

- 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 CDBP 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