued. Although Movimondo could implement these activities at a relatively low cost because of the support of Italian institutions, the adequate use of this data does not seem to be very likely.

236. VCA mapping and emergency plans were not available – or in an insufficient state - at the time of the visits to the different community groups. According to explanations of the project staff they were still in a process of elaboration and will soon be deposited in the communities. To become really efficient, community emergency plans should be accompanied by emergency plans for the vulnerable families / households and mechanisms should be developed for training household members. This aspect should be included in the future (IFRC has recently developed a training module for this aspect).

237. The applied method of community preparation within the project has been perceived very positively by key stakeholders (community and vulnerable families, national and local authorities). The population feels better prepared and staff members feel better trained. As mentioned before, the implemented system in the communities in the north east of the Dominican Republic, has proved its effectiveness in the floods caused by Hurricane Jeanne. People were evacuated on time and the early warning system installed in the basin of Salcedo proved to be functional.

238. The operational capacity of the project has shown to be excellent. Taking into account the limited time, the achieved results are outstanding mainly because of the good coordination, the high dedication and involvement of the team leader, the support of the Italian scientific community and a very active and competent promotion and organization work within the communities, in which the local organization of the Civil Defence has been strongly involved. A quarterly follow-up of activities and a rather profound internal evaluation have been carried out.

4.3.2 UNDP

239. The evaluation of the Dominican part of the Doppler Radar based Early Warning System for Weather related Natural Hazards in the Insular Caribbean has been made on the basis of interviews with the UNDP coordinator in the Dominican Republic and with project staff in Jamaica. For time reasons and logistical constraints a visit to the two project sites had not been possible.

240. The project itself is operating on three islands (Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic) with the same objective as all other projects of the program: to prepare the affected population in order to protect themselves and their property. But in this case special emphasis is placed on the institutional strengthening mainly of the NDO, the Meteorological Offices and the national water resource offices (INDRHI) and on the aspect of exchange of data and information between these offices with the final purpose to supply the population with due information in case of disaster. In the Dominican Republic two municipalities have been selected as intervention areas, Tamayo and Castanuelas (Monte Cristi).

241. The specific objective of the project is that NDOs will have the support and technical assistance from their National Meteorological Offices (NMOs) in order to communicate flood and hurricane warnings on time to the population and, if required, evacuation orders for the target areas.

242. The planned main results were that the technical capacity of key institution would be strengthened and communication linkages between them are reinforced, that early warning information is available and awareness and preparedness within the affected communities are improved.

243. The main activities in order to achieve these results are: training of national and local institutional staff and local actors, awareness raising amongst key political decision makers as well as vulnerable populations and provision of equipment in order to improve the absorption and provision of information.

244. Some progress has been made in the following activities: Training materials and modules have been produced. Some training courses have been carried out, but the training cycle is far from being completed. Five automatic stations have been established (2 climatic, 3 hydrometric), but they are not completely functional yet.

245. There were considerable delays in nearly all planned activities and thus the project is still very far away from achieving its purpose. Local disaster committees (PMR) have not been sufficiently supported, the radar system does not function, provision of equipment is highly delayed and cooperation between main actors and technical capacity strengthening of key institutions has not been achieved sufficiently.

246. The project planning had strong deficits: a clear hierarchy of objectives, results and activities has not been established and they have been far too ambitious in quantity and quality for the given time. Management has been insufficient and the newly introduced financial administration system (ATLAS) led to further delays.

4.4 Jamaica

247. The visit to Jamaica took place in the context of Hurricane Ivan's direct impact on the island, which represented a difficult scenario for developing an evaluation mission. Contact persons were difficult to reach and in some cases not available. When the interviews took place, partners seemed stressed and in a hurry.

248. The mission focused on the IFRC project executed through the National Red Cross in Cedar Valley.

249. The project was relevant, considering that the Red Cross has prioritized a zone highly prone to flooding. Connectedness was good at local level, but the relationship with the national emergency organization ODPEM is not very intensive.

250. Coverage is reduced, considering that the project is a very localized intervention where 14 communities are included (but in part not yet fully integrated).

251. Generally, the project achieved the intended results: Disaster Response Committees are organized and hold regular meetings and simulation exercises. Functional groups are working in the field of first aid, search and rescue, logistics, shelter management, distribution of food, etc.

252. Nevertheless there are some weaknesses, mainly in the field of VCA mapping and in the quality of emergency plans. Individual household emergency plans for the vulnerable families have not been prepared.

253. The applied methodology has been perceived very positively by key stakeholders (community and vulnerable families) and by local authorities (mainly by local Social Development Officers). The population feels better prepared and functional groups feel well trained.

254. Unplanned wider effects: social development officers are using results of needs and capacity assessment as a base for discussion with community population and to prepare the planning of community action plans.

255. Operational capacity of the project has shown to be good although the project coordinator had changed recently and did not demonstrate herself to be informed about all aspects of the project. Planning was realistic and implementation did not suffer major delays. The implementing National Society could take advantage of its adequate technical profile, long experience and the excellent methodology developed by the IFRC.

256. The project developed a high impact at community level. Populations of the vulnerable communities have developed their capacity to respond so that the poorest and most vulnerable families are better prepared and less vulnerable and that preventive actions will be taken in order to reduce the number of victims and material damages in case of natural disaster.

4.5 Saint Lucia

257. The visit to St. Lucia also took place in the context of Hurricane Ivan. Although the island was not been directly affected, the coordinator of the project was absent for emergency reasons in Grenada.

258. The mission focused on the IFRC project executed through the National Red Cross in Soufrieres and in Choiseul.

259. The project was relevant, considering that the Red Cross has prioritized a zone highly prone to flooding. Connectedness was good at national level with the NDO (NEMO) and at local level with the district development officers.

260. Coverage is reduced, given that the project is a very localized intervention. Two communities are included but it has to be taken into account that the various smaller communities that belong to them are very dispersed and difficult to reach because of infrastructural and topographical conditions.

261. The project achieved the intended results: Disaster Response Committees are organized and hold regular meetings and carry out simulation exercises. Functional groups are working in the field of first aid, search and rescue, logistics, shelter management, distribution of food and radio communication. At the time of the visit an exhibition of VCA results took place at school in Choiseul.

262. Also in St. Lucia there are some weaknesses in the field of VCA mapping and in the quality of emergency plans. Dispersion of the communities and no established methodology to approach the target groups in the communities very often makes work difficult. Recently IFRC has developed and published a training module about how to approach communities, sensitize and mobilize the population and how to set forth a house-to-house community based educational program.

263. The applied methodology has been perceived very positively by key stakeholders (community and vulnerable families) and by the national and local authorities (NEMO; Social Development Officers). The population feels better prepared and functional groups feel well trained.

264. District development officers are using the results of a needs and capacity assessment as a basis for discussions with community groups and to prepare the planning of community action plans.

265. The operational capacity of the project has shown to be good. Planning showed to be realistic and implementation did not suffer major delays. The implementing national society could take advantage of the adequate technical profile of the Red Cross for disaster preparedness, its long experience and the excellent methodology developed by the Federation. Financial administration is carried out by the Federation, which gives relief to the implementing National Society. The presence of the National Society presents another advantage. It has agreed MOU with the communities to continue with training activities after the project has finished.

266. The project developed a high impact at community level. Populations of the vulnerable communities have developed their capacity to respond so that the poorest and most vulnerable families are better prepared and less vulnerable and that preventive actions will be taken in order to reduce the number of victims and material damages in the case of natural disaster.

4.6 Dominica

267. The project in Dominica has been the only project carried out within the framework of DIPECHO I. The purpose of this visit was to gain knowledge of the development that has occurred between DIPECHO I and IV and the differences in approach and methodology applied by the Red Cross.

268. The project focused on small mitigation projects (drainage and river walls) and increased awareness and better prepared communities.

269. The project was not clearly defined at that time. It was developed during implementation. Applied methods like the house-to-house training did not work and have been changed by the IFRC afterwards.

270. Nevertheless the micro projects supported the process of awareness rising and motivated the population and government to further action and this is seen as a positive aspect. Small mitigation projects are an excellent instrument to approach a community and involve it actively. According to the Director of the RC National Society another positive aspect is that DIPECHO I paved the way for all other following programs (OFDA; Worldbank). Since then, the RC established an ongoing relationship with governmental institutions like the Office of Disaster Management (ODM) and the National Emergency Planning Organization (NEPO). It plays an important role as a major actor in the national disaster management plan and carries on with training activities (financed by other donors).

271. IFRC and the National Societies have not only developed their instruments and methods but obviously their management and financial administration capacities as well, which, in the times of DIPECHO I, were regarded as rather poor.

272. In an interview at ODM an official mentioned that CDERA might lack efficiency and that the EWS for Roseau River flooding does not function appropriately. Following a specific request from the Santo Domingo office, an effort was made in order to confirm this information through the ODM, but the evaluator was not able to obtain an answer to his inquiries (neither by phone calls nor by e-mails).

4.7 Barbados (CDERA)

273. CDERA is a key organization for DPP actions in the Caribbean. The institution is the official instance for coordination of these aspects at the level of CARICOM countries. In the context of DIPECHO, CDERA has been accepted as a partner and they have participated in the four action plans.

274. Due to the emergency situation existing in the whole region, the visit to CDERA had to be reduced to a couple of hours, and it was centered more on strategic aspects, than on the discussion of specific projects.

275. CDERA's proposals have followed the regional priorities, given by its member countries, and thus relevance, and connectedness have been assured.

276. Project implementation is not directly executed by CDERA's regional body, but by the National Emergency Organizations. CDERA plays a coordination and supervisory role (comparable with the IFRC role in regional projects). In those terms, for direct CDBP projects, its profile keeps them far from the local level organizations targeted by the program.

277. CDERA's profile is adequate for ECHO's objectives on advocacy, considering the role they play in the decision-making process in the region. Their "Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy" is including CDBP policy making and the promotion of specific activities.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 ECHO's strategy

Conclusions:

278. The ECHO strategy establishes a theoretical, well-balanced scheme of promotion, advocacy, mainstreaming, and direct intervention in the regions. DIPECHO's identity – a budget line oriented towards the support of community coping and resilience capacity building - is clearly defined, as well as its role in the regional context. Nevertheless, ECHO's expected impact on the integration of DPP into development services (advocacy) is not realized in the Caribbean. This situation is resulting from a confusion of roles and expectations focused on DIPECHO, trying to find answers that correspond to other ECHO strategic pillars.

279. DEV/AIDCO strategies, plans and investments are not integrating DPP as expected. As previously stated, it is neither in DIPECHO's scope nor possibilities, to impact significantly on that process. It is the main responsibility of ECHO to promote that process and it remains a responsibility of respective EC services (in that case DEV and AIDCO) to include DPP into development strategies and their implementation because they have clear mandates in this sense.

280. The Cotonou Agreement could be seen as a main constraint for a dynamic DPP promotion by DEV/AIDCO and the delegations. Nevertheless, even under these constraints, EC actors could accelerate promotion and advocacy.

281. ECHO is failing in its advocacy task, and its Regional Offices have limited possibilities for its implementation.

282. ECHO's strategy does not include an "exit" strategy for the program. In the four action plans, ECHO has evidently been shaping the program orientation, priorities, and partnership framework in an evolutionary process. Nevertheless, neither a reflection on the expected situation nor a the time frame for ending the program are presented.

283. This situation could lead to a sort of inertia, in which actors are appointed to a long term responsibility (governments, other EC services, and International Cooperation Actors) but do not feel pressure to fulfill their roles.

284. Moreover, DIPECHO's existence could be taken for granted and as a "golden pretext" to the delegations for not integrating risk reduction into their cooperation processes.

285. The relationship and complementarity between DIPECHO, and the advocacy pillar of ECHO's strategy has not been exploited. The regional office in Santo Domingo started a process for the formulation of a strategy and action plan of the different EC actors, unfortunately the initiative could not be consolidated.

286. The reinforcement of advocacy and the establishment of a well coordinated strategy in the region could be the main basis for the exit of DIPECHO.

Recommendations

287. DIPECHO's identity and niche should be "protected". It is vital to avoid overcharging the program with expectations and responsibilities that belong to other actors or structures of the EC. DIPECHO should continue to be a fund that supports community coping and resilience capacities.

288. ECHO should strengthen its advocacy pillar, and establish a clear strategy with necessary resources. This strategy should promote disaster reduction at all levels of EC operations.

289. Instruments to integrate DP in development policies of the EU should be developed:

290. DPP should be inserted stronger than now into the agenda of external services of the EC. Delegations should be asked to carry out a yearly situation analysis and develop strategic recommendations. Procedures should be developed by which regional ECHO's offices and Delegations communicate and cooperate (regular strategy consultations, meetings etc.).

291. Into the formulation of related projects (especially of infrastructure, rural and urban development, poverty relief etc) a disaster management proposal and a vulnerability and risk assessment should be included.

292. The process started by the Santo Domingo office to establish a DPP strategy for the EC actors, should be continued and financed. The "exit" strategy definition should be one of the priorities.

5.2 DIPECHO's Appropriateness and relevance

Conclusions

293. At the moment the DIPECHO financed community-based DP projects are just about the only ones that offer an effective preparation for disaster for the vulnerable population. It seems that DIPECHO IV with the implementation of the CBDP projects has found its niche. Projects meet essential needs, the methodology and techniques are in tune with local organization and culture, they find high acceptance in the target population and related institutions. Local staff members, which can be employed in future projects, have been trained.

294. Micro-projects (mainly drainage, reforestation, small protection works, etc.) serve as a vehicle to support preparedness activities. Although encountering various difficulties to implement them, they had positive effects. They raised acceptance of DP within the population and thus facilitated the work of sensibilization and mobilization of the communities. Partners estimate their pedagogic effect positively: through the micro-project people could learn that there can be an effective mitigation with few resources thus reducing vulnerability.

295. As mentioned, one of the essential points of preparedness of the population to face and respond adequately to a disaster is to be alerted on time. Early warning systems (EWS), when simple and easy to maintain by communal groups, are very efficient tools for the reinforcement of coping capacities as they allow for evacuation on time. The example of MOVIMONDO in the Dominican Republic is an interesting case to be observed and replicated, as well as DIPECHO IV projects in Cuba (ANNF, MPDL and Save the Children).

296. ECHO's time limit for project financing (12-18 months) clearly means that expectations on sustainability of financed operations cannot be too high. A project approach with this limited time frame characterized by ambitious and complex objectives cannot be realistic, if it does not contribute to the local actors' objectives and if it is not integrated into a long term work of partners in the intervention area. Partners' proposals should clearly identify those contributions as well as the sustainability criteria,

297. Some of the projects – particularly the UNDP radar project, and MOVIMONDO in the Dominican Republic – included components of high technology scientific studies (seismic micro zonification, flood modelling, etc) or high technology EWS (radars, telemetric systems, etc) that could hardly be managed – even used – by the type of beneficiaries to which DIPECHO is devoted. These types of activities are very important for DPP, but are not within DIPECHO's scope.

298. On the other hand, DIPECHO's Cuban experiences have shown an appropriate balance between technology and absorption capacities. Some technical solutions (Remote Web and the use of radar data in Cienfuegos, the information system in Havana) could be

used in other countries, but more importantly the process of decision making for the design of appropriate technological solutions could be replicated in the region.

Recommendations

299. For all these reasons it is highly recommended to continue the Program until national institutions and the international community integrate the subject into their agenda and until the achieved results are consolidated.

300. Micro-projects should always be included into activities if they serve as a vehicle to support preparedness activities.

301. Nevertheless an additional result should be required from the partners (and be included into the calls for proposal): an assessment of existing local and national institutional structures and capacities and – based on this – a plan which contains proposals on how to realize a follow up of the projects, in order to consolidate them and uphold their sustainability.

302. CBDP projects should therefore include into their activities, to a higher degree than in DIPECHO IV, EWS in communities, which are prone to sudden floods. Calls for proposals should encourage partners to apply EWS to their projects.

303. DIPECHO should give priority to medium or long-term activities, making it a part of partners' work plan in the countries. In consequence, achievement of planned objectives and results, management of time constraints and follow up will be possible.

304. Activities supported shall strictly observe a balance between technological tools and local capacities for their utilization and maintenance. Countries and partners should be encouraged to integrate projects with higher technological requirements into their proposals for DEV or other international community actors.

5.3 Replication and dissemination

Conclusions

305. Experience shows that partners with permanent DPP activities in the region have shown a good capacity for replication and dissemination: the Red Cross Network has been developing its community based approach, and experiences are used for feed-back, methodological amelioration and dissemination. Other partners have also used Red Cross methodology.

306. CDERA has developed a wide experience during DIPECHO I to III. Since they are an institution completely devoted to DPP actions, they potentially have clear possibilities

for replication and dissemination of their experiences. If this will happen it is still to be seen.

307. Other partners' projects are taking into account their previous experience, mostly when ECHO has accepted to finance "second parts" (MOVIMONDO; French Red Cross, Save the Children). Nevertheless, lessons learned mainly remain in the framework of the particular intervention (project). It is not evident that experiences have been replicated or adequately disseminated in their own partner network.

308. In general, projects are not adequately considering aspects of replication, and their integration into partners' and beneficiaries' activities.

309. Limited success in replication and dissemination is resulting from the partnership concept itself. Projects isolated from the partners' core activities can hardly be replicated. In cases where partners are not willing to replicate or disseminate the experiences in their own organization, it is not very likely that they will make efforts to do so in the projects.

310. DIPECHO's call for proposals is also motivating the 'identification' of non-realistic replication and transfer activities within the projects. Competing proposals are including unrealistic results (mostly in Cuban projects), more motivated by increasing their competitiveness for the bid than with a view to a real and possible regional exchange.

311. The "regional" concept of the program is limited by the type of interventions financed (very local, generally unconnected to the regional trends and activities). Transfer is not prioritized as a working line, and many possibilities for lessons learned, experiences and know-how sharing have not been capitalized.

Recommendations

312. The partnership concept should require that partners are concerned with the subject of replication and dissemination. Partners should not be regarded and feel themselves to be as mere sub contractors or implementers of the projects but should feel responsible for the achievement of program goals as well.

313. Conditions and capacities to replicate and extend CBDP to a wider range of vulnerable communities should be analyzed. As an additional project result, a concept should be developed.

314. Replicability and sharing of best practices should be a particular line of financing. The process should be based on a previous analysis by ECHO of good practices in the entire region and not in a particular country. On the other hand, partners in Cuba should be encouraged to systematize the decision-making process on technological applications and to present specific projects for its dissemination.

5.4 Partnership

Conclusions

315. DIPECHO's main tools for implementation are its partners. DIPECHO becomes an actor by means of its implementing instances, which are – according to its legal framework – European registered NGOs and some International Organizations.

316. In those terms, success can only be achieved if the partnership is well established, with a full observance of DIPECHO's objectives, priorities and strategic orientations.

317. The partnership concept should be redefined. Evaluation has shown that this relationship is not fully adequate for the program needs. Potential capacity to develop and implement DPP projects is not sufficient to become an ECHO and a DIPECHO partner.

318. The Red Cross is a network with an interesting profile for ECHO's objectives and DIPECHO's strategies. Red Cross National Societies are present in every Caribbean Country, and – in general – have a vast network of local offices. The community-based approach, developed and promoted by the International Federation of the Red Cross – and strongly supported by DIPECHO – has shown its appropriateness for strengthening coping capacities at community level. European Red Cross National Societies are also playing an important role in the region, supporting national actions and instrumenting IFRC methodologies.

319. It should also be considered that counterparts of Red Cross projects are the National Societies, and in many cases those organizations are still very weak.

Recommendations

320. Partnership should be based on the complementarity between DIPECHO and the organizations, and agreements should clearly identify and establish common objectives, specific strategies and methodologies developed, and common investments.

321. The new partnership should be built on the basis of ongoing operations and plans. Partners should be actively involved in DPP in the countries willing to be supported.

322. Activities that reinforce partners' strategies and specific plans in the scope of DIPECHO should have a priority. It means that in calls for proposals, those oriented towards complementing medium-term intervention projects, should receive particular attention. Partners should be encouraged to present project proposals with this orientation.

323. Taking advantage of different partners' profiles, DIPECHO's strategy should be based on partnership agreements that consider this situation, and exploit it.

324. A dialogue process with the IFRC should be opened and a complementary support to its medium-term development plan for the Caribbean region should be explored.

325. Well networked NGOs, such as OXFAM, MOVIMONDO, Save the Children and others, should also be approached in order to identify a new agreement basis, for medium-term DPP program support, based on a DPP development plan.

326. Project support developed under DIPECHO IV could continue, supporting NGOs not necessarily complying with the mentioned profile, strictly for highly vulnerable communities' support, where the partner is present and has a deep knowledge of the local situation.

6 Guidelines for ECHO's DPP Strategy (a proposal)

6.1 Introduction

327. ECHO has been developing an active process of support and promotion of Disaster Preparedness and Prevention (DPP) in several regions of the world, and internally in different services of the European Commission. Strategy concepts and guidelines were identified in the document Disaster Preparedness.

328. Since 1997 ECHO has supported DPP in the Caribbean, through four DIPECHO action plans. As a result of the actual evaluation process a revised strategy for the region is proposed.

6.2 ECHO's Policy and Strategy

329. The ECHO DPP strategy has identified three lines of action.

330. DIPECHO Program. The main objective is to address DPP within a regional framework, targeting the most vulnerable populations in the main disaster-prone areas in the world. DIPECHO's main focus is "preparation" rather than "mitigation" or "prevention". This program is ECHO's answer to low coping capacities at the local / community level.

331. Mainstreaming DPP into ECHO's humanitarian operations, through the gradual integration of DPP elements into ECHO's main operations.

332. Advocacy. ECHO has continuously advocated the key EC services in the area of development cooperation and external relations (DGs DEV, RELEX, AIDCO) to integrate DPP in their own programming and operations.

333. Clear understanding of this strategic approach is fundamental for preparing the next steps. DIPECHO's role in DPP is to finance projects in the regions, exclusively oriented towards reinforcing community coping capacities and to a lesser degree to reduce vulnerability by small mitigation works. Other instances or scenes of action for DPP promotion and support are comprised in the other two lines of action, but mainly in advocacy.

334. DIPECHO's impact on the situation of the region can only be sustainable if governments and international actors commit to the concrete integration of DPP into their regular development actions. For this objective, ECHO's advocacy actions have a capital importance in DIPECHO's goal success.

335. On the other hand, DIPECHO's experiences could further the advocacy work with lessons learned and options for DPP actions.

6.3 Identity and niche

336. DIPECHO plays a very important role in ECHO's strategic framework. Direct intervention on risk and disaster in the countries – moreover, in the communities – occurs through this budget line.

337. Orientation to the creation or reinforcement of people's coping capacities is the main characteristic of DIPECHO, and community based programs are its tools. DIPECHO action is justified by the fact that slow processes followed by international and national organizations in the field of DPP, cannot guarantee that highly vulnerable communities will be approached in time.

338. Support to civil society (NGOs and grass root organizations) is the second aspect that identifies the program. In the Caribbean region, DIPECHO is the sole actor supporting mainly non-governmental instances.

6.4 The program basis

339. DIPECHO's strategy will be based on the axis set out below.

340. Supporting community based and non-governmental actors. DIPECHO has a niche where no other international donor is working. It is fundamental to maintain that pertinent

and appropriate profile. Projects financed should be strictly oriented towards community based organizations and non-governmental partners. Nevertheless, the liaison with national and local institutions (such as Municipalities, National Emergency Organizations, National Meteorological Services) should also be strictly observed.

341. Supporting program components and strategic operations instead of projects. ECHO's time limit for project financing (12-18 months) clearly means that expectations on sustainability of financed operations cannot be too high. The project approach, with ambitious and complex objectives is not realistic. DIPECHO should give a priority to already identified medium or long-term programs that are part of the partner's work plan in the countries. Consequently, objective achievement and flexibility for managing time constraints will be under the partners' main responsibility.

342. Impact measured on partners' or beneficiaries' indicators. In that way, activities supported by DIPECHO will be evaluated in terms of their contribution to the local actors' objectives. Partners' proposals should clearly identify those contributions as well as sustainability criteria.

343. Avoid technological dependency. Activities supported shall strictly observe a balance between technological tools and local capacities for its operation and maintenance. Considering DIPECHO's identity, hi-tech projects should not be supported. Scientific studies (seismic microzonation, flood modelling, etc) could hardly be managed – even used – by the type of beneficiaries to which DIPECHO is devoted. These types of activities are very important for DPP, but not within DIPECHO's scope. Countries and partners should be encouraged to integrate them into their proposals for DEV or other international community actors.

6.5 Strategic issues

6.5.1 Vulnerability and Geographical priorities

344. The conceptual framework on DPP shows that risks result from the combination of hazards and the physical and contextual vulnerabilities that characterize a given community or social element. In the formula, communities' coping capacities appear as an element that interacts in the risk formation, even reducing it.

345. The possibility to manage these elements of the risk formula in general fall within the development agenda. Hazard modification and contextual vulnerability reduction (prevention) can only be addressed within the local, national, and regional sustainable development activities.

346. Coping capacities, and some aspects of physical vulnerability, can be addressed in the preparedness agenda. These aspects are orienting DIPECHO's strategy and action plans.

347. DIPECHO will continue to support projects in high-risk level communities in which coping capacities could be strengthened at community level.

348. The Caribbean region presents a variety of conditions that makes countries or groups of countries very heterogeneous. Language, area, political system and many other conditions result in specific vulnerability situations, and thus in different needs. Geographical differentiation for the DIPECHO's strategy should be based on the following:

349. Disaster strikes and their impact on the population are unquestionable proof of the countries vulnerability. Actions plans should consider recent impacts and give priority to communities with degraded coping and resilience capacities, due to disaster.

350. For the next plan Haiti, Dominican Republic and Jamaica should be prioritized for project implementation.

351. Nevertheless small islands should be approached in a different process, considering that in some of them volcanic hazard is also very high. Partners with a particular approach to that problem should be prioritized.

352. As previously analyzed, the Cuban situation confirms the need for continuous support to projects in that country. A balance between support to specific DPP needs in the country and the possibility to promote a stronger development and share of appropriate know-how within the region will be included in the strategy.

6.5.2 National institutional capacities and support to decentralized response

353. Even if paradoxical, countries where the governmental commitment to enhance community preparedness is still weak should still be prioritized by the program. DIPECHO's capacity to move directly into the base is more important for communities where expectations of institutional support are still very low. This consideration shall not become an incentive for an institutional lack of commitment, but give special attention to those with fewer possibilities to survive and cope. On the other hand, EC cooperation at a larger scale should be encouraged to pay attention to this situation and promote national engagements. This condition shall be handled carefully, and partners should present an analysis of this situation as a main argument in their proposals.

6.5.3 Partner's proposals or strategies

354. A key aspect for sustainability and wider impact is the complementarity of projects proposed with partner operations and priorities. Projects that are part of a larger operation of the partner should have more weight in the qualification for approval. (Partnership aspects will be addressed specifically in this proposal - see 6.6 Re-establishing partnerships).

355. The International Federation of Red Cross regional plan should be strongly supported; based on the partnership aspects that will be discussed afterwards.

6.5.4 Permanent situation analysis

356. ECHO should maintain a permanent analysis of the regional situation. Windows of opportunity – usually opened after disaster strikes – political agreements and government changes can open or close possibilities for action. Considering its 12 months interventions, a flexible approach, oriented by this permanent analysis, shall be possible. In those terms, specific aspects to take into consideration could be the following:

357. Other actors financing DPP. Historically, institutions such as OFDA, OAS and PAHO have supported and promoted DPP activities in the region. More recently, financial institutions (Banks) are coming onto the scene with important investments, including preparedness actions: the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) regional project is an example, and IDB support to Dominican Republic as well. The World Bank recently approved a project for Saint Lucia for an amount of 7.5 million dollars. Considering the limited resources of DIPECHO, it is important to take into consideration the movements of other actors if these invest into disaster preparedness. In some cases, countries or regions with a high priority for DIPECHO will be supported by the actors mentioned, in which case DIPECHO could step back, and look for another non-supported area or country.

358. Within the framework of advocacy actions (see 6.7 ECHO'S advocacy) it would be important to establish a coordination framework with these international actors, in order to coordinate action plans, strategies, and areas of support. ECHO should take advantage of international symposia for developing coordination activities.

359. Variations on national policies. Considering that one of the key aspects for project support is the attention of national institutions, it will be important to assure good monitoring of the situation. ECHO's office in Santo Domingo should coordinate with the delegations, in order to establish this process.

360. Monitoring given by partners. One of the main criteria for partnership should continue to be the knowledge of national realities and the evolution of the communities' situation. That knowledge, and its flow to ECHO decision making should not be exclusively attached to DIPECHO financing. On the contrary, partnership should be based on permanent exchange.

361. Vulnerability studies. International and regional actors are permanently assessing the vulnerability situation in the region.

6.5.5 Thematic Priorities

362. Considering the regional conditions of risk, DIPECHO should pay attention to specific aspects, which could have a significant impact. Two thematic considerations shall be prioritized:

363. Rapid urban growth in the Caribbean, combined with extremely bad socioeconomic conditions culminates in increasing urban vulnerability. Marginal communities, as usual, are frequently impacted by small and big disasters. A specific approach to that problem is needed, and some previous DIPECHO experiences have already addressed it (particularly the very interesting DIPECHO IV OXFAM experience in Cap Haitien, Haiti) .

364. Flooding and hurricanes. Flooding and hurricanes frequently strike these countries, and the program needs to pay special attention to that. EWS projects shall continue to be prioritized and analysis of previous experiences, lessons learned and methodologies should be mandatory for proposing partners.

6.6 Re-establishing partnerships

6.6.1 Partnership base

365. DIPECHO's main tool for implementation is its partners. DIPECHO becomes an actor by means of its implementing instances, which are – according to its legal framework – European NGOs and some International Organizations.

366. In these terms, success can only be achieved if the partnership is well established, with a full observance of DIPECHO's objectives, priorities and strategic orientations.

367. The partnership base should be rebuilt. Evaluation has shown that this relationship is not fully adequate for the program needs. Potential capacity to develop DPP projects cannot be the only criterion to become DIPECHO's partner. The new partnership shall be built on the basis of actual operations, plans and objectives. Partners should be actively involved in DPP in the countries to be supported.

368. The absence of DPP in partner's development or strategic plans should be a criteria for exclusion. Partners that are not concretely working on DPP, transversally or specifically, should not be supported by DIPECHO funds.

369. Partnership will be based on the complementarity between DIPECHO and the activity proposed, and agreements should clearly identify and establish common objectives, specific strategies and methodologies developed, and common investments.

370. Activities that reinforce partners' strategies and specific plans in the scope of DIPECHO will have priority. It means that in eventual calls for proposals, those oriented towards complementing medium-term intervention projects, will receive particular attention. Partners will be encouraged to present proposals with this orientation.

6.6.2 Special agreements

371. Partners have different profiles that could potentially be more adequate for specific DIPECHO objectives or strategies: political advocacy for international organizations;

community training for search and rescue for the Red Cross; or urban community organizations for European NGOs such as OXFAM or MPDL.

372. Taking advantage of different partners' profiles, DIPECHO's strategy should be based on partnership agreements that consider this situation, and exploit it. At least, the following conditions should be met:

- DPP actions are part of their regular program;
- development of previous successful experiences in DPP projects in general and with DIPECHO in particular; and
- Relationship with ECHO as part of the general strategy and clear visibility for ECHO.

The Red Cross Movement

373. The Red Cross is a network with an interesting profile for ECHO's objectives and DIPECHO's strategies. The Red Cross National Societies are present in every Caribbean Country, and – in general – have an extensive network of local offices. The Community-based approach, developed and promoted by the International Federation of the Red Cross – and strongly supported by DIPECHO – has shown its appropriateness for strengthening coping capacities at community level.

374. European Red Cross National Societies are also playing an important role in the region, supporting national actions and applying IFRC methodologies.

375. The concentration of Red Cross actors into a more coordinated action could have a potential impact of important dimensions on the objective of coping capacities reinforcement.

376. The IFRC has established a mid-term development plan, in which complementarity with DIPECHO objectives is noticeable. In those terms, an agreement based on the support of that plan should be developed.

377. An important condition that should be observed is the need for a more coordinated action between Red Cross actors.

378. The new action plan should reserve an important part, for developing this agreement, and a coordination dialogue with the Federation should be opened in order to identify realistic possibilities, and to agree on the necessary steps for its implementation.

NGOs with extensive networks

379. As mentioned, several NGOs have developed specific skills on DPP, and are already working in the countries. Organizations such as OXFAM, Movimondo or Save the Children have been working in DPP and have made good experiences in the DIPECHO framework. They also have an extensive network in the region, with partnerships including grass root organizations.

380. These kinds of NGOs have the potential for particular partnerships. In order to be taken into consideration it will be fundamental that NGOs really integrate DPP into their regular planning. Projects or activities proposed, if based on medium- term interventions of the partner, should be prioritized for support.

6.7 ECHO'S advocacy

381. ECHO should develop an advocacy strategy for mainstreaming in DEV operations. Experience of DG RELEX and other actors should be utilized as a decision making base, in order to promote similar decisions for the Caribbean Region.

382. A toolkit for mainstreaming DPP into Development should be elaborated. It will contain checklists and guidelines for project formulators, in order to facilitate the formulation process. Delegations will also be supported for the development of negotiations for National Action Plans.

383. Advocacy actions should be based on DIPECHO's lessons and experiences. As a result of monitoring and evaluation processes, lessons learned and methodologies should be systematized in order to nourish decision-making processes.