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MINEV

Good practice

Waste management and grey water handling during USAR missions

Stamatis Papadopoulos

Lieutenant - Liaison Officer at GR/MUSAR2/THESS and EL/FRB/01

stpa76@gmail.com

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Approach to reducing the environmental footprint during SAR operations

Problem addressed

Increase of environmental footprint in SAR missions

- The deepening climate and environmental crises require measures to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of humanitarian aid.
- Taking into account environmental considerations is also integral to upholding the 'Do No Harm' principle.
- As a major contributor in SAR operations, due to disasters and catastrophic events, the European Commission has a critical role to play to make change happen

European Commission steps towards greening SAR

- Adopting a new way of working through the mainstreaming of an environmentally sustainable approach across projects, programmes and the organisation itself¹
- Is aligning its actions with the key pillars of the European Green Deal: climate neutrality, climate resilience, circular economy, zero pollution and biodiversity protection¹
- Taking a precautionary approach to mitigating environmental impacts¹

1. Study on Greening the Union Civil Protection Mechanism-Final Report (January 2023)

Key areas of intervention for projects and programmes

Objective, targets and expectations

- ▶ Provide clean energy solutions
- ▶ Choose materials with a lower carbon footprint
- ▶ Avoid plastic when possible
- ▶ Green the organisation's logistics and supply chain

Indicative vision-setting timeline towards "greening" operational environment of 2nd SDRU

Astorga, Spain,
2022 GFFF
MODEX
Exercise

Objective, targets and expectations

- Priority given to projects addressing environmental impacts
- Increasing ambition for sound environmental management at 2nd SDRU facilities as well as in missions
- Mandatory training for staff on environmental sustainability
- Continued roll out of 'greening' of the 2nd SDRU field network



Implementation of circular economy and waste management practice

Definition, importance & benefits

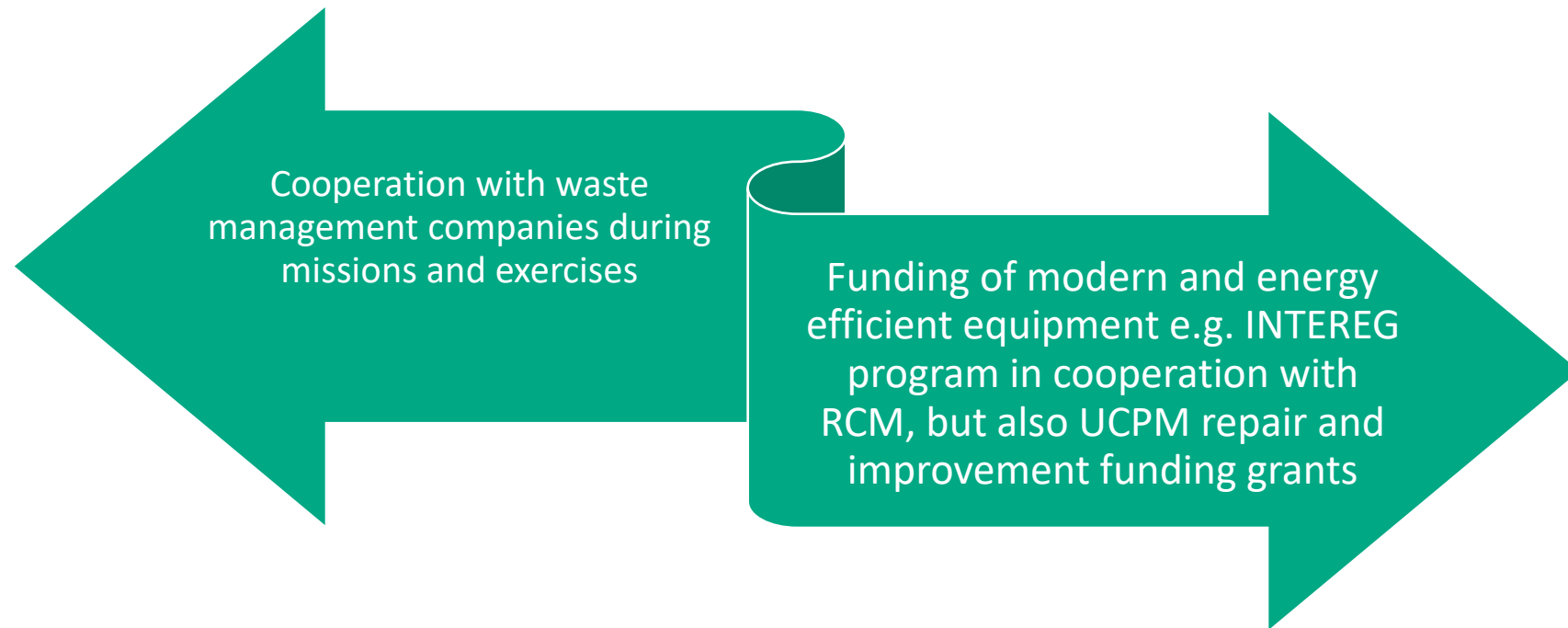
- The circular economy refers to the ability to reduce, reuse, repair or recycle existing products as much as possible
- Better waste management includes reducing the amount of waste produced
- Ensuring waste water does not contaminate water bodies
- Alternative packaging including compostable or biodegradable options
- Packaging that can be reused e.g., for other purposes such as storage during response or reused for re-transport
- Selecting and using low-emission vehicles and ensuring low-emission standards for inclusion in the European Civil Protection Pool (ECCP) would reduce the carbon footprint of operations

Human and financial resources

- ❑ No external experts or trainers were hired
- ❑ Implementation depended on existing staff doing their jobs
- ❑ Greener venues were selected for in-person training reducing on-site waste
- ❑ Blended online and in-person training reduced the amount of waste generated during in-person events
- ❑ Conducting more and smaller exercises helped to reduce the environmental footprint of exercises
- ❑ Economic benefits of our service due to the proper repair and reuse of our equipment

Implementation of the good practice

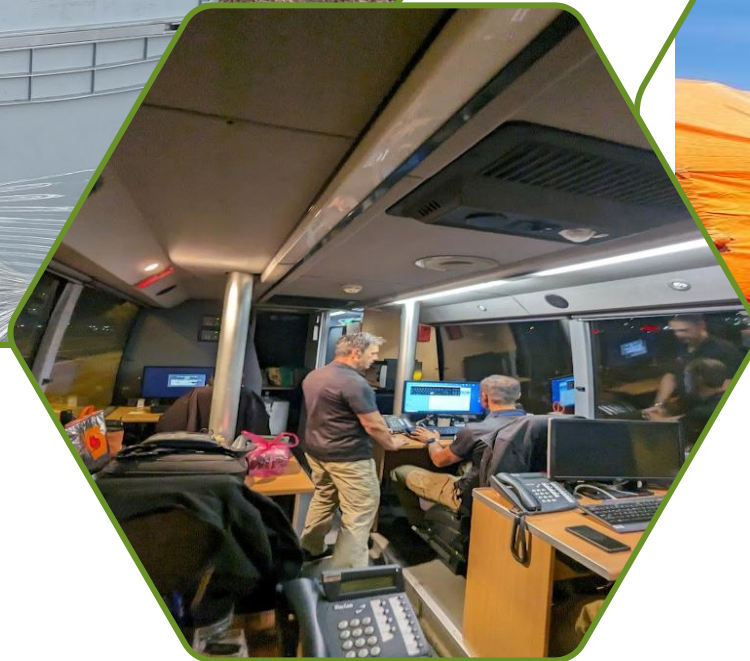
Cross-sectoral and or cross-institutional cooperation



Implementation of the good practice



Implementation of the good practice



- Equipment distribution for reducing transport volume
- Digital working environment
- Waste management during exercises & missions

Implementation of the good practice



- Reusable boxes for load distribution
- Modern generators and heaters
 - Less energy consumption via combining methods

Implementation of the good practice



- Reduce packaging saving significant amount of fuels
- Cooking meals instead of packaged food
- Use of chemical toilets and alternatively grey water management by small capacity pumps

Implementation of the good practice



- Practices towards controlling use of water
- Use of energy efficient devices like LED lighting projectors
- Use of personal thermo insulating bottles for drinking water transfer

Evidences of success

Results achieved

- ❖ First of all greening integration into Training and Exercises
- ❖ Team members embraced the concept of a circular economy and integrated it into their daily routines.
- ❖ Within the team's standard operating procedures (SOPs), guidelines were established to foster a greener consciousness towards the environment.
- ❖ A platform was established to promote greening initiatives and initiate further work on data collection.
- ❖ Waste management practices were improved to ensure minimal environmental impact. This included recycling, product removal, and safe disposal of all products, including medical waste.
- ❖ Measures were implemented to prevent contamination of water sources during emergency responses.
- ❖ Efforts were made to reduce the use of 'forever chemicals' in firefighting operations.

Lessons learnt

Challenges

- Initial resistance from team members towards implementing green practices during operational processes
- Purchase of special equipment for the reduce of carbon footprint raised budget planning
- Further development of training procedures and mandatory update of SOPs

Enabling actions

- ✓ Informing staff on greening practices issues through webinars
- ✓ Promoting repairability, repurposing, recycling, reuse and refurbishment of equipment
- ✓ Drastic change in operational tactics by adopting the use of environmentally friendly tools (e.g. battery tools)
- ✓ Reducing emissions from transport – for example, through reduced mileage, changes in the transport modalities, or the use of cleaner vehicles



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ONLY HOME WE'VE EVER
KNOWN.**

CARL SAGAN

@weareteachers

Time for
questions



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Thank you!

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www.interregeurope.eu/MINEV

www.interregeurope.eu



References:

1. Study on Greening the Union Civil Protection Mechanism-Final Report (January 2023)
2. INSARAG Guidelines 2020 Volume III: Operational Field Guide 7.2 Logistics-Operations
3. 7146/22 'Council conclusions on civil protection work in view of climate change'.