



UCPM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FINANCING FACILITY (TAFF)

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

**OCTOBER 2-3, 2025
BRUSSELS**



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GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



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The Technical Assistance Financing Facility (TAFF) Workshop was held in Brussels on October 2-3, 2025, to facilitate an in-depth knowledge exchange on emerging issues in disaster risk management and civil protection in Europe. The event brought together over 120 participants, including representatives from national civil protection agencies from 18 EU Member States and 8 Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) participating states, and international delegations from Morocco and Japan, as well as experts from the European Commission, the World Bank, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), and other relevant international organisations and research institutions. The workshop reflected on recent developments in disaster prevention and preparedness at the EU level, highlighted TAFF's contributions to disaster and climate resilience investments, and fostered knowledge exchange and collaboration among stakeholders. It also sought to identify lessons learnt and best practices to inform future TAFF activities and scale up resilient investments.

The workshop fully achieved its intended objectives of fostering knowledge sharing and guiding future activities supported by TAFF. The workshop helped strengthen participants' understanding of disaster prevention and preparedness strategies, while facilitating the identification and exchange of best practices and lessons emerging from TAFF projects and related initiatives. It successfully fostered collaboration and networking across countries and institutions, generated valuable feedback to enhance TAFF's effectiveness and future programming, and provided concrete insights into opportunities for scaling up resilient investments at national and EU levels. Overall, the TAFF Workshop served as an effective platform for knowledge sharing, strategic dialogue, and partnership-building to advance disaster and climate resilience across Europe and beyond. All workshop materials are available at <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/taff> (in the resources section).





KEY MESSAGES AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WORKSHOP

The opening session highlighted the complexity and breadth of requirements to achieve effective preparedness for disasters and crises. Strengthening disaster resilience requires a comprehensive approach across the entire risk management cycle — from prevention and preparedness through response and recovery — with a clear ambition to “build back better.” To safeguard people and assets, risk awareness must improve at all levels, and decisions should be grounded in evidence about vulnerabilities and gaps. Investing early and integrating prevention, preparedness, and recovery yields significant co-benefits, especially when tailored to the local and regional risks communities face. Facilitating effective actions to enhance such preparedness capacity is at the core of TAFF’s mandate. Examples were raised from across the region:

- 1.** Early warning systems (EWS) and anticipatory action remain essential to prevent loss of life and support public trust, particularly where disaster preparedness knowledge is low.
- 2.** Available financing is not always matched with the capacity needed to implement and manage resilience projects, highlighting the need for stronger coordination and absorption of funds — including contingency financing mechanisms that accelerate recovery.
- 3.** Inclusive approaches must also be advanced. Preparedness and response systems often overlook the needs of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, leaving a persistent equity gap.
- 4.** Cross-border cooperation, integrated disaster risk management (DRM) solutions, and learning from international experience can amplify the impact of preparedness initiatives and support more resilient development across the region.

The technical sessions throughout the TAFF workshop demonstrated how TAFF responds to these needs by providing the technical assistance and capacity support needed to put preparedness principles into action. Discussions centred around three thematic blocks:



Block 1. Investing in Integrated Wildfire Risk Management: Countries across Europe are facing rapidly intensifying wildfire risk, with recent seasons demonstrating losses significantly above the long-term average, underscoring the urgent need for proactive interventions. A series of presentations featured the latest knowledge pieces and operational efforts by both the World Bank and European Commission in improving wildfire risk management – including the presentation of a series of new reports on wildfire management in the European Union at large, as well as Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania.¹ The recent reports on UCPM wildfire peer reviews conducted in Greece, Italy and Land Brandenburg were also featured. These were complemented by examples from ongoing TAFF projects in Iceland and Albania, in which national civil protection agencies highlighted the strategic and operational contribution of the ongoing projects, as well as emerging lessons learnt of relevance to peers.

Block 2. Strengthening Early Warning Systems and Outreach: EWS are typically one of the most cost-effective measures for substantially enhancing disaster preparedness and thus reducing the devastating impacts of a range of natural hazards. Countries across Europe have made varying degrees of progress in implementing efficient and modern multi-hazard EWS, while the advent of new technologies is continuously raising the potential of such systems. A series of presentations showcased the latest knowledge on EWS including from the World Meteorological Office, which highlighted the critical importance of outreach initiatives to reach “the last mile”; from the European Commission on leveraging the upcoming Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS);² as well as insights from UNESCO CoastWAVE 2.0 project on strengthening the resilience of coastal communities in the North-Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Regions.³ Moreover, State Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Moldova shared how they are leveraging a TAFF project to strengthen the role of EWS in disaster preparedness and resilience to climate shocks.⁴

¹ World Bank. 2025. From Risk to Resilience: Strengthening Preparedness for Wildfires and Earthquakes in Europe. [Link](#).

² European Commission, 2024. Leveraging the upcoming Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS) for a safer, more resilient future. [Link](#).

³ UNESCO. 2024. CoastWave. Strengthening resilience of coastal communities against tsunamis and other coastal hazards. [Link](#).

⁴ World Bank. 2024. Strengthening Moldova's Disaster Risk Management and Resilience (SMORE) Project. [Link](#).



Block 3. From Impact to Recovery: There is an excessive number of recent disasters experienced by countries across Europe, with each instance followed by a complex process of recovery – not only physical and economic, but also social. Through a series of presentations, participants exchanged experiences on the lessons learnt from reconstruction and recovery processes, including examples from Türkiye devastating 2023 earthquake, and Japan's experience following the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Lessons highlighted that an effective recovery builds on ex-ante preparedness, as well as the capacity to coordinate complex institutional and logistical processes. Yet, not rarely overlooked, recovery also requires attention to social and community needs that are key to overcoming the scarring experience of loss. These examples were supplemented by presentations on new knowledge and tools developments, including the Risk Data Hub by the European Commission.⁵

In addition to the above guiding topics, a range of parallel break out and group sessions enabled active knowledge exchanges among the large and diverse group of participants. These sessions covered topics including (i) Lessons learnt and approaches for making disaster preparedness more inclusive, (ii) Challenges, good practice and priorities for earthquake risk management in Europe, (iii) Tools and examples for improving emergency preparedness, (iv) Knowledge, tools, and examples for scaling up nature-based solutions, (v) Decision support tools for prioritizing critical infrastructure and services, and (vi) Using satellite/geospatial information for disaster risk management. These sessions (along with coffee breaks and dinners) enabled detailed exchanges among national practitioners and international experts.

⁵ European Commission 2025. DRMKC Risk Data Hub. [Link](#).

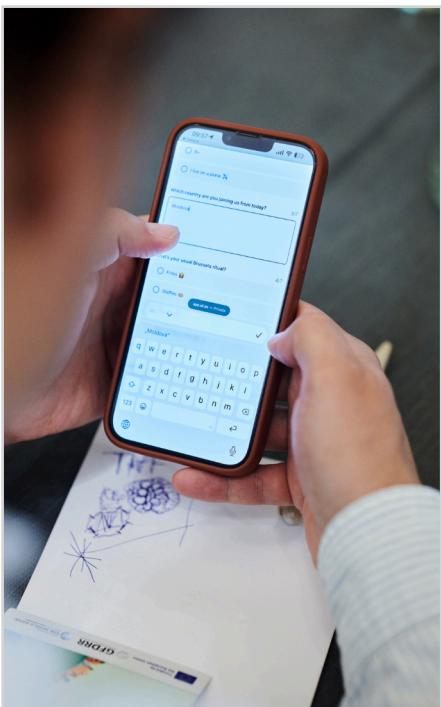


LESSONS LEARNT

The workshop also launched a lessons learnt survey among participants to assess the effectiveness and future direction of the TAFF. The survey revealed that TAFF is widely recognised for its clear impact and strong alignment with national disaster risk management needs, with most respondents rating its contribution as “very well” or “fairly well.” There is robust support for the continuation of TAFF beyond its pilot phase, as the majority of respondents indicated they are “very likely” to support its extension, citing its positive influence on local capacity, investment-ready projects, and knowledge sharing across the UCPM community. The feedback also included constructive suggestions for making TAFF more user-driven, practice-oriented, and accessible, reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement and maximizing resilience outcomes.

Participants also shared many good practices, highlighting how countries are strengthening preparedness, response, and recovery through integrated and inclusive approaches. Examples included national response plans built around Integrated Emergency Management Systems, the introduction of 112 emergency numbers and unified operations centres to improve coordination among emergency services, and ICT-based firefighting command centres that enhance situational awareness. Several participants emphasized early warning systems, such as Romania’s RO-ALERT and community-based flood and landslide alerts, that combine real-time data, interagency cooperation, and local communication networks to enable timely action and save lives. Others pointed to the importance of community awareness, inclusion of persons with disabilities, social cohesion, and peer learning processes as essential elements of resilience. Taken together, these examples illustrate how technological, institutional, and social capacities are being strengthened across countries to deliver more effective, coordinated, and people-centred disaster risk management.

Virtual Reality (VR) Experience: In addition, workshop participants had the opportunity to test a VR experience that simulated an earthquake inside a Peruvian classroom. The project was developed by GFDRR’s Safer School program, in collaboration with the World Bank’s Interactive Media Through a combination of CGI simulation, VR film, and haptic backpacks synchronized with the headset visuals, the team crafted a powerful and realistic experience—transforming seismic data and disaster preparedness into a compelling, sensory story.





150+

PARTICIPANTS

32

SPEAKERS AND
EXPERTS

14

SESSIONS

18

EU MEMBER STATES

8

UNION
CIVIL PROTECTION
MECHANISM STATES

&

INTERNATIONAL
DELEGATIONS FROM
MOROCCO AND JAPAN

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