



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES (CES)**

OUTSOURCING THE LEVIATHAN

Causes for and Consequences of the arrival of public-private partnerships in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

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Master's thesis: 30 credits

Programme: Master's Programme in European Studies

Level: Second Cycle

Semester year: Spring 2024

Supervisor: Victor Lapuente Gine, Department of Political Science

Abstract

This thesis investigates the integration of public-private partnerships (PPPs) within the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), focusing on their emergence during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. As the first study to explore this topic, it breaks new ground in understanding the drivers behind this strategic shift, assessing the impact of PPPs on the UCPM's perceived effectiveness, and identifying the legal and operational challenges associated with incorporating private sector resources into a traditionally state-centric framework. The theoretical framework study employs Hastily Formed Networks and Resource Dependency Theory to assess the causes and Success Factors identified in the literature to assess the consequences of PPP involvement. The qualitative research draws on 17 interviews with representatives from Member and Participating States, DG ECHO, the private sector, and civil protection experts. The findings reveal that the unprecedented scale of the Ukraine crisis necessitated rapid mobilization of resources beyond the public sector's capacity, leading to the engagement of private entities. While this integration significantly enhanced response capabilities, it also introduced complex challenges that must be carefully managed for successful future institutionalization. The research underscores the potential of PPPs to address critical resource gaps in disaster response while highlighting the need to preserve the UCPM's core principles of solidarity and public accountability. As the European Commission continues to explore this strategic shift, a balanced approach will be essential to ensure that PPPs contribute to a more resilient and effective civil protection framework.

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Supervisor: Victor La Puente Gine

Keyword: Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), public-private partnerships, rescEU

Wordcount: 21.987

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Abbreviations

CECIS Common Emergency Communication and Information System

CGF Collaborative Governance Framework

CP Civil Protection

CPM Community Civil Protection Mechanism

DG ECHO Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

EERC European Emergency Response Capacity

EIB European Investment Bank

ERCC Emergency Response Coordination Centre

EU European Union

EUCom European Commission

HFNs Hastily Formed Networks

MIC Monitoring and Information Centre

PPP Public-Private-Partnership

rescEUDS rescEU Donation Scheme

RDT Resource Dependency Theory

UCPM Union Civil Protection Mechanism

1 Introduction

In an era marked by an increasing number of crises and disasters, the importance of effective crisis management and civil protection (CP) has become more pronounced within the European Union (EU) (Widmalm et al., 2019, pp. V–VI; Gestri, 2012, p. V). The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), a crucial component of the EU’s crisis management and CP framework, has evolved significantly over the years, adapting to the growing complexity and frequency of emergencies that transcend national borders (European Parliament and the Council, 2021). The mechanism enables swift coordination, information exchange, and mobilization of assistance during emergencies (European Parliament and the Council, 2021, No. 3). The UCPM’s effectiveness is exemplified by its role in critical interventions during both natural and man-made disasters. From assisting in search and rescue operations after the 2020 Beirut explosion, to mobilizing in-kind assistance such as shelter, mattresses, hygiene and medical kits during the cyclone Idai in Mozambique in 2019, and providing vital support during the 2021 floods in Western Europe, the UCPM has demonstrated its capacity to manage diverse emergencies (Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC), 2024). The mechanism was activated over 480 times alone from 2019 to 2023, underscoring its pivotal role in crisis response (European Commission, 2024b). Established in 2001 and significantly reinforced in 2013, the UCPM operates under the European Commission’s (EUCom) Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) (European Commission, 2013, DG ECHO, 2023). At its core, the UCPM fosters a collaborative framework for disaster prevention, preparedness, and response (DG ECHO, 2023), uniting the resources and expertise of Member and Participating States (MPS)¹. If the response capacities of an EU member state, a participating state or any other state are exhausted in an emergency, they can request assistance through the UCPM (European Parliament and the Council, 2021, No. 3). Historically, the UCPM’s operational ethos has been grounded in public-public relationships, where MPS voluntarily contribute capacities such as rescue or medical teams, experts, specialized equipment, or transportation (DG ECHO, 2024b). This state-to-state support (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 360) has been foundational to the UCPM’s operations. However, recent crises like Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine have exposed the limitations of these traditional approaches, stretching national capacities to their limits (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 117, 176, 360). At the onset of these emergencies, various private sector entities proactively reached out to DG ECHO, offering to donate goods (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 121). Normally, national CP authorities would channel such donations, but they were overwhelmed by the unprecedented scale of the crisis. In response, the Commission established the *rescEU Donation Scheme* (rescEUDS). In conjunction with Belgian and Polish authorities two rescEU hubs to streamline the management of private sector donations were established and assistance of more than 10 million Euros was channeled (Cristian Gimenez, personal communication, August 19, 2024). The response to the Ukraine crisis has been its largest operation

¹The UCPM consists of both Member and Participating states. While some interviewees followed this pattern, some only referred to Member States, which in most cases also includes the Participating States.

to date, involving all 27 EU countries and six participating states in providing a wide range of ‘in-kind assistance ranging from medical supplies and shelter items to vehicles and energy equipment’ (DG ECHO, 2023d).

The integration of the private sector into the UCPM has generated a certain discussion among states, experts, and stakeholders. Already during Sweden’s presidency of the Council of the European Union, the topic of society and resilience was a key priority. Sweden emphasized the importance of a whole-of-society approach, involving various stakeholders, including the private sector in resilience, preparedness, and response efforts. While the potential for broader public-private partnerships was explored and Council Conclusion 10048/23 on *strengthening whole-of-society resilience in the context of Civil Protection* was concluded, no significant progress has been seen - until 2022. Interestingly, the Commission’s cooperation initiatives initiated during the war in Ukraine have brought this topic back to the forefront. The *Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)* covering the period from 2017 to 2022, underscored the significant advancements in public-private cooperation within the UCPM. This evaluation pointed out that the UCPM had successfully leveraged private sector contributions to fill assistance gaps and broaden available capacity during Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Proponents argue that it enhances response capabilities, offers specialized expertise, and ultimately benefits disaster response and receivers of assistance. Some countries, which have long engaged with the private sector, see this cooperation as a natural extension of their CP strategies on EU-level. On the other hand, critics warn that this shift could undermine the UCPM’s foundational principles. They stress the need for thorough and deliberate discussion, fearing that rushed changes might compromise the system’s effectiveness. There are concerns about quality assurance, liability and the monetary motivations of private companies and a lot of open questions yet to be answered when it comes to the practical long-term implementation. Some might fear that the involvement of the private sector could be perceived as an indication of the public sector’s inability to respond adequately on its own. These critics argue that CP should remain primarily a government responsibility, with private contributions limited to supplementary roles. As indicated in the evaluation, the Commission seems to aim to further develop cooperation with the private sector. Interviews and discussions at the Civil Protection Forum in June this year, where a panel session was dedicated to private sector cooperation, underline that PPPs are a highly pertinent topic in the EU CP field. Diving into this current debate, this thesis aims to uncover the causes and consequences of this development of the UCPM. It seeks to elucidate the drivers behind the emergence of the cooperations with the private sector, assess the impact of them on the mechanism’s perceived effectiveness, and identify the legal and operational challenges accompanying the incorporation of private sector resources and expertise.

Given that this topic is relatively new and the discussion has so far happened through bilateral channels without publicly accessible documents, this explorative research utilizes 17 interviews with representatives from MPS, DG ECHO and private sector as well as other experts. The thesis is structured as following: The background chapter

offers essential context on EU disaster management, detailing the structure, scope, and activation of the UCPM. A thorough literature review follows, exploring cross-sector collaboration, the emergence and motivations behind PPPs, success factors, and relevant case studies, culminating in the presentation of the research problem, aim, and questions. The theoretical framework chapter employs Hastily Formed Networks and Resource Dependency Theory to assess the causes and Success Factors identified in the literature to assess the consequences of PPP involvement. The methodology chapter outlines the research design, operationalisation, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The results and discussion chapter presents and analyzes the findings on the evolution and impact of PPPs within the UCPM, discussing immediate consequences and future prospects. Given its single-case nature, this thesis cannot completely corroborate a theory, but can provide supporting empirical evidence of the mechanisms of those theoretical expectations.

The thesis reveals that the integration of PPPs within the UCPM was largely driven by the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Ukraine, which necessitated rapid mobilization of resources and specialized expertise beyond the capacities of the public sector alone. The findings indicate that while the immediate incorporation of private sector contributions significantly enhanced the UCPM’s response capabilities, it also introduced complex legal and operational challenges that require careful consideration if PPPs are to be institutionalized within the UCPM. The research underscores the benefits of these partnerships in addressing resource gaps, but also highlights the need for a balanced approach to ensure that the foundational principles of the UCPM are preserved as the EU continues to explore and institutionalize this strategic shift.

2 Background

This chapter provides an overview of the UCPM, tracing its development from early cooperative efforts to the establishment until recent developments of private sector cooperation. It delves into the structure and operational aspects of the UCPM, including its key components and activation process and delivers further examples of activations.

2.1 EU Disaster Management and Civil Protection

The European Union’s disaster management is built on two main principles: the responsibility of states to protect their citizens and solidarity among MPS to assist each other in disasters. This collective ethos was initiated in the 1980s, with the ministerial meetings in Rome in 1985 being a key catalyst for cooperative CP frameworks. These early efforts were non-binding but laid the groundwork for enhanced disaster preparedness and response (European Council, 2010, p. 25; Gestri, 2012, p. 105). To improve cooperation and disaster protection, the Community Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM) was established in 2001 (Gestri, 2012, p. 121). Key developments of the following years included the introduction of the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS, for explanation see the next subsection) for better disaster response coordination (European Council

(Euratom), n.d., 2001, No. 5; Morsut, 2014, p. 145) as well as new training programs and expert exchanges (European Commission, 2003, (12)). The CPM’s capabilities were demonstrated during the 2004 South Asia Tsunami, highlighting the need for a robust mechanism to manage large-scale emergencies (Morsut, 2014, p. 143). The Treaty of Lisbon further formalized CP as a policy area, introducing Articles 6 and 196 TFEU to support, coordinate, and supplement MPS’ disaster management actions (Morsut, 2014, p. 143). Article 222 TFEU, known as the Solidarity Clause, emphasized joint action during emergencies (Barnier, 2006; Myrdal & Rhinard, 2010). In response to the increasing frequency and severity of disasters, the EU revised its civil-protection legislation in 2013 with Decision No 1313/2013/EU, transforming the CPM into the *Union Civil Protection Mechanism* (European Parliament and the Council, 2013; Widmalm et al., 2019, p. 11). This revision emphasized a more unified approach among the MPS to disaster response (Decision 1313/2013/EU, (1)). In 2019, the EUCom upgraded the UCPM by creating rescEU, which serves as a reserve of European capacities, fully funded by the EU. Regulation (EU) 2021/836, effective from January 2021, further enhanced cooperation and coordination, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (European Parliament and the Council, 2021, Rec. (3)). Throughout the various developments and amendments of the UCPM, it is evident that a central focus is on enhancing cooperation between MPS. According to the *Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a UCPM, 2017-2022*, the period from 2017 to 2022 stands out in the history of the UCPM for the significant rise in the activations, driven by an unprecedented wave of complex disasters (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 5; DG ECHO, 2023a). While the focus has traditionally been on fostering cooperation and solidarity among MPS, these recent challenges seem to have highlighted the need for an evolved response mechanism. This period has marked a transformative shift towards embracing a broader, cross-sectoral collaboration paradigm within the UCPM, integrating various stakeholders beyond the traditional CP actors (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 5). A key instance during the Ukraine conflict highlighted how overwhelmed traditional state mechanisms led to the proactive involvement of the UCPM in managing private donations through the establishment of rescEU hubs in collaboration with Belgian and Polish authorities (ICF S.A., 2024, p. 121).

2.2 Structure of the UCPM

The UCPM can be describes an an operational structure which facilitates cooperation in disaster response, preparedness, and prevention and lies within the EU Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). Laid out in Decision No 1313/2013/EU is the structure of the UCPM. In recital (12) is stated: ‘The Union Mechanism should be based on a Union structure consisting of an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), a European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) in the form of a voluntary pool of pre-committed capacities (CP Pool) from the MPS, trained experts, a Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) managed by the Commission and contact points in the MPS.’ Additionally, the so-called rescEU capacity was introduced in 2019. In the

following, those components and their interplay are explained further.

The ERCC operates 24/7, as the coordination center of the UCPM. It is staffed by DG ECHO and is in constant operation, monitoring emergencies globally and coordinating the EU's disaster response. The ERCC's role includes assessing the needs in the aftermath of a disaster, coordinating the deployment of assistance, and ensuring that the aid provided by EU MPS is coherent and timely (DG ECHO, 2023b). Further, the ERCC is responsible for the co-financing commitments for the pool capacities and the financing commitments for rescEU for both the transportation and operational costs. The ERCC uses the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), a web-based alert and notification application enabling a real-time exchange of information between the ERCC and the MPS' contact points (DG ECHO, 2023b). MPS offer their available relief teams, experts and equipment in CECIS (DG ECHO, 2015).

The possibility of MPS responding to disasters can be visualized as a pyramid (See Figure 1) with three primary layers within the sphere of the UCPM, each representing a different level of response capability:

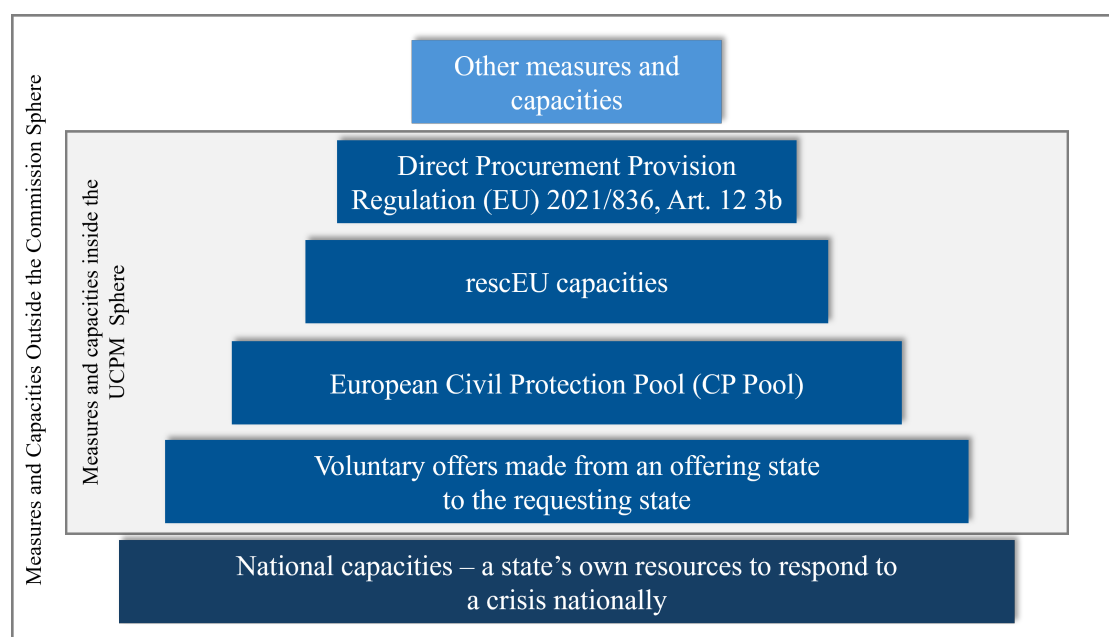


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Capacities and Measures within the UCPM Framework, own illustration

National Capacities: At the base of the pyramid are the national capacities of the MPS, which are the first line of response to disasters. Each country maintains its own disaster response units, equipment, and resources. These national capacities are essential as they handle the majority of incidents independently.

Voluntary offers: These offers can be made from an offering state to the requesting state and is the first layer of requesting assistance ‘abroad’ through the UCPM.

European Civil Protection Pool (CP Pool or ECPP)²: When national resources are insufficient to manage a disaster, the UCPM can be activated. Then, the next layer of response involves the European Emergency Response Capacity, also known as the European Civil Protection Pool or shortly CP Pool (DG ECHO, 2015). This pool consists of pre-committed resources from the 27 EU Member States and 10 other Participating States³. The whole CP Pool is tailored to the individual strengths and capabilities of each state and include a range of assets such as specialized rescue teams, medical units, technical experts, and equipment. The maintenance is done by the MPS but financed by the Commission. The CP Pool can be mobilized at the EU level for coordinated response efforts (DG ECHO, 2023b). On the Member State’s side, the process of offering these capacities is typically managed by national CP agencies or equivalent governmental departments, which are responsible for maintaining the readiness of these resources. They also ensure that the personnel are well-trained, and the equipment is in a state of operational readiness, adhering to international standards (Decision 1313/2013/EU, Art. 9). The CP Pool is designed to be rapidly deployable, with the UCPM stepping in to finance the most part of transportation and other operational costs.

rescEU: at the top of the pool is the rescEU capacity, a ‘safety net’ established to provide an additional layer of protection when both national capacities and the CP Pool are not sufficient (European Parliament and the Council, 2021, Recital (2)). RescEU includes for example a fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, shelter, a medical evacuation plane, stockpiles of medical items and medical capacities as well as reserves to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) risks (European Commission, 2024a). These capacities are fully funded by the EU but maintained and stationed in the MPS. RescEU can be deployed swiftly to provide comprehensive support during major disasters.

‘Direct Procurement Provision’: in extreme cases where the rescEU capacities and the CP Pool are insufficient, according to Regulation (EU) 2021/836, Art. 12 3b, the EU-Com can step in directly, using existing rescEU capacities or creating new ones rapidly. This highest level of intervention is designed for scenarios where traditional mechanisms are overwhelmed, such as large-scale conflicts or unprecedented natural disasters.

Beyond the structured layers of response capabilities within the UCPM, there are additional measures and capacities that can be deployed outside of this framework to effectively respond to specific disaster scenarios. These external measures might include

²The CP Pool is the same as the EERC. As EERC is used in very limited occasion within the Commission, this thesis uses the term *CP Pool*

³Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine.

bilateral or multilateral agreements between states, direct international assistance, support by military or the involvement of private sector and non-governmental organizations that operate independently of the UCPM.

2.3 Scope and activation of the UCPM

The UCPM is capable of responding to various crises such as natural disasters like earthquakes and floods, technological or radiological incidents, acts of terrorism, environmental and marine pollution, and acute public health emergencies, whether occurring within or outside the EU. Its protection extends primarily to people, but also encompasses the environment, property, and cultural heritage (Decision 1313/2013/EU, Art. 1, No. 2). The UCPM's response to acts of terrorism and radiological disasters is generally focused on preparedness and response actions (Decision 1313/2013/EU). Importantly, the UCPM pays special attention to the unique needs of 'isolated, outermost regions, islands of the EU, and overseas countries and territories' (Decision 1313/2013/EU, Art. 2, No. 2), ensuring tailored strategies for disaster prevention, preparedness, and response. Geographically, the UCPM is not limited to Member and Participating States; it can be activated globally by 'any country in the world, but also the United Nations and its agencies or a relevant international organisation' (DG ECHO, 2023c, EU civil protection in action). While any country can request assistance via the UCPM, only MPS offer via this system.

Since its enhancement in 2013, the UCPM has been activated over 650 times to respond to a variety of emergencies. While the UCPM was activated an average of 18 times per year between 2002 and 2019, a sharp increase to an average of 107 activations per year between 2020 and 2022 can be observed from 2020 onwards (DG ECHO, 2023a). Notable instances include the response to the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa in 2014, where the UCPM played a pivotal role in coordinating and delivering European aid, including medical and emergency supplies and experts as well as managing evacuation requests in cooperation with the World Health Organization (DG ECHO, 2023a). The mechanism was also activated for various natural disasters, such as the severe forest fires in Portugal in 2017 and Sweden in 2018, where it helped mobilize firefighting aircraft and teams to assist in combating the fires (DG ECHO, 2023a). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCPM facilitated the distribution of medical equipment and repatriation of EU citizens stranded abroad (DG ECHO, 2023a). In response to the crisis in Ukraine, the EUCom has launched its largest operation under the UCPM to date. This effort involves all 27 EU countries along with Norway, Türkiye, North Macedonia, Iceland, and Serbia, contributing a wide range of in-kind assistance such as medical supplies, shelter items, vehicles, and energy equipment (DG ECHO, 2023d). The preceding examples highlight the diversity of UCPM activations, encompassing a wide range of crises. Despite their differences, these situations share a critical commonality: in each instance, the severity and complexity of the crisis overwhelmed national capacities, necessitating the activation of the UCPM to provide essential support and coordination. Importantly, this state of being overwhelmed is not merely a consequence but a key conditionality for UCPM activation, as stated in Recital (24) of Decision 1313/2013/EU.

3 Previous research and aim

In this section, a comprehensive literature review will be conducted to explore the current scholarly discourse surrounding cross-sector collaboration and public-private partnerships, especially in disaster response. This review will examine both the theoretical frameworks and empirical studies as well as present real-life cases where cross-sector collaboration in disaster response occurred. Following the literature review, the specific aims of this thesis and formulate the primary research questions, that this study seeks to answer will be outlined.

3.1 Literature Review

This thesis builds on the insights of key figures in disaster management, public administration, PPPs, and CP. The literature review is divided into several sections, each addressing different facets of these topics to elucidate current scholarly discourse and highlight this research's unique contributions. The first section examines the concept of cross-sector collaboration, referencing scholars like Bryson, Crosby, and McGuire. It discusses foundational governance and partnership theories relevant to PPPs, emphasizing their importance in the strategic evolution of the UCPM. Following this, the review explores the operational and strategic impacts of PPPs, both generally and specifically within disaster response contexts. Through the perspectives of Andrews, Entwistle, and others, it analyzes the role of PPPs in enhancing the UCPM's capabilities to manage complex crises. This section identifies key operational challenges and opportunities presented by PPP integration in disaster response. Next, the literature review delves into case studies showcasing PPPs in disaster response and management. These examples include successful collaborations involving major corporations like Wal-Mart, the IKEA Foundation, and DHL's Disaster Response Teams. These case studies demonstrate the practical application and value of PPPs in improving disaster resilience and response, offering insights into how such partnerships can be further leveraged within the UCPM framework. Subsequent sections address additional dimensions of PPPs in disaster management. These include an examination of the definitions and theoretical frameworks underpinning PPPs, an analysis of their emergence and motivations, and a discussion on the success factors critical to effective PPP implementation. This comprehensive review provides a robust foundation for understanding the current state of PPPs in disaster management, identifying critical gaps and trends that the following sections of the thesis will explore further, focusing on optimizing PPP integration within the UCPM framework.

3.1.1 Cross-sector collaboration and public-private partnerships

In this literature review chapter, the emphasis is placed on understanding the broader academic discourse surrounding PPPs. This exploration delves into the theoretical frameworks and empirical studies that explain the emergence and effectiveness of PPPs across various sectors. By situating the UCPM within this context, the subsequent

analysis of the UCPM’s engagement with the private sector will draw upon these general findings to highlight specific collaborative endeavors within disaster management. Despite the UCPM report categorizing these engagements broadly under the term ‘collaboration’ (ICF S.A., 2024, e.g. p. 10, 121) this analysis will extend to encompass both cross-sector collaboration and PPPs as the latter are a subset of cross-sector collaborations and both the rescEUDS as possible future engagements between UCPM and the private sector can possibly be categorized as PPPs.

In this literature review subchapter, the focus is on understanding the difference between cross-sector collaboration and PPPs. Although the UCPM report broadly categorizes the engagements with the private sector under the term ‘collaboration’ (ICF S.A., 2024, e.g. p. 10, 121), the analysis in this study will specifically concentrate on PPPs. The reason is that the rescEUDS is the main experience that the interviewees can refer to which can be categorized as a PPP. The use of the broader term ‘cross-sector collaboration’ by the EU might be to keep options open for cooperating with the third sector or due to a lack of distinction between cross-sector and private sector cooperation. However, this thesis will focus explicitly on PPPs, using the terms ‘cooperation with the private sector’ or ‘PPPs’ and avoiding ‘cross-sector collaboration’ where possible.

Cross-sector collaboration is a strategic alliance that unites entities from two or more sectors, including government, business, nonprofits, philanthropies, communities, and the public, towards achieving common objectives (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44). As delineated by Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006, p. 44), this form of partnership is characterized by the pooling of information, resources, activities, and capabilities to realize outcomes unattainable by single-sector efforts alone. The structure of these collaborations can range from informal, ad hoc arrangements, such as temporary task forces, to highly formalized contractual agreements between organizations (Simo & Bies, 2007, p. 125). While the motivations behind such partnerships are varied, cross-sector collaboration inherently aims to advance the public good, necessitating some degree of public or nonprofit participation (Simo & Bies, 2007, p. 125). This concept closely aligns with McGuire’s notion of *collaborative public management* (McGuire, 2002, p. 33), which emphasizes the facilitation and operation within multi-organizational arrangements to address complex issues beyond the capacity of single organizations. Thus, cross-sector collaboration represents a vital mechanism for leveraging diverse strengths and resources in pursuit of shared societal benefits.

Within this broad framework of cross-sector collaboration, PPPs are distinguished as a specialized subset, marked by the synergistic cooperation between government agencies and private sector entities (Andrews & Entwistle, 2015, p. 274). There exist various definitions of PPPs, within the EU alone. According to the European Investment Bank (EIB), a PPP is ‘is an arrangement between a public authority and a private partner designed to deliver a public infrastructure project and service under a long-term contract’ (2024). The European Commission (EUCom) defines PPPs in a similar way, namely as ‘forms of cooperation between public authorities and the world of business which aim to ensure the funding, construction, renovation, management or maintenance of an

infrastructure or the provision of a service’ (European Commission, 2004, No. 1, 1.1). Those definitions narrow down the scope of PPPs to infrastructure-related projects or long-term engagements, omitting other types of PPP projects or shorter-term collaborations. But there exist various different PPPs that are not limited to infrastructure projects or long-time partnership (European Court of Auditors, 2018, pp. 15-16). PPPs can manifest in varied forms — from competitive tendering processes and contractual agreements to more complex, hybrid organizational structures predicated on mixed ownership and high levels of trust (Andrews & Entwistle, 2015, p. 274). Such partnerships can be fluid, blurring the lines between traditional contracting and privatization. Even if the application of an EU-level definition would augment the paper’s applicability to analyses of PPPs within the EU framework, the specificity of the definitions by the EIB and the EUCom misaligns with the goals of this paper, which aims to examine PPPs in the realms of disaster management and CP—areas that don’t necessarily involve infrastructure projects. Therefore, given the relatively new incorporation of PPPs in EU disaster management and CP, where a narrow characterisation of PPPs is not possible yet, this paper will adopt a more inclusive definition of PPPs. Drawing from scholarly sources, PPPs can be conceptualized as a collaborative relationship among public, private, and non-governmental entities, grounded on a mutual agreement that reflects shared responsibilities towards common interests (Buse & Walt, 2000, p. 549; Andrews & Entwistle, 2015, pp. 274-276). As can be seen later in the analysis, it is not clear if public and private sector follow a common interest in the case of the private sector engagement within the UCPM. A definition that includes a relevant aspect for this study is provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, which articulates PPPs as ‘cooperative ventures between the public and private sectors in the design, planning, construction, financing, management, operation and utilization of public services that were previously the sole responsibility of the state’ (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 2024, own translation from German). The aspect of actions being transferred from the state responsibility to the private sector is particularly relevant here. The reason is that CP is a member state competence (Fink-Hooijer, 2014, No. 1). As none of the definitions above seem to fit the case of the UCPM, this study proposes the following definition of PPPs that accommodates the breadth of their application, particularly within the context of the UCPM. PPPs are hereby defined as *collaborative frameworks that engage public authorities and private sector entities in a partnership based on mutual agreement. A PPP extends to encompass actions and initiatives that were previously the exclusive domain of the state..*

3.1.2 The emergence of PPPs: motivations and consequences

The evolution of PPPs since the 1990s reflects a strategic shift in how public services are conceptualized, developed, and delivered (Osborne, 2002, p. 1). This closely mirrors the UCPM’s recent developments to cooperate with the private sector. These partnerships, while varying across time, sectors, and countries (McQuaid & Scherrer, 2010, p. 27), seem to share a common thread in their ability to amalgamate the strengths of

both public and private sectors to address infrastructural and service delivery challenges more effectively and innovatively (Steijn et al., 2011, p. 1235). The literature suggests that PPPs transcend traditional contractual arrangements to become strategic alliances that enhance performance metrics, competitive capabilities, and operational excellence, leveraging the private sector’s specialist knowledge and efficiency (Kang et al., 2019, pp. 335-337; Osei-Kyei et al., 2017, p. 87).

Steijn et al. elucidate that the fundamental rationale for the emergence of PPPs centers on the premise that greater collaboration between public and private sectors can yield significant added value (Steijn et al., 2011, p. 1235). This synergistic model encapsulates diverse motivations for PPP engagement mentioned in the literature: PPPs have garnered attention not only as a cost-efficient and effective mechanism for implementing public policy but also as facilitators of substantial benefits, for example in fostering socially inclusive communities (Osborne, 2002, p. 1). According to Steijn et al., governments anticipate heightened service quality and improved value for money by entrusting private actors with service provision or policy realization (2011, p. 1235). Furthermore, for the public entities, such partnerships represent opportunities to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, access private financing and import management expertise (Rybnicek et al., 2020, p. 1175; Andrews & Entwistle, 2015, pp. 274-275; Wang et al., 2018, pp. 311-312; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 12). Additionally, PPPs are seen as platforms for fostering innovation (Liu et al., 2024, p. 31). Private partners, in turn, benefit from the ability to share or shift risks as well as costs and gain access to public projects they might not otherwise sustain (OECD, 2008, p. 131; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 5, 8) which can lead to a better reputation (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 8).

Despite the benefits and efficiencies attributed to PPPs, criticisms underscore the complexities and unintended consequences of such collaborations. As highlighted by Bovaird, the partnership model can dilute individual agency sovereignty, complicating the attribution of accountability (Bovaird, 2004, pp. 204-205). Another concern is the public sector’s challenge in ensuring that private entities assume an equitable share of costs and risks, highlighting a fundamental concern in risk allocation (Hayllar & Wettenhall, 2010, p. 4). This struggle is compounded by political apprehensions about losing oversight over policymaking and service delivery. Such concerns reflect a deeper reluctance among politicians to cede power and decision-making autonomy to the private sector, underscoring a broader dilemma in the governance and management of PPPs (Bovaird, 2004, p. 205), as they also might lead to a ‘conflicts of interest between key actors’ (Hayllar & Wettenhall, 2010, p. 4).

3.1.3 Success factors of public-private partnerships

Additionally to the substantial body of literature that advocates for the integration of PPPs as a means to enhance public service delivery and infrastructure development, there are scholars focusing on the success factors that influence the cooperations’ outcomes post-implementation. Central to these discussions is the consensus on *good governance* as a critical underpinning for successful PPP ventures. Bovaird (2004, pp.

210-211) and Hofmeister and Borchert (2004, pp. 219-220) argue that accountability, responsiveness, transparency, equity, and participation are indispensable for effective PPP operation. In addition, several scholars such as Koppenjan and Enserink (2009, pp. 293) further expand on this by suggesting what PPP projects can achieve through robust institutional frameworks. An important part of such frameworks, some scholars such as Jamali (2004, p. 419) and Pongsiri (2002, p. 493) highlight the necessity of a sound legal and regulatory framework in order to ensure fair and transparent operations and long-term sustainability and success. Specialized expertise is required by governments to manage these complex arrangements effectively. As Bloomfield (2006, pp. 409-410) asserts, for long-term PPP contracts to be successful, governments must not only invest in but also cultivate specialized expertise and effective contract management capabilities. Kettl (1993, p. 6) and Bloomfield (2006, pp. 409-410) further detail this requisite capability, outlining that successful PPP management involves selecting suitable contractual partners, and proficiently managing, monitoring, and enforcing the contracts with the private sector. These actions are critical as they directly influence the ability of a government to uphold its end of the partnership while ensuring that the private entity meets its obligations. Building upon this foundation, in their study, Yang, Hou, and Wang (2013, pp. 303-304) built their analytical framework on three pillars: the market, the operating environment, and the government. They identify additional critical success factors, namely the market potential, institutional guarantee, government credibility, financial accessibility, government capacity, consolidated management, and corruption control (Yang et al., 2013, p. 301) which aligns with the emphasis on good governance and specialized expertise highlighted by other scholars, while also addressing additional factors essential for sustainable PPP operations.

3.1.4 Enhancing Disaster Response: An integral Role of PPPs

The increasing recognition of PPPs as essential in responding to complex crises and disasters, such as the 2008 financial downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores a pivotal moment for the UCPM's engagement with these partnerships. These historical events have highlighted the shortcomings of traditional, solely government-led disaster management approaches, spotlighting the urgent need to leverage the combined strengths and capabilities of both public and private sectors. Scholars such as Castelblanco et al. (2024, p. 57) and Akomea et al. (Akomea-Frimpong et al., 2023, p. 701, 703) have noted the necessity of collaborative efforts to effectively navigate the complexities presented by global crises. This 'immediate creation of reactive short-term collaborative relationships' (Vecchi et al., 2021b, p. 15) are also called *hastily formed networks* (Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 10) and lays in the rationale that the agility and resources of the private sector are critical in complementing public sector capabilities. This perspective seems particularly relevant to the UCPM, as the mechanism seeks to adapt to an evolving landscape of threats by potentially integrating PPPs into its framework.

Cross-sectoral partnerships are seen as instrumental in addressing such complex social issues by leveraging the comparative advantages of each sector. Public sector partners may possess specific mandates or powers to target 'wicked issues' (Andrews & Entwistle,

2010, p. 680; Bovaird, 2004, p. 208), while private sector partners can maximize value for money and deliver outcomes at lower costs (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010, p. 680). This approach reflects a recognition that public agencies alone cannot effectively tackle such challenges, necessitating collaboration with a wide range of organizations across sectors (Bovaird, 2004, p. 208). This is aligned with the growing understanding that addressing tough social problems and achieving beneficial community outcomes requires collaboration among multiple sectors of society, including ‘business, nonprofits and philanthropies, the media, the community, and government’ (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44).

The concept of *community resilience* has also gained traction in recent years, providing ideological support for private involvement in disaster management (Uhnöo & Persson, 2022, p. 440). Resilience shifts away from a government-centered approach and emphasizes shared responsibility across all community sectors, including public, private, and civic sectors (Tierney, 2019, p. 199; Rådestad & Larsson, 2020, p. 86). Cross-sector collaboration, including PPPs, is advocated for in disaster management, with some scholars asserting that PPPs are essential for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from large-scale natural disasters (Stewart et al., 2009, p. 344; Ansell et al., 2010, p. 204). According to Busch and Givens, PPPs can have ‘positive strategic, operational, and tactical impacts in disaster management’ (Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 16) and Chen et al. argue that there is an agreement that PPPs are ‘essential for preparing for, responding to and recovering from large-scale natural disasters’ (Chen et al., 2013, p. 132). In the landscape of disaster management, PPPs have emerged as critical instruments for enhancing societal resilience and streamlining disaster response (Uhnöo & Persson, 2022, pp. 440-441; Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 2). These partnerships, varying from service contracts to information dissemination efforts, represent a strategic realignment of traditional disaster management approaches (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004, pp. 69-70). Busch and Givens (2004) articulate the transformative potential of these collaborations, asserting that PPPs can significantly alter the strategic focus of disaster management agencies by integrating the private sector into the core operational framework of emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation (2013, p. 4). This shift not only broadens the scope of disaster management but also imbues it with a level of flexibility and efficiency previously unattainable through public sector efforts alone (Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 6; Stewart et al., 2009, p. 345). Strategically, PPPs allow government agencies to delegate certain emergency management functions to private entities, thereby freeing up resources and enabling a more focused approach to strategic planning and crisis mitigation (2013, p. 5). Operationally, these partnerships facilitate a more efficient allocation of resources, enhancing the responsiveness of disaster management agencies to emerging needs and challenges (2013, pp. 5-6). An historical analysis of responses to disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina (Waugh & Streib, 2006; Mitchell, 2006; Kapucu, 2006) and the COVID-19 pandemic (Akomea-Frimpong et al., 2023), as well as recommendations from international frameworks like the Hyogo Framework (UNISDR, 2005, p. 11) and his successor the Sendai Framework (UNISDR, 2015), underscore the importance of establishing PPPs to engage the private sector in disaster risk reduction and resilience building. Several countries adopted policy frameworks that emphasize the significance of partnerships for disaster resilience (e.g. Bundesministerium des Innern

und für Heimat (BMI) (2022), Australian Government (2011), Public Safety Canada (2017)).

3.1.5 Case Studies: PPPs at Work in disaster response and Management

Private companies have been found to cooperate with public disaster responders in numerous ways, driven not only by government contracts but also by ‘vested interests in the impacted areas through physical assets, suppliers, customers, and/or corporate values of social responsibility’ (Stewart et al., 2009, p. 345; Uhnöo & Persson, 2022, p. 440). As mentioned above, while empirical evidence presents a varied picture on positive and negative effects, an increasing number of successful examples of PPPs in the context of disaster management are emerging globally (Chen et al., 2013, p. 132; UNISDR, 2008). According to Ballesteros and Useem, ‘less than a third of the world’s 2,000 largest multinational corporations donated to disaster recovery’ (Ballesteros & Useem, 2023, p. 27). However, in the present day, over 90% of these corporations offer some form of support in times of disaster, ranging from financial donations and provision of ‘cash, goods, services, and sometimes even direct relief and logistics’ (Ballesteros & Useem, 2023, p. 27). PPPs in disaster management vary in their nature of cooperation and action but nevertheless have proven instrumental in response efforts, exemplified by companies like Wal-Mart in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the implementation of the IKEA Foundation’s *Better Shelter* initiative and DHL’s Disaster Response Teams (DRTs). These examples underscore the capacity of PPPs to marshal the strengths of both sectors towards the goal of swift and effective mobilization of aid and resources to disaster-stricken communities and can offer insights for the UCPM. It is noteworthy that there are no scholarly case studies of PPPs within the UCPM, due to the only recent emergence.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Wal-Mart played a critical role by distributing relief supplies to affected Gulf Coast residents (2013, p. 6). Leveraging its extensive distribution network and logistical capabilities, Wal-Mart was able to quickly supply essential goods, such as water, food, and emergency supplies, demonstrating the effectiveness of corporate resources in immediate disaster response efforts (Worthen, 2005). Prior to Katrina escalating into a Category Five Hurricane, Wal-Mart’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), established in 2003, was closely monitoring the storm, adjusting its emergency response plans accordingly (Chen et al., 2013, pp. 135-136). Wal-Mart’s approach to collaboration during Katrina was innovative, including the incorporation of a Red Cross senior official into its EOC team (Chen et al., 2013, pp. 135). This partnership facilitated effective coordination between Wal-Mart and the Red Cross, allowing for more efficient distribution of aid and resources (Chen et al., 2013, pp. 135). Furthermore, Wal-Mart’s daily situation reports became a crucial information source for both federal (DHS and the National Infrastructure Coordination Centre) and state authorities, highlighting the retailer’s role as a vital conduit for disaster response information (Chen et al., 2013, pp. 135).

The partnership between UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation exemplifies an approach to engaging with the private sector in humanitarian efforts and disaster response, particu-

larly in enhancing access to clean energy and promoting economic and financial inclusion for refugees (UNHCR, n.d.). According to UNHCR, the IKEA Foundation has significantly impacted UNHCR’s operations and strategic directions through its substantial contributions, exceeding USD 198 million in both cash and in-kind donations since initiating their collaboration in 2010 (UNHCR, n.d.). Additionally, the IKEA Foundation’s Better Shelter initiative was launched to provide safer, more dignified homes for refugees and those affected by disasters (IKEA Foundation, 2023). The project involves the design and production of flat-pack, easy-to-assemble shelters that offer a more durable and secure alternative to traditional emergency tents, aiming to improve the living conditions in refugee camps and disaster-affected areas (IKEA Foundation, 2023). As disaster response effort to the earthquake response in Türkiye and Syria, the IKEA Foundation contributed by committing EUR 10 million to support the provision of 5,000 emergency shelters developed by Better Shelter (IKEA Foundation, 2023). This strategic alliance has not only provided critical support during emergencies but also fostered innovation and scalability in humanitarian solutions (UNHCR, n.d.). The IKEA Foundation’s commitment extends beyond immediate crisis response, focusing on sustainable initiatives that empower refugees to lead dignified lives (UNHCR, n.d.).

In partnership with UNOCHA, DHL has harnessed its global logistics expertise to create a network of around 900 volunteers, forming the *Disaster Response Teams* (DRTs) who provide ‘on-site logistics support at affected airports in the wake of a natural disaster’ (UN OCHA & Deutsche Post DHL Group, 2023, p. 20) and the *Get Airports Ready for Disaster* (GARD) program for airport preparation in ‘areas at risk of natural catastrophes’ (UN OCHA & Deutsche Post DHL Group, 2023, p. 20). These initiatives were born in the wake of the 2003 Bam earthquake’s logistical chaos, which underscores a pivotal moment for DHL, recognizing its capacity to leverage its global network and logistics acumen to aid disaster-stricken communities (UN OCHA & Deutsche Post DHL Group, 2023, pp. 47-48).

For instance, Wal-Mart’s pivotal role in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, leveraging its distribution network to quickly supply essential goods to affected residents, illustrates the logistical prowess that the private sector can bring to disaster relief efforts. Similarly, the IKEA Foundation’s Better Shelter initiative and DHL’s DRTs underscore the innovative solutions and specialized expertise that private partners can contribute to humanitarian efforts. These initiatives reflect a strategic alignment of corporate resources and social responsibility goals with public disaster management objectives, offering models of how PPPs can enhance the capacity to address emergency situations.

3.2 Problem, aim and research questions

While existing literature provides a foundational understanding of PPPs in disaster management and their emergence on a general scale, there remains a notable gap regarding the specific application of PPPs within the UCPM. This gap arises from the novelty of PPPs within the UCPM framework, a development so recent that it was first officially recognized in the 2024 interim evaluation report. Given the nascent incorporation of PPPs into the UCPM and the lack of prior academic scrutiny in this area, it is crucial

to conduct an exploratory study at this early juncture. The emergent nature of the partnerships, juxtaposed with a clear gap in legal and procedural guidance within the UCPM framework, presents a unique opportunity to contribute to a more resilient and adaptive CP mechanism. By delving into the emergence, challenges, and contributions of PPPs, this thesis aims to shed light on the factors explaining the emergence of PPPs and its consequences on the effectiveness of disaster relief and CP.

The period from 2017 to 2022 marks a significant phase in the evolution of the UCPM, characterized by an increased frequency of complex disasters necessitating an evolved response strategy. A coping mechanism that emerged within this strategy has been the development of PPPs, driven by the urgent demands of the war in Ukraine. Despite the apparent benefits of such partnerships that were mentioned in the literature, such as enhanced capacity and broader resource availability, a formal legal and operational framework for integrating PPPs into the UCPM remains absent until today, as the UCPM is based on the idea of state-to-state aid. This gap complicates the cooperation process. The EUCom highlights the benefits and seems to be keen to integrate the private sector in a long term. At the same time, the interim evaluation of the UCPM underscores the critical need for a robust framework to harness the full potential of PPPs, suggesting a pivotal moment for reassessing the mechanism's operational doctrine and legal underpinnings in light of the shift towards inclusive, cross-sectoral collaboration (European Parliament and the Council, 2013, p. 184). There exist concerns about the efficacy, accountability, and governance of such collaborations (European Parliament and the Council, 2013, p. 184) and there are a lot of open questions to be answered, as some MPS underline.

This thesis aims to investigate the emergence and operational dynamics of PPPs within the UCPM, with a particular focus on their integration during the war in Ukraine. It seeks to elucidate the drivers behind this strategic shift, assess the impact of PPPs on the mechanism's crisis response capabilities, and identify the legal and operational challenges that accompany the incorporation of private sector resources and expertise. By doing so, the thesis endeavors to offer a comprehensive analysis of the evolving landscape of CP within the EU, highlighting the potential of PPPs to redefine traditional approaches to disaster management and resilience-building.

This thesis is structured to examine the causes for the emergence and the consequences of PPPs within the UCPM. To comprehensively address these aspects, the study is guided by two primary research questions — one focusing on the driving factors behind the evolution of PPPs, and the other on the consequences of this strategic shift. Each question aims to uncover distinct dimensions of PPP integration within the UCPM:

What are the driving factors behind the evolution of PPPs within the UCPM context, particularly in response to the war in Ukraine?

This question seeks to explore the contextual and strategic influences that have propelled the integration of PPPs into the UCPM. It aims to identify the key motivations and circumstances that have necessitated the adoption of PPPs, particularly in light of

pressing global challenges that demand enhanced operational capabilities and flexibility. The analysis will delve into how these factors have shaped the UCPM’s approach to crisis management and the broader implications for EU disaster response strategies.

What are the consequences of the UCPM’s strategic shift towards PPP involvement in terms of perceived effectiveness and the necessary operational and legal adjustments?

This question examines the impact of the UCPM’s strategic realignment towards greater PPP involvement. It focuses on assessing how this shift has influenced the mechanism’s perceived effectiveness and the adaptations required within its legal and operational framework. The inquiry will scrutinize both the benefits and challenges that have emerged from PPP integration, aiming to provide actionable insights into how the UCPM can design its partnerships to enhance disaster management and CP efforts effectively. The question is examined from two sides, the first part focusing on the immediate consequences of PPP integration, and the second part explores the future prospects and long-term implications of institutionalizing these partnerships within the UCPM. The discussion about this question is divided in two parts, one focusing on immediate consequences, the second one on future prospects.

Given that there is only one event where PPPs occurred within the UCPM and the scarcity of published data on their effectiveness, this thesis opts to focus on *perceived effectiveness* as a primary evaluative metric. Perceived effectiveness within the UCPM refers to the subjective evaluation by stakeholders of how well the UCPM achieves its objectives as defined in Decision No 1313/2013/EU. These objectives include preventing, preparing for, and responding to disasters with an aim to improve the effectiveness of systems in handling natural and man-made disasters (European Parliament and the Council, 2013). Perceived effectiveness, in this context, not only provides a viable alternative to traditional empirical assessments but also captures the subjective evaluations of stakeholders directly involved with or affected by the UCPM’s initiatives. This approach is particularly pertinent in the exploratory phase of studying PPPs within the UCPM, where direct outcomes and impacts are not yet fully measurable or understood. By analyzing how these partnerships are perceived by key actors, the research aims to glean insights into the qualitative aspects of effectiveness, such as stakeholder satisfaction, trust in PPP arrangements, and the subjective assessment of the PPPs’ contribution to the UCPM’s disaster response capabilities.

All in all, the research questions are intended to dissect different aspects of PPP dynamics within the UCPM — analyzing both the causes behind their adoption and the subsequent outcomes of their integration. This dual examination helps in understanding not only why PPPs might become a strategic necessity but also how they would reshape the operational and legal landscapes of the UCPM.

4 Theory

This chapter develops a theoretical framework to analyze the dynamics and implications of PPPs within the UCPM. Understanding the nature of PPPs requires a comprehensive approach that examines both their emergence and their ongoing influence on disaster management strategies. To achieve this, the thesis interlinks two key theories and a summary of success factors derived from the literature. For the causes of PPPs, *Hastily Formed Networks* (HFN) and *Resource Dependency Theory* (RDT) are explored to provide perspectives on the initiation and strategic management of PPPs. For the consequences of PPPs, various success factors identified in the literature are examined to understand their governance and effectiveness. Those are: Good Governance, Institutional Frameworks, Specialized Expertise, disaster response Enhancement and Community resilience. This integrated theoretical approach not only enhances the understanding of the immediate responses to crises but also illuminates the broader strategic implications for EU prevention, preparedness, and response to disasters. The ensuing sections will detail how each theory and factor contributes to the understanding of PPPs and demonstrate their interconnectedness in addressing the research questions posed by this study.

4.1 Framework for Assessing the Causes of PPP involvement in the UCPM

4.1.1 Hastily Formed Networks

According to Busch and Givens, ‘sometimes an emergency will require public and private sector organizations to immediately collaborate, even when they have no previous history of collaboration’ (Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 10). In the wake of the Ukrainian war, this behaviour could be observed when the UCPM started to collaborate with the private sector in channeling donations. These efforts, referred to as *Hastily Formed Networks* (HFNs), underscore the critical need for swift, effective partnerships in times of crisis. The concept of HFNs, elaborated by scholars such as Denning (2006) and further discussed by Busch and Givens (2013) as well as (Vecchi et al., 2021a), provides a theoretical basis for understanding the emergence of PPPs within the UCPM framework.

HFNs emerge out of necessity, formed in response to ‘urgent missions’ (Denning, 2006, p. 17) such as disaster relief, where traditional, slower forms of collaboration are impractical. These networks are characterized by their rapid assembly, cross-sectoral composition, and shared commitment to a significant, immediate goal (Denning, 2006, pp. 16-17). The essence of HFNs is captured by the assertion that ‘the quality of the response depended not on response planning or on new equipment, but on the quality of the network that came together to provide relief’ (Denning, 2006, p. 5).

The incorporation of HFNs into the analysis of PPPs within the UCPM allows for an exploration of how such partnerships are initiated and managed. Furthermore, it sheds light on the communication and coordination challenges inherent in these collaborations, emphasizing the importance of a shared ‘conversation space’ where planning, commitment, and execution of actions occur (Denning, 2006, p. 16). Denning’s work highlights the need for both technological infrastructure and effective human organization to ensure

the success of HFNs (Denning, 2006, p. 19). This perspective is particularly relevant to the UCPM, which operates in a highly complex environment with all MPS and possibly in the future more private sector entities. Moreover, as suggested by Busch and Givens (pp. 10-11, 2013), the dynamics of HFNs — highlighting incentives, penalties, and social factors — offer insights into the mechanisms through which PPPs within the UCPM can be sustained beyond immediate crises. The potential for HFNs to evolve into long-term partnerships points to a strategic opportunity for the UCPM to bolster its resilience and response capacity through enduring collaborations with private sector entities.

4.1.2 Resource Dependency Theory

The integration of PPPs within the UCPM can be further elucidated through the lens of *Resource Dependency Theory* (RDT). Initially developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (2009), RDT posits that organizations form partnerships to secure essential resources that are not readily available within their own confines (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2009, pp. 2-3; Drees & Heugens, 2013, p. 1667). This theory underscores the mutual interdependencies between organizations, which can explain the strategic alliances and collaborative endeavors observed in various organizational contexts (Aung & Lim, 2021; Sapat et al., 2019). Lin suggest that organizations in positions of strength, whether through innovation capabilities, financial resources, or prominent social standing, are more likely to form PPPs as a strategic maneuver to harness government influence and resources for mutual benefit (Lin, 2014, p. 384). Government entities, in turn, are drawn to partnerships with these resource-rich firms, seeing an opportunity to leverage the firms' capabilities and reputation to foster technological innovation and strategic advancements across their industries (Lin, 2014, p. 384). This insight complements the understanding of PPPs within the UCPM, as posited by RDT, where such partnerships are seen as a strategic response to resource dependencies and interorganizational dynamics. This perspective not only clarifies why and how PPPs are formed in the context of disaster management and CP but also shows the strategic motivations behind these collaborative efforts. Moreover, RDT highlights the significance of autonomy and legitimacy gained through these interorganizational arrangements (Drees & Heugens, 2013, p. 1667). For the UCPM, partnering with private entities not only augments its operational capacity but might also enhance its legitimacy in the eyes of the European populace and the international community. It signals a proactive and adaptive approach to disaster management that transcends traditional, solely public sector-driven methods.

All in all, by applying RDT, it is possible to analyze how the UCPM and private partners navigate their interdependencies, addressing resource needs, and leveraging each other's strengths to achieve common goals in disaster management.

4.2 Framework for Assessing the Consequences of PPP involvement in the UCPM

This section of the theoretical framework addresses the second research question which is about the consequences of PPP integration into the UCPM. This part of the theoretical framework elaborates on the critical success factors essential for the effective implementation and sustainability of PPPs and is thus a mix from different frameworks tailored into one fitting for this research. These factors — Good Governance, Specialized Expertise, Institutional Frameworks, Disaster Response Enhancement, and Community resilience — are derived from literature and collectively provide a robust foundation for analyzing how PPPs can enhance disaster management and resilience. Each factor addresses a specific dimension of PPP operations, from ensuring ethical and transparent practices to leveraging the unique strengths of the private sector. By understanding these factors, this framework aims to assess the effectiveness of PPPs in achieving their intended outcomes and to explore the operational and legal adjustments necessary for the UCPM to maximize the benefits of PPP involvement.

Good Governance: This foundational aspect of successful PPPs ensures that partnerships operate within a framework characterized by accountability, responsiveness, transparency, equity, and participation. Effective governance is essential for maintaining public trust and securing the long-term viability of PPPs within the UCPM (See Bovaird, 2004, pp. 210-2011; Hofmeister & Borchert, 2004, pp. 219-220).

An example for good governance is the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) that promotes transparency and reduces corruption in extractive industry agreements by involving national civil society and international validators as watchdogs. This initiative highlights how transparency and accountability can be effectively incorporated into PPPs to ensure public benefits and trust (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 10). Conversely, the absence of good governance can lead to mistrust and inefficiencies. Many PPPs fail to achieve their intended public benefits due to poor implementation or skewed incentives, as highlighted in various assessments. For example, the inadequate regulation and lack of accountability in some PPPs have resulted in limited public benefits and increased costs to consumers, demonstrating the negative impact of poor governance practices (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 8). Further, when businesses and government partners collaborate in disaster management, maintaining accountability is a significant challenge. Issues arise regarding the direction and authority between business and government employees, particularly in non-emergency situations. Additionally, there is the question of how government can ensure it remains in control of emergency management when significant responsibilities are handed to the private sector (Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 15).

Institutional Frameworks: The legal and regulatory backbone provided by institutional frameworks supports PPP operations with clear and consistent guidelines. This robustness is crucial for the stability and adaptability of PPPs, facilitating effective collaboration between public and private sectors (See Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009, p. 293;

Pongsiri, 2002, p. 493).

When it comes to the ‘effective implementation of disaster management policies’ (Gestri, 2012, p. V), the damage after a disaster can be minimized. As an example, Gestri mentions the UCPM as a single delivery platform capable of deploying assistance immediately and coherently, where tasks are distributed to specific partakers in the mechanism which is anchored in the UCPM legal framework (2012, p. V). The absence of a robust institutional framework can lead to significant challenges in disaster management. The disaster management framework in India, despite being structured from the national to the local level, often suffers from a lack of clear specification of roles and responsibilities at the local level (Madan & Routray, 2015, p. 548). The Disaster Management Act of 2005 and the National Policy on Disaster Management of 2009, while providing a broad structure, fail to define the roles and responsibilities of local bodies and communities effectively (Madan & Routray, 2015, p. 546, 548). This gap results in inadequate coordination and delays in response.

Specialized Expertise: The complexity of PPP arrangements in disaster management necessitates a high level of specialized technical and managerial expertise. Cultivating this expertise ensures effective management of PPPs, allowing for informed governance of complex projects (See Bloomfield, 2006, pp. 409-410).

The example of the Mauritius oil spill in 2020 illustrates, how absence of specialised expertise can hinder effective disaster management. During the oil spill, government agencies struggled due to their limited experience in managing such disasters (Nagea & Miller, 2023, p. 5). In contrast, California’s effective response to a similar spill in 2021, facilitated by prior experience and regular drills, highlighted the critical importance of specialized expertise (Nagea & Miller, 2023, p. 5). This comparison underscores how a lack of expertise can delay response efforts and exacerbate the impact of disasters.

Disaster Response Enhancement: Leveraging the private sector’s agility and resources through PPPs enhances the UCPM’s operational capabilities in managing emergencies. This approach integrates private sector innovations into public disaster management strategies, boosting responsiveness and effectiveness (See Busch & Givens, 2013, p. 2, 16).

For instance, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Walmart effectively leveraged its distribution network and logistical expertise to supply essential goods quickly. By incorporating a Red Cross official into its Emergency Operations Centre, Walmart facilitated efficient coordination and became a vital information source for federal and state authorities (Chen et al., 2013) (For details see Literature Review - Case Studies, p. 15). In contrast, a report by FEMA about the response to the Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017 highlights several deficiencies in the agency’s preparedness and response capabilities. Notably, FEMA had nearly empty emergency-supply warehouses and was significantly understaffed, with most of its specialized disaster staff already deployed elsewhere (Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 2018, pp. 26, 28). The absence of reliable telecommunications connectivity in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, coupled with the insufficient availability of logistics staff and the inadequately ad-

justed business processes for the incident’s scope and scale made the response even more difficult (Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 2018, p. 28). This lack of resources and personnel exemplifies the absence of disaster response enhancement.

Community resilience: PPPs enhance community resilience by fostering shared responsibility for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation across public, private, and civic sectors. This broadens the scope of disaster management and ensures a more resilient community framework (See Uhnöo & Persson, 2022, p. 440).

The partnership between UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation, through initiatives like Better Shelter, has improved living conditions for refugees and those affected by disasters, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable solutions (UNHCR, n.d.) (For details see Literature Review - Case Studies, p. 15). For instance, the FEMA report on Hurricane Maria also underscored extensive communication challenges and poor coordination with local authorities and private partners during the response. Many residents were left without power for months, and 95% of cellular sites were out of service, severely complicating recovery efforts (Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 2018, p. 34). Additionally, the prevalence of informal construction and limited flood insurance participation left many without the means to rebuild, highlighting the critical need for improved construction practices and insurance participation (Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 2018, p. 48). These examples illustrate critical gaps in community resilience, emphasizing the necessity for robust PPPs and stronger community involvement to enhance disaster preparedness and resilience.

The success factors identified from the literature form a comprehensive framework for evaluating the impact of public-private partnerships within the UCPM. Good Governance ensures that PPPs operate within a transparent and accountable framework, gaining and maintaining public trust. Specialized Expertise and Institutional Frameworks provide the necessary skills and legal structures to manage complex PPP arrangements effectively. Meanwhile, Disaster Response Enhancement and Community resilience are crucial for leveraging the capabilities of the private sector to improve emergency management and strengthen community resilience. Together, these factors not only support the operational success of PPPs but also contribute to the strategic goals of the UCPM in managing crises more efficiently and effectively. This theoretical framework thus offers a detailed guide for analyzing the contributions of PPPs to the UCPM, helping to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in future collaborations.

4.3 Interlinking of theories

This section elucidates how the theoretical constructs of HFNs, RDT, and success factors are interwoven to address the dual research questions of this study. While HFNs and RDT predominantly address the first research question by explaining the genesis and strategic rationale behind forming PPPs, the success factors are pivotal in tackling the second research question, evaluating the effectiveness and necessary adjustments of these partnerships.

To begin with, it's essential to acknowledge that although RDT and HFNs are examined separately for clarity, these theoretical frameworks are not entirely distinct from each other. There are notable intersections between them; for instance, where RDT refers to *scarcity*, HFNs might use the term *urgency*.

The rapid and sometimes spontaneous formation of PPPs, as described by HFNs, highlights the urgent collaborative efforts necessitated by crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. This theory underscores the need for agile and effective governance structures within the UCPM to manage these emergent collaborations. Good Governance, a key success factor, ensures that these hastily formed collaborations remain transparent, accountable, and participatory, which are essential for maintaining public trust and achieving long-term viability.

Conversely, RDT sheds light on the strategic motivations behind PPP formations, emphasizing the mutual benefits derived from accessing essential resources unavailable within the public sector. This perspective aligns closely with the Institutional Frameworks and Specialized Expertise factors, which ensure that the legal and operational structures are in place to support these strategic alliances effectively.

Both HFN and RDT contribute to the understanding of how PPPs can enhance disaster response capabilities and Community resilience. The success factors of Disaster Response Enhancement and Community resilience illustrate the operational and societal benefits of these collaborations. These factors evaluate how PPPs leverage private sector innovation and resources to not only respond more effectively to emergencies but also strengthen the resilience of communities against future crises.

By weaving together these theories and success factors, this framework not only elucidates the strategic motivations behind the UCPM's shift towards PPPs but also provides a structured approach to examine the operational and legal adjustments necessary for their effective implementation. This comprehensive theoretical integration supports a holistic analysis of how PPPs enhance the UCPM's crisis management capabilities, offering insights into potential long-term benefits and challenges. Through this comprehensive theoretical framework, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations that could inform future policy and strategic decisions within the UCPM.

5 Method and material

This chapter outlines the methodological approach and the materials used in the study. It details the qualitative strategies employed to gather and analyze data, justifying the choice of methods in light of the research's exploratory goals. The subsequent sections discuss the specific design of the research, the data collection techniques used, and the methods for analyzing the data. Further, ethical considerations, limitations of the study are discussed.

5.1 Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the emerging phenomenon of PPPs within the UCPM, recognizing that while PPPs are a well-established concept,

their specific application in this context is a *partially known phenomenon* (Stebbins, 2001, p. 7, Figure by Shaffir and Stebbins, Experiencing fieldwork: An inside view of qualitative research in the social sciences, 1991). The study’s exploratory nature aims to uncover how PPPs are integrated and function within the UCPM, an area where empirical data is notably scarce (Stebbins, 2001, p. 6). This approach not only aids in understanding potential operational and strategic alignments but also helps formulate ideas on how similar frameworks might be adapted or implemented within the UCPM context. To compensate for the scarcity of documentary evidence, the study utilizes semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. Interviews with 17 key stakeholders provide insights into the operational, strategic, and emerging roles of PPPs. These interviews are instrumental in revealing the nuanced processes, personal experiences, and expert opinions that fill the informational void (Nathan et al., 2019, p. 391).

5.2 Operationalisation

This research aims to investigate the emergence and operational dynamics of PPPs within the UCPM. The study seeks to understand the driving factors behind the evolution of PPPs and their consequences on the UCPM’s disaster management capabilities. To structure this study, perceived effectiveness is operationalised based on the theoretical frameworks of HFNs, RDT, and Success Factors in PPPs.

The first aspect of the research focuses on exploring the contextual and strategic influences that have propelled the integration of PPPs into the UCPM, particularly in response to global challenges such as the war in Ukraine. The operationalisation of this dimension involves the following indicators: *Motivations for Partnership Formation* involves understanding the initial reasons and strategic goals behind forming PPPs within the UCPM. *Contextual Influences* is about identifying the specific contextual factors of the Ukraine war that led to the formation of PPPs, such as the scale of the crisis, resource needs, and operational challenges. The *Strategic Goals and Objectives* set by the Commission and its partners in the formation of PPPs includes understanding how PPPs are intended to enhance the UCPM’s disaster response capabilities.

The second aspect of the research explores the necessary operational and legal adjustments required for the integration and management of PPPs within the UCPM framework - looking both at immediate and long-term consequences. The operationalisation of this dimension involves the following indicators: *Necessary Changes in Legal Frameworks* to support PPP integration, including regulations on liability, data protection, and ethical implications are explored. The *Development of Specialized Contracts* that specify roles, responsibilities, and financial arrangements are explored. The *Operational changes, challenges and best practices* are evaluated as well as *values of collaboration* such as trust, transparency, mutual goals and risk-sharing.

The third aspect of the research examines the impact and perceived effectiveness of PPPs within the UCPM. *Perceived effectiveness* refers to the subjective evaluation by stakeholders of how well PPPs achieve their intended outcomes. The operationalisation of this dimension involves the subjective assessment of PPP Contributions to disaster

response capabilities. This involves the subjective evaluation of the perception of other stakeholders as well. The *Long-term impact* on response, community resilience and disaster preparedness is evaluated as well.

The exploratory research is guided by theoretical expectations derived from an extensive literature review, which are then tested through interviews. First, it is anticipated that global crises will expose the limitations of traditional government-led disaster response strategies. These crises are expected to highlight the necessity for enhanced agility and resource mobilization, qualities that PPPs can uniquely provide. Specifically, these crises are anticipated to act as catalysts, accelerating the integration of PPPs within the UCPM as they necessitate rapid and scalable responses that governmental bodies alone may not be able to provide. Furthermore, these crises will underscore the importance of cross-sector collaboration, demonstrating that effective disaster management requires leveraging the strengths and resources of both public and private sectors to fill gaps in response abilities and capacities. Looking at the immediate consequences, the integration of private sector donations through the rescEUDS is expected to result in several legal and operational adjustments, necessitated by the need to work within the existing UCPM framework. Given that the current UCPM legislation does not specifically cater to the channeling of private donations, it is anticipated that legal improvisations were necessary to facilitate these contributions. However, this ad-hoc approach likely encountered several hurdles, primarily due to the absence of a tailored legal framework and the constraints imposed by existing regulations, which could hinder the efficient facilitation of PPPs. Operationally, the ad-hoc setup of the rescEUDS projects is expected to have led to communication challenges among the various stakeholders involved. Additionally, the public sector's lack of specialized expertise may have posed significant challenges. Further, the integration of PPPs is expected to significantly enhance the perceived effectiveness of the UCPM among stakeholders in terms of response capability and capacity. This enhancement is anticipated to be particularly evident in terms of rapidity, adaptability, and comprehensive scope in sense of specialised expertise of crisis responses. Additionally, the integration of PPPs is projected to broaden the reach of the UCPM's disaster management efforts, enabling it to address a wider range of disaster scenarios and enhance its overall response capacity. Lastly, the strategic shift towards PPP involvement is expected to necessitate significant adjustments in operational and legal frameworks. It is expected that this shift will require a clear definition of expectations and roles for all parties involved. This includes delineating responsibilities, establishing performance metrics, and ensuring accountability. Additionally, the integration of PPPs is anticipated to require a robust legal framework that addresses critical issues such as liability, data protection, and the ethical implications of private sector involvement in public crisis management. This framework should ensure that private partners can operate within clear legal boundaries while contributing effectively to disaster response efforts. To manage diverse capabilities and resources of private partners, the development of specialized contracts is expected. These contracts should specify roles, responsibilities, and financial arrangements, ensuring that all parties have a clear understanding of their obligations and the resources they can access. Furthermore,

the establishment of processes for cost coverage is anticipated, ensuring that financial aspects of PPP involvement are transparently managed. This includes mechanisms for cost-sharing, reimbursement, and financial accountability. Finally, the integration of the private sector into the EU’s crisis response communication networks, such as granting access to CECIS, is expected. This integration will facilitate real-time information sharing, coordination, and decision-making, enhancing the overall efficiency of disaster response efforts. These theoretical expectations aim to uncover new insights and deepen the understanding of the strategic, operational, and legal complexities of PPPs in enhancing disaster management capabilities within the UCPM. The success factors derived from the literature will provide a comprehensive framework to evaluate the consequences of PPP integration, ensuring a detailed analysis of its impact on the effectiveness and resilience of the UCPM.

By operationalizing these dimensions, the study aims to provide a structured and comprehensive analysis of the role and impact of PPPs within the UCPM. This approach offers actionable insights and recommendations for future policy and strategic decisions, particularly in enhancing the mechanism’s disaster management capabilities and overall resilience.

5.3 Data Collection

To gain in-depth insights into the operational, strategic, and policy implications of PPPs within the UCPM, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews are chosen for their ability to elicit detailed narratives and personal experiences, providing depth and context to the study of PPPs within the UCPM (Nathan et al., 2019, p. 391). This format is particularly effective in exploratory research, as it allows respondents to discuss their experiences, perceptions, and opinions in detail, which are crucial for understanding the nuances of PPP implementation and operation (Nathan et al., 2019, p. 393).

Recognizing that the UCPM, like any organizational setting, has its ‘own formal structures and informal hierarchies and relationships’ (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.35), it is crucial to include a diverse range of participants. For the selection of participants, the study employed a purposive sampling strategy, aiming to cover a wide range of experiences within the UCPM framework. The interview partners can be divided into the following groups: Member State representatives, Participating State representatives, Experts, representatives from DG ECHO, and representatives from the private sector. Following the definition of Experts of Halperin and Heath (2020, p. 324), they are ‘individuals with specialised knowledge or expertise’ in the area of disaster response within the UCPM. A list of potential interview partners was created, built on web research to identify relevant interview partners as well of contacts from my own network that were considered suitable interview partners. This list included all MPS of the UCPM, as well as a list with representatives of DG ECHO, the private sector and other experts. Additionally, later in the process, a *chain referral approach* was utilized, where an initial contact at DG ECHO well connected in the realm of private donations as well

as some interview partners helped in identifying participants, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the PPP landscape within the UCPM (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.38). In the recruitment process, the potential interviewees were contacted via email addresses found on relevant websites or gained through introduction by others. Due to the time restriction of the thesis, only MPS whose contact information or relevant authorities were easily identifiable were approached, as the process presented challenges, such as language barriers and difficulties in identifying the appropriate contacts due to the complexity or opacity of some websites. Additionally, attending the CP Forum in Brussels allowed for the acquisition of four more interview contacts. These were individuals who either lacked accessible contact information previously or who had not responded to initial emails. In total, 17 interviews were conducted during May and July 2024. An overview of the number of contacted persons per group as well as a list of participants is available in the Appendix 1. For those interviewees who chose to remain anonymous, they are only categorized by Sector and - if allowed - specified as far as possible.

Semi-structured interviews are chosen for their flexibility, allowing the interviewer to explore complex issues such as opinions and experiences in depth (Denscombe, 2021, p. 230). Each research question is firmly grounded in the theoretical framework of this study. The interview guide (See appendix) is structured around key themes but will allow for flexibility in the discussion, enabling interviewees to elaborate on points of interest, thus enriching the data collected (Denscombe, 2021, p. 231). This flexibility in the interview format is crucial, as it accommodates the natural progression of discussion, which can vary significantly between participants (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p. 50). It also enables the interviewer to probe deeper into particularly relevant or interesting areas that may arise during the conversation (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, pp. 46). The guide emphasizes the use of open-ended questions, which encourages respondents to provide detailed stories, reflections, and opinions, termed as *rich talk* by Magnusson (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p. 48). This approach not only yields depth in responses but also ensures that the data collected is comprehensive and nuanced, reflecting the complex dynamics at play in cross-sector collaborations within disaster management (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.48). Each question within the guide is directly linked to the integrated theoretical frameworks of HFNs, RDT and Success Factors, ensuring that the data collected is relevant and can be effectively analyzed within these constructs. It also follows the categories presented in the section about the Operationalization. For instance, questions about the initiation and operationalisation of PPPs explore the rapid assembly and resource allocation strategies, aligning with the principles of HFNs and RDT. This helps in understanding not only the strategic rationale behind forming these partnerships but also the practical aspects of their execution within the UCPM's complex multi-actor environment. Further, questions related to the legal frameworks, challenges, and best practices in managing PPPs are designed to uncover insights into the regulatory and operational hurdles and successes. These align with the Success Factors by highlighting the importance of regulatory environments and adaptive management practices that facilitate or hinder effective collaboration and governance within PPPs.

5.4 Data Analysis

Given the exploratory nature of this study, thematic analysis has been selected as the most appropriate qualitative data analysis method. This method is well-suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data and allowed for an in-depth exploration of how PPPs are perceived and operationalized within the UCPM context (Denscombe, 2021, p. 329). The flexibility and versatility of this analytical framework allows researchers to use it for many types of studies. Braun et al. suggest thematic analysis for example to ‘examine the “factors” that influence, underpin, or contextualize particular processes or phenomena’ and ‘identify views about particular phenomena’ (Braun et al., 2019, p. 850) which are particularly relevant for this study.

The data analysis was conducted mainly following the procedures recommended by Denscombe (2021, pp. 329-334). Initially, all recorded interviews were transcribed, and if the participant opted for an anonymisation of the interview, the anonymisation was facilitated. These transcripts were thoroughly read by the researcher to fully immerse in the data. Preliminary notes were taken during these readings to identify potential patterns, setting the foundation for the subsequent coding process.

In order to ensure a rigorous and systematic analysis of the qualitative data collected, this study utilized ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. The selection of ATLAS.ti is grounded in its robust capabilities for managing complex datasets, including diverse forms of text and multimedia materials (Cypress, 2019, p. 215, 217). Additionally, ATLAS.ti enhances the transparency of the research process by providing a detailed audit trail of coding decisions and data manipulations, which supports the credibility and reproducibility of the study’s findings as well as ensures consistent coding (Cypress, 2019, p. 216). By employing ATLAS.ti, the study ensures a structured and verifiable analytical process, thereby bolstering the integrity and depth of the analysis and facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the operational, strategic, and policy implications of public-private partnerships within the UCPM.

The coding utilized a combined approach of reflexive and codebook thematic analysis to maximize the extraction of pertinent themes from the interviews (Braun et al., 2019, pp. 848-849). The codebook approach was initially employed using predefined codes based on the established theoretical frameworks of HFNs, RDT, and the identified success factors (See appendix). This structured coding method provided a consistent lens through which the data were examined, highlighting known theoretical constructs and their implications on PPP dynamics and strategies (Braun et al., 2019, p. 847, 849). Concurrently, a reflexive approach was adopted to allow for the emergence of new themes from the data, capturing insights and patterns that extended beyond the existing frameworks (Denscombe, 2021, pp. 331). This inductive coding strategy added depth and flexibility to the analysis, accommodating both anticipated and novel elements of PPP integration within disaster management contexts (Denscombe, 2021, pp. 331). The choice of employing both reflexive and codebook thematic analysis aligns with Stebbins’ arguments on the nature of exploratory research, which suggests that such studies can benefit from integrating both inductive and deductive reasoning (Stebbins, 2001, p. 7). Stebbins emphasizes that exploratory research often begins with

inductive observations that are largely shaped by an emerging theoretical framework, yet it can also include deductive elements that allow for the confirmation of emergent generalizations. By adopting a codebook approach grounded in established theoretical frameworks alongside a reflexive approach that encourages the emergence of new themes from the data, this study effectively balances structured, theory-driven analysis with the flexibility to uncover novel insights about PPPs within the UCPM. This methodological combination ensures a comprehensive understanding of both anticipated and emergent phenomena, thereby enriching the analysis with a depth that purely inductive or deductive approaches might not achieve.

After the initial coding, the identified codes were collated across the dataset and examined for overarching themes (Denscombe, 2021, pp. 333). This stage involved a rigorous review and refinement process to ensure each theme's coherence and relevance. Themes were evaluated to confirm whether they accurately reflected the meanings evident in the data and were appropriately linked back to the research questions and theoretical framework (Denscombe, 2021, pp. 333). Each theme was clearly defined and named, involving a process to refine what each theme covered and determining the unique aspects of the data captured by each theme (Denscombe, 2021, pp. 333). The final step involved synthesizing the thematic analysis with the analytic narrative, integrating the themes within the existing research literature. This synthesis discussed how the findings from the interviews contribute to a deeper understanding of PPP integration and effectiveness within the UCPM.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity is paramount in conducting research that involves human participants. In accordance with established ethical guidelines, this study ensures that all participants are provided with comprehensive information about the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, and their rights as participants. Before conducting any interviews, informed consent was obtained, detailing participants' 'rights to decline to answer any questions, the right to end the interview at any point or not to enter the study at all, and the right to confidentiality and anonymity' (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.44). This research emphasizes the voluntary nature of participation, ensuring that interviewees understand they are not obliged to respond to questions that make them uncomfortable. The research upholds strict confidentiality measures; all collected data is securely stored and accessible only to the researcher, complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Respectful and non-judgmental interaction is maintained throughout the interview process to prevent any discomfort to the participants. Furthermore, upon completion of the interviews, participants are offered a debriefing session where they can ask questions about the study and are informed about their right to access the final thesis.

5.6 Limitations, Generalization and Robustness of the study

This study acknowledges several limitations. Firstly, the inherent nature of qualitative research limits the generalizability of the findings. The insights gained are context-specific and derived from a purposive sample of stakeholders, which may not represent all potential perspectives within the UCPM. From the 17 interviews conducted, only two were with representatives from the private sector, whereas only one interview was conducted with a representative from a company who actually donated through the UCPM. The other representative comes from a company who is interested in cooperating with the UCPM but did not do so yet. Identifying the right contacts or companies that had donated through the UCPM and publicly acknowledged their contributions proved challenging. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that many companies preferred to remain anonymous. This limitation underscores the challenges in obtaining a comprehensive view of private sector involvement in the UCPM and highlights the potential gaps in the data collected. Further, the reliance on semi-structured interviews might introduce biases linked to the subjective interpretations of the participants and the researcher's own analytical perspective.

Beyond the context of the UCPM, the applicability of these findings to other CP systems around the world also warrants careful consideration. Different regions and countries have varying legal frameworks, operational capacities, and political climates that might affect the feasibility and effectiveness of PPPs in disaster management in a different way. For instance, in countries where private sector capabilities and governmental transparency differ, the implementation of PPPs might encounter significant challenges. Moreover, cultural differences could influence stakeholder expectations and the perceived legitimacy of private involvement in traditionally public sectors.

A quantitative method, such as surveys or statistical analysis, or a mixed-method approach could potentially provide broader generalizations about the prevalence and types of PPPs across the UCPM. However, this approach was not chosen due to the lack of existing data sets on PPPs within the UCPM and the study's focus on in-depth, contextual understandings of PPP dynamics rather than numerical generalizations. Conducting detailed case studies of specific instances of PPPs within the UCPM could provide deep insights into individual examples. However, given the nascent stage of PPP integration in the UCPM, a broader exploratory approach using semi-structured interviews was chosen to first identify general trends and themes. Additionally, the exploratory nature of this study is designed to generate initial insights of PPPs within the UCPM rather than to produce findings that are universally generalizable. However, the results may still offer valuable implications for similar contexts within emergency management and public administration. Future studies could expand upon this research by incorporating quantitative methods or broader samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings across different settings. Further, conducting detailed case studies of specific instances of PPPs within the UCPM and comparing these with other international examples could provide deep insights into individual examples and help identify global trends and divergences.

To enhance the robustness and trustworthiness of the findings, several methodological strategies were employed. First, as many people from different stakeholder groups as

possible were interviewed, sticking as closely as possible to the interview guide and using the same wording when appropriate. This approach not only provided multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon but also helped validate findings through cross-verification across different interviewees. The use of a combined reflexive and codebook approach to thematic analysis further strengthened the study. This method allowed for a structured analysis grounded in established theories while remaining open to emerging themes and insights that were not anticipated at the outset of the research. Such a balanced approach ensured that the analysis was both comprehensive and sensitive to the complexities of the data. Moreover, the iterative process of data collection and analysis enabled continuous reflection and adjustment of the research methods, enhancing the adaptability and depth of the study.

6 Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the research and provides a discussion of these results. It is structured into two main sections, each addressing one of the research questions.

6.1 Causes of PPP Evolution within the UCPM

This chapter presents and discusses the research results, focusing on the driving factors behind the emergence of PPPs within the UCPM. It interprets the findings through the lenses of RDT and HFNs, using relevant codes and topics associated with each theory. While the theoretical explanations provided by RDT and HFNs are analyzed separately for clarity, it is important to recognize that these frameworks are not mutually exclusive. These similarities underscore that, despite the distinct theoretical lenses, the underlying dynamics they describe often converge, offering complementary insights into the factors driving the emergence of PPPs within the UCPM. The chapter is divided into two main sections:

The first section, Urgency and Necessity, examines the immediate and pressing needs that catalyzed the formation of PPPs, aligning with the theoretical framework of HFNs. This section uses the codes and topics relevant to HFNs (See Appendix 3, Table 6) to present the findings and then discusses how they align with the theory.

The second section, Scarcity and Dependency, focuses on the resource scarcity and dependencies that necessitated the involvement of private sector partners, as viewed through the lens of RDT. This section employs the codes and topics pertinent to RDT (See Appendix 3, Table 7) to present the research results and discusses their alignment with the theoretical expectations.

Urgency and Necessity

The interviews revealed that the war in Ukraine created an urgent and unprecedented need for resources and expertise, quickly overwhelming national CP authorities. The

immediate response required mobilizing additional resources swiftly and efficiently, leading to the formation of PPPs. The escalation of demands underscored the pressing need for rapid deployment and coordination.

One of the motivations for public sector assistance was the obligation to provide timely and adequate support, as mandated by the principles of solidarity, coordination, and effective disaster management outlined in Decision No 1313/2013/EU on the UCPM. As MPS of the UCPM, they are inherently responsible for upholding these values and responding to emergencies. While contributions through the UCPM are voluntary, there is a strong underlying responsibility to act in accordance with the mechanism's objectives. The scale and complexity of the crisis exceeded the capacities of the Commission and MPS, necessitating new solutions to bridge resource gaps, such as the integration of the private sector to leverage additional resources and expertise.

Participants highlighted that the demands in Ukraine far surpassed the normal disaster response capacities of the UCPM. One expert noted that the UCPM deployed around €796 million in financial value of in-kind assistance and emergency operations to Ukraine, marking the largest CP operation to date, and underscoring the need for collaboration with the private sector.

Participant 5 highlighted that the demands in the Ukraine for goods and support increased dramatically, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing how the war exacerbated the situation. Another participant emphasized the exceptional nature of the emergency, noting its wide-ranging impact and prolonged duration, which made it impossible for authorities to respond effectively without external support:

We have never seen this kind of emergency before. It's so wide, it affects all sectors of society, and assistance is needed in all sectors of society. And it has lasted over two years now. So this is exceptional and authorities cannot answer to this kind of emergency by themselves effectively enough.

(Heikki Honkanen, Specialist - Department for Rescue Services, Ministry of the Interior of Finland)

The overwhelming need on the ground was the primary motivation mentioned for integrating PPPs during the war in Ukraine. Conventional means were insufficient to meet these extraordinary demands, making the rapid deployment of resources essential. Participants also recognized the potential role of the private sector in ensuring continuous aid delivery when traditional supply chains were exhausted.

In Ukraine, the protracted situation regarding humanitarian needs are so great that Member States have probably exhausted or nearly exhausted the more traditional supply chains to deliver aid to those most in need, and now have to think imaginatively working with the private sector and other entities to ensure the donations of aid continue.

(Paul Rock, Senior Advisor, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management Ireland)

The ability to channel resources effectively, sharing the effort among several stakeholders, was seen as a key success factor. Participant 5 named the UCPM a ‘successful example’ for channeling various donations through a well-established system, ensuring that the right materials reached those most in need. Coordination was highlighted as a direct win, with central management preventing dilution of efforts and ensuring that aid was delivered where it was most needed.

The extensive range of supplies provided through PPPs illustrated the breadth of the needs, with detailed lists from Ukraine showing the necessity of integrating private sector resources to meet diverse demands.

The UCPM provided - to give you an idea - over 100,000 tons of goods⁴ to Ukraine in all sectors. This covers energy generators, small generators, spare parts for electricity grids, etcetera, because this is often under heavy attack. This is about shelter, different kinds of shelter. This is about medical equipment. This is about stockpiles of medical equipment, CBRN - Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear - support as well. This is about transport, ambulances, iodine pills.

(Maarten Vergauwen, Team Leader - UCPM Policy Development and Cross-sectoral Preparedness, DG ECHO)

The HFNs established might convert into long-term partnerships could be evaluated as beneficial in the eye of both public and private sector. Public sector agencies, for instance, gained a deeper understanding of the private sector’s organization and key contacts, enhancing overall disaster response resilience.

One example from Norway demonstrated how this network-building was beneficial not just for the UCPM as a whole but also for the MPS. The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) was able to quickly source needed equipment for ‘an area in Norway that was in desperate need for power supply’ (Mari Løwehr, Duty Officer, DSB) due to the relationships built through the UCPM.

From the private sector’s perspective, companies engaged in PPPs not only to assist in the humanitarian crisis but also with an eye towards future benefits, such as maintaining market stability and ensuring continued business operations in crisis-affected regions.

I haven’t discussed this with my leader, but I believe in when Ukraine will start to rebuild again, I think might be able to help out in some ways there, but that’s a long shot.

(Participant 4, Private Sector)

However, there were also instances where companies and donations were rejected because their motivations were perceived as purely capitalistic and not aligned with the humanitarian objectives of the UCPM. Whereas this kind of network building for the private sector might be underlied by more economic motivations such as generating

⁴Current number reaches 150,000 tons of goods as up to mid-August 2024

profit, there were also altruistic or humanitarian motivations mentioned by the interviewees. According to several participants, many companies and their employees felt a genuine desire to assist in the face of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and acted out of solidarity.

I believe personally that there were some truly emotional and human reactions from some private sector companies that wanted to do something because we were all in shock in Europe, everyone.

(Maarten Vergauwen)

Despite these varied motivations, participants generally agreed on the importance of shared goals between the public and private sectors. The alignment of goals, particularly the common aim of supporting affected populations and ensuring effective disaster management, facilitated the formation of PPPs. However, some participants noted that the interests of the private sector could sometimes differ significantly from those of the public sector, creating a need for balance to ensure that both sectors could complement each other without compromising their respective aims.

We cannot align the goals of the private sector because the private sector is an economic sector in most of the cases and has different aims. And we cannot take their aims away. So we have to kind of come together and see where we can complement each other without losing every aim of the sector. Then we have an overlapping area where we can have a common aim.

(Participant 7, Expert)

Resource Scarcity and Dependency

The war in Ukraine underscored significant resource gaps in the public sector, necessitating the involvement of private sector partners. The interviews suggested that these gaps were not just in volume but also in the specialized nature of the needs, highlighting the critical role of PPPs in mobilizing resources that were otherwise unavailable or insufficient within the public sector alone. The complexity of sourcing specialized equipment was particularly challenging due to the ‘closed nature of certain markets’, as one participant noted, making procurement difficult for public authorities. Participant 2 brings up the concrete example from the energy sector:

That’s why they [the Commission] accept also the private donations. Especially within the energy sector, [they are] very important because this specialized equipment, it’s not possible to go to the shop and buy it or to order, to produce. You have to get it from the energy companies.

(Participant 2, Member State)

Additionally, the lack of specialized know-how in public agencies often required reliance on private partners for the necessary skills and technologies. Participants 3 emphasized the effective collaboration with a logistical partner, noting their experience in

coordinating multiple inbound donations. This collaboration ensured that the logistics of receiving and distributing aid were handled efficiently.

Beyond the immediate needs in Ukraine, some participants highlighted the potential usefulness of specialized expertise in other areas, such as cybersecurity, where public authorities might lack the technical competence, necessitating external support from the private sector.

Integrating the private sector into procurement processes and leveraging their expertise was anticipated to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness. By centralizing efforts and avoiding the dilution of resources, the UCPM ensured that contributions were complementary and effectively addressed existing gaps.

Then there is obviously a notion of complementarity. I mean, there are gaps which might be filled through donations or contributions from other than the usual public service partners, i.e. from private industry companies.

(Participant 5, Expert)

Furthermore, utilizing donations and leveraging private sector efficiencies allowed the public sector to achieve more with fewer expenditures, optimizing taxpayer money as noted by Maarten Vergauwen from DG ECHO. Tax relief for donations also incentivized private companies to engage in cooperation, as participants noted, with some companies benefiting from exemptions and tax reductions for their contributions.

Generally, most participants acknowledged the inherent profit motives in the private sector's engagement. As Mario Di Gennaro pointed out:

This is a company and the company has to earn money. That's their purpose. They have to pay their employees, [...] they have to expand and so on.

(Mario Di Gennaro, Head of Competence Center for EU Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.)

Additionally, companies sometimes used these opportunities to offload surplus or obsolete stock, which can have operational benefits.

For the private sector, these engagements were not only about profit but also about creating value and demonstrating their importance to customers.

It's easy saying private equals revenue and money. It is like that. But then we have to dive into that because it's not just making money for money, it's really showing them [Note by interviewer: the customers] the value they can get from what we produce.

(Franck Ranera, ICEYE)

Lastly, integrating the private sector into security and crisis management fosters a culture of shared security and resilience, contributing to long-term stability. This collaborative approach was seen as a positive long-term outcome, helping to build a more resilient society through shared efforts.

6.1.1 Discussion: driving factors for PPP emergence

Urgency and Necessity

One theoretical expectation posited that global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine would expose the limitations of traditional government-led disaster response strategies. These crises were expected to highlight the necessity for enhanced agility and resource mobilization, qualities that PPPs can uniquely provide. Specifically, these crises were anticipated to act as catalysts, accelerating the integration of PPPs within the UCPM as they necessitate rapid and scalable responses that governmental bodies alone may not be able to provide. Furthermore, these crises were expected to underscore the importance of cross-sector collaboration, demonstrating that effective disaster management requires leveraging the strengths and resources of both public and private sectors to fill gaps in response abilities and capacities.

The empirical evidence collected from the interviews supports the theoretical expectations to a significant extent. The interviews revealed that the war in Ukraine created an urgent and unprecedented need for resources and expertise, rapidly overwhelming national CP authorities. The immediate response required mobilizing additional resources swiftly and efficiently, leading to the formation of PPPs. This aligns with the HFN theory, which posits that crises necessitate the rapid assembly of cross-sectoral networks to address urgent missions.

According to the HFN theory, we would expect the integration of PPPs to be driven by the immediate need for resources and the necessity to coordinate efforts effectively. The war in Ukraine presented an exceptional situation where the existing capacities of MPS were insufficient, highlighting the public sector's motivation to form a network with the private sector. Traditionally, the UCPM relied on the resources and capabilities of MPS to address crises. However, given the scale and complexity of the Ukraine crisis, it became clear that conventional means were inadequate. This unprecedented scenario necessitated the Commission to explore new approaches, including integrating the private sector to leverage their resources and expertise. This approach was met with a 'private sector readiness' (Participant 5, Expert) to cooperate, leading to the formation of PPPs. The deployment of significant resources and the need for coordination further underscore the importance of rapid and flexible responses, as highlighted by the UCPM's efforts to channel donations through a well-established system. The involvement of the private sector marked a significant shift, emphasizing the extraordinary nature of the crisis and the need for innovative solutions.

The need for additional resources and the ability to channel these resources effectively were also emphasized by participants. This reflects the HFN theory's assertion that the quality of the response depends on the quality of the network that comes together to provide relief. The extensive range of supplies provided through PPPs illustrates the breadth of the needs and the necessity of integrating private sector resources to meet diverse demands.

A component of HFN theory is the establishment of common goals among network

participants. Some participants highlighted that the formation of PPPs was facilitated by the alignment of common goals, such as supporting affected populations and ensuring effective disaster management. As Sara Bertilsson from MSB noted, shared goals are essential for the cooperation to work effectively. However, the alignment of goals between public and private sectors was not always straightforward. Several participants highlighted that CP is fundamentally a public service and the responsibility of the state, suggesting an inherent tension between the different aims of the public and private sectors. While some participants emphasized the importance of shared humanitarian goals, others pointed out the differing motivations between the sectors. For instance, the private sector's economic interests and public sector's duty to provide public service often led to contrasting objectives. Participant 7 noted that achieving a balance where both sectors can pursue their goals without compromising their core objectives was crucial. This nuanced view indicates that while common goals are vital for effective PPPs, the alignment of these goals can be complex and not always fully achievable. Moreover, the rejection of some donations due to perceived purely economic motivations underscores the challenges in aligning goals within HFN. One participant mentioned that certain companies and donations were rejected because their motivations were seen as purely capitalistic and not aligned with the humanitarian objectives of the UCPM. This highlights a key limitation in the HFN theory: while rapid network formation is crucial, ensuring that all participants share genuinely aligned goals is equally important to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the response.

Summed up, the empirical evidence supports the theoretical expectation that global crises highlight the necessity for enhanced agility and resource mobilization, accelerating the integration of PPPs within the UCPM. The war in Ukraine created an unprecedented need for resources, overwhelming national CP authorities and necessitating rapid mobilization through PPPs. This urgency required comprehensive assistance beyond normal UCPM capacities, emphasizing the necessity of integrating private sector partners to effectively address the crisis. While there were challenges in aligning goals and coordinating efforts, the overall formation of PPPs demonstrated the significant role of private sector cooperation in addressing immediate needs and enhancing disaster response capabilities.

Resource Scarcity and Dependency

One theoretical expectation based on RDT posited that organizations form partnerships to secure essential resources that are not readily available within their own confines. For the UCPM, this would mean leveraging the specialized resources and expertise of private sector partners to address gaps in response capabilities. Additionally, RDT highlights the significance of autonomy and legitimacy gained through these interorganizational arrangements, suggesting that such partnerships could enhance the UCPM's operational capacity and its legitimacy in the eyes of the European populace and the international community.

The empirical evidence collected from interviews largely supports these theoretical expectations. The war in Ukraine highlighted significant resource gaps on the public

sector side, necessitating the involvement of private sector partners. The interviews revealed that these gaps were not just in volume but also in the specialized nature of the needs, emphasizing the critical role of PPPs in mobilizing resources that were otherwise unavailable or insufficient within the public sector alone. The complexity of sourcing specialized equipment, particularly in sectors like energy, was emphasized by participants. As noted by Participant 2, certain specialized equipment could only be sourced from energy companies, highlighting the necessity of private donations. This aligns with RDT's assertion that partnerships are formed to secure resources that are not readily available within the organization. Furthermore, the lack of specialized know-how in public agencies often necessitated reliance on private partners who could offer the required skills and technologies. One participant emphasized the effective collaboration with a logistical partner, underscoring their experience and the importance of coordination. This reliance on private sector expertise for specialized skills and technologies supports the RDT framework, highlighting the mutual interdependencies between organizations.

The anticipation of efficiency and cost-effectiveness through the integration of private sector resources also supports the theoretical expectation of optimizing resource use. By centralizing efforts and avoiding the dilution of resources across multiple smaller channels, the UCPM ensured that contributions were complementary and effectively addressed existing gaps. As Participant 5 noted, avoiding fragmented efforts ensured a more streamlined and effective response. The economic motivations of the private sector, such as tax relief and operational benefits, further align with RDT. In this context, tax relief serves as a financial incentive, while operational benefits such as offloading surplus or obsolete stock reduce inventory and storage costs. These incentives represent significant reasons for private companies to engage in PPPs, aligning with RDT's notion that organizations form partnerships to optimize resource use and achieve strategic advantages.

RDT also posits that interorganizational arrangements can enhance an organization's autonomy and legitimacy. For the UCPM, partnering with private entities not only augmented its operational capacity but also had the potential to enhance its legitimacy. By effectively responding to crises through these partnerships, the UCPM could bolster its credibility and trust within the EU and the international community.

However, the rejection of private sector partners due to perceived purely economic motivations underscores the complexity of maintaining legitimacy. One participant mentioned that certain companies and donations were rejected because their motivations were seen as purely capitalistic and not aligned with the humanitarian objectives of the UCPM. This highlights a critical aspect of RDT: while partnerships can enhance legitimacy, they must align with the core values and objectives of the public sector to be effective.

Moreover, while the inclusion of private sector resources through direct cooperation at the EU level has significantly complemented the assistance provided by MPS, it's important to recognize that the overall impact, although substantial, remains smaller compared to the volumes managed by traditional CP authorities which also integrate private donations into their efforts. In this context, the UCPM's mandate to meet critical needs might have been fulfilled even without private sector involvement, but likely with

more limited effectiveness and scope. This underscores the importance of balancing the integration of private sector capabilities with the need to ensure that these partnerships enhance, rather than compromise, the public sector’s responsibility and legitimacy.

In summary, the empirical evidence supports the theoretical expectation that the integration of PPPs within the UCPM is driven by the necessity to address resource scarcity and dependency. The need for specialized resources and expertise that public agencies could not independently provide necessitated a collaborative approach. By leveraging the strengths of private sector partners, the UCPM was able to mobilize critical resources quickly and effectively. However, the evidence also underscores the challenges in maintaining legitimacy and the complexities involved in aligning the diverse objectives of public and private sector partners.

6.2 Consequences of the UCPM’s Strategic Shift Towards PPP involvement

In the following, the consequences of the UCPM’s integration of the private sector donations are discussed, using the Success Factors identified in the literature (See Appendix 3, Table 8).

6.2.1 Current State: immediate consequences of Private Sector Integration with the rescEU Donation Scheme

As discussed with research question one, the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022 created an urgent need for resources and expertise, overwhelming national CP authorities. The immediate response required mobilizing additional resources swiftly and efficiently, leading to the formation of PPPs. This section will explore the immediate legal and operational adjustments made to facilitate this rapid integration.

To understand the legal consequences, it is essential to first understand the initial steps taken when the need for resources became apparent.

Maarten Vergauwen explains the situation that DG ECHO faced succinctly:

If things would go wrong, like Ukraine, [...] with the Member States overwhelmed, and nor the CP Pool nor rescEU, nor the Commission, through direct procurement would be able to respond sufficiently. So what’s left then? We have to look for partners outside the usual system [...] And then you can think of stronger cooperation with NATO. Problem is, if we are in a situation where there is spillover of the conflict and when we’re in a war scenario, NATO will be busy [...]. Hence, another obvious partner to cooperate is the private sector.

Referring to the pyramid of capacities that was presented in the background chapter, the integration of the private sector donations adds a ‘new layer of support’ (Cristian Gimenez, DG ECHO) to the UCPM response capabilities.

The usual procedure for private sector donations within the context of the UCPM involves private entities initially contacting their respective national CP authorities.

These authorities then channel the offers through the established UCPM system. Subsequently, the UCPM coordinates the assistance and provides financial support for the transportation of these donations.

Cristian Gimenez explains:

On top of that [usual procedure] we created this system to attract additional donations, also to provide support to these international authorities, which were at the time overwhelmed with the amount of offers that they were receiving from their own private sector.

Considering the limited capacities of the national authorities to channel, paired with an anticipative request for support from the Ukrainian authorities and the Private Sector offering its donations, DG ECHO decided to rapidly find a way with the current UCPM legal framework to integrate private sector partners. Two primary options were considered for channeling the donations. The first option was that the Commission would accept donations from MPS and ensuring their delivery to the final destination, utilizing the internally called *direct procurement provision*, outlined in Regulation (EU) 2021/836, Article 12(3)(b), which allows the Commission to create a rescEU capacity through an emergency act. However, the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 posed a challenge: donations to the Commission over €50,000 required additional approval from the European Parliament and the Council, which could take several months (European Parliament and the Council, 2018). This delay was problematic given the urgency of the Ukraine crisis, which is why a second option was chosen to facilitate the donations, working under the name EU Private Donations Scheme. This option involved integrating the donations into the rescEU strategic reserve via MPS, as outlined in Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019, which established rescEU as an instrument. This means that MPS would manage the donations as part of their rescEU capacities. The creation of each new rescEU capacity requires the enactment of an implementing act that stipulates the minimum requirements, detailed in the annex of the legislation. Instead of creating a new rescEU capacity from scratch, the Commission decided to leverage existing capacities as stipulated by the legislation. The available capacities were reviewed, and the medical stockpile was selected as the most appropriate capacity for this initiative. Initial discussions and inquiries led to Belgium stepping forward to host the private sector donations. Later, another project was also started in Poland (DG ECHO, 2024a). Belgium, having an established capacity, opted to create a new capacity specifically for this operation. A new contract was formulated under rescEU, where Belgium - and later Poland - would manage the reception and storage of the donations⁵. Unlike the usual procedure, where Belgium and Poland would procure items through public procurement and the stock them to then deliver them to a country in need, they directly received donations from the private sector and then channeled them. Simply put, this option changed the overall procurement process, and added the

⁵The hub in Belgium was closed in February 2024 as the project ended. The hub in Poland is still operating

private sector as an entity to the process.

The newly setup structure involves four key entities: The ERCC, the rescEU hubs in Poland and Belgium ⁶, the private companies and the Ukraine as receiver country.

The process of channeling the donations through the rescEUUDS works as follows:

1. A private company offers an in-kind donation.
2. The ERCC evaluates the donation offer against the list of needs provided by Ukraine.
3. Upon determining the suitability of the donation, the ERCC presents the offer to the appropriate recipient authority on behalf of the private donor.
4. If the recipient authority accepts the donation, the ERCC instructs the private company to deliver the assistance to a rescEU hub either in Belgium or Poland. Before transportation, an administrative or remote quality check is performed, which may involve requesting additional documentation.
5. The hubs in Belgium or Poland carry out a physical quality check of the donation. Once verified, the donation is integrated into their rescEU capacities.
6. The ERCC, in close coordination with the hosting authority, triggers the mobilization of the rescEU capacity.
7. Finally, the hosting authority organizes the transport of the donation to Ukraine with a logistical partner.

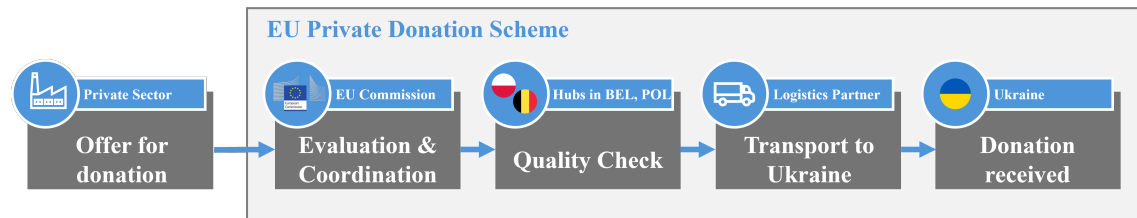


Figure 2: rescEU Donation Scheme (simplified), own illustration inspired by rescEU Donations Scheme, DG ECHO, 2024

The introduction of the rescEUUDS led to further legal and operational consequences that directly impacted the framework and execution of disaster response efforts.

⁶rescEU hubs are not to be confused with UCPM hubs, even though both are involved in centralizing and coordinating assistance. UCPM hubs focus on channeling aid provided by MPS, while rescEU hubs specifically manage contributions from private entities and third countries. In Poland, for instance, both hubs share the same warehousing facilities but operate under different projects with distinct procedures. The EUCom mandates specific requirements and physical quality checks for rescEU hubs, whereas MPS determine whether such checks are necessary for UCPM hubs based on their national legislation (Cristian Gimenez, personal communication, August 13, 2024)

Operationally, the integration required enhanced communication and coordination between the ERCC and the hubs in Poland and Belgium. Initially, the lack of direct contacts and established communication channels led to delays and miscommunications. Sometimes it resulted in increased costs, as noted by Participants 3. One example involved challenges with cold chain logistics for medicines. The need for truck drivers to wait days to unload created concerns about maintaining the necessary temperatures, particularly due to the risk of running out of fuel. These delays were primarily caused by unforeseen and extended hold-ups at the unloading stage. Additionally, coordination difficulties were compounded by language barriers and the urgency to prioritize certain trucks.

To manage the high volume of donated goods, substantial logistical adjustments were required. Detailed instructions were provided for handling and stacking pallets efficiently at the Ukrainian border hubs. National agencies had to deploy significant manpower to handle logistics. A participant explained:

We had to use almost all of our staff of the agency working in the main office to do only the logistics.

(Participant 2)

To ensure quality standards, initial criteria were established to ensure donations met necessary standards. Goods that would not be used by the donating country - so Belgium or Poland - were not accepted for donation to Ukraine.

Legally, the integration necessitated several adjustments and clarifications. As an example, participants 3 mentioned contracts with their logistical partners were sometimes unclear regarding the duration and capacity requirements, leading to difficulties in defining responsibilities and expectations. Liability issues arose as Belgium assumed liability for donated goods without corresponding contracts with Ukraine or other recipient countries. This added complexity, particularly for certain goods like medicines, where the entire lifespan and quality could not be guaranteed.

If we sign a contract with the company to accept their goods, at that moment we get the liability of everything that goes bad with these goods, but we don't sign a contract with Ukraine. We just donate those goods so we don't hand over the liability that we received from the company and this is all fine if [...] you can certify that they're in perfect state, but it changes a bit with [...] certain goods like medicine that we don't see the entire lifespan of.

(Participants 3, Belgium).

When it comes to pharmaceuticals, Regulatory compliance generally posed a challenge. Transferring medicines between countries required complex regulatory compliance, including authorizations for specific warehouses and maintaining proper cold chains. Some hubs did not have the required authorizations or infrastructure to handle these medicines, necessitating detailed planning and compliance efforts.

Standardization and legal language also presented issues. Contracts with private companies, especially from the US, often included legal terms not recognized in the EU, causing miscommunications and delays. Each contract had to be individually negotiated and tailored, which was resource-intensive.

Sometimes, especially when we were working with American companies, they would significantly change our template, and they would also use legal language that didn't exist in the EU but only existed in America, so it often led to miscommunication and confusion on both sides.

(Participants 3)

Participants highlighted several aspects where the rescEUDS positively impacted the disaster response efforts.

When asked if the integration of the private sector donations improved resource utilization and response effectiveness, participants widely agreed.

Absolutely. It's a no-brainer in the sense that what's the alternative? The alternative is that stakeholders develop their response actions in their corner or at national level, which is not efficient. Integrating the private sector donations directly creates pure economy of scale.

(Maarten Vergauwen)

This underscores the efficiency gained through coordinated efforts at the EU level rather than fragmented national initiatives. Moreover, the integration of private sector donations allowed for the mobilization of substantial quantities of valuable goods that otherwise might not have reached Ukraine but which have been 'brought on top of what was foreseen' (Maarten Vergauwen).

The rescEUDS also facilitated strategic integration and coordination among various actors. Participants highlighted the benefits of bringing different actors together, which allowed for mutual learning, efficient logistics and access to closed markets. This also draws back to the specialised expertise the private sector can contribute, as already discussed in the section about Resource Dependency and Scarcity.

6.2.2 Discussion: immediate consequences

The theoretical expectation posits that the immediate consequences of integrating private sector donations into the UCPM would involve significant legal and operational adjustments. Given the lack of a tailored framework for private donations, it was anticipated that working within the existing legal framework would present several hurdles. Additionally, operational challenges were expected due to the ad-hoc setup of the projects, which could lead to communication issues, inefficiencies, and delays. As Maarten Vergauwen from DG ECHO highlighted, the UCPM had to rapidly find ways to work within the existing legal framework to facilitate private sector donations due to the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Ukraine. The integration of private donations required legal creativity, as the existing framework was not explicitly designed to handle

such contributions. For instance, the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 posed significant challenges. Therefore, the Commission had to creatively use possible loopholes within the current legal framework to make the donations work without formally adapting the legal framework itself.

Operationally, the integration of private sector donations necessitated substantial adjustments. Whole new processes and communication flows needed to be set up, and new partners were added to the system. This was an unprecedented initiative, requiring the establishment of hubs, intricate logistics management, regular coordination meetings, and campaigns to advertise the scheme. As highlighted by various participants, the scale and complexity of these operations were entirely new, necessitating significant efforts to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the disaster response. The initial setup faced communication challenges, as evidenced by the prolonged and complicated coordination process between the ERCC and the hubs in Poland and Belgium. Participant 3 from Belgium noted that they often had to communicate through the ERCC which was not a streamlined way of doing it. This necessity to route communications through the ERCC, rather than having direct contact, led to inefficiencies and increased costs. Additionally, the ad-hoc setup of the project led to non-optimized processes. Additionally, coordination difficulties were compounded by language barriers and the urgency to prioritize certain trucks. Another example of fragmented processes is the complexity of handling and stacking pallets efficiently at the Ukrainian border hubs, which required detailed instructions and significant logistical adjustments.

Legally, the integration of private sector donations required several adjustments and clarifications. Contracts with private companies were sometimes unclear regarding duration and capacity requirements, leading to difficulties in defining responsibilities and expectations. Liability issues also arose, as due to national law Belgium assumed liability for donated goods without corresponding contracts with Ukraine or other recipient countries. This added complexity, particularly for goods like medicines, where the entire lifespan and quality could not be guaranteed. Regulatory compliance, particularly for pharmaceuticals, posed significant challenges. Transferring medicines between countries required complex regulatory compliance, including authorizations for specific warehouses and maintaining proper cold chains. Some hubs did not have the required authorizations or infrastructure to handle these medicines, necessitating detailed planning and compliance efforts. Standardization and legal language also presented issues. Contracts with private companies, especially from the US, often included legal terms not recognized in the EU, causing miscommunications and delays. Individual negotiations and tailoring was resource-intensive.

In summary, the integration of private sector donations into the UCPM through the rescEUDS led to significant legal and operational adjustments. These included adapting the legal framework to facilitate donations, enhancing communication and coordination among stakeholders, managing logistical challenges, clarifying contractual obligations, and ensuring regulatory compliance. The empirical goes in line with the theoretical expectations, highlighting the complexities and challenges involved in integrating private sector contributions within the existing UCPM framework. Given its single-case nature, this thesis cannot completely corroborate a theory, but can provide illustrative empirical

evidence of the mechanisms of those theoretical expectations. While the theoretical expectations provided a broad framework for understanding the immediate consequences of integrating private sector donations into the UCPM, they were not detailed enough to fully capture the complexities involved. The empirical evidence from interviews revealed a much deeper level of complexity in both legal and operational adjustments than initially anticipated. The interviews demonstrated that the integration process was not just about high-level strategic decisions but also involved granular, operational-level adjustments that required significant coordination and expertise.

6.2.3 Future prospects: institutionalization of PPPs within the UCPM Framework

In exploring the integration of the private sector into the UCPM, it's crucial to consider both the immediate impacts and the potential long-term implications of such cooperation. While the previous section focused on the immediate adjustments required to incorporate private sector donations through the EUPDS, this part delves deeper into the broader implications of institutionalizing private sector cooperation within the UCPM. To achieve this, it is necessary to additionally examine the experiences of MPS that have not utilized the rescEUDS but have instead received donations as a state which were then channeled through the mechanism in the 'usual' way.

A key question is whether private sector cooperation aligns with UCPM objectives. Several participants believe that it does, particularly in enhancing disaster prevention, preparedness, and response.

I think it perfectly aligns with the objectives because [...] what we want to achieve is to deliver maximum of assistance and [...] if there are companies that are willing to step in, I think we should always make possible these channels and be open for that.

(Participant 1, Member State)

However, there are concerns about maintaining the UCPM's core spirit of solidarity among MPS. Some participants worry that involving the private sector could dilute this solidarity or introduce profit-oriented logic into a non-profit system. Despite these concerns, others believe that private sector cooperation can be integrated without altering the fundamental principles of the UCPM, ensuring that MPS remain the primary actors and contact points for donations.

Participants generally welcomed the integration of the private sector into the UCPM, though opinions varied on how best to structure this integration. One approach suggested is central coordination by the EU, as seen with the ERCC's role during the war in Ukraine and the rescEUDS. This model could streamline processes but risks encroaching on areas considered national competencies, which could lead to resistance from MPS. Another approach is to maintain the current model, where each MPS coordinates private sector donations through their national CP authorities, preserving national sovereignty and existing structures. On the other hand, it can be slower and less efficient due to the need for coordination between multiple entities. This model could also increase the workload for the national authorities leading to increased need for budget and other resources.

A hybrid model could combine EU-level coordination with state-level implementation, leveraging the strengths of both centralized and decentralized models. This approach would allow the EU to handle initial coordination while MPS manage the logistical aspects and final delivery. The choice of structure must consider the diverse political and administrative landscapes of MPS, as varying CP setups and cultural paradigms such as language can complicate coordination.

According to participants, operational aspects such as quality control and trust are critical in determining the effectiveness of private sector integration. Participants noted that quality assurance is vital to ensure donations meet necessary standards, with proximity playing a key role in managing quality checks. Trust between partners, particularly at the national level, is also crucial, though it cannot replace the need for stringent checks, especially for sensitive items like medicines as mentioned by Participants 3. Transparency in procedures is equally important to prevent issues and ensure smooth operations.

Liability issues also emerged as a concern. If disputes arise regarding the quality of donated goods, the intermediary state could face reputational or financial repercussions. Participants emphasized the need for clear, standardized legal procedures to manage donations and ensure compliance with national and EU regulations. Clarity in contracts is essential to avoid disputes, and standardized documentation could help streamline processes and prevent delays.

I think if there's a setup [...], if these mechanisms already in place with these companies, we wouldn't have to go through all those legal aspects and they would just say 'OK, we want to donate this'. They know how it works. They know they have to complete this kind of template and then donate.

(Participants 3)

Beneath a legal framework, one participant mentioned that the Commission might consider to introduce a dedicated budget line for private sector support within the UCPM to ensure a more structured and sustainable funding mechanism for these collaborations.

Strategically, integrating private sector contributions requires a shift in the UCPM's operational paradigm, moving beyond immediate crisis response to include long-term planning and collaboration. Some participants suggested involving the private sector in product design and procurement cycles to enhance innovation and efficiency in disaster response, contributing to a more resilient system. While DiGennaro questions if resilience aligns with private sector interests, several participants highlighted how resilience can't be achieved solely through CP efforts:

[...] this growing idea of EU wide resilience, which is completely cross-sectoral, requires the involvement of all elements of society, from the military and the civil side: from the citizen to the government, academics to private sector, everyone needs to play their part.

(Participant 6, Expert)

While in the war in Ukraine the perceived effectiveness of the private sector integration was recognized, the long-term impact on effectiveness remains uncertain according to interviewees. Many expressed that although PPPs have provided valuable resources and enhanced response capabilities, it is difficult to estimate their effectiveness over time without establishing an evaluation process. Another participant noted that he sees ‘big synergies for [PPPs]’.

6.2.4 Discussion: Future Prospects

The strategic integration of private sector contributions into the UCPM signifies a substantial shift in its operational paradigm, requiring careful analysis of both immediate and long-term implications. While immediate operational and legal adjustments were necessary to facilitate private sector donations during the Ukraine crisis, the broader institutionalization of such partnerships within the UCPM demands a thorough examination of potential long-term consequences.

According to the participants, the integration of PPPs aligns with the UCPM’s objectives of enhancing disaster prevention, preparedness, and response. Participants widely agree that private sector involvement can provide additional resources, expertise, and innovation, contributing to a more resilient disaster management system. However, concerns remain about maintaining the core spirit of solidarity among MPS and avoiding the introduction of profit-oriented logic into a traditionally non-profit system. These concerns highlight the need for a balanced approach that preserves the UCPM’s fundamental principles while leveraging private sector strengths.

Different approaches to structuring private sector integration were suggested, each with its own set of advantages and challenges. Central EU coordination, as exemplified by the ERCC’s role during the Ukraine crisis, could streamline processes but may face resistance from MPS protective of their national competencies. Conversely, maintaining the current model of national-level coordination respects sovereignty but may result in inefficiencies and increased workloads for national authorities. A hybrid model, combining EU-level coordination with state-level implementation, could potentially harness the strengths of both centralized and decentralized systems but would require careful design to manage complexities and ensure seamless cooperation. Analyzing these structural approaches through the theoretical lens of Good Governance, centralized coordination could enhance accountability and transparency, critical for maintaining public trust. However, the challenges in balancing national sovereignty and EU coordination underscore the importance of clear institutional frameworks to support PPP operations effectively. Ensuring that each model incorporates robust governance mechanisms is essential for their long-term viability and success.

The integration of PPPs necessitates stringent operational measures to ensure quality control, trust, and transparency. The requirement for physical checks, certifications, and detailed documentation is crucial to maintaining the integrity of donated goods, particularly sensitive items like medicines. While trust between partners is vital, it cannot replace the need for comprehensive verification procedures. Transparent processes and uniform documentation are essential to prevent misunderstandings and ensure account-

ability.

From the perspective of Specialized Expertise, operational considerations must include developing technical and managerial skills to handle the complexities of PPP arrangements. The Mauritius oil spill incident highlighted the critical importance of expertise in managing disaster responses effectively. Inadequate expertise can delay response efforts and exacerbate the impact of disasters, emphasizing the need for specialized training and preparedness.

A robust legal framework is critical for the successful integration of PPPs, addressing issues such as liability, data protection, and ethical implications. Specialized contracts delineating roles, responsibilities, and financial arrangements are necessary to avoid disputes and ensure clarity. The experiences of MPS, such as Belgium, underscore the importance of clear contractual terms, particularly regarding duration and capacity requirements. This legal clarity is fundamental to managing donations effectively and ensuring compliance with both national and EU regulations.

Analyzing this through the lens of Institutional Frameworks, it is evident that clear and consistent legal guidelines are necessary to support the stability and adaptability of PPPs. The challenges faced in regulatory compliance during the Ukraine crisis highlight the need for robust legal structures that can accommodate the dynamic nature of disaster management and PPP operations.

The long-term impact of PPPs on UCPM effectiveness remains uncertain, reflecting the need for ongoing evaluation and strategic planning. While immediate benefits are evident in terms of enhanced resources and response capabilities, the sustained effectiveness of these partnerships over time requires further scrutiny. Future joint efforts could foster synergies and improve crisis response options, but the integration process must be approached thoughtfully to avoid potential pitfalls. Through the theoretical lens of Disaster Response Enhancement and Community resilience, it is clear that PPPs have the potential to significantly improve emergency management capabilities. Participants noted that resilience cannot be achieved solely through CP efforts, and a cross-sectoral approach involving all societal elements, including the private sector, is necessary. This comprehensive integration ensures that disaster management efforts are sustainable and effective at the community level.

Institutionalizing PPPs within the UCPM framework involves significant operational and legal adjustments, necessitating clear roles, robust frameworks, and ongoing evaluation. While the immediate benefits of PPPs are apparent, their long-term impact on the effectiveness and resilience of the UCPM requires careful consideration. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the strengths of both public and private sectors, the UCPM can enhance its disaster management capabilities and achieve greater resilience in the face of future crises.

7 Conclusion

This thesis explored the emergence and integration of PPPs within the UCPM, with a particular focus on the war in Ukraine as a catalyst for this strategic shift. The research aimed to identify the driving factors behind the adoption of PPPs and to assess their consequences on the effectiveness of the UCPM, particularly in terms of legal and operational adjustments.

7.1 Synthesis of findings

The findings reveal that the integration of PPPs within the UCPM was largely driven by the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Ukraine, which overwhelmed traditional state-led disaster response mechanisms. Participants emphasized that the primary motivation for integrating PPPs during the war in Ukraine was the overwhelming need on the ground. This situation marked a significant shift from the previous operational model, where responses were provided by public authorities through the UCPM. Before the introduction of PPPs, the MPS and DG ECHO bore the sole responsibility for mobilizing resources, coordinating logistics, and delivering aid. However, the scale and urgency of the crisis exposed critical limitations in this approach.

The urgent need for resources, specialized expertise, and rapid mobilization prompted the formation of partnerships between the public and private sectors, reflecting the expectations of the theories of RDT and HFNs. These partnerships enabled the UCPM to bridge critical resource gaps, particularly in sectors like medical items and energy, where the public sector lacked sufficient capacity. For example, in previous crises, the procurement of such goods has been exclusively managed by public authorities. In contrast, during the Ukraine crisis, companies stepped in to provide in-kind donations, which facilitated the procurement process and demonstrated the added value of private sector involvement.

Operationally, the integration of PPPs necessitated substantial adjustments, including the establishment of new communication channels, the redesign of logistical processes, and the introduction of new legal documents. A robust legal framework proved critical in the eyes of the participants for the successful integration of these partnerships, addressing key issues such as liability, data protection, and ethical implications. Specialized contracts will be essential to delineate roles, responsibilities, and financial arrangements, thereby avoiding disputes and ensuring clarity. The empirical evidence confirms the theoretical expectation that these partnerships would require significant modifications to existing UCPM operations. Yet, the process also unveiled challenges, such as the complexities of aligning the diverse objectives of public and private sector partners, the necessity for clear contractual terms, and the importance of maintaining the humanitarian focus of the response.

The perceived effectiveness of PPPs, as reported by stakeholders, highlights the advantages of coordinated, EU-level disaster response efforts that include the private sector. While immediate benefits are evident in terms of enhanced resources and response capabilities, the sustained effectiveness of these partnerships over time requires further

scrutiny. All in all, by leveraging private sector contributions, the UCPM was not only able to enhance its response capabilities by providing resources such as electrical and medical items but also adapt to the evolving demands of such a large-scale crises like the war in Ukraine. While aid only through CP authorities could have been provided without private sector involvement, it would have been with a more limited impact.

7.2 Broader implications

The integration of PPPs within the UCPM marks a significant shift in the EU’s approach to disaster management. While these partnerships have proven valuable in addressing immediate resource needs, their long-term institutionalization presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, PPPs can provide additional resources, expertise, and innovation, contributing to a more effective and efficient disaster management system. On the other hand, the introduction of profit-oriented logic into a traditionally non-profit system raises concerns about the potential erosion of the UCPM’s core principles of solidarity and public accountability.

Strategically, the hierarchy of capacities within the UCPM, as presented in the background chapter, would be expanded through the inclusion of private sector contributions (See Figure 4). This new layer of protection, channeled through the UCPM, could possibly enhance the mechanism’s overall response capacity by adding another dimension of resources and expertise. This expansion might not only bolster the UCPM’s ability to respond to large-scale crises but also ensure a more comprehensive and layered approach to disaster management, offering greater resilience and adaptability in the face of diverse challenges.

The strategic shift towards PPPs also has broader implications for the governance of the UCPM. The tension between central EU coordination and national sovereignty suggests that a balanced approach, possibly through a hybrid model, may be necessary to ensure the successful integration of private sector contributions without undermining MPS’ control over CP.

7.3 Limitations and future research

While the qualitative insights provided by stakeholders offer valuable perspectives, the findings may not fully capture the long-term impacts of these partnerships. Additionally, the focus on a single use case of the rescEUDS may limit the generalizability of the results to other contexts or types of disasters.

Future research should aim to address these limitations by conducting studies focusing on other cases where the rescEUDS was used. Comparative studies across different types of disasters or between different regions could offer further insights into the contextual factors that influence the success of PPPs in disaster management. For example, a comparative analysis of PPP effectiveness across different EU Member States could help identify best practices that could be standardized and mirrored at the UCPM level. Additionally, a pairwise comparison between the UCPM and for example FEMA could provide valuable insights into how different systems incorporate PPPs and what lessons

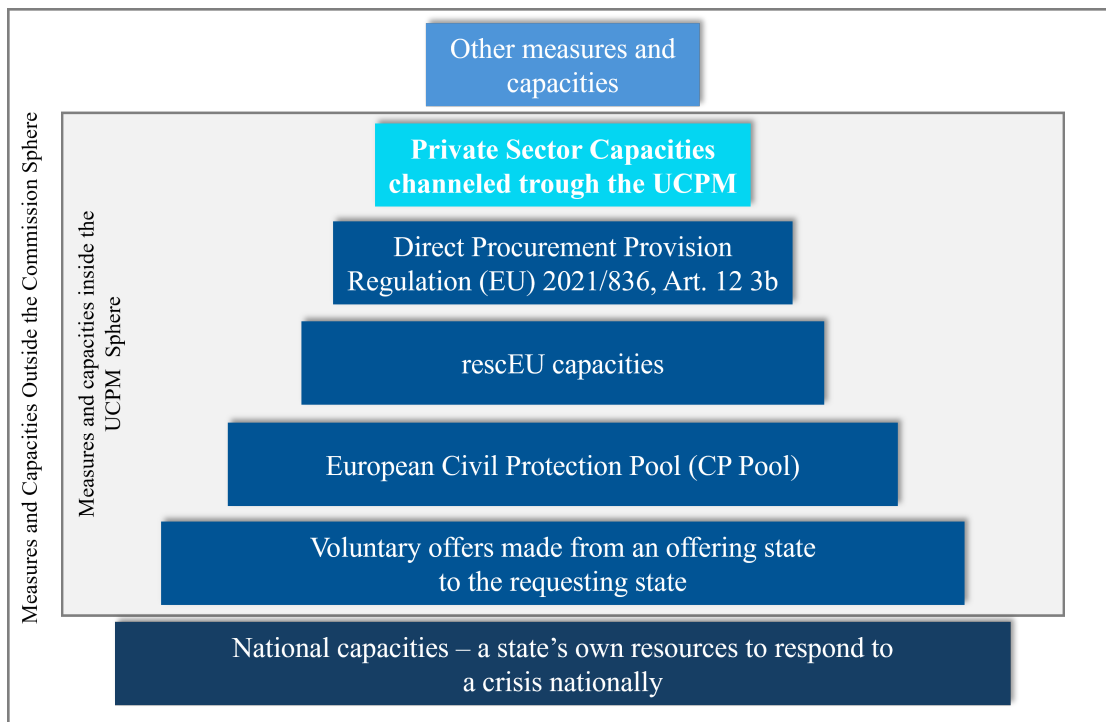


Figure 3: Hierarchy of Capacities and Measures within the UCPM Framework including the private sector, own illustration

can be learned. Another avenue for future research involves exploring the development of a robust legal and operational framework to support the institutionalization of PPPs within the UCPM. This includes examining the potential for standardized contracts, the role of trust and transparency in cross-sector collaborations, and the mechanisms for maintaining public accountability in partnerships that involve private sector actors. It could also be interesting to include a document analysis of existing documents touching upon PPPs within the UCPM - even if those are still scarce. Quantitative analyses could complement the qualitative findings by providing more comprehensive data on the outcomes of PPP integration. For example, a quantitative study could explore the impact of PPPs across various crises within the EU, comparing how the intensity of PPP involvement affects the efficiency of disaster response and recovery efforts. Exploring the impact of PPPs on enhancing resilience in post-disaster recovery would provide valuable information on how these partnerships contribute not just to immediate response efforts but also to building long-term resilience in affected communities. This research could analyze specific cases to assess how PPPs help in rebuilding infrastructure, restoring services, and supporting economic recovery.

7.4 Final thoughts

The integration of PPPs within the UCPM represents a significant evolution in the EU's approach to disaster management. While the immediate benefits of these partnerships are clear, their long-term success will hinge on the EU's ability to effectively balance the strengths of both public and private sectors while safeguarding the fundamental principles of the UCPM. Addressing the challenges identified in this thesis and continuing to explore innovative collaboration approaches will be essential for enhancing the UCPM's resilience and effectiveness in responding to future crises.

This topic is of high relevance, as emphasized by numerous interviewees, and it is likely to remain a focus in upcoming discussions. With the EuCom appearing eager to further integrate the private sector, we can expect this topic to be revisited in rounds such as the PROCIV working party, the CP Forum, or even addressed in the Commission work program which will be presented in September. As crises are expected to increase in frequency and complexity, finding new and effective ways to address these challenges will become unavoidable.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Participants

Table 1: Contacted and Interviewed Participants by Group

Group	Contacted	Interviewed
Member States	24	6
Participating States	3	1
Experts	7	4
Private Sector	8	2
ECHO	4	3
Total	46	16

Table 2: Interviewed Participants

Name/Alias	Sector	Specification
Heikki Honkanen	Public Sector	Ministry of the Interior of Finland, Specialist - Department for Rescue Services
Mari Løwehr	Public Sector	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), Duty Officer
Participant 1	Public Sector	Member State
Participant 2	Public Sector	Member State
Participants 3	Public Sector	Belgium
Paul Rock	Public Sector	National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management Ireland, Senior Advisor
Rickard Wennergrund	Public Sector	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Project Manager - Response and Operations Department
Sara Bertilsson, Kristofer Thelin	Public Sector	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), EU Coordinators
Alessandro Carrotta	Public Sector	DG ECHO, Policy Officer – UCPM Policy Development and Cross-sectoral Preparedness
Cristian Gimenez	Public Sector	DG ECHO, Project Officer - rescEU Donations / Emergency Shelter
Maarten Vergauwen	Public Sector	DG ECHO, Team Leader - UCPM Policy Development and Cross-sectoral Preparedness
Franck Ranera	Private Sector	ICEYE, Senior Manager Government Solutions Europe
Participant 4	Private Sector	-
Mario Di Gennaro	Expert	Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. - Head of Competence Center for EU Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance
Participant 5	Expert	-
Participant 6	Expert	-
Participant 7	Expert	-

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introduction

Presentation of interviewer and research

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

My name is Cora and I am doing my master's at University of Gothenburg in Political Sciences with focus on Europe. I'm currently working on my master thesis that examines the integration of collaborations with the private sector in form public-private partnerships within the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

I became aware of the topic as in the recently published UCPM evaluation, cross-sector collaboration was mentioned particularly in response to COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. As the UCPM was constructed as a state-to-state support system, it is interesting that the collaboration with the private sector happened during those crises and now is discussed to become a part of the UCPM. The aim of this research is to understand the dynamics of these partnerships and their implications for disaster management strategies within the EU.

During this interview, I will use the terms 'cross-sector collaboration' and 'public-private partnerships' interchangeably. I may also refer to them simply as 'PPPs' for brevity. Today, I would like to discuss your experiences and insights regarding PPPs or cross-sector collaborations. As PPPs are a specific form of cross-sector collaboration, in the following I will refer only to cross-sector collaboration.

Thank you for sending back to me the Consent form in advance. As stated, I will record this interview. If you do not have any other questions, I will start the recording now.

Presentation of the interviewee

To get started, I'm interested in learning about your involvement with public-private partnerships within the context of disaster management.

Theme 1: Strategic Integration of PPPs within the UCPM

First, I would like to talk about why cooperation between the private sector and the UCPM started.

As you are not directly involved in DG ECHO, did you hear about the cooperation with the private sector and know how these collaborations looked like?

If no: From the beginning of the crisis, private sector entities got in touch with DG echo expressing the interest to donate goods. Traditionally, Member States as well as

Ukraine (at the time not a UCPM participating state) would have dealt with the private donations bilaterally, but they were overwhelmed, leading to the involvement of the UCPM to channel private donations, and fill assistance gaps, as well as broaden available capacity. In collaboration with Belgium and Polish authorities DG ECHO established two rescEU hubs to manage donations.

Table 3: Strategic Integration of PPPs

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Occurrence of PPPs	Can you describe when the first co-operation started and how it manifested?	Who initiated the cooperation? How were the partners selected? Were there any factors that were considered in the selection process?	Aim: Uncover the historical context and procedural specifics of initiating PPPs within the UCPM. It seeks to understand the genesis of such partnerships and the criteria used for partner selection. Link to Theory: question delves into the circumstances through which the first PPPs were formed (HFNs);investing strategic motivations by asking who initiated the cooperation and how partners were selected (RDT); inquiry into selection factors touches on Good Governance and Institutional Frameworks, evaluating whether the selection process adhered to transparency, accountability, and strategic fit within the existing legal and regulatory frameworks of the UCPM.
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Table 3 continued from previous page

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Reasons for PPPs	Can you talk about the initial motivations for such cooperation? Reflecting on past experiences, were there instances where cooperation with the private sector were already discussed, or do you think there was a clear need for them even before they were implemented now?	What specific benefits were anticipated from the incorporation of PPPs into the EU's civil protection framework?	Aim: Explore the motivations behind forming PPPs and the expected benefits, particularly in terms of enhancing disaster management capabilities. Link to Theory: Reflecting on past experiences and the perceived needs might uncover recognition of an impending need for swift action (HFNs); Questions align with RDT by examining how these partnerships help overcome resource scarcities and dependencies; Discussing the anticipated benefits of PPPs connects directly to Disaster Response Enhancement and Community resilience.
EU Civil Protection/ Disaster Management Strategy	How do PPPs align with the broader objectives of EU civil protection and disaster management strategies?	Do you think they align with the objectives of the UCPM? In your opinion, should such cooperation be integrated in the UCPM? Why? Why not?	Aim: Assess the strategic alignment of PPPs with the overarching goals of the UCPM and the broader EU disaster management framework. Link to Theory: Questioning the alignment of PPPs with UCPM objectives, the inquiry indirectly assesses the adaptability and immediate utility of PPPs as seen in HFNs, especially in how these networks form and function under urgent circumstances; Finding out if these partnerships provide essential resources that the UCPM might otherwise lack (RDT); evaluating whether PPPs contribute to enhancing the UCPM's disaster response capabilities and if they adhere to principles of good governance, thus ensuring their effectiveness and alignment with EU objectives

Theme 2: Operational Dynamics + Legal Framework of PPPs in Disaster Management (Practical Implementation)

Table 4: Operational Dynamics + Legal Framework

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Example-PPP Execution	Could you walk me through how the [insert cooperation name] was set up and executed?	Can you describe how different stakeholders were involved in the process? Who were the key players? How were resources allocated for this project? Were there any unique financial or logistical arrangements?	Aim: Explore the mechanics of PPP formation and execution within the UCPM, focusing on stakeholder roles, resource allocation, and the execution process. Link to Theory: Looking at setup and execution process, involving various stakeholders and managing logistics under pressure (HFNs); questions explore how resources were sourced and allocated, directly reflecting RDT's emphasis on how organizations engage in partnerships to access essential resources they lack; Involvement of different stakeholders and the arrangements for resource allocation can be analyzed through the lenses of Good Governance and Institutional Frameworks.
Legal framework	Were there any significant legal or contractual hurdles during the initiation or implementation phases of the project? [Link to legal aspects if participant is able to talk about it]	How do current PPP contracts align with EU rules on public contracts and concessions, and what improvements, if any, are needed? Are there any regulatory gaps that you believe need addressing to facilitate more effective cooperations?	Aim: Identify and understand the legal and contractual challenges faced during PPP initiatives, and assessing alignment with EU regulations. Link to Theory: Alignment with EU regulations reflects the strategic need to manage dependencies not only on resources but also on regulatory compliance to ensure the legitimacy (RDT); relates to the Institutional Frameworks success factor, which stresses the importance of having robust legal and regulatory structures in place to support effective PPP operations.
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Table 4 continued from previous page

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Challenges	What operational challenges have been encountered while executing PPP projects during emergencies?	How were these challenges addressed?	Aim: Uncover the operational difficulties experienced during PPP executions and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. Link to Theory: Addresses the nature of PPPs formed in response to emergencies, emphasizing the HFN concept of rapid, effective response to urgent missions despite operational challenges; Discussing how challenges were addressed ties into Disaster Response Enhancement and Good Governance, indicating the need for effective management and adaptive response strategies within PPP frameworks.
Best Practices	Can you share any examples of best practices or successful outcomes from PPP projects during recent disaster responses?		Aim: Gather insights into successful PPP implementations and identify practices that led to effective outcomes. Link to Theory: Seeks to identify instances where Good Governance, Specialized Expertise, and Disaster Response Enhancement have been effectively implemented, showcasing how these success factors contribute to the effectiveness of PPPs in disaster management.
Values of collaboration	How are trust and collaborative relationships built between public and private sector partners?	What roles do transparency, mutual goals, and risk-sharing play in the effectiveness of these partnerships?	Aim: Delve into the dynamics of relationship building within PPPs, focusing on trust, transparency, and shared objectives. Link to Theory: Building of trust and collaborative relationships can be analyzed through RDT, as these elements are crucial for managing interdependencies and ensuring mutual benefits in PPPs; roles of transparency, mutual goals, and risk-sharing are central to the Good Governance factor, essential for maintaining public trust and securing the long-term viability of partnerships.

Theme 3: Impact and Effectiveness of PPPs in Enhancing Disaster Resilience

Table 5: Impact and Effectiveness of PPPs

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Personal perception of Effectiveness of PPPs	In your view, how have PPPs contributed to enhancing the EU's disaster resilience and response capabilities?	How would you compare the disaster response capabilities before and after the implementation of PPPs? Would you say that collaboration makes the UCPM more effective? Can you discuss any innovative practices or technologies introduced through cooperations that have improved disaster management capabilities?	Aim: Assess personal perceptions of the effectiveness of PPPs, focusing on observed changes, specific innovations, and the overall impact on disaster management processes. Link to Theory: Rapid integration of innovative practices in response to crises reflects the dynamics of HFNs; Before and after can be viewed through the RDT lens, emphasizing how these partnerships provide access to resources and innovations previously unavailable; improved effectiveness and innovative practices and technologies aligns with Disaster Response Enhancement and Specialized Expertise.
Other people's perception of Effectiveness of PPPs	How do different stakeholders—such as government officials, private sector partners, and affected communities—perceive the impact of PPPs on disaster resilience?		Aim: Aim: capture a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives on the effectiveness of PPPs, which can highlight differing views on the successes and areas for improvement. Link to Theory: Explores how different stakeholders recognize and value the resources and benefits provided by PPPs (RDT); Stakeholder perceptions can be influenced by how well the PPPs embody the Good Governance and Community resilience success factors, assessing transparency, participation, and the overall resilience enhancements contributed by the partnerships.
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Table 5 continued from previous page

Topic	Question	Follow-up Questions	Aim of Question, Link to theory
Long-term Impact	How do you evaluate the long-term impacts of these partnerships on community resilience and disaster preparedness?		Aim: Understand the sustained effects of PPPs on enhancing community resilience and preparedness, looking beyond immediate disaster responses. Link to Theory: Evaluating long-term impacts also involves considering how networks formed in a hurry can transition to stable, enduring partnerships that contribute consistently to community resilience (HFNs); focuses on the long-term effectiveness of PPPs in terms of Community resilience and Disaster Response Enhancement.
Measurement	What measurable outcomes or performance indicators do you use to assess the effectiveness of PPPs in disaster management?		Aim: Identify the metrics and indicators used to quantitatively assess the success and effectiveness of PPPs in the context of disaster management. Link to Theory: Performance indicators can also reflect how effectively the PPPs are managing and utilizing the resources critical to the UCPM's objectives, (RDT); Question is tied to Good Governance and Disaster Response Enhancement, as it seeks to identify clear, quantifiable indicators of success, crucial for transparency, accountability, and ongoing assessment of the PPPs' operational impacts.

Outro:

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Your insights have been extremely valuable and will significantly contribute to my understanding of cross-sector collaboration within the UCPM. I truly appreciate your openness and the detailed information you've shared.

If there's anything more you would like to add or clarify about what we discussed today, please feel free to do so now. Also, if any other thoughts or examples come to mind after our conversation, please don't hesitate to contact me via email.

Do you know any person who, in your view, I should talk to in order to gather more

insights?

In the coming weeks, I may need to follow up with you to clarify some points or get further information, if that's alright.

Once my analysis is complete, I'd be glad to share a summary of the findings if you're interested.

Appendix 3: Codes for the Codebook approach and Inductive Codes

Table 6: Codes linked to HFNs

Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
Urgent Mission	Reflects the urgent need for partnerships to address immediate challenges during crises.	<i>But of course, the situation has evolved over the years, particularly in the last years, perhaps starting with COVID and now also in particular with the Ukraine war, where all of a sudden, I mean the the amounts of needs went up very, very dramatically. (Participant 5, Expert)</i>
Immediate Needs	References to urgent resource and operational needs, emphasizing the necessity for swift and broad responses.	<i>We have never seen this kind of emergency before in the context of the UCPM. It's so wide, it affects all sectors of society, and assistance is needed in all sectors of society. And it has lasted over two years now. So this is exceptional and authorities cannot answer to this kind of emergency by themselves effectively enough. (Heikki Honkanen, Ministry of the Interior of Finland, Specialist - Department for Rescue Services)</i>
Coordination efforts	Examples highlighting the importance of coordinated efforts in mobilizing and deploying resources through PPPs.	<i>[...] I mean, otherwise everyone goes there and they have to get in touch with the hosting Member States and the authorities and the affected people. And I mean coordination is a direct win. (Maarten Vergauwen, DG ECHO, Team Leader - UCPM Policy Development and Cross-sectoral Preparedness)</i>
Strategic opportunity (HFN)	Identifies opportunities for strategic engagement and potential future benefits from PPPs formed during crises, directly or indirectly linked to economic motivation.	<i>I haven't discussed this with my leader, but I believe in when Ukraine will start to rebuild again, I think might be able to help out in some ways there, but that's a long shot. (Participant 4, Private Sector)</i>
Humanitarian and Altruistic motivations	Highlights the genuine desire to assist during crises, driven by humanitarian or altruistic motives.	<i>I believe personally that there were some truly emotional and human reactions from some private sector companies that wanted to do something because we were all in shock in Europe, everyone. (Maarten Vergauwen, DG ECHO, Team Leader - UCPM Policy Development and Cross-sectoral Preparedness)</i>
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Table 6 continued from previous page

Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
Common Goals	Refer to the shared objectives and mutual interests that drive collaboration between public and private sector partners within the UCPM.	<i>And also when it comes to common goals, if there were no such and, and I think this is linking back to what we said about needs and to support affected populations. It wouldn't really work out either. So there must be some.</i> (Sara Bertilsson, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), EU Coordinators)

Table 7: Codes and Subcodes linked to RDT

Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
Resource Scarcity	Reflects the necessity to form partnerships due to limited availability of essential resources.	<i>x</i>
<i>Volume</i>	References to the sheer volume of resources needed, highlighting the inability of authorities to meet demands alone.	<i>So it was clear that the need is huge and the field is wide so there's no chance for the authorities alone to provide assistance enough. (Heikki Honkanen, Finland)</i>
<i>Specialised Expertise</i>	The need for specialized resources and knowledge that are not readily available within the public sector.	<i>That's why they [the Commission] accept also the private donations. Especially within the energy sector, [they are] very important because this specialized equipment, it's not possible to go to the shop and buy it or to order, to produce. You have to have it from the energy companies. (Participant 2, Member State)</i>
Interdependency	Instances highlighting the reciprocal reliance between public and private sectors where both sectors depend on each other for resources, expertise, or capabilities.	<i>We have to kind of come together and see where we can complement each other without losing every aim of the sector. (Participant 7, Expert)</i>
Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness	Reflects the strategic benefit of forming partnerships to optimize resource use and reduce costs.	<i>And if everyone opens up their little channels, this kind of dilutes the effort. Then there is obviously a notion of complementarity. I mean, there are gaps which might be closed through donations or contributions from well, not the usual partners, meaning from private industry companies and so on. (Participant 5, Expert)</i>
Private Sector Motivations	Reflects the underlying reasons driving the private sector to engage in partnerships.	<i>x</i>
Continued on next page		

Table 7 continued from previous page

Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
<i>Economic Motivations</i>	Direct financial benefits such as revenue generation, tax relief, and profitability.	<i>This is a company and the company has to earn money. That's their purpose. They have to pay their employees, [...] they have to expand and so on.</i> (Mario Di Gennaro, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. - Head of Competence Center for EU Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance)
<i>Other Motivations (RDT)</i>	Motivations beyond direct financial gain, such as demonstrating value to customers and fostering long-term business relationships.	<i>It's easy saying private equals revenue and money. It is like that. But then we have to dive into that because it's not just making money for money, it's really showing them [Note by interviewer: the customers] the value they can get from what we produce.</i> (Franck Ranera, ICEYE)
Other Motivations	Reflects additional reasons for engaging in partnerships, such as contributing to societal resilience and security.	<i>Taking different parties in society, including private sector, involving them in security work both in general and this field in particular – that creates the culture of common resilience.</i> (Heikki Honkanen, Ministry of the Interior of Finland, Specialist - Department for Rescue Services)

Table 8: Codes and Subcodes linked to Success Factors

Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
Good Governance	This code captures how PPPs adhere to principles of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity, and participation.	
<i>Accountability</i>	Instances where mechanisms or practices ensuring accountability in PPPs are discussed.	<i>So you have to have clear rules, you have precise procedures, you have control mechanisms and all of that and it's it's a business. (Participant 5, Expert)</i>
<i>Transparency</i>	Discussions related to the openness and clarity of processes and decisions within PPPs.	<i>Transparency is required. Everybody would like to know where their donation is going. (Paul Rock, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management Ireland, Senior Advisor)</i>
<i>Trust</i>	Captures discussions and instances where trust is established or challenged between stakeholders in PPPs. This includes trust in the efficiency, reliability, and ethical standards of the partnership.	<i>On some level you just have to trust the donors. You don't have an opportunity to check everything. (Heikki Honkanen)</i>
<i>Common Goals</i>	Instances where the alignment of goals and objectives between partners is discussed as a component of effective governance.	<i>And will it in the end be private sector-driven or will it be state-driven or system-driven like driven by the United Nations, driven by the European Union, which have completely different aims than the private sector. (Participant 7, Expert)</i>
Specialized Expertise	Refers to the level and impact of specialized technical and managerial expertise within PPPs, crucial for their effective management.	<i>Let's make a scenario where there is a critical infrastructure broken. Whatever, there's no matter: Water, energy, transport, communication. Something big is broken. We have to work with the operators of these critical infrastructures. That's also private sector. (Maarten Vergauwen, DG ECHO)</i>
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Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
Institutional Frameworks	This code identifies discussions on the supportive legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitate PPP operations.	<i>It has to go via the Member States or the participating states. So there were special arrangements set up in in connection to that. Within rescEU and and hubs, both in Belgium and energy hubs in in Poland for instance. (Kristoffer Thelin, MSB)</i>
Disaster Response Enhancement	Captures how PPPs contribute to improving the operational capabilities of the UCPM in managing emergencies.	<i>I think in Ukraine it worked well. I wouldn't go so far to say that it has substantially enhanced use capabilities to respond, it's certainly a form of delivering more (Participant 1, Member State)</i>
Community resilience	This code examines how PPPs contribute to building and enhancing community resilience against disasters.	<i>Well, I would say that in general taking a different parties in society, private sector and others, involving them in security work in general, but also this field in particular. That's something that creates the culture of shared resilience (Heikki Honkanen, Ministry of the Interior of Finland, Specialist - Department for Rescue Services)</i>
Structuring and Managing PPPs	Captures discussions on the organization and management of PPP arrangements.	<i>So which partner do you choose if you wanna do that on a systematic basis. Or maybe you want several partners, you want consortia or you want to work with associations, which is another option that one could consider. (Participant 5, Expert)</i>
Operational Challenges	Discusses obstacles in PPP implementation and management.	
<i>Communication Issues</i>	Issues related to the flow of information within PPPs.	<i>Now there is complications because the private sector don't know what the UCPM is or what it does, or what the obligations are, those conditions surrounding the grant funding for sending donations abroad. (Paul Rock, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management Ireland, Senior Advisor)</i>
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Code	Definition	Examples from Interviews
<i>Coordination Difficulties</i>	Problems in coordinating activities and aligning goals among different PPP stakeholders.	<i>The process of getting a transit permit in Poland has been extremely time consuming and we're sometimes delayed by many months. I think there are 7 different agencies in Poland that have to give a permission for us to transit with dual use products or military equipment. (Rickard Wennergrund, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Project Manager - Response and Operations Department)</i>
<i>Quality Assurance</i>	Challenges related to verifying the quality, suitability, and standards compliance of donated materials.	<i>So we started to use this quality check before we receive the donation and trying to get as many information as we can (Participant 2, Member State)</i>