



## DELIVERABLE 5.6.1

# CONSULTATION ON THE 1<sup>st</sup> LOCAL PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY PLAN

## INCLUSIVE PLANNING AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE



*Prepared by:*

Urban Research Institute

November, 2020

## PROJECT

# Public awareness, Preparedness, Participation and Coordination for Civil Protection for All

(Subsidy Contract No: A2-1.4-1)

## REPORT

<b>Meeting title</b>	Consultation on the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response
<b>Meeting date(s)</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> of November 2020
<b>Organized by</b>	PB6 – Urban Research Institute ( <a href="http://www.uri.org.al/">www.uri.org.al/</a> )
<b>Meeting location</b>	Zoom Meeting (link: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82386975098?pwd=L0paMWVuOXRWSDFRazVaUXFrZ0JpZz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82386975098?pwd=L0paMWVuOXRWSDFRazVaUXFrZ0JpZz09</a> )
<b>Document version<sup>1</sup></b>	D (18.11.2020)
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<sup>1</sup> F: final, D: draft



## CONTENTS

PART 01	PART 02	PART 03
<p><b>About the Project</b></p> <p>Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan</p> <p>Joint Cross-Border Study</p>	<p><b>The Consultation process</b></p> <p>Obstacles and challenges</p> <p>Successful approaches and action</p> <p>Actions needed to achieve disability-inclusive development in CP</p> <p>Roles for key involved stakeholders</p>	<p><b>Feedback &amp; Recommendations</b></p> <p>Key Recommendations</p> <p>Annexes</p>

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The main aim of the "4PLUS" Act is the upgrade / improvement of the existing infrastructure and development of human resources skills in the respective stakeholders, in order to take into account and better meet the needs of people with disabilities, people with chronic diseases, people with disabilities, age and people with reduced mobility in general ("low independence & high-risk groups").

In order to achieve the goal of developing Inclusive Civil Protection and to include the needs of people with reduced mobility / independence in the planning of any civil protection initiative in the cross-border area, it is necessary to develop strategies to promote "Accessibility".

And the principles of "Planning for All" in all phases of civil protection (prevention, preparation, early warning, immediate intervention and crisis management, response and rehabilitation, etc.) that will meet the characteristics and requirements of people belonging to high-risk groups.

## METHODOLOGY FOR LOCAL PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY PLAN

The Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan for Kolonja is prepared in the frame of "IPA II Greece - Albania 2014-2020 Cross-Border Program" and aims to help citizens identify potential for information and disaster risks, integrate mitigation plans and make efforts on how to improve the process of recovery after natural disasters. Therefore, it may serve as a guide and be used by law enforcement agencies in responding to a natural disaster, those at the local level responsible for creating and / or updating risk mitigation plans and implementing risk mitigation activities, or city dwellers and business owners looking to better understand where to find information that can help them build or set up their businesses in secure locations.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015-2020 of the Government of Albania is expected to directly contribute to the strengthening of institutional mechanisms, capacities and procedures for strategic planning and integrated at the central and sectoral level, to further strengthen the capacities for appropriate implementation of IPA II actions, as well as implementation of the "Interreg IPA II Cross-border Greece-Albania 2014-2020 Cross-Border Cooperation Program".

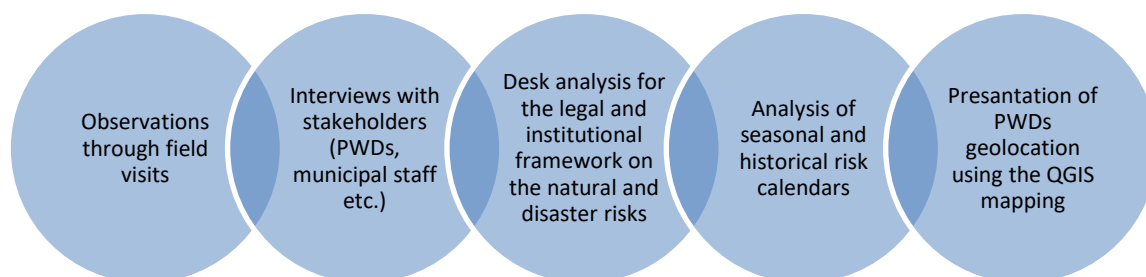
Nowadays, as it extends to the "IPA II Cross-Border Program Greece - Albania 2014-2020", natural and man-made disasters present significant challenges for sustainable development in this particular cross-border area. In particular fires and floods are increasing having cross-border impacts which make a common approach essential. Although prevention is gaining



increasing importance in both countries, strategic guidance on how to support people with disabilities / older people is lacking leaving them fully exposed to the many risks.

From a methodological point of view, the plan applies a comprehensive approach. The approach focused on institutional cooperation and the participation of various community groups in order to institutionalize the culture of disaster risk reduction for Kolonja. For this, the following instruments are used:

Figure 1: Methodological approach applied for this plan.



In addition, it follows the “Joint Cross-Border Study” on the four important phases:

### Phase #1: Prevention: Disaster Risk Reduction

Before disaster strikes, there should be a general process of mitigation, risk reduction, preparedness and planning. During the interval between disasters, it should be recognised and firmly established that in emergency situations, people with disabilities have a fundamental right to as good a level of protection as the rest of the population.

### Phase #2: Protection: Emergency Action

This phase refers to an emergency or crisis situation in which responses such as rescue, evacuation and care are required. Those rescuers who are required to lift and transport physically people with disabilities, and the frail elderly, should be trained and equipped to carry out such actions in the proper, professional manner with minimal risk to the giver or receiver of assistance. All equipment and technical devices should be well maintained in order to be fully operational in case of an emergency. Emergency responders and other carers must be required to maintain a correct, professional and non-discriminatory attitude to people with disabilities at all times.

### Phase #3: Evacuation

Evacuation is one of the principal means of avoiding harm to people during threatening or crisis situations. It can be divided broadly into the pre-impact (preventative) kind and that

which is practised during or after the impact (for rescue or the maintenance of public safety). When evacuation is needed, civil protection authorities should have pre-existing procedures to ensure no one is left behind.

#### Phase #4: Rehabilitation

This phase refers to the aftermath of a disaster, crisis or emergency in which the emphasis is placed on restoring conditions to normal and recovering from damage and disruption. This may be a slow process that lasts years and requires a lengthy period of living with temporary arrangements.

***The successful Implementation of civil protection for PwDs would be essential achieving the following components:***

**Political commitment** - Governments must make clear decisions and include in their political agenda the commitment to make a serious effort to develop effective disaster risk management for people with disabilities.

**Co-ordination and continuity** - In order to guarantee the effective development, application and monitoring of emergency systems for people with disabilities, one particular body of governmental administration must be responsible for co-ordination and the continuity of initiatives.

**Networking** - At least one network should exist that allows stakeholders to meet and exchange information about the challenges to be met if risks are to be identified and solutions are to be found.

**Strategic planning** - A master plan should be set up and constantly updated. The organisation of training activities and the evaluation of emergency exercises should be part of a constant process of adaptation of the master plan.

**Knowledge management** - A coherent programme of knowledge management should be used to ensure the transfer of acquired know-how to those who can benefit from it.

**Identification and optimisation of resources** - The evaluation of a master plan and constant updating of its capacities, and the general level of knowledge, should allow stakeholders to estimate needs regarding financial, organisational and human resources.

**Communication** - In order to ensure that everyone is kept informed about the state of preparedness, a good communication policy is needed.

## INTRODUCTION

The online consultation was organized by the Urban Research Institute, for the consultation of an appropriate strategy for the joint development of the Inclusive Civil Protection and further elaboration of the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan for Kolonja.

The consultation presents a good opportunity to advance a disability-inclusive development agenda on DRR & CP. The consultation has resulted in concise, action-oriented outcome recommendations guided by the ideals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and aimed at ensuring the inclusion and mainstreaming of disability in all future country development plans and cross-border programmes.

## THE ONLINE CONSULTATION PROCESS

URI organized and moderated an online consultations on 18 of November 2020. With a view to gather input for the on-going work in consolidation for the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response; the gathering perspectives, feedback and recommendations from relevant stakeholders on how to include disability in the DRR & CP development framework.

The format of the consultation encouraged participation and stimulated discussion from a wide range of stakeholders and were based on a set of ten questions previously developed to guide the consolidation of the document. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the major obstacles encountered and challenges faced in relation to implementing policies and programmes for the realization of the development goals for person with disabilities?
2. What approaches/actions have been successful in promoting the inclusion of disability in the DRR & CP development framework?
3. What specific steps, measures or actions should be taken to promote the goal of a disability inclusive society?
4. What are the roles of the relevant stakeholders? Governments, NGOs, academics, private sector?
5. Additional recommendations on the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response.

### ***Participation***

A total of 17 individuals, participated in the online meeting, representing different organizations and institutions at local and national level.

Discussants types included non-governmental organizations (11), academia (1), Governments (4), and care-givers (1). A list of participant organizations and affiliations is included as Annex 4.

Non-governmental organizations were the most active in providing feedback and recommendations, many of which are involved in disability issues.



## OBSTACLES & CHALLENGES

The consultation process initiated with a question about “major obstacles and challenges faced in relation to implementing policies and programmes for the realization of development goals for persons with disabilities.”

There were several responses on this question, and respondents took a variety of positions on the issues following three guiding themes:

- a. **Lack of political will and lack of capacities by Governments**
- b. **Lack of empowerment of persons with disabilities to advocate**
- c. **Lack of an adequate inclusive DRR&CP policy framework for implementation**

The above three issues have guided the structure of this report. The inputs from the online discussion have been broadly organized to further elaborate on the obstacles encountered and how these may be tackled using examples of promising solutions and good practice for successfully integrating a disability perspective into development activities.

Efforts have been made to develop a clear and reasonable framework based on the multitude of opinions and the overall goals of the exercise: to provide useful and comprehensive views resulting in useful recommendations.

### **Lack of political will and lack of competences by Governments**

The impact of disasters in Albania are significantly compounded by a relatively high degree of poverty, lack of infrastructure maintenance, unsafe building and land use practices, linked to rapid urbanization, exploitation of natural resources (overgrazing of pasture, overexploitation of forests and riverbeds, etc.) as well as some other consequences of the transition from a state-controlled economy to a free-market one.

Following all this, several participants representing mostly NGOs commented on the lack of political will, and the fact that real implementing of the inclusive development programming was a low in general.

At the same time, it was emphasized that there is a low level of implementing their competences due to lack of technical and human capacities from the administrative staff.

While, experiencing the strong 6.4 magnitude earthquake that struck Albania in 2019, participants' emphasized that:

*“Some of the main challenges staff face are lack of needed logistics, lack of funds, panic and pressure exerted by earthquake-affected persons to meet their needs, including out-of-focus requirements for social protection, part-time work, fieldwork, increased stress and management and organization problems. Some of the staff (public and private) suffered personal property damages and consequently are more vulnerable to the increased psychological burden in the provision of services”.*



In addition, there is the lack of material resources and the low level of coordination between different agencies with legal responsibilities in civil emergencies, while education and information systems lack the necessary comprehension and effect on state agencies and Albanian population at large.

### Lack of empowerment of persons with disability to advocate

At the core of the 'political will' issue lays the basic fact that persons with disabilities are a highly marginalized group; a group too often without power and lacking a voice to advocate for themselves.

Yet, there is a **lack of a clear strategy to promote the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** and their organizations so to promote their meaningful participation and consultation while designing, approving and implementing legislation, policies and programs.

According to the respondents feedback *"Empowerment can't be an individual process only"*. It should also aim to increase collective power, both in terms of organizational as well as advocacy capacity. Persons with disabilities should be empowered by participating in a unified manner (represented by organizations) but also by forming strategic alliances with other social sectors. As much as possible participation should allow PWDs to interact with other civil society groups and with relevant/high level authorities.

At the same time, in general *"A new culture of safety and resilience should be instilled not only into all levels' institutions but into the Albanian population as well, because it "lacks awareness of DRR, as a result, risks and vulnerabilities are not well understood"*.

Furthermore, chaotic urbanization, usually in disregard of the seismic code application and risk zoning, the lack of maintenance for the drainage systems, etc., all increase the disasters' occurrence and consequences.

On the other hand, both, the lack of insurance culture and the lack of public/private insurance scheme negatively impact the recovery of the disaster affected area/population. Related to the latter, among the Albanian population *"there is an expectation that once a disaster damages houses, goods, crops and cattle, the government will allocate emergency funds to compensate losses"*, while (based on the Albanian legislation) compensation possible is up to 40% of the losses.

### Lack of an adequate inclusive DRR & CP policy framework for implementation

The Civil Protection System in Albania consists of permanent and temporary structures at central level, district and local level. There are about 20 agencies/institutions at central level, and about 15 organizations at district/local level which are regularly involved in DRR&CP activities. At each level there is at least one temporary structure - the Inter-ministerial Committee, at central level, and the Civil Emergency Commission, at region / municipality



level. Besides government organizations, there are tens of relevant NGOs acting in this field. However, the DRR&CP system in Albania remains highly centralized. Regional and local governments do not receive sufficient funding and in practice are excluded from decision-making.

Referring the discussions during the recent years, a range of legislation and policies relevant to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities has been approved in Albania.

The latest National Strategy on Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Albanian society, prevent discrimination, and eliminate any barriers to accessing public services and the fulfilment of their rights.

Though disaster prevention is gaining increased importance in the Regulation of Albania and in the priorities of the local authorities in the region, **strategic guidance on how to carry out the relevant priority setting and how to support hazard prevention and reaction measures for citizens with reduced mobility and autonomy, such as persons with disability and the elderly is lacking.**

Following ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and Albania receiving the status of a candidate country for EU membership in 2014, the government prepared a Policy Document on Social Inclusion (PDSI 2016-2020). The PDSI provides a framework for monitoring and measuring social inclusion in a number of policy areas, including poverty reduction and social protection, employment and skills, education and training, health, basic needs, participation and human rights. In addition, the Document promotes accountability and transparency in the ways social inclusion is measured and used to inform the implementation of social services. The previous National Disability Strategy aimed to “ensure that the locations and premises of all governmental agencies and public offices were made accessible”.

Nevertheless, **Albania still faces significant challenges in removing these barriers.** Many public buildings and outdoor public areas, as well as government websites, remain inaccessible. Similarly, there are no private or public services where there is provision in sign language for hearing-impaired persons. The actions that need to be taken in this area often are the responsibility of local government authorities. The present Action Plan defines activities at the national level which fall within the remit of the central government.

## SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES AND ACTIONS

The online consultation moved participants from a discussion about obstacles and challenges toward a consideration of methods to address them.

### Addressing the lack of political will and lack of competences by Governments

**Most of the participants stated that the key element to address this issue is to meaningful involvement and active participation of persons with disabilities in consultations with the**



*policy makers; the need for development policies that support inclusive DRR & CP services, as well as a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly persons with disabilities; and ensuring equal access to education for persons with disabilities and enhancing the welfare of persons with disabilities.*

At the same time, **national authorities should become more aware of the need to develop long-term risk reduction approaches**; increasing the level of understanding, in order to link the **DRR perception of “disaster response” with “risk reduction” for all**. This needs to be addressed in long-term development plans.

**Government agencies at national, regional and local levels, as well as non-governmental actors, must understand the need to work together**. This will reduce the risks and consequences of disasters. Crucially, the population should be educated to understand what they themselves can do to either reduce the likelihood of a disaster, or increase their family’s ability to cope in the event of a disaster.

**There is a need for a database that compiles all data on regional disaster risks, impacts and losses, and in particular the distribution of PWD** and other data concerning to them; and it needs to be regularly updated by local authorities.

There is the need for local governments to receive **financial support** from the central government for civil protection work, but also the obligation to use some of their incomes to train their staff and to be equipped with necessary infrastructure to deal with emergency situations.

### **Addressing the lack of empowerment of persons with disabilities to advocate**

According to most of the participants some of the approaches that you can use to facilitate people’s empowerment include the following:

- Rights-based approaches
- Person-centred practice
- Self-advocacy
- Active support
- Active listening
- Social justice and the importance of knowing and respecting each person as an individual
- Strengths-based approaches

At the same time it is important to **PROMOTE open access to risk information**. In assisting communities to map their exposure to disasters, DRR mapping activities should:

- Empower and include persons with disabilities and DPOs in mapping activities.
- Disaggregate data by disability and ensure protection of personal information.

- Ensure that all tools and methods for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating risk information are accessible to people with disabilities.

### Addressing the lack of an adequate inclusive DRR&CP policy framework for implementation

In order to address this challenge, **participants stated the importance to revise the strategies at national and local level on the DRR & CP approaching all, and in particular PWD**, by:

- Ensure that persons with disabilities and disabled people's organizations (DPOs) are included as contributing stakeholders.
- Persons with disabilities and DPOs have relevant knowledge and expertise to support the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of disability-inclusive DRR.
- Identify potential strategic partnerships that can be used to address accessibility standards at the national level.
- Work with DPOs and sector experts in construction, communication, and other areas, and seek the support and guidance of national/international organizations with expertise in accessibility standards.
- Collaborate with partners to improve data; and facilitate the use of existing data collection tools and tools yet to be developed to address disability.

Promote **resilient infrastructure**. In providing technical assistance to governments to improve the design, operations and maintenance, and contingency planning of new and rehabilitated infrastructure - adoption and implementation of accessibility standards.

## ROLES FOR RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

To further encourage greater opportunity for input and discussion, the online consultation included a question about the roles of the various stakeholders in the field of DRR & CP inclusive development.

The National Strategy on Civil Protection (CP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a draft document not yet adopted by the GoA.

However, the main principles are contained in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 (DCM 348/2015). In July 2019, a few months before the earthquake, GoA approved the new law "On Civil Protection" (L. 45/2019), which replaced the Law 8756/2001 "On Civil Emergencies."

The new law established the National Civil Protection Agency (NCPA), under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), This function was previously handled by the General Directorate of Civil Emergencies under the Ministry of Interior (Moi) until 2017, and then under MoD.

The main operational structures in disaster response in the country are:



- The Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), with available specialized Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams,
- Albanian State Police (ASP),
- Fire Protection & Rescue Service (FP&R) at local level, and
- the Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

In the event of a major disaster, the GoA has established mechanisms to seek assistance from the EU Emergency Response and Coordination Centre (ERCC), the NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), bi-lateral and other countries. The General Directorate of State Material Reserves (DPRMSH) provides relief goods.

### Civil society organizations

A majority of participants were people involved with NGOs. The suggested role of civil society included increasing dialogue with Governments to promote the inclusion of the perspectives of persons with disabilities in relevant decision-making processes and outcomes on DRR & CP sector.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE LOCAL PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY PLAN AND INCLUSIVE PLANNING AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The following key issues have been identified for action to promote disability-inclusive development for the finalization of the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan:

- Disability issues must be recognized as a cross-cutting developmental issue between all related stakeholders at local and national level;
- A rights-based approach to disability-inclusive development is needed to ensure the efficacy of any initiative;
- Persons with disabilities, and their representative organizations, should be included in all decision-making processes that affect them;
- Accessibility should be part and parcel of all aspects of society and development.
- Further progress should be made in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in DRR & CP.
- Greater awareness-raising about disability issues is needed to increase political will, which is essential to the success of inclusive development.
- PROMOTE open access to risk information. In assisting communities to map their exposure to disasters.
- PROMOTE resilient infrastructure. In providing technical assistance to governments to improve the design, operations and maintenance, and contingency planning of new and rehabilitated infrastructure.

## ANNEX 1: FINAL AGENDA

### PROJECT

## Public awareness, Preparedness, Participation and Coordination for Civil Protection for All

(Subsidy Contract No: A2-1.4-1)

### Draft Agenda and Guidance

<b>Event</b>	Consultation on the on the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response
<b>Date(s)</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> of November 2020
<b>Organized by</b>	PB6 – Urban Research Institute ( <a href="http://www.uri.org.al/">www.uri.org.al/</a> )
<b>Venue</b>	Zoom Meeting (link: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82386975098?pwd=L0paMWWuOXRWSDFRazVaUXFrZ0JpZz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82386975098?pwd=L0paMWWuOXRWSDFRazVaUXFrZ0JpZz09</a> )
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<sup>2</sup> For persons with disabilities

<sup>3</sup> F: final, D: draft, RD: revised draft

<sup>4</sup> In case further guidance and support is needed once onsite

18<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 (Wednesday)

**Consultation on the on the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response.**

11:00 – 11:15 <sup>5</sup>	e-Registrations
11:15 – 11:30	Welcome speech
11:30 – 11:45	Introduction of the 4PLUS Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objectives</li><li>• Results to be achieved</li><li>• Current status</li></ul>

>Break<

12:00 – 12:20	Introduction of the on the Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Political commitment</li><li>• Co-ordination and continuity</li><li>• Networking</li><li>• Strategic planning</li><li>• Knowledge management</li><li>• Identification and optimisation of resources</li><li>• Communication</li></ul>
12:20 – 12:45	Obstacles and challenges
12:45 – 13:00	Successful approaches and action
13:00 – 13:20	Roles for key involved stakeholders
13:20 – 13:35	Key recommendations on the inclusive planning and emergency response

END OF THE MEETING

<sup>5</sup> Local times



## ANNEX 2. MATERIALS PRESENTED DURING THE MEETING (SLIDES, DOCS, ETC.)

Interreg - IPA CBC  
Greece - Albania  
4PLUS

**4PLUS**  
civil protection for all

INTERREG IPA II CROSS-BORDER  
COOPERATION PROGRAMME  
"GREECE - ALBANIA 2014 - 2020"

**Public awareness, Preparedness,  
Participation and Coordination for  
Civil Protection for All**

**An introduction to the Project**

Project co-funded by the European Union and by National Funds of the countries participating in the Interreg IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme "Greece-Albania 2014-2020"

***Document of the 1<sup>st</sup> Local Preparedness and Emergency Plan and inclusive planning and emergency response***





# LOCAL PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY PLAN

*1<sup>st</sup> Version*  
*October 2020*

KOLONJA MUNICIPLAITY  
URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

