

Documentation of how governments in Europe and Central Asia have responded to disasters and crises through subnational social protection systems

Policy document



Contents:

Introduction	i
1. The documentation at a glance	1
2. Policy options for UNICEF ECA Regional Office	2
2.1. POLICY OPTION 1: Guide and support UNICEF country offices in developing the knowledge about decentralisation and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related process	2
2.2. POLICY OPTION 2: Guide and support UNICEF COs in further documenting core aspects of public financial management in decentralised context and its implications on financing SRSP	6
2.3. POLICY OPTION 3: Advocate for a more consolidated approach to SRSP in the region, with sensitisation of national and subnational governments regarding the main administrative and financial implications of delivering support for the most in need during the crises	9
3. Policy options (exploratory) for UNICEF Country Offices	11
3.1. POLICY OPTION 4: While consolidating the knowledge about decentralisation in general and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related process, engage in both areas with the subnational governments in pilot projects followed by more strategic partnerships, including with their associative representations (area to be further explored/investigated)	11
3.2. POLICY OPTION 5: While investigating, piloting, and developing programmes and interventions in the area of SRSP, consolidate the knowledge in terms of public financial management in decentralised context and its implications on financing SRSP (area to be further explored/investigated)	13
4. Policy options for the governments in the region	15
4.1. POLICY OPTION 6: At national level, review the regulatory, strategic and policy frameworks in SP and DRM/R areas, in order to ensure the necessary coordination through functional linkages between the systems, both horizontally and vertically. Moreover, develop mechanisms to support further development at subnational levels, in either of the two areas where the capacity is lower.	15
4.2. POLICY OPTION 7: At subnational level, consolidate the cooperation mechanisms between the two areas, develop cross-cutting and multidisciplinary approaches in tackling shocks and crisis, and build on mutual learning, including by considering good practices implemented by different subnational governments	21
Annexes	23
Annex 1: details of SNG configuration at the ECA regional level.....	23
Annex 2: COVID-19 SP-related measures throughout the region	24
Annex 3: Core terminology	25
Bibliography	27

Acronyms

ASP	Adaptive Social Protection
CaLP	Cash Learning Network
DRA	Disaster Risk Assessment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFM	Public Financial Management
SNG	Subnational Governments
SNG-WOFI	World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment
SP	Social Protection
SRSP(S)	Shock-responsive social protection (system)
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF CO	UNICEF Country Office
UNICEF ECA-RO	UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

This **summary document** is both a synthesis and a part of a series of analytical products elaborated within the documentation on how governments in Europe and Central Asia have responded to disasters and crises through subnational social protection systems. In its elaboration, the previous analytical products (see scope below) play a critical role, while additional documentation was also reviewed in order to properly build upon the key findings, and to tailor meaningful lessons, and recommendations.

The purpose of this report is to present in a compacted and systematised format the key findings, lessons, and recommendations emerging from an extensive analysis previously carried out to date. In this respect, two objectives have guided the work:

1. **Build a representative corpus of evidence at ECA level on how the subnational governments in the region are able – and enabled – to effectively respond to disasters and crises**, particularly in terms of locally-based elements and processes of social protection provision.
2. **Articulate a series of recommendations** that could help, on one hand, UNICEF ECARO in managing the broader process and, on the other hand, UNICEF COs in supporting the subnational governments (SNG) in the region, in **consolidating and articulating the partnerships, the coordination, and the financing of shock-responsive social protection at the subnational level**.

The summary document relies on **three core products** of the documentation, namely:

1. The **Inception report**, setting the methodological framework and providing a rapid analysis, including quick mapping of COVID-19 related responses, of core dimensions of the documentation: social protection, disaster risk management and

reduction, configuration of subnational governments,

2. The **Legal and policy frameworks review**, focused on key features and provisions of the relevant legal and policy frameworks that govern subnational provision of multi-hazard disaster response and preparedness mechanisms, including through social protection in the region,
3. The **five Country case studies in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Tajikistan and Ukraine**, with specific examples, approaches, adaptations and lessons learnt within the national contexts, focused on social protection responses by subnational governments, the articulation with disaster risk management and reduction mechanisms, and proposing further policy adaptations regarding the delivery, by the subnational governments, of COVID-19 or other disaster responses through social protection, with focus on how the response was effective to the economic and social needs of children and their families.

Following a one pager summary presenting the entire documentation “at a glance”, the report is structured in three sections with policy options as follows:

Part 1: policy options (or recommendations) for UNICEF ECA Regional Office building on the evidence emerging from desk review and case studies.

Part 2: policy options for UNICEF Country Offices. They are formulated as potential areas of further research and development, hence, called “**exploratory**” and will depend on how each country adopts and adapts to local specificities.

Part 3: policy options for both central and subnational governments in the region, with specific recommendations on actions to be taken at strategic, regulatory and implementation levels.

1. The documentation at a glance

Key dimensions of the documentation:

1. **Structure of subnational governments** in the region and main implications in terms of decentralization.
2. **Disaster risk profile** of the countries, including natural and human-made hazards.
3. Roles and responsibilities of subnational governments in terms of **social protection and disaster risk management and reduction**.
4. Government **social protection measures responses to the economic and health crisis engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic**, at both central and subnational levels.

Key priority areas of work and further development:

1. **Decentralisation processes** and their impact on effectively **delivering social protection** measures at subnational level.
2. **Articulation between the social protection (SP) and disaster risk management and reduction (DRM/R) systems**, both horizontal – at the same level of governance, and vertical – at national and subnational levels, in order to better respond to disasters and crises.
3. **Coordination processes** among the main stakeholders as a premise for **further consolidated partnerships to effectively deliver shock-responsive social protection (SRSP)** to the most vulnerable.
4. **Funding mechanisms** in decentralised contexts in both areas of SP and DRM/R, as a premise for developing a future **vision on financing the SRSP**.

Core policy options

For UNICEF ECA Regional Office:

- Guide and support UNICEF country offices (COs) in developing knowledge about decentralisation and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related processes.
- Guide and support UNICEF COs in further documenting core aspects of public financial management in decentralised contexts and its implications on financing SRSP.
- Advocate for a more consolidated approach to SRSP in the region, with sensitisation of national and subnational governments regarding the main administrative and financial implications of delivering support for the most in need in crisis contexts.

For UNICEF Country Offices in the region (exploratory):

- While consolidating the knowledge about decentralisation in general and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related processes, engage in both areas with the subnational governments in pilot projects followed by more strategic partnerships, including with their associative representations.
- While investigating, piloting, and developing programmes and interventions in the area of SRSP, consolidate knowledge in terms of public financial management in decentralised contexts and its implications on financing SRSP.

For the governments in the region, both at national and subnational levels:

- At national level, review the regulatory, strategic and policy frameworks in SP and DRM/R areas, in order to ensure the necessary coordination through functional linkages between the systems, both horizontally and vertically. Moreover, develop mechanisms to support further development at subnational levels, in either of the two areas where the capacity is lower.
- At subnational level, consolidate the cooperation mechanisms between the two areas, develop cross-cutting and multidisciplinary approaches in tackling shocks and crises, and build on mutual learning, including by considering good practices implemented by different subnational governments.

2. Policy options for UNICEF ECA Regional Office

2.1. POLICY OPTION 1: Guide and support UNICEF country offices in developing knowledge about decentralisation and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related processes.

Issue:

The governance models in the ECA region are highly heterogeneous, and each state virtually adopted its “own model” of decentralisation, as the central level governments delegated selective competencies, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms to subnational governments, at three tiers of decentralisation: (i) regional or state, (ii) intermediate, and (iii) municipal. A thorough knowledge about these models is needed among dedicated UNICEF professionals in order to facilitate the understanding of how SP and DRM/R related processes are effectively implemented.

Actionable options:

The documentation provides a thorough review of these models, both on a theoretical basis from globally recognised stakeholders such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and exemplification with practical implementation models in five selected countries. Moreover, a legal and policy review emphasised a series of proposals in terms of articulation of (i) DRM/R and SP processes and (ii) of DRM/R and SP related roles and responsibilities of the subnational governments.

Key concepts:

Decentralisation (de-concentration, delegation, and devolution); **Governance tiers** (state, intermediate, and municipal); **Implementation of SP and DRM/R processes**.

One solution does not fit all the situations. At both regional and country level, UNICEF should acknowledge that the **decentralisation¹ processes are uneven and ongoing, generating an unprecedented complexity in governance structures** with direct effects on any process of delivering shock responsive social protection.

The mapping of various forms of governance in the ECA region indicated a **broad diversity of**

models in which the subnational governments (SNG) are organised, with different tiers² and competencies. The principal modes of decentralisation include de-concentration, delegation, and devolution; distinction³ is to be made between the aspects of *managerial or administrative reform* (de-concentration) and the aspects *transferring the responsibility to another authority* with its political mandate and accountability.

¹ According to UNDP, *Decentralized Governance Programme: Strengthening Capacity for People-Centred Development*, Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Development Policy, September 1997, decentralization, or decentralizing governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels. Decentralization could also be expected to

contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people's opportunities for participation in economic, social, and political decisions; assisting in developing people's capacities; and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency, and accountability

² See Annex 1.

³ Wyatt, A., Barca, V. 2021. *Adaptive social protection and decentralisation: a conceptual framework*, Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom

The documentation in the ECA region also confirms the results of previous analyses⁴, that the **institutional structures for the design and delivery of social protection are very diverse and uneven**. Social assistance⁵ is particularly prone to fragmentation, with a variety of ministries, departments, and agencies possibly active in delivering programmes for different beneficiary groups and/or geographical areas, alongside non-governmental organisations, and multilateral and bilateral aid agencies.

Moreover, the diversity of institutional structures – and most appropriate level of decentralisation – also reflects the characteristics and local capacity requirements of different types of programmes, under each pillar. For example, personal social services (such as psychosocial support for families in crisis), domiciliary social care for the elderly or people with disabilities, public works programmes and programmes aimed at delivering training, livelihood support and economic inclusion, require much higher capacity (personnel, physical resources, etc.) at local levels of implementation compared to other programmes.

Based on the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment (SNG-WOFI)⁶ data where 21 out of 22 ECA countries have a full profile on SNG-

WOFI report⁷, except for Turkmenistan⁸, it was possible to carry out an extensive analysis in terms of **territorial organisation of SNG and their responsibilities, which led to a full regional picture⁹ of administrative configuration and governance structure**, with some core characteristics:

- The **territorial organisation in the region is broadly uneven**, with countries including as few as 23 SNG, as in the case for Montenegro, to countries (at the time of elaboration of the SNG-WOFI report) with 11,733 SNG, as in the case of Ukraine¹⁰.
- **Almost all countries have SNG at the first tier (20 countries), the municipal level** (except Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and their number vary significantly from one country to another (23 in Montenegro to 7,169 in Kazakhstan).
- **Only eight countries have an intermediate level SNG**, and their number ranges from 10 in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 676 in Ukraine.
- **Five countries do not have regional or state level SNG, which is traditionally the equivalent of counties**, and for the remaining countries they range from one in Azerbaijan to 81 in Turkey.

A model of decentralisation in an asymmetric governance system – the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has an asymmetric governance system, composed of three entities independently divided between cantons and cities/municipalities. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) has a three-tier federal government organisation, composed of ten federal units, (the cantons) further divided into 79 cities and municipalities as local self-government units. The Republic of Srpska (RS) has a single level of local government constituted of 62 cities and municipalities. The Brčko District, with around 95 000 inhabitants, is a special unit of local self-government with its own institutions, laws and regulations, powers, and status. This configuration directly affects the responsibilities in the SP area at the level of each entity and tier, as illustrated in the matrix at the end of the section.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For this documentation, the four pillars of social protection are acknowledged: social insurance, social assistance, social services, and active labour market policies. However, the focus of the research remains on social assistance, as non-contributory programmes which transfer resources, either cash or in-kind, to vulnerable individuals or households which are labour-constrained or otherwise lack the means of adequate support, including single parents, orphans, and vulnerable children, the homeless, and people with disabilities, etc.

⁶ [About - SNG-WOFI](#)

⁷ OECD/UCLG (2019) **2019 Report of the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment** – Country Profiles at [SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles.pdf \(sng-wofi.org\)](#)

⁸ Not part of the SNG-WOFI and the data was taken from Wikipedia: [Districts of Turkmenistan - Wikipedia](#)

⁹ See Annex 1 for full detail about the configuration of SNG in each of the 22 ECA countries.

¹⁰ Ukraine is currently in a process of administrative decentralisation reform (not captured by SNG-WOFI data in 2019). According to this new configuration, **the current number of SNG is 1,469**, hence in the region, Kazakhstan is now on top with 7,169.

Articulation of DRR and SP processes		
Phase of DRM/R	DRM/R adaptation	SP adaptation
Prevention / mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link public works with disaster proof infrastructure • Harmonise SP social registries with DRM/R processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand coverage and adequacy of benefits • Improve targeting accuracy, focusing on reaching the most vulnerable children
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning systems to consider needs of vulnerable people benefiting from SP • Contingency plan to consider SP interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP data management system to consider DRM/R related approaches, such as undertaking regular risk and vulnerability analysis, and enhance capacities for data management and reporting on risks and vulnerabilities • Linking early warning systems with SP programmes, such as triggering automatic payments in case of (levels of) shocks • Consolidate procedures and human resources to act in emergency situations • Social protection systems to be supported by risk and vulnerability analysis, and enhance capacities for data management and reporting on risks and vulnerabilities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP budgets to include a set percentage of reserve funds to be used flexibly to address shocks, and adopt a 'crisis modifier' that stipulates the circumstances under which the reserve funds are unblocked, or the system turns into an emergency mode
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of emergency in-kind and cash support by considering the social registry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer amounts adjustments and accept extraordinary payments • Short-term expansions to cover the new poor • Linkages to additional services, including social work, outreach • Adjusting payment modalities • Introducing ad hoc/extraordinary payments (e.g. in winter months for clothing or heating). • Expanding the number of beneficiaries through ad hoc/extraordinary enrolment campaigns, or modifying/relaxing the criteria for enrolment (e.g. all children in a region affected by floods receive a child benefit - not only the poorest). Where benefits to children are linked to "conditions" and compliance has become untenable, temporarily relax conditions as appropriate. • Support children to access education, health and other services (e.g. via free transport, vouchers, fee waivers, deployment of social workers/mediators, etc.).
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post disaster needs assessment to support SP targeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target the regions or vulnerable populations which were the most affected by an emergency to boost the recovery phase • In areas that are shock prone and impacts (e.g. on livelihoods) are known, the SP system could promote reskilling/retraining and livelihood diversification interventions for family members

Source: author, policy and legal review document, articulated with [ECARO Social Protection Brief 2 - Resilience](#)

Articulation of DRM/R and SP related roles and responsibilities of SNG		
DRM/R at SNG level	SP at SNG level	Actions for better articulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop DRR strategy and disaster risk assessment (DRA) document at municipal level Develop civil emergency plan Inform the population, carry out trainings for staff and population Ensure monitoring, early warning, alert, and alarm systems. Develop databases for the territory, including disaster losses, population affected, damages, needs assessment, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underlying information systems and data management, with focus on beneficiary registries and social registries. Outreach and communication, sensitization and awareness raising Identifying the vulnerable: needs assessment, targeting, registration, enrolment Delivery: provision of benefits and/or services Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting Managing grievance mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRR related strategies and plans to be developed with consideration of SP available data Information, outreach, and sensitization to be mutually informed by SP and DRR Monitoring, early warning, alert, and alarm systems to include data about the most vulnerable (SP) Databases for the territory (disaster losses, population affected, damages, needs assessment) to include SP M&E related data.

Source: author, policy and legal review document

Social protection system in an asymmetric governance system

State level	Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina with no responsibility in SP area		
Entities	FBiH	RS	Brčko District
Entity level (tier 3)	Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Policy and regulatory role Establishes minimum value of social benefits (SB)	Ministry of Health and Social Protection Policy and regulatory role Establishes standard / uniform value of social benefits	Sub-Department for Social Protection under the Department for Healthcare and Other Services. Policy and regulatory role. Establishes standard / uniform value of social benefits
Intermediate level (tier 2)	10 cantonal ministries of social protection Policy and regulatory role Have the right to adjust upwards the value of SB	-	-
Municipal level (tier 1)	79 municipalities with Centres for social welfare – CSW (de-concentrated) Value and typology of SB varies across municipalities	64 municipalities with CSW (de-concentrated) Value and typology of SB is identical in all municipalities	47 settlements with CSW (de-concentrated) Value and typology of SB is identical in all municipalities
Departments of Social Affairs (decentralised in all municipalities) ensure the partial management of the SP and occasionally, including in crisis context, may allocate their own funding for SB (cash / in-kind transfers to vulnerable people).			

Source: author based on the case study in BiH

2.2. POLICY OPTION 2: Guide and support UNICEF COs in further documenting core aspects of public financial management in decentralised contexts and its implications on financing SRSP.

Issue:

Financing for SRSP has been given added impetus by the COVID-19 crisis, as countries use and adapt social protection systems and programmes in an attempt to reach existing and newly affected people in a timely and appropriate manner. The pandemic has at once underlined the **importance of routine and shock responsive approaches to social protection** in helping address covariate shocks and has created the prospect of a global economic downturn that could threaten investment in these same systems and programmes in the near future. However, **most of the funding comes from central level whereas the evidence from the ground in terms of financing by the subnational governments is scarce.**

Actionable options:

While UNICEF would **build better knowledge by relying on technical expertise in the public financial management (PFM)** area in order to better understand how the SNG could be better involved in financing their own complementary SRSP, in close articulation with the central governments, the documentation provides critical information about **financing processes in both areas of interest, SP and DRM/R, and at each level of decentralisation, including adaptation models, that could inspire the concrete work on the ground.**

Key concepts:

PFM for natural disasters , DRM/R financing mechanisms, Disaster and contingency funds, Resource mobilisation systems, and Insurance mechanisms

Public financial management (PFM)¹¹ is a central element of a functioning administration, underlying all government activities. Even if a PFM approach to the analysis was not within the scope of the current review, some general considerations, such as **PFM for natural disasters** need to be foreseen. According to the World Bank¹², combining different instruments is typically more cost-effective than relying on one source of funding. For the government, having rapid access to resources to meet surge demand for emergency assistance entails benefits; these are due to cost efficiencies generated by early procurement and response. For households, early relief can reduce the resort to negative coping strategies, which have been shown to have detrimental long-term consequences.

At sovereign level, financing mechanisms can be grouped into two main categories: (i) **retention**, in which the government decides to assume and manage disaster losses through its budgetary resources, and (ii) **transfer**, in which the government transfers potential future disaster losses to financial or insurance markets by paying a premium.

Ideally, **DRM/R financing mechanisms, disaster and contingency funds, resource mobilisation systems and insurance mechanisms, would explicitly include the funding of SP interventions.** While this could easily work in theory, by establishing legal and policy provisions, nonetheless, the **inner SP systems' limitations**¹³ could not be overlooked: in most of the countries, the central government is the

¹¹ Transparency International, 2014. *Public financial management topic guide* at [Topic guide \(transparency.org\)](https://www.transparency.org)

¹² World Bank / GFDRR, 2020. *Disaster finance diagnostic – Albania*, December 2020

¹³ UNDP/UNCDF, 2013. *Strengthening the Governance of Social Protection: The Role of Local Government Regional Analysis*

major source of funding for SP programmes, they can face major **fiscal constraints**, and may not be willing or able to provide the local government with sufficient funding to cover the full costs of social protection programmes. While the targeting processes are established at national level, a series of complementary actions take place at local level: field visits for monitoring and evaluation purposes, communication, and socialization campaigns (at national or local levels), and cash delivery, when paid at and by local level, all create additional financial costs for local governments. Even when administrative budgets are made available, they are often not based on formula weighted for costs against, for example, the number of beneficiaries served and area of distribution/coverage. Further, additional budgets may be needed to recruit additional staff to manage and deliver social protection functions, and again the need may vary from area to area.

In the process of building new evidence and the necessary knowledge in the PFM area, due attention should be paid to the following aspects:

- The **investment is needed to understand the potential cost of response**, leveraging data sources to shed light on the anticipated contingent liability of using a safety net to respond to shocks
- Building from these costing models, **appropriate funding should be pre-planned**
- **Robust payment mechanisms that are capable of absorbing the funding made available after a shock and delivering it to households are critical** to enable the disbursement of these risk financing instruments to households

Moreover, the following principles could be applied¹⁴:

- **Timely**: The release of financing and delivery of response are both swift and timely.
- **Appropriate**: The right financing and interventions are sequenced according to need over time.

- **Available**: Rules to release resources and deliver support are pre-agreed and understood before a shock or disaster, and the process for accessing resources is straightforward and administratively light.
- **Deliverable**: The capacity, infrastructure, and enabling conditions are in place to deliver support from financing instruments; in this sense, the ability to deliver is as important as the financial arrangements themselves.
- **Informed**: Objective and commonly agreed/understood data and information is used to decide on the right types of financing and programming to address the risks posed by different shocks.
- **Predictable**: All stakeholders have confidence that the finance will be available on time and that the agreed actions will be adequately financed and implemented.
- **Coordinated**: Different forms of financing are aligned, integrated, and coordinated in an intentional and coherent manner.
- **Equitable**: Ensure that financing and delivery put people first and reach those most in need, including ensuring gender equity and social inclusion in any response.

In terms of potential mechanisms to finance disaster response, these could include:

1. **High-risk disaster layer (e.g., major floods, major earthquakes)**
 - a. Donor assistance
 - b. Emergency borrowing
 - c. Sovereign risk transfer
2. **Medium-risk disaster layer (e.g., regional floods, minor earthquakes)**
 - a. Contingent financing
 - b. Budget relocation
3. **Low-risk disaster layer (e.g., localized floods, droughts, landslides)**
 - a. Budget funds: cabinet contingency fund
 - b. Budget funds: contingency funds of community budgets
 - c. Catastrophe insurance

¹⁴ Longhurst D., Evans S., Connolly, D., Lung, F., McCord, A., Allan, S., Plichta M., 2021. What are future financing options for shock responsive social protection? A technical primer Social Protection

Assessing the cash preparedness – the case of Tajikistan. Based on Oxford Policy Management (OPM) options¹⁵ for adapting social protection programmes to make them better at responding to shocks, UNICEF Tajikistan supported a Cash preparedness assessment pilot¹⁶, laying the grounds for programme options in linking **the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA)**, as the flagship social protection programme, with the humanitarian cash transfer programmes. The following proposals emerged:

Temporary ‘top up’ cash grants to TSA beneficiaries in areas affected by disaster (‘vertical expansion’). Considered as a priority to pilot in the short term, this option is a useful entry point for testing the feasibility of using national social protection systems in practice (for example to understand fully the accuracy of the TSA beneficiary lists, bottlenecks in systems, etc.), and generating evidence to influence wider government on the potential.

Temporary support to additional, disaster affected households through the TSA programme (‘horizontal expansion’). This could be achieved through relaxation of the eligibility criteria during a disaster to allow others to receive assistance, or an extraordinary enrolment campaign to provide support to those that fit the criteria but who are currently excluded. Such an option should be considered in the medium term, once there is clarity on the draft social protection strategy and TSA programme proposal and (ideally) once some of the human resource capacities of the TSA are improved.

Making use of the underlying systems and processes of the programme, to implement a separate emergency response (‘piggy backing’). This can be an option for consideration in the medium to longer term, once decisions/progress are made on some of the system capacity building aspects. Could provide opportunity to institutionalise a government owned, but separate, emergency cash transfer programme.

The evidence emerging from the policy and legal review indicates that while in the **SP area, the funding mechanisms are relatively simple**, with most of the funding coming from central level, through channels managed by the Ministry in charge of SP, and the approval of national budget and coordination of PFM processes are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, in the **DRM/R area the financing is very specific at each level of responsibility and tier of decentralisation**, as emphasised by the legal and policy analysis section of the documentation:

At central level: (i) the Parliament / Assembly approve state budget with corresponding areas and institutions, (ii) the Coordination body / Council of ministers establish the right to compensation, (iii) the Ministry of Finance / Economy coordinate the PFM processes across participating institutions, (iv) the Ministry of Defence/ Emergency / Interior, / etc. responsible for civil protection oversee the “agency” budget management, in accordance

with the applicable financial legislation, (v) the National “agency” (unit, directorate, authority, inspectorate, etc.) for civil protection plan funding in specific areas of interest and receive funds requests from local / lower levels, and (vi) various other Ministries plan their own annual budgets for DRM/R.

At subnational level tier 3: the Regional department / Governmental de-concentrated body / Prefecture mediate the budgeting process between the lower and central level of administration, including checking provisions related to budget allocation for DRR in local budget planning.

At subnational level tier 2 of district government there was no DRM/R related financing identified whereas at **subnational level tier 1** of Local (self) government / Municipality / Mayoralty / City-hall the focus is on investing in disaster prevention, protection, and rehabilitation and on budget planning with a DRM/R component.

¹⁵ O’Brien C., Holmes R. and Scott Z., 2018, Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks, OPM, January 2018

¹⁶ Smith G., 2017, Cash Preparedness Assessment: Tajikistan Pilot

2.3. POLICY OPTION 3: Advocate for a more consolidated approach to SRSP in the region, with sensitisation of national and subnational governments regarding the main administrative and financial implications of delivering support for the most in need during the crises.

Issue:

Social protection needs to be adapted to better meet needs in emergencies, or scaled up to meet new needs, in various ways, including through design tweaks, vertical or horizontal expansion of existing programmes, the introduction of new programmes, or the use of various elements of the social protection operational system by actors in or outside government for delivery of emergency assistance. **SRSP approaches are relevant to governments in the Europe and Central Asia region**, where natural disasters, as well as displacements due to political conflicts, are commonplace, and where national social protection programmes are relatively well established, providing regular cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households in normal times.

Actionable options:

During the last years, both prior and during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has been engaged in a series of knowledge generation processes necessary to provide the evidence helping to prepare the social protection systems in the region for shock response. Valuable **guidance and lessons learnt** emerged in the process, and are to constitute the backbone of advocacy efforts, together with the evidence emerging from more recent documentations such as the current one.

Key concepts:

Policy frameworks, Coordination, Accountability

Commissioned by UNICEF, the review¹⁷ of **experiences of integrated social protection for children and families in 17 countries of the Europe and Central Asia Region** during 2019 and 2020 considered four levels of integration - policy, programme, administration, and evidence.

For most countries in the region, current reforms aim towards coordination, establishing coherence and reducing fragmentation. Furthermore, integration of services to address multiple deprivations across the life course is beginning to receive political attention. **Progress at country level can be accelerated by:**

- Developing a robust national **social protection policy framework** that pays attention to overall policy coherence across programmes and levels of government.
- **Coordination of financing mechanisms and macro-economic policy** to take advantage of the generally favourable political economy around social protection.
- **Institutionalisation of systems for M&E to increase accountability**, including integrated management information systems/ social registries, poverty and vulnerability analysis, and systems assessment.
- **Making explicit linkages across programmes and sectors** through institutionalised processes such as case management.

¹⁷ Oxford Policy Management and UNICEF, 2020. Integrated Social Protection Systems in Europe and Central Asia Region - Policy Brief.

A recent study in Armenia¹⁸ emphasised several lessons:

The value of preparing for shock response, ex-ante: the value of planning for and building the capabilities for SRSP ex-ante; specifically, the frameworks developed for SRSP at the municipal level in Yerevan meant municipal emergency support programmes were being rolled out within a month, albeit only in the form of food and non-food items. Based on this positive experience the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure is now planning to roll out the regulation for social protection within voluntary authorities in other municipalities.

Moving from idea to implementation takes time: Building a shock responsive social protection system is not a one-off activity; it is an incremental process. It requires the buy in and support from a range of different governmental institutions in order to move forward with the actions that are needed.

Making progress in SRSP requires a range of specific investments: Within UNICEF, supporting the government to make progress on SRSP has required concerted investments in the form of dedicated staff time, recruitment of technical expertise and financial resources. The awareness raising, convening and technical assistance activities to date have taken up a considerable portion of the social protection and DRM/R staff members' time.

Partners can contribute to SRSP preparedness in a variety of ways: Experiences in Armenia highlight the diverse roles that UNICEF and other partners can play in supporting

governments to develop effective SRSP systems. Prior to the pandemic, UNICEF's added value was in awareness raising, convening and advocacy, and technical assistance. During the COVID-19 response, above and beyond the funds provided, UNICEF also supported the government's social protection response through technical assistance to develop the tools and systems for rapid assessment (jointly with UNDP and WFP) and planning the complementary support measures for families of children living with disabilities.

It is important to appreciate possible trade-offs and understand the factors enabling or constraining effective programming when designing emergency responses through social protection systems: While there are clear potential advantages to making use of national social protection systems for shock response, the approach also presents challenges. For example, in Armenia, making use of existing data, systems, and processes offers potential for a faster and more cost-efficient response, especially for those families already benefiting from long term social protection. However, there are challenges to be aware of when it comes to reaching all households affected by a shock. Another issue to bear in mind is that political pressures can influence the design decisions of national governments, which may mean those design decisions require some degree of compromise between what is best for meeting people's needs and what is politically feasible.

¹⁸ UNICEF, 2021. *Preparing social protection systems for shock response - A case study of UNICEF's experiences in Armenia*

3. Policy options (**exploratory**) for UNICEF Country Offices

3.1. POLICY OPTION 4: While consolidating the knowledge about decentralisation in general and its implications in terms of overall governance of SP and DRM/R related processes, engage in both areas with the subnational governments in pilot projects followed by more strategic partnerships, including with their associative representations (**area to be further explored/investigated**).

Issue:

According to OECD/UCLG (2019, Op. Cit.), nine categories of responsibilities of SNG were analysed globally, and they include: 1. General public services /administration, 2. Public order, safety, and defence, 3. Economic affairs / transports, 4. Environmental protection, 5. Housing and community amenities, 6. Health, 7. Recreation, culture, and religion, 8. Education, 9. Social protection. This classification allows for a quite **straightforward delineation of SP related responsibilities**, as described under “group 9”, whereas in the case of the DRM/R related responsibilities rather seem **un-delineated**. UNICEF is traditionally engaging with the SP area and stakeholders whereas the DRM/R area and stakeholders are often left apart, hence, a **thorough understanding of these delineations and their implications for programming are to be developed**.

Actionable options:

Engaging with subnational levels in both SP and DRM/R areas will firstly benefit from the articulation with the policy work developed by the Regional Office. A thorough coordination with the national harmonisation efforts between the systems is also required. Moreover, even in smaller pilot projects, it is important to co-opt associative structures of the local governments, as they are usually able to provide the necessary support and share valuable knowledge in the process.

Key concepts:

Street level SP, Typology of SP programmes, Horizontal and vertical coordination, DRM/R activities

According to ILO¹⁹, the **local level governments deliver and coordinate SP at “street-level”²⁰** with focus at the point of delivery: how civil servants or local officials coordinate different programmes or services, and also the coordination between units or service-delivery points. **The street-level service delivery coordination implies:** (i) underlying information systems and data management, with focus on beneficiary registries and social

registries, (ii) outreach and communication, sensitization and awareness raising (iii) identifying the vulnerable: needs assessment, targeting, registration, enrolment, (iv) delivery: provision of benefits and/or services, (v) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, (vi) managing grievance and redress mechanisms, (vii) coordination (of services across sectors), (viii) and case management.

In terms of typology of SP programmes, the following may be included: (i) social insurance

¹⁹ ILO, 2021. *Governance of social protection systems: a learning journey, Module #1: Coordination*.

²⁰ The other levels are the central government where high-level policy coordination is taking place, and intermediate upper SNG level where the mid-level operational coordination takes place.

Subnational social protection systems

(e.g. unemployment insurance, pensions), (ii) social care services, (iii) livelihood support and economic inclusion programmes, (iv) cash transfers, (v) public works, and (vi) school feeding.

Within the ECA region, the **DRM/R roles and responsibilities may vary significantly** since the political and administrative frameworks in each country are also very national specific. However, one regularity throughout the region is that the **roles and responsibilities are very well defined at each level of decentralisation (horizontal coordination), including being strongly articulated between these levels (vertical coordination)**, both in terms of decision-making and decision implementation processes. Section 4 on policy options for governments provide a wealth of details regarding these aspects.

DRM/R involves activities related to: **prevention** – activities and measures to avoid existing and new disaster risks (often less costly than disaster relief and response); **mitigation** – the lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters; **transfer** – the process of formally or informally shifting the financial consequences of particular risks from one party to another whereby a household, community, enterprise or state authority will obtain resources from the other party after a disaster occurs, in exchange for ongoing or compensatory social or financial benefits provided to that other party; and **preparedness** – the knowledge and capacities of governments, professional response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

In Albania, following the earthquake of 2019 the Municipality of Korçë put in place a **“social dialogue group” directly linked with the DRM/R response at municipal level**. It gathers representatives from public and private sector and civil society organisations, in a transparent process of cooperation and data sharing. Once the emergency state was declared in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this group was reactivated. The main strengths of this mode of cooperation are:

- Mutual sharing of data through a joint database regarding the families in need, the specific needs they have, and the capacities of response by each member of the group.
 - During the first stages of emergency, it was mainly the municipality funding which ensured aid provision to these families, but the other members of the group, including CSOs, brought their own contributions, even if not prepared to respond to the emergency situations.
 - In terms of operating procedures, (i) three hot-lines where vulnerable people could call and ask for support, (ii) a youth volunteers' group - outreach activities to isolated and single elderly, and (iii) procedures to identify and support vulnerable families with many children or single parent families.
 - Most of the actions were supported by UNICEF CO and were highly appreciated by the counterparts, and the local aid continued till entering into force of the national SP measures.
-

3.2. POLICY OPTION 5: While investigating, piloting, and developing programmes and interventions in the area of SRSP, consolidate knowledge in terms of public financial management in decentralised contexts and its implications on financing SRSP (area to be further explored/investigated).

Issue:

For an effective SRSP, the **routine social protection programming should be based on a solid understanding of the risks, shocks, and stressors that countries typically face**. This understanding should consider several dimensions : **(i) building resilience** of individuals, households and communities to future shocks is critical and should be an explicit focus of SP programming, **(ii) understanding the vulnerability to shocks** (beyond chronic poverty or categorical, life-cycle criteria) such as by expanding routine coverage in areas frequently affected by shocks, incorporating vulnerability criteria into routine targeting, etc. **and (iii) ensuring continuity of service delivery** for routine programmes in shock-affected contexts is critical, at the moment when recipients need support the most. This is often referred to as 'resilience building of systems' to future shocks, adopting the principles of contingency planning.

Actionable options:

While UNICEF country offices will benefit from regional support as per the policy option 2, a constant adaptation to national specificities is required. This **entails carrying out further research in the PFM area considering the country fiscal and administrative decentralisation context**.

Key concepts:

Investments, costing models, payment mechanism, resilience, vulnerability, service delivery

Emerging evidence²¹ highlights three core lessons for **applying a disaster risk financing approach to adaptive social protection**:

- **Investment is needed** to understand the potential cost of response, leveraging data sources to shed light on the anticipated contingent liability of using a safety net to respond to shocks,
- **Building from these costing models**, appropriate funding should be pre-planned, and
- **Robust payment mechanisms** that are capable of absorbing the funding made

available after a shock and delivering it to households are critical to enable the disbursement of these risk financing instruments to households.

Within the **COVID-19 pandemic context**, a wealth of evidence²² emerged globally requiring adjusting the social protection measures to better respond to large shares of population in need, with a focus on properly financing the SP systems: the impact of the crisis has highlighted the imperative of more effective financing of SP systems, including universal health care (UHC).

²¹ Thomas B., del Ninno C., Andrews C., Coll-Black S., Gentilini U., Johnson K, Kawasoe Y., Kryeziu A., Maher B., Williams A., 2020. *Adaptive Social Protection: Building Resilience to Shocks*. International Development in Focus. World Bank 2020

²² UN Regional Coordination Mechanism – Europe and Central Asia, 2021. *COVID-19 and social protection in Europe and Central Asia – A moment of opportunity to expand and strengthen social protection mechanisms to safeguard health, well-being and livelihoods, leaving no one behind*.

While many governments are currently putting in place short-term measures to support informal workers²³, it will be important that these extension policies are converted from a short-term measure to institutionalized policies based on sustainable and equitable financing. The current crisis, which prevents children and families from accessing many essential services, is a reminder of the key role social

transfers play in shielding children and families from some of the worst effects of social and economic insecurities.

A proposal for a potential mechanism to finance disaster response, although not necessarily related to the COVID-19 context, was presented under policy option 2.

Towards a shock-responsive social protection system: the case of Montenegro. A set of 15 reforms has been adopted by the Montenegrin Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare with UNICEF support with a roadmap spanning from 2022 to 2025. The roadmap considers actionable steps at five levels: (i) legal and policy, (ii) design, (iii) implementation, (iv) systems, and (v) monitoring and evaluation. Reform #14 is focused on **making the social protection system shock-responsive** and strengthening it to provide preventive support (pre-crisis) for cyclical or anticipated shocks as well as protective support (post-crisis) for shocks that erode the productive or coping capacity of households.

At **legal level**, the envisioned actions are focused on: (i) Explicitly highlighting the role of social protection in the Disaster Risk Management and Response Framework as the primary instrument for disaster risk management – especially identifying vulnerable groups, providing cash-based assistance, and other services. (ii) Recognizing the role of social protection in shock - response in the Law on Social and Child Protection. (iii) Eliminating the design & implementation nuts and bolts details such as benefit value, PMT thresholds for eligibility and other such details from the Law, which may benefit from more frequent revisions to enable greater flexibility, (iv) implementing mechanisms and provisions in the Law that allow the temporary relaxation of eligibility criteria or increases in benefit values for fixed periods post-crisis, (v) considering a simplified process to secure permissions from rightsholders to access their data to deliver emergency support (with processes and triggers for these requests stipulated in the humanitarian response framework).

At **design level**, the envisioned actions are focused on developing a humanitarian cash framework or emergency response guidelines that identify triggers and categories of responses to guide the level of emergency benefits and the role of social service providers during crisis preparedness, management, response, and recovery. The framework must include: (i) levels and triggers for a cash-based response, and (ii) coordination framework and guidelines for service-based responses for government and non-government service providers, including coordination between these agencies.

At **implementation level**, the envisioned actions are focused on developing delivery systems with multiple payment options (cash in hand, bank payment, other forms of e-payments) for cash-based support and protocol to implement child and social protection services.

At **systems level**, the envisioned actions are focused on enabling flexibility in identifying emergency support recipients based on a “severity of poverty” approach to prevent exclusion during crises.

At **M&E level**, the envisioned actions are focused on introducing and implementing an accountability framework for monitoring the provision of emergency support, its adequacy, and lessons for improvement in future crises through strong feedback loops.

²³In addition, other categories of support are envisioned. See details emerging from the World Bank, 2021. *Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country*

Measures (May 14, 2021) COVID-19 Living Paper Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group.

4. Policy options for the governments in the region

- 4.1. POLICY OPTION 6: At national level, review the regulatory, strategic and policy frameworks in SP and DRM/R areas, in order to ensure the necessary coordination through functional linkages between the systems, both horizontally and vertically. Moreover, develop mechanisms to support further development at subnational levels, in either of the two areas where the capacity is lower.**

Issue:

The Governments in the ECA region have adopted **complex legislative packages** in each area of interest, doubled by the elaboration of **strategies and action plans** covering five to ten years in SP and DRM/R areas. However, with few exceptions, these regulatory frameworks **seem disconnected one from the other**, and do not provide enough functional clarity in order for the two systems to work jointly, and in an articulated manner.

In addition, most of the **regulatory and strategic frameworks have been constantly focusing on the roles and responsibilities at central levels**, including by provision of explicit financing processes and mechanism, while the local levels (particularly at tier 1), although being explicitly mentioned in the regulatory provisions, generally **do not benefit from coherent and detailed frameworks of rules and regulations, and even less of provisions regarding explicit financing mechanisms** necessary to deploy their responsibilities. Moreover, the local governments would also require capacity building support that could come from upper levels, not only in terms of resource allocation, but also in terms of knowledge and practice consolidation.

Actionable options:

Through the policy and legal review, the documentation provides a detailed overview regarding the **decentralised roles and responsibilities in both DRM/R and SP areas**. Moreover, the country case studies also provided an opportunity to dive into some of the **specificities of these frameworks in particular contexts**. Following the analysis, these frameworks were summarised in schematic models to be disseminated and adapted, depending on the governance structures, in any of the country contexts, and could serve as models to inspire further reforms.

Key concepts:

Strategic frameworks, coordination, articulation among sectors (horizontal) and between tiers of decentralisation (vertical)

Within the ECA region, the DRM/R roles and responsibilities may vary significantly since the political and administrative frameworks in each country are also very national specific. However, as previously mentioned, one regularity throughout the region is that the roles and responsibilities are very well defined

at each level of decentralisation (horizontal coordination), including being strongly articulated between these levels (vertical coordination), both in terms of decision-making and decision implementation processes.

At central level: compared with the SP sector, the DRM/R relies on a complex configuration of central level institutions, adding to the 'single thematic social ministry' a series of institutions such as the Assembly, with regulatory role during emergency, or the Cross-coordination Committees, of intersectoral nature, with broad horizontal and vertical coordination roles.

An executive function of the public administration in the DRM/R area in charge of the implementation of the DRM/R strategy and oversight at national level is usually a DRM/R Agency, traditionally placed at sub-ministerial level with a high frequency in the Ministry of Interior and sometimes in the Ministry of Defence.

Other line ministries – virtually covering almost the entire governmental apparatus – are in charge of developing their own civil emergency plans and budgeting. The DRM/R Agency would have a guiding role on strategy and planning aspects while a careful involvement of the Ministry of Finance is required on the budgeting aspects, since it is traditionally in charge of designing and developing financing strategies, annual budgets and funds reallocations and the coordination of public financial management (PFM) processes across all the institutions.

At subnational levels, including the intermediate tiers 3 and 2, the administrative organization in each country context determines the configuration of responsibilities in the DRM/R area, and they are to be differentiated depending on the tier of decentralisation. In general, the tendency is to focus on some policy aspects (aligned with the central level policy in the area) and on the overall decision-making processes (in relation to the regional or subregional level specifications that might not be covered in detail by the national regulations).

However, there are also exceptions, particularly in the case of Central Asia states such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan where the SNG at these intermediate tiers of decentralisation may have some concrete responsibilities in the areas of: (i) public order,

safety, and defence, (ii) environmental protection, or (iii) housing and community amenities.

At subnational level of municipal tier 1, there is a high complexity of decision making and decision implementation roles as the local governments are the closest to the population in need and understand best the specific needs within their environments: (i) develop DRM/R strategy and disaster risk assessment (DRA) document at municipal level, (ii) develop civil emergency plan, (iii) inform the population, carry out trainings for staff and population, (iv) ensure monitoring, early warning, alert and alarm systems, (v) develop databases for the territory, including disaster losses, population affected, damages, needs assessment, (vi) ensure DRM/R strategy and DRA documents are articulated with regional/national strategies and documents, (vii) cooperate with all the upper levels of decentralisation and with the neighbouring municipalities, (viii) mobilise relevant public and private institutions and entities in their geographical area.

In specific emergency contexts, **ad hoc temporary** organisational approaches could be adopted, and they may consist of **organization of committees or commissions**, usually of inter-ministerial character, with focus on (i) coordinating civil protection institutions and structure activities, (ii) determining methods and procedures for employment of material and financial resources, (iii) deciding on the allocation of funds aimed at recovery from natural disasters. **These entities might be mirrored at subnational levels by emergency or civil protection committees** in charge of implementing the policies on disaster risk management and reduction and civil protection in close articulation with the local level civil emergency plans.

Central level DRM/R stakeholders' role and coordination		
	Core roles	Coordination
Parliament / Assembly		
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue relevant legislation • Decide on extending the initial state of emergency (by Govt.) 	
Coordination body / Council of ministers		
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve policies, national emergency plans, and risk assessment documents • Decide whether to declare the state of emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate among all the relevant ministries
Ministry of Finance / Economy		
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and develop financing strategies, annual budgets, and funds reallocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate PFM processes across participating institutions
Ministry²⁴ of Defence/ Emergency / Interior, / etc. responsible for civil protection		
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and oversee the implementation of DRR and civil protection policies • Draft, approve, and update the national Civil Emergency Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the coordination body about DRR and civil protection
National "agency" (unit, directorate, authority, inspectorate, etc.) for civil protection		
Decision implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement council's policies and minister's decisions • Develop and implement plans • Draft, approve, and update the Civil Emergency Plan (depending on how roles are distributed between the "agency" and the "ministry") • Carry out inspections • Data management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate efforts within the national DRR strategy
Other ministries		
Decision making and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft, approve, and update the Civil Emergency Plan in their area of responsibility and submit it to the "agency" (or Ministry) • Data management in the area of responsibility • Carry out assessment of disaster losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the coordination body about DRR and civil protection

²⁴ A wide diversity of stakeholders may be considered, accordingly to [Regional Office for Europe & Central Asia | UNDRR](#)

Subnational level DRM/R stakeholders' role and coordination Tiers 3 and 2		
	Core roles	Coordination
Tier 3: Regional department / Governmental de-concentrated body / Prefecture		
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and approve the regional DR assessment document • Draft, adopt and update the Regional Civil Emergency Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the activity of regional institutions, bodies, authorities, both decentralised and de-concentrated • Cooperate with municipalities to carry out DR assessment in the region, as well as informing the public and the communities at risk of disaster • Cooperate with neighbouring regions affected by disasters • Coordinate the delivery of international aid
Tier 2: District or city government		
Decision making and some²⁵ decision implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate with and complement the roles assigned for the SNG at tier 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to coordination effort within their geographical and administrative area of responsibility

Subnational level DRM/R stakeholders' role and coordination Tier 1		
	Core roles	Coordination
Local (self) government / Municipality / Mayoralty / City-hall		
Decision making and decision implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop DRR strategy and disaster risk assessment (DRA) document at municipal level • Develop civil emergency plan • Inform the population, carry out trainings for staff and population • Ensure monitoring, early warning, alert, and alarm systems • Develop databases for the territory, including disaster losses, population affected, damages, needs assessment, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure DRR strategy and DRA document are articulated with regional/national strategies and documents • Cooperate with all the upper levels of decentralisation and with the neighbouring municipalities • Mobilise relevant public and private institutions and entities in their geographical area

²⁵ E.g.: in case the fire department is at this level, then it will implement the decision taken at upper level.

While acknowledging the complexity and importance of the **institutional configuration of the SP**, and focusing on the importance of **coordination**, it should also be acknowledged that *“the push towards working across silos and with other stakeholders is not a social protection issue but a broader government trend and even an organizational trend”*, according to ILO²⁶. According to the same

source, the coordination is required at three levels of public administration, namely:

- **High-level: policy coordination** – internal rationale of the social protection system
- **Mid-level: operational coordination** – programme, organization, plans, budget, IT
- **Street-level: service-delivery coordination** – linkages at street-level with other programmes or services.

SP stakeholders' roles and overall coordination		
	Core roles	Coordination
Central level		
High-level policy coordination	Ministry of Labour / Social Protection / Family / Inclusion	Line ministries – mainly Education and Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and policy frameworks in social protection (and labour) • Strategy development • Financing • Establish definition, tools, and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarly with the Ministry of Labour (etc.) but in their own areas of interest
Subnational level (tiers 3 and 2)		
Mid-level operational coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually coordination between upper/central level and lower/street level. • Important dimensions: tools and structures used to translate high-level coordination guidelines into concrete steps: IT solutions (central registries, integration of different databases), joint budgeting, common planning, state or provincial coordination committees, definition of joint procedures, automatic information exchange. • Delivery: provision or approval of benefits and/or services 	
Subnational level (tier 1)		
Street-level service delivery coordination	<p style="text-align: center;">Delivery systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underlying information systems and data management, with focus on beneficiary registries and social registries • Outreach and communication, sensitization and awareness raising • Identifying the vulnerable: needs assessment, apply targeting criteria, registration, enrolment • Delivery: provision of benefits and/or services • Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting • Managing grievance and redress mechanisms • Coordination (of services across sectors) • Case management 	<p style="text-align: center;">Types of SP programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance (e.g. unemployment insurance, pensions) • Social care services • Livelihood support and economic inclusion programmes • Cash transfers • Public works • School feeding

²⁶ ILO, 2021. *Governance of social protection systems: a learning journey, Module #1: Coordination.*

Coordination within and between complex DRM/R and SP systems: the case of

Albania. Albania has a highly complex DRM/R mechanism propitious for incorporating SP measures at subnational levels. Whereas the institutional configuration is way more complex in DRM/R than SP, several levels of stakeholders and responsibilities are to be considered. At central level is the most complex structure, with Assembly, Council of Ministers, Ministries, National Civil Protection Agency, and Inter-Ministerial Committees of Civil Emergency and of Civil Protection. At local level are the Implementing Units of DRM/R and the Local Self Government Units. Whereas the National Civil Protection Agency is in charge of the elaboration of National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the National Civil Emergency Plan, and centralizing data from both central and local levels, it is also acknowledged that line ministries – including health (and social protection) – have explicit responsibilities in terms of setting aside budgets for DRM/R and civil protection and ensuring disaster loss data analysis and data management in their respective areas of responsibility.

While of temporary nature, the Civil Protection Committees also have a critical role in coordination among stakeholders at various levels of decentralisation. In the case of Albania, these committees operate at several levels:

- central level - Inter Ministerial Committee for Civil Emergencies,
 - sub-regional level (prefectures / qark) – the Civil Protection Committee under the coordination of the Prefect, with responsibilities at district and/or cluster of municipalities level, and
 - municipality level – where the Civil Protection Committee operates in close articulation with social protection services, municipal police, fire protection and rescue, public services, infrastructure, and health services.
-

4.2. POLICY OPTION 7: At subnational level, consolidate the cooperation mechanisms between the two areas, develop cross-cutting and multidisciplinary approaches in tackling shocks and crisis, and build on mutual learning, including by considering good practices implemented by different subnational governments.

Issue:

Intra and intersectoral as much as vertical and horizontal coordination are all equally important in ensuring the effectiveness of a coordinated mechanism to deliver SRSP. While local initiatives of mutual support, including better articulation, data sharing and management, financing, etc. have proved their efficiency, the **regulatory frameworks do not necessarily consider these models, and hence do not operate the necessary adjustments in the legislative provisions in order to make the cooperation a more concrete reality on the ground.** DRM/R and SP systems often actuate on very different trajectories, each being characterised by a certain level of intra coordination, with a tendency for stronger and more articulated coordination, both vertically and horizontally in the DRM/R area, compared with the SP area, where the tendency is for more fragmentation.

Actionable options:

The five case studies carried out during the documentation identified new approaches the stakeholders in the region are adopting in order not only to make the SP system more effective and efficient but also to encourage more coordination and articulation of processes and stakeholders at subnational level in SP and DRM/R areas.

Key concepts:

Piloting models, lessons learnt, mutual learning

While reviewing the legal and policy frameworks that support the subnational provision of multi-hazard disaster response and preparedness mechanisms, it became clear that the **coordination** among various stakeholders, both from a **horizontal perspective** (i.e. among the ministries, among the subnational stakeholders) and from a **vertical perspective** (i.e. among various categories of stakeholders at all the levels of decentralisation) is intrinsic to DRM/R systems, whereas in the case of SP systems delivering cash and in-kind support²⁷,

the coordination is rather of a vertical nature²⁸, focusing on how the central entity and its deconcentrated units coordinate with the decentralised bodies.

From a **horizontal perspective**, the following **DRM/R coordination** related conclusions emerge:

- Strong legal and policy frameworks for coordination at central level, with formal institutionalisation of inter-ministerial coordination bodies.

²⁷ While the focus of the mapping is on social protection responses that consist of cash transfer type measures, a broader approach to social protection by UNICEF, covering a range of policies and programmes needed to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and exclusion should be acknowledged. Programmes like cash transfers – including child grants, school meals, skills development and more – help connect families with health care, nutritious food and quality education to give all

children, no matter what circumstances they are born into, a fair chance in life. More details on [Social protection | UNICEF](#)
²⁸ The horizontal coordination is rather characteristic to the service delivery component of the SP system, where at least the areas of education, health and social inclusion/protection need to be coordinated.

Subnational social protection systems

- The SNGs, regardless of the tier, have explicit coordination responsibilities among a broad variety of stakeholders, both de-concentrated and decentralised.
 - Neighbouring (region, district, locality) cooperation at subnational level is essential.
- From a **vertical perspective, the following DRM/R coordination** related conclusions emerge:
- Each ministry is in charge of the coordination among its respective subnational de-concentrated units.
 - The National “agency” (unit, directorate, authority, inspectorate, etc.) for civil protection at central level has a strategic cross-cutting coordination role: national and subnational strategies and relevant documents and plans.
 - The SNG, regardless the tier, have explicit cooperation responsibilities between the upper and lower levels of decentralisation (e.g. a regional government will cooperate with all the municipalities in its coverage area).

Towards a better articulation of processes: the case of Ukraine.

According to the **Concept of Implementation of the State Policy on Social Protection of the Population and Protection of Children's Rights**, a process of reforming the institutions responsible for implementation of the state policy on social protection and protection of children's rights has begun:

(i) The National Social Service of Ukraine has been established as a central executive authority that implements the **state policy on social protection of the population**, including protection of children's rights. The new service should ensure continuity in the implementation of state policy in the field of social protection and protection of children's rights, as well as state control over legal requirements for social protection provision and children's rights protection. This institutional set-up should be articulated with the creation / adjustment of the Social Services Delivery Units, in close coordination with the provisioned creation of the National Agency for Social Benefits, **(ii)** The Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine has been established in September 2019 – a central executive authority responsible for the formulation and implementation of **the state policy on digitalization**, in particular ensuring children's rights in the digital space, **(iii)** The Educational Ombudsman position has been introduced – an official on whom the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine imposes the **tasks concerning the protection of rights in education**, **(iv)** The Cyber-police Department has been established in the National Police of Ukraine – an interregional territorial body that ensures the implementation of state policy on combatting cybercrime, organizes and conducts, according to the legislation, operational search activities, in particular investigating crimes against/involving children in the digital space.

Moreover, the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine is currently implementing **the largest digital project in modern Ukraine so called “Action”**. The aim of the project is to unite all departments into a single convenient and effective online system and make communication between citizens and businesses with the state convenient and transparent. It is planned that by 2024, 100 per cent of public services will be available online. . Since June 2021, the Ministry of Social Policy is piloting the **project “Social Community” in order to test the technology of forming the Unified Social Register (USR)** of Ukrainian citizens on the basis of the register of insured persons. As part of the pilot project, the following electronic services are provided: (i) online application for state social assistance, (ii) online display of information contained in the certificate of compulsory state social insurance and in the pension certificate, (iii) display of information in electronic form about a person's disability according to USR, and (iv) generation in electronic form of salary certificates, paid insurance premiums, pension amount. In addition, Ukraine became the first country in the world in which digital passports in smartphones became complete legal analogues of ordinary paper documents. Ukraine is also the fourth country in Europe to have a digital driver's license.

Annexes

Annex 1: details of SNG configuration at the ECA regional level

Based on the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment (SNG-WOFI)²⁹ data where 21 out of 22 ECA countries have a full profile on SNG-WOFI report³⁰, except for Turkmenistan³¹, it was possible to carry out an extensive analysis in terms of territorial organisation of SNG and their responsibilities, which led to a full regional picture³² of administrative configuration and governance structure, with some core characteristics:

- The territorial organisation in the region is broadly uneven, with countries including as few as 23 SNG, as in the case for Montenegro, to countries (at the time of elaboration of the SNG-WOFI report) with 11,733 SNG, as in the case of Ukraine³³,
- Almost all countries have SNG at the first tier (20 countries), the municipal level (except Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and their number vary significantly from one country to another (23 in Montenegro to 7,169 in Kazakhstan)
- Only eight countries have an intermediate level SNG, and their number ranges from 10 in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 676 in Ukraine,
- Five countries do not have regional or state level SNG, which is traditionally the equivalent of counties, and for the remaining countries they range from one in Azerbaijan to 81 in Turkey.

sub national governments (SNG)

		Municipal level	Intermediate level	Regional or state level	total number of SNGs
1	Albania	61	0	12	73
2	Armenia	502	0	0	502
3	Azerbaijan	1607	0	1	1608
4	Belarus	1190	128	7	1325
5	Bosnia and Herzegovina	141	10	3	154
6	Bulgaria	265	0	0	265
7	Croatia	556	0	21	577
8	Georgia	72	0	2	74
9	Greece	325	0	13	338
10	Kazakhstan	6938	215	16	7169
11	Kosovo	38	0	0	38
12	Kyrgyz Republic	470	12	2	484
13	Moldova	925	0	35	960
14	Montenegro	23	0	0	23
15	North Macedonia	81	0	0	81
16	Romania	3181	0	42	3223
17	Serbia	174	0	2	176
18	Tajikistan	369	65	4	438
19	Turkey	1389	0	81	1470
20	Turkmenistan*	0	59	7	66
21	Ukraine	11030	676	27	11733
22	Uzbekistan	0	201	14	215

* Wikipedia data

²⁹ [About - SNG-WOFI](#)

³⁰ OECD/UCLG (2019) **2019 Report of the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment** – Country Profiles at [SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles.pdf \(sng-wofi.org\)](#)

³¹ Not part of the SNG-WOFI and the data was taken from Wikipedia: [Districts of Turkmenistan - Wikipedia](#)

³² See Annex 1 for full detail about the configuration of SNG in each of the 22 ECA countries.

³³ Ukraine is currently in a process of administrative decentralisation reform (not captured by SNG-WOFI data in 2019). According to this new configuration, **the current number of SNG is 1,469**, hence in the region, Kazakhstan is now on top with 7,169.

Annex 2: COVID-19 SP-related measures throughout the region

The World Bank's real time review allowed for an extensive mapping of social protection measures as a response to the COVID-19 crisis in all the countries in the region. These measures are grouped in three categories: social assistance, social insurance, and labour market. Under each category, a set of four subgroups of measures are mapped, as follows: (i) social assistance: cash transfers, public works, vouchers and others, and utility waivers, (ii) social insurance: paid leave / unemployment, health insurance support, pensions, and social security contributions, and (iii) labour market: wage subsidies, training measures, labour regulations, and shorter work time. Within the Social assistance group, excepting Croatia, all countries took at least a cash-based transfers measure (21 countries) followed by utility & financial support (19 countries). Within the Social insurance group, 16 countries took paid leave / unemployment measures followed by social security contributions (waiver/subsidy), applied for 14 countries in the region. Finally, the Labour markets group of measures includes 18 countries with wage subsidies and 15 countries with specific labour regulations. Adding up all the measures taken by each individual country, the following categories emerged: **(i)** Countries with 3 to 5 measures: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan **(ii)** Countries with 6 to 8 measures: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kyrgyz Republic and Montenegro, **(iii)** Countries with 9 to 11 measures: Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

		SOCIAL ASSISTANCE				SOCIAL INSURANCE				LABOUR MARKETS			
		Cash-based transfers	Public works	In-kind (in-kind/school feeding)	Utility & financial support	Paid leave / unemployment	Health insurance support	Pensions	Social security contributions (waiver/subsidy)	Wage subsidies	Training measures	Labour regulation	Shorter work time
1	Albania	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
2	Armenia	X	X	X	X			X		X		X	X
3	Azerbaijan	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	
4	Belarus	X		X	X	X				X			
5	Bosnia and Herzegovina	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		
6	Bulgaria	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X
7	Croatia				X				X	X		X	X
8	Georgia	X		X	X				X			X	X
9	Greece	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X
10	Kazakhstan	X	X	X	X		X						
11	Kosovo*	X			X				X	X			
12	Kyrgyz Republic	X		X	X	X			X		X	X	X
13	Moldova	X				X				X			
14	Montenegro	X			X	X			X	X			
15	North Macedonia	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
16	Romania	X				X				X	X	X	
17	Serbia	X		X		X			X	X		X	X
18	Tajikistan	X			X	X					X		
19	Turkey	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X
20	Turkmenistan	X			X				X			X	
21	Ukraine	X			X	X	X		X	X		X	
22	Uzbekistan	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X

* under UNSC resolution 1244

Annex 3: Core terminology

Adaptive social protection³⁴: helps to build the resilience of poor and vulnerable households by investing in their capacity to prepare for, cope with, and adapt to shocks: protecting their wellbeing and ensuring that they do not fall into poverty or become trapped in poverty as a result of the impacts.

Contingency financing³⁵: Contingency funds (disaster funds) refer to funds set aside, ex-ante, as a financial buffer. These vary in form and the ways in which they can be set up. The most basic, a contingency budget, is an often small but flexible pot of funds most governments have available to draw upon in the annual budget in order to meet unanticipated needs. The government has the authority to spend this flexible pot on additional financing needs within the fiscal year, such as salary increases, maintenance needs, or natural disaster response, dependent on the Public Finance Management (PFM) law.

Contingency planning³⁶: A management process that analyses disaster risks and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective, and appropriate responses. Contingency planning results in organized and coordinated courses of action with clearly identified institutional roles and resources, information processes and operational arrangements for specific actors at times of need. Contingency planning is an important part of overall preparedness. Contingency plans need to be regularly updated and exercised.

Decentralization, or decentralizing governance, refers³⁷ to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels. Decentralization could also be expected to contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people's opportunities for participation in economic, social, and political decisions; assisting in developing people's capacities; and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency, and accountability.

Disaster³⁸: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

Disaster risk reduction³⁹: Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development. DRR is the policy objective of *disaster risk management (DRM)*, and its goals and objectives are defined in disaster risk reduction strategies and plans. Disaster risk reduction strategies and policies define goals and objectives across different timescales and with concrete targets, indicators, and time frames.

Preparedness⁴⁰: The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities, and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters. Preparedness action is carried out within the

³⁴ Thomas B., del Ninno C., Andrews C., Coll-Black S., Gentilini U., Johnson K., Kawasoe Y., Kryeziu A., Maher B., Williams A., 2020. **Adaptive Social Protection: Building Resilience to Shocks**. International Development in Focus. Washington, DC: World Bank

³⁵ Longhurst D., Evans S., Connolly D., Lung F., McCord A., Allan S., Plichta M., (2021) ' **What are future financing options for shock responsive social protection? A technical primer** ', Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom available at [SPACE_Financing-SRSP-Full-Version-1.pdf \(calpnetwork.org\)](https://calpnetwork.org/SPACE_Financing-SRSP-Full-Version-1.pdf)

³⁶ [Contingency planning | UNDRR](#)

³⁷ UNDP, Decentralized Governance Programme: Strengthening Capacity for People-Centred Development, Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Development Policy, September 1997

³⁸ [Disaster | UNDRR](#)

³⁹ [Disaster risk reduction | UNDRR](#)

⁴⁰ [Preparedness | UNDRR](#)

context of disaster risk management and aims to build the capacities needed to efficiently manage all types of emergencies and achieve orderly transitions from response to sustained recovery. Preparedness is based on a sound analysis of disaster risks and good linkages with early warning systems, and includes such activities as contingency planning, the stockpiling of equipment and supplies, the development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises. A preparedness plan establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective, and appropriate responses to specific potential hazardous events or emerging disaster situations.

Response⁴¹: Actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety, and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected. Disaster response is predominantly focused on immediate and short-term needs and is sometimes called disaster relief. Effective, efficient, and timely response relies on disaster risk-informed preparedness measures, including the development of the response capacities of individuals, communities, organizations, countries and the international community. The institutional elements of response often include the provision of emergency services and public assistance by public and private sectors and community sectors, as well as community and volunteer participation. "Emergency services" are a critical set of specialized agencies that have specific responsibilities in serving and protecting people and property in emergency and disaster situations. They include civil protection authorities and police and fire services, among many others.

Shock-responsive social protection⁴²: Social protection is intrinsically intended to be shock-responsive in the sense of supporting people in the event of a shock or helping to mitigate their susceptibility to shocks. The concept of a 'shock-responsive social protection system' (SRSPS) refers to covariate shocks, those that affect large numbers of people and/or communities at once. The specific challenge presented by covariate shocks is the implication that many individuals fall in need of social protection benefits simultaneously, while at the same time the consequences of the shock may limit the capacity of the system to deliver. Establishing SRSPS relates to preparedness, response and recovery from a disaster, and thus potentially overlaps with a number of different DRM activities and mechanisms (aligned with UNRDD definitions).

Social protection⁴³: Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups. This means ensuring adequate protection for all who need it, including children; people of working age in case of maternity, sickness, work injury or for those without jobs; persons with disability and older persons. This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services

Subnational governments⁴⁴: A subnational government (SNG) is considered to be a decentralised entity elected through universal suffrage and having general responsibilities and some autonomy with respect to budget, staff, and assets.

⁴¹ [Response | UNDRR](#)

⁴² Oxford Policy Management – OPM (2015), *Shock-responsive social protection systems - A research programme for DFID* Working paper 1: Conceptualising Shock-Responsive Social Protection, compilation, OPM Oct. 2015.

⁴³ [Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, SPIAC-B | socialprotection.org](#)

⁴⁴ OECD/UCLG (2016), *Subnational Governments around the world: Structure and finance* at oecd.org

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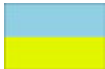

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Subnational social protection systems

When available, data from DRR main national stakeholders:

Country	Sendai Focal Point	National Platform	Country profile on Prevention Web
 Albania	General Directorate of Civil Emergencies, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Albania		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Armenia	Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia	Armenia National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Azerbaijan	The Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Azerbaijan		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Belarus	Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus	Belarus National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Bulgaria	Ministry of Interior (Bulgaria), Chief Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior	Bulgaria National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Croatia	National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Croatia - government	Croatia National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Georgia	Emergency Management Service of Georgia		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Greece	General Secretariat for Civil Protection of Greece	Greece National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Kazakhstan	Committee for emergency situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Kyrgyzstan	Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic	Kyrgyzstan National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE

Subnational social protection systems

Country	Sendai Focal Point	National Platform	Country profile on Prevention Web
 Montenegro	Ministry of Interior - Directorate for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Interior and Public Administration	Montenegro National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 North Macedonia	Republic of North Macedonia - government	North Macedonia National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Romania	General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, Romania - government		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Serbia	Sector for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, International Cooperation Protection and Rescue Sector, Ministry of Interior	Serbia National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Tajikistan	Committee of Emergency situations and Civil defence under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Turkey	Ministry Of Interior Disaster And Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD)	Turkey National Platform	COUNTRY PROFILE
 Turkmenistan			COUNTRY PROFILE
 Ukraine	State Emergency Service of Ukraine		COUNTRY PROFILE
 Uzbekistan			COUNTRY PROFILE

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Disclaimer

Any views, opinions and recommendations presented in this case study are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the of Governments or UNICEF.

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