

# Evaluation of LRRD in Tajikistan

## FINAL REPORT



**This Evaluation Report has been financed by and produced at the request of the European Commission (Contract number: ECHO/ADM/BUD/2007/01203)**

**The comments contained herein reflect the opinions of the consultants only.  
The cost of this evaluation was 70.410 Euros (=0.0037 % of the budget evaluated).**

**August 8, 2007**



**Peter HOLDSWORTH - Anna GORTER - Robert STRYK**

**For SHER Ingénieurs Conseils s.a.**

**E-mail: [sher@sher.be](mailto:sher@sher.be) Website: [www.sher.be](http://www.sher.be)**

**REPORT ON EVALUATION OF LINKING RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT (LRRD) IN TAJIKISTAN  
MAY 2007.**

---

**Appreciation:**

The team would like to express their considerable gratitude to everybody who, unhesitatingly, assisted us in this evaluation, with their advice, comments, information, expertise, and physical help. We have tried to list most of you in Annex C, but we have probably missed some of you, for which we apologise, and some of you, the affected communities – the main stakeholders, will probably not read this anyway.

We realise that you all facilitated our mission to the very best of your ability and so it may be invidious to single any body out, but, without the help of the DIPECHO representative and the DG ECHO team in Dushanbe, we would have had much more difficulty with logistics and local knowledge. We would also wish to thank the previous DG ECHO expert in Tajikistan, whose background knowledge was extremely helpful, and who should also be commended for the great effort put into implementing DG ECHO's part of the LRRD strategy.

Similarly, on all our visits we were, unequivocally, supported by hosting agencies as well as government bodies both nationally and locally. In some cases this went well beyond the call of normal duty. We are grateful for the briefings and debriefings arranged for us both in Brussels and Dushanbe as well as all the time that was set aside by individual desks and experts to inform, educate, and alert us to specific issues.

Throughout the region we encountered nothing but considerable kindness and cooperation. Meetings were very often arranged at short notice; at a time when for many agencies it was extremely busy. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of you, whether enthusiastic supporter of LRRD or bewildered beneficiary, and we hope that this report, critical though it may be in places is a true reflection of all that you told us.

Anna Gorter,

Robert Stryk,

Peter Holdsworth

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
	<b>Stipulations, Acronyms, and Definitions</b> .....	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b> .....	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2 - 10</b>
2.1. – 2.2.	Bullet point list of Conclusions and Recommendations.....	2 – 3
2.3. – 2.14.	Main Conclusions.....	3 – 7
2.15.	Main Recommendations .....	7 – 10
<b>3.</b>	<b>Methodology, Background and Approach</b> .....	<b>10 – 11</b>
3.1. – 3.7.	Methodology, Background and Approach.....	10 – 11
<b>4.</b>	<b>Overview of LRRD &amp; Humanitarian Situation in Tajikistan</b> .....	<b>11 – 18</b>
4.1. – 4.6.	Background.....	11 – 13
4.7. – 4.14.	Current Situation in Tajikistan.....	13 – 15
4.15. – 4.18.	LRRD in Tajikistan.....	15 – 18
<b>5.</b>	<b>Water Sector Analysis</b> .....	<b>18 – 21</b>
5.1. – 5.2.	Importance, Consequences, Access, Regulation, Ownership.....	18
5.3.	Gov involvement, Constraints, Agency Actions, Suitable Sector?.....	18
5.4. – 5.6.	Funding cycles, Effectiveness, Co-ordination, ECHO phase-out.....	18 – 20
5.7. – 5.8.	Specific Water Sector Conclusions and Recommendations.....	20 - 21
<b>6.</b>	<b>Health/Medical Sector Analysis</b> .....	<b>21 – 25</b>
6.1. – 6.3.	Access, Relevance, Appropriateness, Timeliness, .....	21 – 22
6.4. – 6.5.	Gaps, Capacities, MoH, Co-ordination, Best Practices, Constraints...	22 – 23
6.6. – 6.7.	Specific Health Sector Conclusions and Recommendations.....	23 – 24
<b>7.</b>	<b>Food Aid</b> .....	<b>24 – 25</b>
7.1 – 7.3.	Food Aid.....	24
7.4.	Specific Food Aid Conclusions and Recommendations.....	25
<b>8.</b>	<b>DIPECHO</b> .....	<b>25 – 26</b>
8.1 – 8.3.	Relevance of DRR in Transition.....	25 – 26
<b>9.</b>	<b>Overall Conclusions &amp; Recommendations</b> .....	<b>26 – 31</b>
<b>Annex A</b>	Technical Analysis of Sectors	
<b>Annex B</b>	Summaries of the projects and aid agencies visited	
<b>Annex C</b>	List of people, agencies, government bodies consulted	
<b>Annex D</b>	Itinerary	
<b>Annex E</b>	Terms of Reference	

## **SOME STIPULATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND DEFINITIONS**

Some assumptions, abbreviations and definitions used in this paper in the context of disaster preparedness:

### **STIPULATIONS**

- 1. Concept behind/meaning of LRRD:** Linking relief to rehabilitation and development (LRRD), as defined in those terms, is a concept of the European Commission but it is ultimately a strategy of ‘transition’ that most agencies involved in humanitarian assistance and development aid strive for in one form or another.
- 2. Commission and DG ECHO Emphasis:** The terms of reference called for an evaluation of ‘LRRD’, specifically, and to this end the emphasis has been on examining it from a Commission and DG ECHO perspective. Any failures, however, in LRRD or the transition from relief to development should not be laid at the door of the Commission; there are other donors and, in addition, there are many other actors in the transition scenario, including the government, that should or could have had input during this period of transition.

### **SOME ACRONYMS:**

<b>AAH</b>	Action Against Hunger
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AKF</b>	Aga Khan Foundation
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development – Britain
<b>DG</b>	Directorate General
<b>DP</b>	Disaster Preparedness
<b>DIPECHO</b>	The Disaster Preparedness Sector of DG ECHO
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>ECHO</b>	European Commission’s Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation (UN)
<b>FSP</b>	Food Security Programme
<b>GAA</b>	German Agro Action
<b>GHD</b>	Good Humanitarian Donorship
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>IO</b>	International Organisation
<b>LRRD</b>	Link between relief, rehabilitation, and development
<b>NLRC</b>	Netherlands Red Cross
<b>NMPDC</b>	National Medical Procurement and Distribution Centre
<b>NNS</b>	National Nutritional Survey
<b>PSF</b>	Pharmaciens Sans Frontières
<b>RSO</b>	Regional Support Office
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Development Cooperation
<b>SFC</b>	Supplementary Feeding Centre
<b>STG</b>	Standard Treatment Guidelines
<b>TA</b>	Technical Adviser, Technical Advice
<b>TACIS</b>	Technical Assistance for Newly Independent States
<b>TFC</b>	Therapeutic Feeding Centre
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

## **SOME DEFINITIONS:**

1. ***'Linking relief to rehabilitation and development'***: Fundamentally, LRRD is the transition between the provision of emergency relief aid and the implementation of development assistance. Within the broad orientation established by the Commission, LRRD is partly a system of handing over (continuum) relevant relief projects where they can act as a catalyst to longer-term development projects, but it also means to: 1) consider LRRD as close complementarity (contiguum) at the levels of programmes/projects, country and actors involved; 2) seek for complementarity with other donors, NGOs, international organisations for countries where DG ECHO's main sectors (health, food security and water and sanitation) are not focal sectors in the country strategic plans (CSP) of the Delegation/s. Within the broader aim of poverty reduction (a fundamental aim of the EU), humanitarian programmes can be a catalyst or foundation on which poverty reduction programmes could

build, and should be considered as investments or assets that should not be lost by the recipient societies.

2. **'Disaster Preparedness'**: In the likelihood of a disaster, the initiatives or proactive measures that can be taken to lessen the impact, mainly through enhancing the resilience or the capacity of the vulnerable population to cope.

This involves pre-disaster activities that are undertaken within the context of disaster risk management and are based on sound risk analysis. This includes the development or enhancement of an overall preparedness strategy, policy, institutional and management structure, capabilities, and plans that define measures geared to helping at-risk communities safeguard their lives and assets by being alert to hazards and taking appropriate action in the face of an imminent threat or the actual onset of a disaster. (*UN/ISDR terminology*)

3. **'Disaster Risk Reduction'**: The systematic development and application of policies, strategies, and practices to minimise vulnerabilities, hazards, and the unfolding of disaster impacts throughout a society, in the broad context of sustainable development. (*United Nations Development Programme definition*).

The conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards within the broad context of sustainable development. (*UN/ISDR definition*)

4. **'Exit Strategy'** (in a DG ECHO context): drawing down from an ongoing commitment by handing over the running/financing of an operation to another EC instrument, donor, host government, or the beneficiaries.

'...Humanitarian aid cannot address the structural causes of the problems, and is not an appropriate substitute for sustainable social and economic policies. Given this (...), a gradual phasing-out of humanitarian assistance is necessary.' [In such a situation] "ECHO should therefore focus on its "core mandate", i.e., life-saving operations in emergencies which aim for the *earliest possible exit, combined with co-ordinated and progressive transition from humanitarian aid to normal co-operation* instruments [where necessary]"...' (*Explanation from DG ECHO paper on Exit Strategies dated May 2003.*)

'...A second criterion for phasing out ECHO's activities is a sufficient commitment by other donors and humanitarian actors, which may qualify a decision taken solely based on the existing humanitarian needs situation...' (*Explanation from DG ECHO paper on Exit Strategies dated May 2003.*)

5. **'Hashad'**: Traditional form of labour contribution for community purposes.
6. **'Jamoat'**: Lowest level government entity/administration in Tajikistan.
7. **'Pour Flush Latrine'** – as opposed to a 'pit latrine', a pour flush latrine is one where water is used to wash away faeces, urine, etc. A tank of water, kept filled, is accessed with smaller containers for flushing by users. A system that is being introduced in schools by UNICEF.
8. **'Vulnerability'**: The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. (*UN/ISDR terminology*)

# 1 BACKGROUND

**LRRD in Tajikistan:** Tajikistan was not an ideal country in which to implement an LRRD strategy, although not many countries emerging from a similar situation would be. In the case of Tajikistan there was a double transition: 1) transition from rehabilitation to development in a civil war context, 2) transition from ‘socialism’ to market economy. This double transition made the situation more difficult for international agencies and state structures, which have had little experience in dealing with their own affairs, because this region was heavily ruled from Moscow. The government lacks experience, capacity, and adequate budget and, a deficiency in sensitivity to the wellbeing of the population.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, a large part of the working population is held in thrall to the feudalistic systems of the cotton-farming industry, whilst on the other, a large part of the younger population, is determined to escape from what they see as country that lacks a viable economic future for them, creating gaps in many sectors of the working population. Much of the older population had grown up with a Soviet system that they believe effectively provided for most of their needs, creating a form of reliance, only to see it destroyed by the subsequent collapse of the Soviet system and the civil war, and even now with the war ended nearly ten years ago, they are still worse off than they were under the communist regime<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the culture of secrecy, once again inspired by the former Soviet regime and tribal systems, does not lend itself to gathering information easily and therefore means that there is no accurate data on which to base humanitarian and development programmes, with only limited indicators as to how the humanitarian situation may be improving or otherwise<sup>3</sup>. Implementing an LRRD strategy in Tajikistan may not be more difficult than any other country that might be going through a transition from a relief situation to development – but it is certainly different to many.

The report refers variously to ‘*LRRD programme*’, ‘*LRRD process*’, ‘*LRRD project*’ and other phrases. This tends to frame LRRD as a specific programme designed to handover projects from ECHO to a development donor in a transition between relief and development. Many of the findings of the report concentrate on whether the LRRD phase was punctual or properly implemented or handed over to the right donor/instruments. The report also focuses on LRRD as a Commission strategy, in line with the terms of reference, which called for an evaluation of ‘LRRD’, specifically, and so the emphasis has been on examining it from a Commission and DG ECHO perspective **rather than the wider notion of arranging ECHO's efforts, in general, with other donors and development actors in the country.** This perspective, however, is important, and it should be recognised immediately that the Commission is not a ‘fix all’, and in terms of the amount of funding to Tajikistan, it is, by no means, the largest donor. Ideally, LRRD, or whatever terminology is used for the transition between relief, rehabilitation and development, should be seen more as an **approach** or a **set of principles** or **concept** for implementing relief or development in any context, and as an automatic consideration during the emergency phase of an operation. In this context, comments on ‘*LRRD starting late*’ become irrelevant because LRRD should then be applied to all projects at all times. In other words it should be ‘mainstreamed’. If this concept is applied in the future for DG ECHO, it will become more important to determine whether the projects that were funded and the specific interventions were adequately aligned with this process or followed LRRD principles; whether humanitarian

---

<sup>1</sup> As pointed out in the discussion, during the debriefing in Brussels, about development in general and in Africa in particular, this statement is, admittedly, true for most developing countries of similar ranking in poverty and the HDI.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that only the resource rich countries of the Former Soviet Union Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, now reach the level of economic development they had during Soviet times. All other CIS countries are worse off.

<sup>3</sup> The data situation has multiple facets. First, the transition from one statistical system to a new one made it impossible to have time series. The Soviet style system of reporting of data broke down when the health, education, and social system broke down. New systems have not yet been established, and on top of that there is no tradition of surveys, and household surveys in particular. This adds to the culture of secrecy.

partners incorporated activities to ensure better links to longer term development within their projects right from the start and whether the projects gradually evolved into more sustainable development initiatives towards the end of the funding period. Thus, the onus of implementing LRRD would be more on the partners from the very start of the emergency phase, or it would become automatic, and so would be less dependent on the mechanics of the Commission procedures or the agendas or procedures of other donors.

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ***Bullet Point List of Conclusions and Recommendations:***

#### **2.1. Conclusions:**

- **Clearly conceived:** For DG ECHO, specifically, the mechanics of the LRRD phase were clearly thought out, with foresight, and fulfilled,
- **Ample funding:** The amount of funding **from DG ECHO** for the LRRD phase was both appropriate and sufficient,
- **Overall:** For the instruments of the Commission including DG ECHO, LRRD was late starting, capacities of partners varied leading to inconsistent approaches, partly caused by a lack of indicators,
- **Sustainability & Flexibility:** There is a lack of sustainability in short-term funding cycles, which even with a 3 year strategy is difficult to overcome, and a lack of flexibility in longer-term instruments, which, together, do not ease the process of transition,
- **Prolonged Presence:** DG ECHO's presence in Tajikistan, as an emergency donor, was too prolonged<sup>4</sup>, and it extended its mandate into sectors where it's expertise is less relevant,
- **Inconsistent interpretations of LRRD:** There were varying interpretations of LRRD by partners, despite the clear and consistent briefings from DG ECHO,
- **Long term humanitarian problems:** There is a small danger of leaving a legacy of long-term humanitarian problems, but these are mainly a consequence of structural issues that are not within the mandate of DG ECHO or the sole domain of the Commission.
- **Commission; not the only donors** – need for coherent, global approach in LRRD that looks beyond just the Commission instruments,
- **Sustainability:** DG ECHO's projects should actively promote elements of sustainability,
- **Need for faster implementation** of longer-term instruments.
- **Effectiveness of the interventions/Capacities** of implementing partners were inconsistent,

---

<sup>4</sup> This is controversial; some argue that it LRRD may have started late but that ECHO's presence was not prolonged. The type of emergency was a complex one. The peace agreement was signed but the government institutions were very weak and slow to move ahead with strategic planning which would have allowed them to capitalise more efficiently on outsider support. The population themselves were demanding humanitarian assistance as they felt abandoned by the state authorities.



- **Limitations with co-ordination**, good at HQ and local level, poor at intermediate level,
- **Levels of engagement in LRRD** with other donors and stakeholders was good as far as DG ECHO could make it so but a more coherent general approach is needed.

## 2.2. **Recommendations:**

- **Desirable long-term objective** for all humanitarian actors,
- **Develop longer-term perspectives** at an earlier stage [during the emergency phase],
- **Develop indicators and data bases** to assist with decisions on timing of implementation, both entry and exit,
- **Re-examine the moral imperative [for DG ECHO]** of moving further into the grey zone;
- **Align co-ordination at all levels** amongst all actors (difficult given different agendas and different means),
- **Reassess LRRD strategy Commission-wide:** In due course, the Commission should revisit its' LRRD strategy
- **Levels of funding for LRRD:** Tajikistan can be commended as an example where the amounts were ample and carefully balanced against what was likely to be forthcoming.
- **Global Common Approach:** This can only be achieved by greater advocacy for a common approach at HQ level.

**Main Conclusions:** *(Detailed conclusions and recommendations will be found at the end of the report, under chapter 9.)*

**2.3. For DG ECHO, specifically, the mechanics of the LRRD phase were successful:** In Tajikistan, LRRD was a clearly conceived strategy, decisively executed (by ECHO), there was significant commitment from most of the actors, and although there were some gaps, there were no overwhelming humanitarian needs that developed during the period of transition. DG ECHO, the DG ECHO expert and the team in the field, and the desks made a determined effort to implement LRRD for which **they should be strongly commended**. They should also be commended for showing sufficient vision to define a longer-term strategy for its implementation, although, if one considers that by this time the emergency was over, then three years was too long for DG ECHO to be involved in a transition strategy, and this did not entirely ease the problem DG ECHO faces with short funding cycles.

**2.4. Ample funding from DG ECHO for LRRD phase:** It is not possible in any intervention to say precisely what an appropriate level of funding might be; when an emergency phase ends and there is more access, new needs become evident and sometimes more funding is needed than during the emergency itself but then much depends on the capacity of the agencies present. The level provided during the phase out of DG ECHO (relative to the intervention in Tajikistan and to ECHO interventions more generally) against the residual needs from the emergency was appropriate. Measured against the level of funding that was intended by the other instruments of the Commission, DG ECHO's funding was sufficient a) to address some of the residual

humanitarian needs and b) to act as a catalyst for longer term instruments of the Commission and other agencies.

- 2.5. General, Late Start, Capacities of Partners, Indicators, Quicker Introduction of longer-term Commission Instruments:** Due to external circumstances, LRRD was late starting in Tajikistan – in a context where relief had already started moving into a rehabilitation phase before the Commission strategy commenced. Despite the best efforts of those involved, LRRD had difficulty in aligning all the necessary instruments satisfactorily. Activities implemented under LRRD, at this late stage are not as efficient and cost-effective as pure development initiatives would be. The capacity of partners varied; not all could make the transition and several should not have tried. As far as recommendations are concerned, from DG ECHO's perspective, clear indicators for exit/transition/handover need to be developed, (for examples see detailed recommendations under section 9 sub paragraph 5) not only for DG ECHO but also for other Commission instruments. DG ECHO should continue to advocate for the timely introduction of other instruments of the Commission to come in with greater flexibility, as well as, most importantly, trying to find complementarity with other donors.
- 2.6. Lack of sustainability in short-term funding, lack of flexibility in other instruments:** The one-sided effort, in the initial phases of LRRD, however, could not be easily sustained by the short-term funding cycles of an emergency relief orientated donor, nor find adequate flexibility and speedy positioning of the other instruments of the Commission which have, generally, the single minded aim of reducing poverty. Whilst this is an admirable aim, it is, above all, a broad aim, whereas the programmes of DG ECHO tend to be much more specific. The main instrument used for LRRD was TACIS which is, as the acronym suggests, technical assistance, but it did not allow sufficient manoeuvre for the more specific shifting and evolving humanitarian needs of Tajikistan at the time of the implementation of LRRD. In the opinion of many, TACIS has never been a sufficiently flexible instrument. Moreover, TACIS will discontinue<sup>5</sup> when current funding is complete. It should be stressed, however, that a significant amount of the TACIS funding went into an NGO-IO poverty alleviation scheme – which could be described as a more flexible response than could have been expected from an instrument that is mainly designed for supporting the Government with technical advice. There was large support from the EC Delegation and RELEX to negotiate with the Government over the allocation of funds through NGOs-IOs, which was not an easy task. RELEX, AIDCO and the Delegations made considerable efforts and investments to maintain such a human resource extensive programme.
- 2.7. Prolonged stay, late start, extended sectors:** LRRD in the context of a Commission strategy, as implemented through DG ECHO, primarily an **emergency** instrument of the Commission, went further in Tajikistan over a much more prolonged period of time than is normal for many DG ECHO programmes<sup>6</sup>. Despite this, the strategy was implemented too late from ECHO's perspective – when the emergency phase was well past – and too slowly by the longer-term instruments of the Commission that form the vital link in the LRRD strategy (despite the early presence and subsequent temporary exit of TACIS – for security reasons). Maybe, as one DG ECHO official remarked '*...the evaluation should*

---

<sup>5</sup> Whilst TACIS is still running, the new EC instrument addressing poverty alleviation is the DCECI – development cooperation and economic cooperation instrument.

<sup>6</sup> This has to be qualified by pointing out that some crises (through no fault of DG ECHO, or despite DG ECHO's best efforts to maintain a needs driven approach) tend to be better funded than others, either because they have a high profile or because they occur in a 'strategic' area, and sometimes in these cases the money that DG ECHO has, is used for projects that go beyond immediate emergency relief. Nevertheless, by the standards of many of DG ECHO's programmes, and by the terms of its own mandate, which is essentially 'life saving' one would not expect such activities as the rehabilitation of major water systems, for example.

*not have been of 'LRRD' but of 'LDRR', i.e. linking development and rehabilitation to relief...*' which puts the emphasis on either better development programmes in the first place that are able to pre-empt some of these sorts of disasters, or development moving further down the 'grey zone' to meet relief, in the sense that if the Commission wants a coherent LRRD strategy, it has to be approached holistically, looking at DG ECHO, TACIS, Poverty Reduction as a range of instruments that have to be used in the most appropriate fashion. If ECHO enters into an LRRD phase late (as in Tajikistan), there is a danger of the strategy becoming disconnected from reality and then the ECHO activities within the LRRD phase become an island within the development community's reality.

- 2.8. Differences of Interpretation of LRRD by Partners:** A difficulty lies in the way that different agencies working with DG ECHO and the Delegation in Tajikistan interpret LRRD (as opposed to 'transition' or 'exit strategy'). One **extreme** comment, but worth mentioning as being one end of the spectrum, is that *'...LRRD is an unnecessary concept, that there is undoubtedly a big gap between humanitarian and development funding, but it requires no special emphasis from ECHO or the EU, as a separate concept. Rather, it should be included in any programming from the very beginning [of a humanitarian emergency], as good practice in relief/development scenarios...'*<sup>7</sup>

This statement included the belief that ECHO was really only using LRRD as a system for early withdrawal from a country where the needs continue to be overwhelming, although the agency concerned was addressing those needs with a developmental approach. Thus, it was their belief that ECHO should continue to provide funding for transition strategies well after the relief phase was over. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of what DG ECHO's role is and the role of other instruments of the Commission. Partners often chose to interpret LRRD in different ways, varying from a mere transition between donors rather than a change in programming, to a full justification of their normal projects. This, however, was often a manifestation of their varying capacities for being able to move from emergency relief to developmental programmes, where, in some cases they were less driven by a desire to implement realistic projects than they were to stay in business. In many cases, there was also some flawed thinking on the parts of some of the partners as to what constituted effective LRRD.

- 2.9. Danger of Leaving a Legacy of Long-term Humanitarian Issues:** Whilst there was no clear evidence of any major humanitarian needs developing during the implementation of the LRRD strategy, some agencies did consider that there were potential humanitarian problems just over the horizon. Such serious matters as HIV/Aids, (although extremely well funded by the Global Fund<sup>8</sup>) malnutrition, water contamination problems, major shortcomings with the economy leading to livelihood difficulties, and an alarming number of, admittedly small-scale, disasters such as mudslides and flooding, need constant monitoring, and in the view of some agencies, may lead to a return of dire humanitarian needs. Most of these potential problems, however, stemmed from structural causes that were best addressed by long-term strategies beyond the mandate, even in an LRRD scenario, of DG ECHO. Continuing with emergency-orientated humanitarian aid to try to address some of these issues would be counter-productive and would aggravate dependency, whilst lacking the cost-effectiveness of longer-term solutions.

---

<sup>7</sup> If one takes the case of Tajikistan as an example for discussing such a statement, with an entry in 1992-1993 during a civil war: it may be questionable as to how realistic it would be to develop an exit strategy in a volatile environment and at such an early stage?

<sup>8</sup> Massive funding is, however, by no means a guarantee against HIV/AIDS developing rapidly. There has been considerable funding in Southern Africa over the last decade but this has not prevented the rapid spread of the disease in the region.

**2.10. Commission; not the only donors:** This being said, DG ECHO had alerted the Delegation and other donors (as well as the government) to many of these issues, and it should be emphasised that if, as yet, hypothetical humanitarian disasters were to develop this would not be through a lack of effort on the part of the LRRD strategy of the Commission. Although at one time DG ECHO was a major donor amongst very few others in Tajikistan, at the time of the emergency and at the commencement of LRRD, **the Commission are not the only donors** either of emergency relief aid or development, nor are the donors the only ones for overseeing any transition phase. Much responsibility lies with the government. If one considers the relief work of DG ECHO to have been essential in the emergency phase, then the biggest gap that occurred was the consequence of not creating an adequate bridge to allow this work to flow efficiently into the next phase towards development. An earlier departure would allow DG ECHO's specialised expertise to be used in other humanitarian emergencies, and minimise the potential waste caused by inadequately or inappropriately developed transition projects that dissipate into nothing through a lack of follow-up funding.

**2.11. DG ECHO's projects should actively promote elements of sustainability in an LRRD phase:** LRRD is definitely a two-way affair, (between emergency relief and development) and there is no reason why DG ECHO's projects should not incorporate into their planning greater elements of sustainability. Well-designed ECHO funded projects have potential to act as a catalyst for development, and partners can attract donor funding because, by the time that the LRRD phase occurs, the projects are likely to be sound and having a positive impact on peoples' lives.

*The counter argument*, however, would be that many, for example health INGOs, are first, only proficient in one area, emergency aid or development, and secondly, in health there seems to occur a shift for the type of partners donors are looking for during development. These, not unnaturally, are different from the ones preferred during the emergency. This was certainly the case in Tajikistan – where the delegation has prioritised health, but much funding will go through budget support, while, basically, TACIS finances capacity building. Where development funding, as a follow on to ECHO funding, is not likely or appropriate, then the projects should at least be sustainable in the sense that the immediate outputs will not be lost as soon as funding ceases. In this situation, a good LRRD strategy would be to ensure easy replicability (i.e. replication by the affected communities, which would lead to self sufficiency), sustainability, reliability of interventions, and relevance for future interventions (i.e. data collection and capacity building) as well as an appropriate exit strategy for DG ECHO. As an emergency instrument of the Commission, their specialised and well-developed relief expertise is more valuable in developing emergency situations, where their use will produce better results, especially since the returns on inadequately or inappropriately developed interventions during transition may be limited/minimal.

**2.12. Possibility of Faster Implementation of Longer-term Instruments?** It is not entirely clear why the longer-term instruments, in the case of Tajikistan could not move quicker. Part of this inconsistent approach to timing – in the phasing out of DG ECHO and the phasing in of other Commission instruments – can be attributed to the lack of adequate indicators to enable the various agencies to 'fine-tune' their actions. It will never be easy to do this in the volatile situations where LRRD occurs, but more effort should be made to define a coherent approach by the Commission. In the case of Tajikistan, there appears to have been limited benefit by having a long LRRD period – certainly, for example, in the case of health where partners simply continued with what they had been doing during the crisis, although, in some cases, they added, correctly, capacity building,

and the development of standard treatment guidelines etc. This, however, could have been done in a shorter period. The three year period combined with the short funding cycle of DG ECHO was on the one hand too long to carry on doing emergency-type health projects, but on the other hand, some NGOs considered that it was too short to develop sensible developmental plans, such as a functional procurement and distribution system for medicines

- 2.13. Effectiveness of the interventions/Capacity of implementing partners:** It was not always possible to find adequate capacity (implementing partners, UN, NGOs and government agencies) in the field to execute the programmes of LRRD in the most effective way. Some of the implementing partners of ECHO are, specifically, specialists in relief aid and do not necessarily have the dual mindset and skills to work efficiently in rehabilitation/development work. They, therefore, tend to work at activities that they understand but which are, sometimes, more appropriate to a relief phase than to LRRD; in other words, they were not entirely capable of switching from humanitarian to development work, (just as, in sudden onset disasters, the reverse is true). During rehabilitation and development, capacity building of the government is essential and ECHO (this problem was, once again, especially observed in the health sector) cannot finance this formally although indirectly it could be done within the context of the other humanitarian operations, such as training the MDs of the health centres, receiving free medicines. This was, in fact, done extensively by DG ECHO over some years and some improvement among those medical facilities targeted was noticeable. There were some other good examples of best practice in the health sector of LRRD, such as the National Nutritional Surveys, implemented with DG ECHO and USAID funding.
- 2.14. Limitations with Co-ordination:** At Commission level co-ordination was fine, on the ground between DG ECHO and the Delegation acceptable, at DG ECHO level in the field it was considerable and highly commendable with the DG ECHO expert going to huge lengths to co-ordinate with and lobby other parts of the EC, non-EC actors, other donors, government and many others. This, however, was an individual, isolated effort at co-ordination and for co-ordination to be coherent, it has to be a concerted effort. It seemed that amongst many of the UN agencies, NGOs, and Government, at the country level, especially linking on the ground initiatives with policy action, it was definitely lacking, or more accurately, it happened, but not in a holistic way. Tajikistan and the LRRD phase are not exceptional in this, although it is important to note it here, where much co-ordination was attempted, but it tended to be done at different levels, where the levels, agendas and means did not necessarily connect. As far as Tajikistan is concerned there appeared to be a gap in the 'intermediate' level of co-ordination, if one considers the 'micro' level to be the co-ordination in the field, and the 'macro' level to be the co-ordination at HQs. This coordination may indeed be improved, in the future, by the UN cluster approach, but that is outside the terms of this evaluation.

### ***Recommendations:***

- 2.15. Desirable Long-Term Objective:** With carefully integrated elements of sustainability built into the latter phases of their relief strategy, DG ECHO can act as a catalyst for development projects. If this is matched by an earlier and more flexible approach of instruments such as TACIS (or whatever replaces such instruments), combined with a more rigorous self examination by the implementing partners of their capacities and agendas, then a smoothly working process that is of benefit to the affected population and the country as a whole can be achieved. For a seamless transition, longer-term **instruments of the Commission should move in more quickly** and with greater

flexibility. This would allow ECHO to withdraw much earlier, than it did in Tajikistan, even though it is clearly understood that the three-year implementation phase, for DG ECHO, was a deliberate policy, which was decided on years in advance of the implementation – an act of foresight that should also be recommended for future LRRD scenarios. LRRD is a good concept as such, but particularly needs greater commitment from those who take over from DG ECHO. The following are a list of more immediate recommendations:

- 1. Develop Longer-term Perspectives:** Relief projects, especially when the relief phase is ending, need to have longer-term perspectives as well as the swifter deployment of development instruments. DG ECHO tried to achieve this with their 3-year plan, and, in future LRRD scenarios **this sort of vision is essential**, but it needs to **become operational at an earlier phase, before the emergency ends**. It should also encompass a strategy that would lead to sustainability, and include elements of DRR<sup>9</sup>. This being said, ECHO should **not** have longer term projects. Many partners would want this as it would be easy for them and encourage them into using DG ECHO as a source of temporary funding whilst waiting for larger amounts of development funding, but a **clear direction of the projects towards development** is all that is needed. So... for example, the project proposals could include a more detailed section on sustainability mirroring the TACIS (or whatever other instrument takes over) section.
- 2. Develop Indicators to Decide on Timing of Implementation, both Entry and Exit:** In order to provide guidance on the critical issue of timing, **more work needs to be done on developing indicators** for exit or handover. DG ECHO has already done work on this resulting in a document on entry and exit strategy<sup>10</sup>. **Jointly**, (because LRRD is a two-way affair) however, DG ECHO and the other Commission instruments should be looking at indicators in key areas such as security, government capacity, NGO priorities – i.e. continuing with relief activities or independently moving into rehabilitation, displacement – to what extent people are finding stability in their homes, livelihoods and certain sector specific indicators in health, water (i.e. what access to water is available – potability, quantity, hand pumps per population concentration etc), to what extent partners have development strategies, to what extent community organisations are operational, food security, and protection. As well as being a signal for the drawing down of emergency relief, this should also be a positive encouragement for development actors to enter the country, in the sense that if this is happening, development projects are ready to be implemented. Concurrently with this it would be necessary to set up baseline data in key sectors of intervention before the beginning of the LRRD phase – once again, almost at the start of an emergency – in countries where it is implemented.
- 3. Re-Examine the Moral Imperative of Moving Further into the Grey Zone:** Despite the arguments over the moral imperative – i.e. ***if there is no other donor available can DG ECHO turn away from even a mild humanitarian situation?*** – In the opinion of the evaluation team, DG ECHO should not go as far into the grey zone funding rehabilitation and development as it did in Tajikistan. In some situations, as was the case in Tajikistan, a lack of other donors (or slowness to position themselves)

---

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that DRR is only a recently defined concept, which has only been emphasised after 2005. This means that it was not something that would have been considered when this LRRD strategy was being developed, but which is now an issue and an important one for the future.

<sup>10</sup> 'General Guidelines for ECHO Exit Strategies', May 2003

means that a humanitarian imperative pulls ECHO into the grey zone, but resisting the pull and attempting greater advocacy may not guarantee that other development actors can fill the gaps. It is ECHO's rapidity in mobilising funding that allows it to fill the gaps. This is the stark reality now and if DG ECHO wishes to escape from this moral dilemma then ECHO should put even greater emphasis on strong advocacy rather than declaring it a no go (grey) zone. Although DG ECHO definitely has a role in any LRRD strategy, as being the entry point, foundation, or catalyst upon which other Commission instruments can build, it is primarily an emergency relief donor. As such, whilst it is acknowledged that DG ECHO attempted to do so wherever possible in Tajikistan, during the LRRD phase ECHO should: 1) limit its assistance to support humanitarian aid activities, trying to ensure that there is no gap, and phase out when feasible, and 2) thereby handing over the continuation into rehabilitation and development to the other, better suited, instruments of the Commission or other long-term agencies, or 3) ensure that its partners and programmes have managed to develop independency from relief funding, be it self-sufficiency and sustainability amongst the affected population that they serve, or that they have been able to adapt their programmes to the new phase and to obtain development funding, 4) ensure that all of the above are achieved through much greater advocacy.

If DG ECHO does move further into the 'grey zone' during an LRRD phase, then this can only be done as far as DG ECHO's technical expertise allows it. This prompts the recommendation that the technical experts in the RSO become more involved in LRRD.

4. **Align Co-ordination:** Because 1) DG ECHO would be phasing out, and is therefore likely to have less funding available, 2) the main co-ordination role would be taken on by the Delegation, but 3) DG ECHO will have a well-established knowledge and experience of the situation, ECHO's main role in the LRRD phase should be advocacy; advocacy with other parts of the Commission, advocacy with other donors, advocacy with implementing partners to ensure complementarity with other donors, **such as happened in the Health sector with ADB**, facilitate a smooth transition from relief to development aid. In a transitional context good co-ordination would involve:
  - ***Regular meetings*** between Delegation ECHO and member states (assuming that at this stage of LRRD the situation has reached a degree of stability that allows for their presence) at pre-arranged, for example monthly, intervals to discuss development issues and transition (possibly with rotating topics through the sectors), and possibly an even closer working relationship between the delegation and the DG ECHO team in the field – for the LRRD phase, shared offices?
  - ***A common understanding*** on 1) the needs of the population and how to best achieve them, 2) transparency of the objectives and agenda of those involved, 3) a rigorous examination of capacities amongst the agencies, 4) a more altruistic or humanitarian approach to funding, where it should be understood that funding is first and foremost for the affected population.
5. **In due course, the Commission should revisit its' LRRD strategy** and in connection with this **its work on exit strategies** (following up the 2003 reviews), providing a clear definition of strategic sectors or the limit of DG ECHO's

involvement, given that ECHO cannot avoid being involved, initially, in LRRD if it is already present during a humanitarian crisis. This should be done in coordination with the Delegations so that they would be clear from the start if an exit strategy is required or if the partners need to transition to other instruments<sup>11</sup>. LRRD is a good concept as such, but needs more commitment especially from those who take it over. DG ECHO can advocate for the development of a preliminary strategy or phasing-in strategy and corresponding programmes to ease the phasing-in of longer-term instruments of the Commission and phasing-out of ECHO.

6. **Levels of funding for LRRD:** The levels of funding from DG ECHO for the LRRD phase can only be decided on a case by case basis, but Tajikistan can be commended as an example where the amounts were ample and carefully balanced against what was likely to be forthcoming. Too much funding in the LRRD phase would draw DG ECHO further into development sectors which, in theory, should be looked after by longer-term instruments and agencies. At the same time there has to be adequate funding to deal with the residual humanitarian problems, which may actually increase as access becomes easier. The amount of funding has also to be balanced against the capacities of DG ECHO's partners and, for example, the desirability from DG ECHO's point of view to fund new agencies who may come in (with all their start up costs) for rehabilitation and development specifically.
7. **Global Common Approach:** DG ECHO's efforts in the field towards attempting to align their funding strategies with other donors, such as ADB, should be commended. Nevertheless, an LRRD strategy is likely to work best if other donors than the Commission are similarly engaged. This can only be achieved by greater advocacy for a common approach not only in the country concerned amongst the donors and agencies together with the government but also at HQ level.

### 3 METHODOLOGY, BACKGROUND AND APPROACH:

- 3.1. **The layout of the paper is as follows:** The executive summary contained in part one, above, provides a précis of the main issues and focuses on the key objectives, which are; the justifications, challenges, successes, for DG ECHO in its implementation of an LRRD strategy in Tajikistan; whether the strategy was effective and a smooth transition took place; whether timing was appropriate; how well, as an instrument of the Commission, DG ECHO melded with other instruments of the Commission or the strategies of other donors and vice versa; whether the strategies of DG ECHO were best suited to enable implementing partners to ease out of the relief phase and into rehabilitation and subsequently development, and to what extent this was the responsibility of DG ECHO or the responsibility of the partners, and perhaps most importantly whether, perhaps, perceived 'Western' concepts such as 'LRRD' and 'development' are best suited to a country like Tajikistan, where, one might argue, the mindset and cultural perceptions are such that 'reform' (also a 'Western' concept) is of a higher priority and without it development actions will have limited effectiveness. Following this summary, there is a more detailed argument and explanation. This includes details of the current state of the humanitarian situation, vulnerabilities, and the situation with regard to, current practices, good and bad, identification of gaps and to

---

<sup>11</sup> *In any one country, where LRRD is a potential strategy, three situations can occur at the same time, depending upon type of operations, which determine the modus operandi during LRRD: 1) no hand-over is necessary; project can be phased out, 2) hand-over is necessary; no external institution prepared to take over, project should be geared to local actors, 3) other donor or government prepared to take over; design of an interface into project which facilitates hand-over.* DG ECHO paper on exit strategies dated May 2003.



what extent ECHO investments in LRRD have filled some of these gaps or whether they were subsequently met by interventions outside DG ECHO's mandate, i.e. adequate rehabilitation and developmental programming. The last section of the paper is devoted to conclusions and recommendations. After the main paper, there are a number of annexes, which will provide a summary of projects visited on the mission, some good and bad examples of LRRD identified in the country, a list of people consulted on the evaluation, and finally the itinerary.

### ***Purpose of Evaluation:***

- 3.2. **The purpose** of evaluations is to fulfil article 18, regulation EC 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, which states that the Commission shall regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community to establish whether they have achieved objectives and to produce guidelines for the effectiveness of subsequent operations.
- 3.3. **The more specific aim** of this evaluation was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the LRRD phase; to assess the effectiveness of LRRD and the management of the transitional process from humanitarian to development aid, highlighting best practices and lessons learned, as it has been implemented in Tajikistan through DG ECHO and its partners and to produce recommendations on how this process can be improved when applying LRRD in other interventions globally.

### ***Methodology, Background & Approach:***

- 3.4. **Sources of information:** The evaluation team attempted to gather information from as many sources as possible, beginning with an examination of project documents both in Brussels and at the DG ECHO office in Dushanbe.
- 3.5. **Meetings:** Most important were the detailed meetings with partners, beneficiaries and other donors and stakeholders, which focussed on the LRRD transition process.
- 3.6. **Field Visits:** Another vital element to the evaluation was that of field visits, where the evaluation team was not only able to see what was actually happening on the ground, but was able to talk to the affected population – to find out to what extent they benefited from LRRD strategies, or whether they even realised that emergency relief was changing its nature and becoming aid towards rehabilitation and development. Field visits were particularly useful in verifying the situation in the three priority areas – food, health and water and sanitation – as well as the linkages to development.
- 3.7. **Participatory Approach:** In all aspects, a participatory approach in information gathering was encouraged with a special effort made to talk to often subdued groups such as women and children – the silent but important consumers of humanitarian aid.

## **4 OVERVIEW OF LRRD & HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN TAJIKISTAN**

- 4.1. **Background:** The humanitarian consequences of the violent and bitter five-year civil war in Tajikistan, exacerbated by a severe drought from 2000 – 2001 and combined with the legacy of the Soviet era, eventually reduced to a degree of stability where it became feasible to link relief to rehabilitation and development (LRRD). In 2003 this strategy of the European Commission was implemented as a deliberate policy by DG ECHO and other of the European Commission's instruments, involving many services in the field (TACIS, FSP, ECHO, etc.) in co-ordination, programming, monitoring, and evaluation. The implementation of the Commission process focussed on the phasing out of DG

ECHO and the phasing in of the TACIS Poverty Alleviation Scheme and the FSP NGO programme – although complementarity had originally been envisioned in wider areas than those two. ECHO's presence was, possibly, maintained longer than it usually would be, partly because of this strategy. A final decision was made in 2006 to reinforce the plan of action by attempting to link the concluding ECHO programme to the incoming new instruments of the European Commission in 2007. Maintaining 1) a strong programme in the water sanitation and health sectors, while 2) continuing to address the poorest and most vulnerable populations in remote areas have been central elements in the LRRD strategy and exit phase of DG ECHO.

The timing of this evaluation was such that it took place towards the conclusion of the final DG ECHO funding decision for Tajikistan (with the exception of DIPECHO) as part of the phase-out of humanitarian assistance – and therefore was instigated whilst partners were still active in the field, concluding projects in water sanitation and health, and some small, targeted, household level food security measures. Although this evaluation may be able to assess the effectiveness of the mechanics of the process, to be able to judge how successful LRRD was in terms of benefit to the affected population, it may be too early.

### *Humanitarian Setting:*

**4.2. General:** Tajikistan poses complex challenges regarding the development environment. With a history of being part of the Soviet system, the population was used to regular government services for utilities such as water and electricity, as well as a functioning social system providing benefits for disadvantaged groups and quality health and education systems. The older population, therefore, can still remember the government provision of reliable services and tends to compare current development efforts with the previous situation, where development interventions, typically, fall short of the previous system.

In Tajikistan, the transition and destruction of the Soviet systems was more profound than in neighbouring countries, due to the effect of the civil war that started in 1993, with the situation only gradually calming down after that. Most stakeholders claim that around the year 1997 some sort of order was restored, with the actual fighting subsiding after this point. Much of the social and utility infrastructure was destroyed during the conflict, and immediately after the war, the provision of water and electricity to the population was no longer ensured. Schools and health facilities mostly continued to function during the conflict but with a lower level of service.

**4.3. Relief Operations:** The relief operations started in earnest during the last phase of the conflict when access to the rural areas of the country was restored. During this initial phase food distribution, the provision of emergency water supply, and emergency medical services were the priority of donors and government. Already in the two following years some of the ECHO partners were able to transition their assistance towards the provision of rehabilitation activities. The transition from food provision to seed provision, to revitalize the agricultural sector was started. During this phase as well, the INGOs started to introduce the community based development approach in Tajikistan, giving the local communities a role in the prioritisation of activities affecting their life.

**4.4. Drought:** This first period of rehabilitation of the systems was interrupted by the drought of 2000. This prompted many donors to revert to the provision of food aid, and other direct measures needed in an emergency situation. However, it is worthwhile

noting that while below average rainfall was recorded the failing of irrigation systems played at least an equal role contributing to the failing of crops and the shortage of food. After this event the transition period towards development was restarted.

- 4.5. TACIS Implementation:** While TACIS as the main development instrument of the EC at the time started its operation relatively early, due to a security incident in 1997 the programming was suspended and TACIS only became operational again in 2003 with the first programmes that were available for ECHO partners being implemented at the beginning of 2004. The food security programme of the EC has been active in the country since 1997, already providing community based interventions that are relevant in the rehabilitation phase and had a clear developmental component.
- 4.6. Launch of LRRD:** In 2003 LRRD was launched in Tajikistan, focussing on three sectors; health, water, and food. During the launch of LRRD and subsequently, the partners were advised on the conditions for LRRD, as well as the purpose and how LRRD should be integrated in the overall programming of partners, and how it links to the programming of the Commission in Tajikistan. The response of the partners was mixed, with some being able to implement LRRD in their programming, some not being able to make the shift from relief to development, and a third group using the LRRD funding strategically to fill gaps in their own programming.

***Brief Description of the Current Situation in Tajikistan:***

- 4.7. Tajikistan is the poorest country (considering GDP per capita) of the CIS.** The economy as well as the administration has still not fully recovered from the break up of the Soviet Union and the subsequent civil war. The comparative economic advantages over the short term for Tajikistan are the production of cotton and the production of aluminium<sup>12</sup>. The vast resources of water, however, that can be utilised to generate electricity, as well as to expand the irrigated area of land, mean that there are other opportunities (than cotton and aluminium) present for Tajikistan over the medium and long term. Given the current competitive advantages government focuses on these two sectors to a significant degree. As a consequence 60 percent of the electricity is consumed by the aluminium plant. In addition, to earn hard currency some of the available electricity is sold to neighbouring Afghanistan. This shortage of electricity is especially severe in winter and has a huge impact on economic and social life. Without electricity for almost half of the year it is difficult to establish businesses, to provide drinking water, and to run schools and hospitals. In many parts of the country the unavailability of heating formerly provided through either electricity or central heating systems has led to severe environmental damage, **especially deforestation**. This is aggravated by the increase of livestock breeding in an uncontrolled way, leading to overgrazing of the denuded mountain slopes by goats and sheep. Consequently mudslides and flash floods, further threaten livelihood in marginal areas. An estimated 5000 landslides and flash floods occur annually in Tajikistan, destroying roads, irrigation systems, and entire villages.
- 4.8. Degradation of Agricultural Land:** The lack of funding for the ‘Vadacanal’ organisations in the irrigated plains of Sught and Khatlon have led to a severe

---

<sup>12</sup> Kyrgyzstan is planning to build their own aluminium plant with an annual production capacity of 500,000 tons and associated with power stations, located in Tashkumyr and Khaidarkan in the southern part of the country. So this could diminish Tajikistan’s slender advantage.

degradation of the agricultural land due to salination, where the drainage canals have not been maintained. This affects both the production of cotton as a cash crop as well as food production. Given the priority of government for cotton production in agriculture, the best lands are reserved for cotton, with the households only allowed to farm the garden land and presidential land allocated to them. Typically, families only have 0.2 ha of garden and presidential land combined. Families are only entitled to farm presidential land if the family works on the Dehkan farm in cotton. The situation of the Dehkan farmers is mostly destitute. Dehkan farmers are faced with monopolies for farm inputs and the buying of cotton. Consequently, Dehkan farmers lose money on cotton farming, leading to an increasing indebtedness of farmers to ‘investors’. For the farmers themselves it is not profitable to plant cotton, and the only tangible benefit they have is to have the right to farm the presidential land. However, even the presidential land is not safe, and land ownership still needs to be addressed in the country. Often, therefore, if development initiatives improve the quality of presidential land, afterwards, it will be designated for cotton farming with new presidential land assigned elsewhere in the community. As a result of the system in cotton farming, poverty indicators are worst in cotton growing areas, with these areas also showing the highest incidence of stunting among children.

- 4.9. Government is low at local level:** The Jamoat, the lowest level administration is a good entry point for interventions. Jamoat officials are typically unpaid by government and have a similar role as mahallas in neighbouring countries. The Jamoat is a small enough unit (about 100 to 500 households) to know the area well, and to assist with community contributions to development efforts. In Tajikistan, there is a traditional form of community work “Hashad” from pre Soviet times. Today the concept of Hashad is used to organised community work for example to dig trenches for drinking water system pipes.
- 4.10. Government capacity at village, rayon, and district level is extremely low:** Agricultural extension services, health services, animal vaccination, and the inspectorate system do not function to the desired degree. This in turn poses numerous problems for businesses that need to deal with inspectorates not knowing the regulations, and often charging unjustified fees. This, in combination with the unavailability of electricity, seriously hampers local economic development in Tajikistan.
- 4.11. The difficulties of farming in the cotton areas as well as the difficulties of starting businesses in turn have led to significant out-migration** of Tajik population especially from Khatlon. Migrants are typically young male persons, leaving much of the burden of farming with women and children in the cotton areas of Tajikistan. While remittances help to sustain some of the families in the rural areas, migration also led to an increasing number of female headed households, as well as serious increase in some health risks such as HIV/AIDS which despite the risk factors has so far been stigmatized and ignored by government. Recently, initiatives have tried to use remittances for investment purposes in Tajikistan. However, given the business environment people prefer to use remittances for consumption or construction of houses rather than starting their own business.
- 4.12. The education sector is severely affected by the low salaries of teachers** resulting in significantly lower educational attainment of the population as compared to the Soviet time. Furthermore, the curricula have not been updated, resulting in an education that is often perceived as irrelevant by the population, and consequently in lower attendance rates. Given the current education system, as well as the tendency to hire and promote

employees not using merit based systems but rather relationship based systems, the potential for economic growth in Tajikistan is further limited.

- 4.13. Necessity for Awareness Raising:** The legacy of the Soviet times necessitates that development interventions are accompanied by awareness raising activities. As the previous system was heavily subsidised by central government in Moscow it is unrealistic to restore services to Soviet standards in the near future. This message needs to be constantly given to the affected population, to move towards sustainable provision of services in Tajikistan.
- 4.14. Technological Solutions:** A further legacy of the Soviet times is the focus on technological solutions to service provision. The engineering quality of systems was reasonable during this time, and there is still some capacity in Tajikistan on how to maintain the Soviet style systems. Much of this, however, has been lost due to migration. Unfortunately, however, most of the technology legacy from the Soviet area is not suitable for Tajikistan, which should design or develop appropriate technology that will better fit into the new small scale economy structure of the country. The agriculture technology and equipment was designed for huge Soviet farms and is not adapted to the current situation. China was quicker to understand this and saturate the country with their technology in such a way that Tajikistan has become and would certainly remain a consumer of Chinese technology – with practically no comparative advantage (except energy) toward China. Knowledge regarding more cost effective service provision needs to be built from scratch, using the very limited technological and social capacity in country. Almost no international organisation in the country has thought to set up vocational training schools that would help the country to develop small scale enterprises to produce goods for practical usage such as household furniture and others. Much of the remittance money is largely diverted to China where those goods are imported from.

#### *LRRD in Tajikistan:*

- 4.15. Timeframe:** Whilst it is understood 1) that DG ECHO spent much time considering the timeframe for withdrawal and that 2) Tajikistan was a pilot country for LRRD, this was too long a period to exit from a country where the relief phase was over. The current humanitarian situation is by no means negligible, and if not addressed in a **structural** way, for which there is now the opportunity, given the current stability, could lead to potential problems in the future: situation with HIV/Aids, water contamination problems, potential problems with the economy, an alarming number of, admittedly small-scale, disasters such as mudslides and flooding and others. The government lacks experience, capacity, and adequate budget and, some might say, a lack of sensitivity to the wellbeing of the population<sup>13</sup>. Thus, on the one hand a large component of the working population is held in thrall to the feudalistic systems of the cotton-farming industry, whilst another large part of the younger population, is determined to escape from what they see as country that lacks a viable economic future for them. Much of the older population has grown up with a Soviet system that they believe effectively provided for most of their needs, creating a form of dependency only to see it destroyed by the civil war, and even now with the war ended nearly ten years ago, they are still worse off than they were under the communist regime. Despite all this, as described well in the terms of reference, these problems **'...are now of a structural nature, and the Commission's Humanitarian**

---

<sup>13</sup> On top of this, there is a lack of skilled human resources to implement development work in a complex competitive region....China, Kazakhstan, and Turkey are not far from Tajikistan. The integration in regional market could be seen as a long term solution for economic development.

*Aid instrument [DG ECHO] is not effectively mandated or equipped to address such needs...* DG ECHO, with its limited experience in development and rehabilitation could, as an emergency relief donor, have withdrawn much earlier from Tajikistan thereby remaining closer to its core mandate were it not for the need to ensure that there was an adequate handover to the longer term instruments of the Commission. ECHO does not have the capacity and very often does not have the partners to start taking on rehabilitation and development, despite the fact that many of the partners, anxious to stay in business, assist the population that they have come to know well, or remain in a country or region and try to extend their capacities. If, however, DG ECHO does wish to go further into the 'grey zone' then it should involve and develop more of the technical capacity contained in the RSOs. This, however, is an issue that would require a separate evaluation.

All of this does **not** mean that DG ECHO should not be involved in LRRD; indeed it cannot help being involved but it comes back to the circular question of 'how long it should be involved?' The best suggestion for this dilemma is that it would have to be decided on a case by case basis.

- 4.16. Timing:** One of the most important elements of an LRRD strategy has to be that of timing. Most of the agencies, partners, government organisations, and the various parts of the Delegation agreed that the emergency relief phase in Tajikistan, caused by the conflict and subsequently the drought, was over well before 2003 when LRRD officially began for the Commission instruments. Nevertheless, many of them thought that the chronic humanitarian situation was such that DG ECHO was correct to stay on until now. So...from an emergency point of view DG ECHO stayed for too long, but, from the point of view of making funding available for the transition, the timeframe was about right. This could be considered a commendable aspect from an LRRD perspective. In the case of Tajikistan, however, it may have created a false sense of dependency – DG ECHO was seen as a dependable source of reliable money, (even though ECHO is meticulous in providing funding on a needs based approach, and only after rigorous examination of proposals) from which funding of relief aid could be obtained, even though ECHO-Tajikistan advocated strongly for more appropriate interventions adapted to the transitional phase. Several partners 1) stayed on in an evolving situation that was beyond their capacity to address, or, 2) did not find other sources of funding more aligned to the work that they needed to do or, 3) others embarked on development-type of interventions for which funding from other donors would have been more appropriate. Withdrawing earlier would have freed resources from ECHO for urgent emergency situations or work that is more aligned to their expertise. Whilst this may raise a moral question by suggesting that more needy cases were deprived of DG ECHO funding, this is not the issue – which is simply that, in theory, better adapted instruments/funding existed within the Commission, which if they had come in earlier would have allowed ECHO to use its resources in areas where its expertise would have been more efficiently used. It is not entirely clear why the longer-term instruments, in the case of Tajikistan, could not move quicker.

This is not to say that DG ECHO's aid was not extremely useful since 2003, but over this period a form of dependency was created, in that DG ECHO having been a major donor from the beginning, some of the aid agencies, despite all the warnings and briefings, did not believe or hoped that DG ECHO would not really withdraw. Consequently they were ill-prepared when DG ECHO left or lacked strategies, or they had staff turnover problems, or they could not manage to find funds or else, they refused to admit that their mandate was exhausted (in one or two cases only), and had not put in place adequate

structures to follow them. In some cases, there followed a hurried superficial approach to withdrawal where some of the agencies claimed that they had, for example, done much 'capacity building' where in reality all they had done was trained staff to do jobs within their specific organisation (usually administration). LRRD (probably as a consequence of the report and operational conclusions of the LRRD/DPP Inter-service group, dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 2003) started too late, but this was not so much a fault of DG ECHO's as 1) the strategic decision of the Commission to start LRRD in Tajikistan in 2003 and 2) the slowness of other Commission instruments to take over. In Tajikistan, the Commission instruments were probably 5 years too late and DG ECHO should probably have started to withdraw in 1999<sup>14</sup>. Part of this was due to the fact that, although TACIS started before DG ECHO commenced its' official LRRD strategy, due to a security issue it had to withdraw. The real problem was that it took almost 2 years to become effective – a problem that was also observed in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in Central America, and many other areas where longer-term interventions have tried to build on the foundations laid by DG ECHO. Even now some of the Commission instruments will take another two years to become effective, and in the meantime there could be some serious gaps, although TACIS has significant funding left-over that is likely to be spent during this time. Funding, however, for health and for GBAO and RSS will not be available.

- 4.17. Range of instruments available to Commission for LRRD:** Three basic types of situations determine the modus operandi during LRRD: 1) no hand-over is necessary, project can be phased out, 2) hand-over is necessary, no external institution prepared to take over, project should be geared to local actors, 3) other donor or government prepared to take over, needs design of an interface which facilitates hand-over of project. However, in the context of LRRD, DG ECHO, TACIS, FSP, DG DEV, etc, are instruments of the European Commission's that can be used in the process, and as such should be seen as tools with different capacities and abilities but, 1) where possible they should be considered as complementary, and 2) if LRRD is to become a useful strategy they will have to be adapted to fit neatly. In the case of Tajikistan they did not. There were gaps in the timing and gaps in the procedures. The usual reasons given by the other instruments of the Commission is that they cannot move fast enough, they have to work with governments and they require a relatively stable and secure environment to operate.
- 4.18. Fine-tuning of LRRD necessary:** If LRRD, itself, is seen as a strategy whose purpose is to enable a smooth transition from relief to development, then it had not been adequately evolved in Tajikistan. The process in Tajikistan demonstrated that there are still significant gaps in the instrument to allow for unhindered progress of the different Commission budget lines from relief into development activities. This is caused by limitations on all sides, capacity/skills and mindset of ECHO emergency partners, plus often, single purpose health partners, short funding cycles, difficulties of working with and through government (while that is exactly what is needed in a rehabilitation phase, in order to get a government functioning again), the tender processes the EC uses and many other factors. On the one hand, the primary instrument of the Delegation, TACIS, was, in the initial stages of its use, seen as too rigid, whilst DG ECHO did not have long enough budgetary cycles to empower an effective transition approach, in a country where much had to be done to raise awareness, change cultural perceptions, and, in the main, take a long-term view. Whilst DG ECHO cannot escape some involvement in the transition phase or LRRD, because by nature of its mandate, it is present at the start of

---

<sup>14</sup> This is what was originally planned but then a severe drought brought major humanitarian consequences. The phase out strategy was then determined while the drought response was being finalised. At that time the funding went up to €16 million a year.

any given crisis, and has already ‘picked up the flag’ and started running, there is less pressure on the other instruments of the Commission to follow up quickly – so... DG ECHO cannot drop the flag but in the case of Tajikistan it was a long time before anybody else was prepared to take it on. It is not a possible solution to say that DG ECHO should have nothing to do with LRRD, because right from the start it is involved in LRRD, especially when it is considered that, LRRD is also an ‘exit’ strategy.

## 5 WATER SECTOR (FOR FURTHER DETAIL SEE SECTION UNDER ANNEX A):

- 5.1. **Important Sector for LRRD:** The water sector was one of the sectors identified by ECHO for the LRRD phase in Tajikistan. Several partners implemented activities to address improved access to water with DG ECHO funding, during the LRRD phase, as well as during previous phases. While Tajikistan possesses ample resources of both surface and underground water, access to drinking water for the population remains difficult. While currently, access to water is generally available, the water is often of unsatisfactory quality. In the cotton growing areas of Tajikistan, especially, the water is chemically contaminated by fertilisers and pesticides. In most of Tajikistan the shallow surface water is contaminated biologically, due to the absence of sewage treatment throughout the country and the intensive livestock breeding.
- 5.2. **Water Consequences of Conflict:** Immediately after the conflict, most of the population in the irrigated plains of Sught and Khatlon were forced to use water from irrigation channels or shallow hand pumps for human consumption. The previous systems, utilising electrical pumps of the mostly submersible type failed, because of destruction during the conflict and the unavailability of electricity to run the pumping stations. The situation in the mountainous areas was slightly better as the rivers and streams in that area are less polluted than in the irrigated parts of Tajikistan but in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, restoring access to drinking water had been, correctly, a high priority.
- 5.3. **As an LRRD strategy/sector?** While the provision of drinking water is a main priority for activities in relief, rehabilitation, and development, the choice of the drinking water sector as a focus for LRRD in Tajikistan was not easy. Many of the partners were already in the development phase in the water sector when LRRD was announced. Therefore, rather than LRRD driving the partners towards more developmental interventions DG ECHO-financed LRRD interventions were **perceived as a step back** on the way to developmental activities. This was very specific for the situation in Tajikistan, owing to the late start of LRRD – when the emergency phase was well past but this should not automatically be the case in future LRRD situations. For example, the interim solutions such as the deep hand-pump systems would have been appropriate prior to the official announcement of LRRD in 2003, while after 2003 the focus of drinking water systems clearly shifted to the centralised systems – on the insistence, perhaps incorrectly, of the government. The water sector in Tajikistan has been a difficult sector to design effective interventions during LRRD, partly due to the differing requirements or appropriateness during emergency and in rehabilitation and development. In relief quick technical solutions may be more important, but in development the legal framework may become a priority, as experienced in Tajikistan.
- 5.4. **Short funding cycles:** As the main concern of most of the partners was sustainability of the actions, the short funding cycle is the main constraint when implementing drinking water projects in Tajikistan. Those partners that already established strong community organisations were able to utilise money from DG ECHO in the LRRD phase, but had to



ensure that the training for sustainable operation would be sourced elsewhere. This problem was much less pronounced in the mountainous regions of Tajikistan, as the gravity fed systems do not need such a strong local organisation as the pump type systems. Interim solutions such as the deep hand-pump systems would have been appropriate prior to the official announcement of LRRD in 2003, with the focus of drinking water systems after this clearly with the centralised systems.

**5.5. Effectiveness/Efficiency:** There are some concerns regarding the efficiency of interventions in the water sector. Those interventions, which did not have the time to build a strong community organisation that will be able to maintain the systems, could result in inefficient investments. The provision of deep hand-pumps without access to spare parts is only acceptable as a stopgap measure during a crisis, but fails to be efficient in a development context. Finally, the ‘pour flush’ latrines constructed by one of the multinational agencies, at an average cost of \$4,000 for a latrine with only four places, does not seem to be cost effective, considering that the health benefits compared to the type most used in Tajikistan (pit latrine) are minimal. This agency told the evaluation team that they planned to replicate the latrine in the families for between \$100 and \$200.

**5.6. Issues of Tenure:** The proprietorship of the drinking water systems, in many cases is not clearly defined. While it is possible to establish a completely new system, under the management of a community water entity, or the Jamoat, all of the systems established during Soviet times have a proprietor. Sometimes, it is with the Vodhose (local water providing utility), sometimes with the Dekhan farms, who are the legal successors of the Kolchoses and Sovchoses, and often they have been privatised (sold to a private person by the Dehkan farm)<sup>15</sup>. The only common feature of the different types of proprietorship of the water system is that the proprietor has neither the capacity nor the interest to operate and maintain the system. Given the low income in rural areas, water users are not able to pay sufficient fees to maintain a Soviet style water supply system, and enable the proprietor to operate profitably. In several cases in the past, the DG ECHO partners and other development actors have bypassed these issues and rehabilitated systems only to find problems in sustainability, because a) the beneficiaries do not have the means to maintain the systems and the proprietors are unwilling to do so unless there is an interest for them.

#### Example 1

##### **A Microcosm of the Difficulties Involved in the Implementation of LRRD:**

A manifestation of the sort of major dilemmas that have to be overcome when moving from emergency into the implementation of LRRD, was the rehabilitation of the former Soviet pumping station that the evaluation team visited. This was being done with DG ECHO funding and is the sort of water project that may be considered by the longer-term instruments of the Commission. Previous to this visit, in the expert’s report<sup>16</sup> (following a mission in 2006 to evaluate the water and sanitation situation – well after LRRD commenced) some significant comments were made: *‘...improving access to safe drinking water implies to fully address the important issue of sustainability. Many limitations, often beyond DG ECHO and partners’ scope of action, are faced regarding this issue: the fees paid by the families for the water are often insufficient to cover the operation and maintenance of the water systems – in the case of the rehabilitation of the Soviet-era pumping stations run with electricity, even the operational cost is not totally covered (the electricity bill is never fully paid so the committees are in constant debt) – it is*

<sup>15</sup> In the LRRD phase the partners increasing awareness of the tenure issue and typically insisted that the water system will be under the control of the Jamoat before starting to rehabilitate the system. However, the system visited by the evaluation team was one of the cases where tenure was unclear leading to complications and delays in implementation and a questionable sustainability of the action. This also affected other partners to a significant degree, although over time the awareness of the importance of the ownership of the system is growing among partners.

<sup>16</sup> Water and Sanitation Report – DG ECHO water, sanitation co-ordinator report, September 2006

*therefore impossible for the committees to undertake reparations...*' and it was recommended that funding old Soviet water pumping stations was avoided by DG ECHO (although this recommendation came too late for the current project).

Nevertheless, the team was taken by one of the agencies that, from their briefing, had demonstrated a liberal interpretation of LRRD, to a former Soviet pumping station, which, they warned us, was not working, currently – because they couldn't get the spare parts, although they had rehabilitated it. In fact it had faced many problems – such basic factors as the operator being incapable of operating the system (a common problem due to the migration of the technical expertise that used to maintain these systems) or collecting the water fees. The system, therefore, was almost non-operational during 2006 and the regular water supply was not in place. *“But... now,”* they made it clear, *“the system was generally up and running and it was only a small repair that was needed to overcome the latest difficulty; just a small spare part that they would be able to obtain easily”* – so they told us that we should not to be too concerned. *(Our main concern is why the agency itself had to obtain the part and complete the repair and not the water management committee, which had been set up against just this sort of contingency?)* Nevertheless, it transpired when talking to the pump operator, that actually *“what was more troublesome was the fact that the electricity available meant that the pumping station was only powered for a very limited time,”* and was sometimes unable to operate for several days. The agency then explained to us, *“the tanks get adequately filled in the space of time during which the electricity is on.”* The evaluation team then spoke to the water committee. During the course of the conversation, they informed us *“actually, neither the spare parts nor the limited electricity supplies were the problem. The real difficulty was that the pipes from the pumping station to the tap stands only reached a small proportion of the tap stands, because the pipes to all the others had rotted and were much too expensive to replace!”* So... the organisation had rehabilitated a pumping station, but this was only as useful as the outlets.

The organisation claims that due to insufficient funding they could only rehabilitate the main part of the system and provided the drinking water to the pipes, which had to be rehabilitated by the people. But...given that the committee consider the pipes too expensive to replace (and the organisation itself is already having to repair small spare parts) this appears to be unrealistic and would appear to have been a poor assessment of the situation. One questions, therefore, whether they should have embarked on an expensive rehabilitation which they were a) unable to complete, and which therefore b) was unlikely to be sustainable, especially in view of the rapidly declining of technical expertise.

This anecdote illustrates some difficulties of LRRD: 1) **the need for rigorous far-sighted evaluation**, 2) **the need to clearly define what is required in LRRD** by implementing partners, and who they are trying to help or **what their first priority is with LRRD** (the affected population or the government, for example, or both) 3) **the need to balance the requirement to work with the government and what the government's agenda is**, against providing systems that the affected population will be able to maintain, 4) **the need for clear dialogue** by the partners with the donors on what the donors expect, 5) **a realistic assessment of the cost efficiency** of such a project where it could be deemed a false economy to rehabilitate a pumping station, if ultimately the outlets fail, and 6) **the importance of the early use of technical expertise** from the RSO.

**Lesson:** Should ECHO fund this sort of project? The attempt to establish a sustainable operation with the pumping station may be very difficult and require significant institutional development/capacity-building in the current political environment of Tajikistan, and therefore should either not have been attempted as a 1 year humanitarian project under an LRRD approach or only attempted, by the agency, with a guarantee of longer-term funding (something which they obviously did not have) and a strategy for establishing operation and maintenance systems after ECHO funding expired.

## 5.7. Main conclusions for LRRD in the water sector are:

1. **LRRD in the water sector was late**, communities and partners were ready for development interventions before LRRD even started, with the short funding cycle further limiting its efficiency.
2. **Need for a long-term perspective:** A sustainable water system operation has to be rooted with local authorities, and communities. It is, therefore, an activity that

should be considered only with a programming period of at least three years, and possibly longer, if one takes necessary cultural changes into consideration.

3. **Previous System a Benchmark?** The provision of drinking water in post Soviet countries will always be measured against the services available during Soviet times (good quality, convenient, and free drinking water).
4. **Despite the difficulties, water was a sensible choice as a lead sector for LRRD**, because people are willing to move from emergency solutions to more comfortable and better quality systems early in the LRRD transition.

#### 5.8. **Specific Recommendations regarding Water in LRRD are:**

1. **To establish sustainable drinking water systems**, longer term involvement with local authorities and communities is necessary. Either this would need a funding instrument that is longer term, or the water component needs to be embedded in other activities with long term funding. DG ECHO needs to lay the foundation for this through advice and advocacy rather than themselves being heavily involved in longer-term, system heavy projects. Although DG ECHO did not have the choice at the time, this would be an instance where the early advice of the technical support at the RSO would be invaluable. Another important recommendation concerning long-term sustainability is that the issue of tenure has to be dealt with robustly through earlier consultation with government. It cannot be ignored for long after the emergency phase.
2. **The choice of technology needs to be revisited**, to be able to establish water systems that the population can sustain. To facilitate this, upstream activities (through Delegation instruments) should ensure the legal requirements for the provision of water are realistic, and capacity is available at central level. Further thought also needs to be given to the concept of water management committees, who in the case of Tajikistan and the obscure tenure issues seem powerless. This issue of 'water committees' is not exclusive to Tajikistan but is a global issue and needs to be examined by ECHO in all its water interventions. For DG ECHO the recommendation would again be that they 1) use the technical support at the RSO at the earliest possible opportunity, 2) provide advocacy and advice for longer-term instruments of the Commission, and 3) rather than making giant steps into rehabilitation of major systems dovetail the simpler relief activities into a useful component for the longer-term development agencies.

## 6 **HEALTH/MEDICAL SECTOR ANALYSIS (FOR FURTHER DETAIL SEE SECTION UNDER ANNEX A):**

- 6.1. **Access to health care & Relevance of health sector.** was comprehensive during the Soviet era, with many health care facilities – although biased toward curative rather than preventative care. Quality was not high, if compared to Western countries, although compared to countries of similar income it could have been considered excellent. Health indicators deteriorated after the collapse of the Soviet system and civil war. Together with high levels of poverty, living conditions worsened and quality of the health system declined sharply, while incidence of poverty-related diseases and infectious diseases increased, making humanitarian aid in the health sector pertinent and the consequent transition phase important for DG ECHO's LRRD strategy, not only because of the precarious health situation, but also because of the weak capacity of the Ministry of

Health (MoH). DG ECHO mentions *'the difficulties of handing over some health components and the slow uptake by EC instruments'*, although this in itself is not an adequate reason to justify the continuation of humanitarian aid.

- 6.2. Relevance of health interventions.** DG ECHO's main objective has been to reduce morbidity and mortality by enhancing access to primary health care, controlling infectious diseases, and promoting community health awareness. These actions belonged to the main priorities of the relief phase, and continued to be during the LRRD phase. Although the design and implementation of the interventions was not always appropriate, **the content was relevant**, i.e. addressing the immediate health needs. Interventions were suitably targeted at most vulnerable populations and addressing specific needs.
- 6.3. Appropriateness of operations.** For some of the operations ECHO health partners had difficulty in changing their modus operandi, and simply scaled down these costly but life saving interventions rather than redesigning them for LRRD. An example is the continuation of the screening of children and the establishment of Supplementary Feeding Centres (SFC) in the villages all organised by INGO staff without building local capacity. **A change towards e.g. a community based nutritional surveillance system would have been more appropriate**<sup>17</sup>. Another example is the free distribution of medicines, even though partners made real efforts to adapt their programme by reducing the distribution to avoid a brutal shock after discontinuation.

#### Example 2

##### **An Effort to Bridge the Gap between Relief and Development through a Rehabilitation Project**

An example often mentioned and also applied in Tajikistan is the development of a national procurement and delivery system of essential medicines to fill the gap when the free distribution of medicines ends. While the concept seems attractive, it is difficult to implement. In Tajikistan there are several reasons it has not worked out, so far, as intended, although from the beginning it was recognised that it would be difficult. The time frame for such an undertaking, including the construction of warehouses, was too short; not enough 'seed' money could be obtained from the government or other donors to create a stock of medicines large enough to become self-sufficient; and more importantly in the end the commitment from the Government proved to be too tenuous to ensure the future of the system. **The funding, however, of the establishment of the centre together with the Asian Development Bank can be regarded as a good example of joint donor funding.**

It is still possible that the procurement centre will function in the way that was foreseen. If not, there will be a gap left behind at the facilities which received free medicines until the very last part of the LRRD phase. The lesson learned is that a procurement and delivery system is too complicated to establish in such a short period, even though in the case of Tajikistan the ADB programme run for five years, with ECHO funding only a small part of the overall programme. Alternatives are needed, such as a cost recovery system, whereby gradually the subsidy on the medicines is reduced – as piloted by several INGOs, or the establishment of small pharmacies with good quality and low cost medicines at health centre level as piloted by one of the health reform projects. In the case of Tajikistan the legal framework, apart from the pilots, still did not permit this kind of activities. Some of the pilots had very good results, while others were less convincing. What is interesting is that the pilots tried to ensure good access to quality medicines at the lowest cost possible and might have been a better way to bridge from relief into development. A general lesson learned is that, where the legal framework permits, alternatives such as cost-recovery systems should be established as opposed to a procurement and delivery system because the latter is too complicated to establish during a LRRD phase.

- 6.4. Capacities of the partners and development partners:** DG ECHO is, like all donors, dependent upon its partners, including the design of the interventions. In Tajikistan, DG

---

<sup>17</sup> This was considered but was not possible at the time because of internal issues within the organisation (large turnover of Country Directors which caused a 2 year delay in making strategies – too late). It should also be noted, however, that such approaches are still rather new. Efforts have been made as of 2005 to do so.

ECHO made a great effort (workshops, open communication) to inform its health partners on the importance of adapting their interventions to the transitional phase. To shift from relief to development, a health partner does need a comprehensive array of capacities within its staff. As was repeated by many interviewees, relief and development need different skills and mindsets, while rehabilitation demands the capacity to oversee both fields. Many health partners are single-purpose, which can make transition more complicated, compounded by the fact that within their field they are more or less specialised in relief or development, e.g. NGOs specialising in nutrition, emergency medical care and control of infectious diseases and UN organisations focussing on a specific part of the population or a specific task. Also, whilst building community capacity through participatory approaches would have been highly appropriate, it seemed that health partners had difficulties implementing this strategy. DG ECHO and the EC delegation organised structural consultations in order to overcome barriers for phasing in of DG ECHO activities into the development instruments. This led to the inclusion of health as a priority area and the employment of a health expert at the EC-delegation in Tajikistan in 2007. Some health partners succeeded in obtaining funding from development partners to continue their activities, e.g. for malaria (GFATM), community awareness activities and technical assistance for the NMPC (TACIS). Some partners were not able to transition from relief to development and did not obtain development funding.

**6.5. The implementation of the NNS in 2006 constitutes a best practice**, not only because it provided much needed data necessary for planning, but also because it was implemented in a highly participative way, with the outcome that the MoH has planned a follow-up in 2008 for which funding has already been allocated from the state budget. Capacity building of communities through participatory approaches would have been a good practice in transiting from humanitarian to development aid, but this was insufficiently pursued. Overall conclusions in the Health Sector:

**6.6. Specific conclusions** in the health sector are:

1. **LRRD phase started too late**, and a three-year period was too long.
2. **A combination of causes made it difficult, if not impossible, for the health partners to design and implement appropriate LRRD interventions**, which were as cost-effective as possible given the circumstances (for example implementation of activities in close collaboration with the MoH accompanied with a strong component of capacity building of the MoH against direct implementation of activities by the partners, executed by their own staff and with limited MoH collaboration).
3. **Nevertheless a number of the operations were successful** in linking relief successfully to rehabilitation and development.

**6.7. Specific Recommendations:**

1. **Start the health aspects of LRRD much earlier**, based on clear indicators.
2. **Reduce the LRRD period to a shorter period** – less than 3 years.
3. **Ensure health sector coordination from the start** or even before the start of LRRD (although, in theory this should be done, once again, by the cluster approach of the UN) and assist health partners in designing appropriate LRRD

interventions. ECHO may consider the development of a concept paper with policy recommendations – developed in a similar way to the DG ECHO HIV/AIDS strategy with indications as to what type of activities are appropriate under which circumstances.

## 7 FOOD AID:

- 7.1. Whilst it is recognised that the food security situation is still tenuous** (with unpublished data stating that 10% of the population of Tajikistan is ‘food-insecure’), there is 1) no major humanitarian problem in this sector, although it may take some time to recover from the legacy of the war, followed by the drought (which was as much caused by the failure of the irrigation systems as a lack of rain), and 2) structural issues are now the cause behind any insecurity in the food situation. It is, therefore, appropriate that DG ECHO has shifted from food aid and that the Delegation is including food security with its EC Food Security Programme (FSP). This represents the sort of natural progression that a good LRRD strategy needs.
- 7.2. Too Long in Food Aid Amongst the Aid agencies generally:** Although DG ECHO has now almost completely reduced its involvement in the food sector (bar a project with GAA) some agencies believe that there is still a need for food distribution in Tajikistan. Most agencies and donors consider, however, that the time for food aid is well past and that an extended association with this aspect of ambivalent need in Tajikistan would be counter-productive. Structural issues, such as poor agricultural policies; deforestation; soil erosion and in some districts severe degradation of the agricultural land due to salination, where the drainage canals have not been maintained; overgrazing; a fixation on cash crops (mainly cotton) that both keeps the population in feudalistic thrall and diminishes the possibilities for growing food crops, are now the main problem. The best lands are reserved for cotton, for example, with the households only allowed to farm the garden land and presidential land allocated to them. Typically, families only have 0.2 ha of garden and presidential land combined. Families are only entitled to farm presidential land if the family works on the Dehkan farm in cotton. The situation of the Dehkan farmers is mostly one of destitution. It is interesting to note, for example, that **poverty indicators are worst** in cotton growing areas, with these areas also showing the highest incidence of stunting among children.
- 7.3. Alternatives to Food Aid:** In the context of LRRD and transition as a whole, some of DG ECHO’s partners, (although in most cases DG ECHO had ceased to fund them) did not contribute to a coherent strategy in the food sector because they did not look for more sustainable solutions than the free distribution of food aid, which has the danger of creating a dependency culture and undermining farming for food crops. Whilst this was definitely not a fault of DG ECHO it was certainly a concern during the LRRD phase and when one of the lead agencies appears to have been slow to move into more sustainable projects than direct food aid it is difficult to encourage other partners to move away from the direct distribution of food. Given the lack of capacity of the government and the MoH and yet the degree of faith that seemed to have been placed in some of the figures that were presented, it is surprising that the first and only reasonable nutritional survey was completed by AAH with DG ECHO funding. Once again, given the lack of capacity within the Government and MoH, it was surprising that more was not done in an LRRD phase to develop sustainable community nutritional surveillance and feeding systems.
- 7.4. Specific Conclusions & Recommendations are:**

1. **It is not clear how relevant food distribution still is for Tajikistan.** The advantages of providing services to vulnerable groups and the disadvantage of distorting the agricultural market currently seem to compel a recommendation that food aid should stop. Without visiting the project sites, it is hard to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures. When used, however, for community action by other partners the initiatives were reasonably well planned. Vulnerable people have been selected by the Jamoat and verified by WFP again in an acceptable process. The impact is highest if food is used to supplement medical initiatives. Sustainability is not an issue with food distribution.
2. **Essential Relief Aid but Questionable in LRRD:** For the food aid aspects of LRRD it is understandable how in the early days of LRRD it was essential for DG ECHO to carry on with the food aid programme that they had developed in the earlier days of the relief operation and the subsequent period of drought. They executed a progressive hand over to other instruments of the Commission, which is a successful aspect of the LRRD strategy in Tajikistan.
3. **Importance of Indicators and Accurate Data:** This was a difficult sector to know when to exit from food aid and into food security programmes. ECHO achieved this relatively successfully but the recommendation is that in future LRRD scenarios DG ECHO has to insist on much more accurate indicators from the leading agencies concerned with food aid. In this respect the commissioning of a valid survey, was invaluable, but this is something that ECHO should insist on at a much earlier stage.
4. **The natural progression of food aid from DG ECHO to FSP** with other Commission Instruments represents the sort of process that is desirable in a smooth LRRD phase.

## 8 DIPECHO

- 8.1. **Important in Transition/LRRD:** An indirect but important element of the LRRD strategy for DG ECHO has been the introduction of a regional DIPECHO programme in Tajikistan. In a country in transition, where the government structures are either slow to evolve or weak and lack capacity, and in a country where the population has been weakened and which is susceptible to a growing number of disasters caused by a vicious circle of poor agricultural practices (the increase of livestock breeding in an uncontrolled way, leading to overgrazing of the denuded mountain slopes by goats and sheep, which in turn leads to mudslides and flash floods), deforestation to provide fuel to fight the cold winters, the type of philosophy behind DIPECHO projects which is to develop the coping mechanisms and self sufficiency of the affected populations is of great benefit.
- 8.2. **Suitable Sector for LRRD:** The community-based DIPECHO actions that the team saw during the evaluation had the benefits of being 1) relatively simple, 2) comparatively low-cost, 3) potentially sustainable, and represented an area of need that was not being filled by other donors or agencies. The evaluation team was also encouraged to find that this was an area where 1) DG ECHO in the form of DIPECHO would remain for a while, and 2) where there was potential for transfer to longer-term instruments of the Commission. This is a sector that is suitable for LRRD and should be commended for other LRRD interventions in other countries. In most countries facing transition usually many of the same factors apply and therefore an element of disaster preparedness is essential. Rather than, however, specifically introducing DIPECHO projects into a

country during LRRD it is more important, as mentioned in the following paragraph to mainstream DRR during the LRRD phase.

- 8.3. DIPECHO projects demonstrate the importance of DRR strategies in providing the possibility of a sustainable, community based, project** that is suitable for LRRD. Ultimately for disaster preparedness to be effective government involvement or continuation with the projects by longer-term development agencies is essential, but for DG ECHO this is exactly the sort of transition activity that should be considered if government capacity is weak or if other instruments look as though they will take time to be in place.

## 9 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1.** Conclusions and recommendations are as described below (bearing in mind that they may have been properly addressed in the implementation of LRRD in Tajikistan):

- 1. Significant Effort made to Implement LRRD from DG ECHO:** DG ECHO and most of its partners have made a considerable effort to implement LRRD. In particular, the DG ECHO expert and desks have worked harder at executing this strategy than would normally be expected and the DG ECHO expert in the field should be strongly commended. In doing so, DG ECHO has liaised closely with other elements of the Commission, all their partners, other donors, and government agencies; perhaps more so than virtually any other agency, through 1) being there for much longer, 2) through having a wide knowledge of the situation and partners and 3) approaching the issues from a less broad-based and more technical perspective as compared with the top-down approach of other Commission instruments.

*Recommendation:* In this aspect of LRRD in Tajikistan DG ECHO's efforts have been commendable and should be used as an example for future LRRD strategies.

- 2. Timing late and process slow:** Whilst it is understood why DG ECHO deliberately took a decision to withdraw over a period of three years, the time of withdrawal was too late and too prolonged, extending the dependence of some partners on DG ECHO funding, and allowing procrastination on the part of other instruments from the Commission, and even other donors. In Tajikistan, other longer-term instruments of the Commission should have moved in much more quickly and with greater flexibility, allowing ECHO to withdraw much earlier than it did. Concurrently, it could be argued that relief projects need to have longer-term perspectives and encompass a strategy that would lead to sustainability, and should include DRR.

*Counter Argument:* There is a counter argument which suggests that by taking three years to withdraw DG ECHO allowed for a stable transition, and according to some of the NGOs, made funding available when it would otherwise not have been. It is a question of priorities (and judged only on a case by case basis) as to whether DG ECHO's valuable and limited resources and proficiency was put to better use by intervening in areas where its skill was limited but, thereby, giving time to other instruments of the Commission to position themselves, or whether its expertise would have been more efficiently used in other urgent humanitarian situations around the globe. One argument that is suggested is that withdrawing



too early is a false economy, in that DG ECHO may have to return to a newly evolved humanitarian situation and, as it were, ‘start from scratch’. There are no signs in Tajikistan now that DG ECHO will need to return with emergency humanitarian programmes.

**Recommendation:** ECHO should phase out earlier, over a shorter period of time and advocate for other instruments to come in sooner and more speedily. At the same time ECHO should strongly advocate for EC missions which can start drawing up preliminary or basic strategies and corresponding programmes almost before the end of the crisis and as the crisis draws to an end or stabilises ECHO’s role may become a facilitating one<sup>18</sup>.

- 3. Suitability of Commission Funding Instruments?** In the circumstances of Tajikistan, LRRD has not reached a stage where the instruments of the Commission dovetail into each other neatly. If LRRD, itself, is seen as an instrument and its purpose is to enable a smooth transition from relief to development, then it has not been adequately evolved – it is still underdeveloped, although the bulk of the development has to come from the longer-term instruments of the Commission rather than from DG ECHO.

**Recommendations:** For the Commission to develop an effective LRRD strategy one of four things has to happen either:

- i. DG ECHO should move further up into the ‘grey zone’ of LRRD, **or**,
- ii. The other instruments of the Commission should be better adapted to take over more quickly and flexibly from DG ECHO, **or**
- iii. An alternative instrument such as the ‘Humanitarian Plus Programme’<sup>19</sup>, has to be used, as was attempted in Sudan<sup>20</sup>.

**Of these, the least preferable solution would be for DG ECHO to move further into the grey zone,** and the best solution would be to ensure that the other instruments of the Commission are better adapted. ‘Humanitarian Plus’ could be seen as some sort of ‘adaptor plug’ into which the two other ill joined instruments might comfortably fit, but one

---

<sup>18</sup> To quote the report on ‘General Guidelines for ECHO Exit Strategies’, May 2003, ‘...*In general terms, it is often difficult to reconcile humanitarian aid and development co-operation, particularly in post-conflict situations, not least because of the difficulty in identifying appropriate implementing partners to take-over from emergency relief operations, both at the state level and among non-governmental organisations. Where possible, thus, a long-term perspective must be adopted from the start of the crisis and influence the nature of emergency and follow-up interventions. Even if this is not possible, at least a thorough phase-out and hand-over planning process must be started as soon as possible and ECHO must operate on clear exit criteria...*’

<sup>19</sup> This was the recommendation of the review of LRRD in 2003, which stated that: ‘...*“Humanitarian Plus” programmes have demonstrated good LRRD potential (Sudan, DRC and Angola) and their implementation should be further explored...*’. DG ECHO, however, was not entirely happy with the early phases of humanitarian plus in Sudan, stating that ‘...*ECHO considers that the Humanitarian Plus has a too broad mandate and its geographical coverage is compounded with limited resources (15 M€) and cumbersome calls for proposals, which are limiting its impact as a transitional tool...*’

<sup>20</sup> The start of the **Humanitarian Plus Programme** of the European Delegation in Sudan took place in January 2002. HPP aimed to re-establish a more structural and sustainable approach to rural development issues, where earlier mostly a humanitarian or emergency approach, only, was possible due to the actual situation on the ground and as a result of policy restrictions applying to finances under the EU’s DG ECHO and Food Security Unit funding. HPP 1 (possibly the Commission is now on HPP 2) was of 36 months duration. It was expected to bridge the period between a gradual lessening of dependence on humanitarian assistance and a return to full scale funding of structural development activities resulting from the progressively normalising of bilateral relations between the DG ECHO and the Government of Sudan. HPP, with €5 million, was set up to address three main sectors – food security, and water sanitation and health. Thus one might say that this is a similar situation to Tajikistan or LRRD in general.

would question the sense in inventing another instrument just because others cannot be adjusted and thereby creating yet more interfaces.

- iv. **Disaster Risk Reduction to be a fundamental component:** There is, however, a fourth possibility, which is that, DG ECHO could take a lesson from its DIPECHO programme, where one of the main aims is to develop self-sufficiency within communities. Given that in many LRRD scenarios, 1) the government is likely to be lacking in capacity, 2) the longer-term instruments of the Commission may not be in place, and 3) DG ECHO (and many of its implementing partners) lack technical expertise in rehabilitation and development, DG ECHO should focus its attention during LRRD on DIPECHO-type programming, concentrating on building up the self-sufficiency of communities. When DG ECHO starts to phase out it should design its' relief projects to have a perspective on how the intervention can have a longer term, sustainable impact (or at least not undermine development). These projects should incorporate DRR, in the way that DG ECHO is currently doing with its DIPECHO programme in Central Asia. This, however, should be done not specifically under the auspices of DIPECHO but should be done as a mainstreaming issue where DRR is programmed into LRRD and all DG ECHO strategies.

4. **Co-ordination, whilst considerable in Tajikistan, needs to be better aligned:** Despite the considerable and commendable efforts of DG ECHO, especially in the field where the DG ECHO expert went to huge lengths to co-ordinate with and lobby other parts of the EC, non-EC actors, other donors, government and many others generally, co-ordination in the transitional phase was not always good between the humanitarian/relief and development community. There was coordination (limited in certain cases) but sometimes coordination is not enough, when agenda and means do not match. Tajikistan and the LRRD phase are not exceptional in this, but it is important to note it here. Much co-ordination was attempted, but it tended to be done in isolated groups, and at different levels, where the levels did not necessarily connect. As far as Tajikistan is concerned there appeared to be a gap in the 'intermediate' level of co-ordination. This coordination may, indeed, be improved by the UN cluster approach; however, this is not something that we can give as a recommendation as it is outside of the control of ECHO and indeed even the EU as a whole, except inasmuch as it can be supported.

**Recommendations on coordination:** In a transitional context such as this good co-ordination would involve:

- i. **Regular meetings** between Delegation, ECHO and member states at pre-arranged, for example monthly, intervals to discuss development issues and transition (possibly with rotating topics through the sectors), assuming that by the time that the LRRD phase has commenced there is likely to be a Delegation and a reasonable number of donors present – i.e. that the security situation has stabilised to a degree that rehabilitation and development are viable.
- ii. **A common understanding** on 1) the needs of the population and how to best achieve them, 2) transparency of the objectives and agenda of those involved, 3) a rigorous examination of capacities amongst the agencies, 4) a more altruistic or humanitarian approach to funding, whereby it should be understood that funding is ultimately for the affected population, that the priority at the end of a relief phase is almost for an agency to 'do itself out of business' difficult though that

might be for employees, rather than stray into areas where its expertise might be inappropriate.

- iii. ***Greater Co-ordination between DG ECHO experts & delegations at field level:*** One suggestion for greater levels of co-ordination between DG ECHO experts and delegations in the LRRD phase is that they should occupy joint offices. It is thought that by doing this those involved would work more closely together on the strategy and implementation of LRRD. This may be the case when the delegation is well-established in a country after a conflict (this was not the case in Tajikistan, where the establishment of a Delegation has been recent, and occurred long after DG ECHO's arrival); the problem lies in the initial phases of LRRD, depending on when it is decided that is, when, from a security point of view, it may be considered that there is **insufficient** stability to allow delegation staff to be deployed on the ground. Thus the DG ECHO expert may find him/herself occupying such an office alone. It would have to be considered on a case by case basis.

5. **The Need to Develop Indicators or a Coherent Approach towards Indicators:** What appeared to be lacking in this situation were any clear indicators as to when DG ECHO should withdraw, or perhaps, more accurately, when the other instruments of the Commission should take over.

***Recommendations on Indicators:*** In order to provide guidance on the critical issue of timing, more work needs to be done on developing indicators for exit or handover. DG ECHO has already done work on this resulting in a document on entry and exit strategy<sup>21</sup>. This work needs to be continued. To suggest a list of detailed indicators would be a considerable work in itself, but a few possible indicators for a handover or exit strategy for DG ECHO would be – this is not an exhaustive list – only a random sample:

- i. ***Security***, whether the security situation is stable enough to allow the development agencies to establish longer-term projects, without fear of major upheaval,
- ii. ***When NGOs start to develop rehabilitation and development strategies, independently***, as happened in Tajikistan with some of the larger NGOs,
- iii. ***When the Government begins to develop a strategy on poverty reduction*** (could be MDG or PRSP strategy) this is a clear indicator that a country is entering the development phase,
- iv. ***When displacement has diminished*** to such an extent that most people are able to return to their homes (or in humanitarian situations where camps have been established – which, of course, did not apply to Tajikistan – few people are left living in camps),
- v. ***Sector specific indicators*** such as: water is available but of poor quality, calorific requirements can be satisfied with food in country/region, health – vaccination system is operating effectively, medical services are available and accessible for the majority of the population, educational system recovering?

---

<sup>21</sup> 'General Guidelines for ECHO Exit Strategies', May 2003

6. **DG ECHO should advocate for a review of LRRD** as a strategy and a redefinition/reassignment of tasks. At the same time, ECHO **should review its exit strategies**, a work that was commenced in May 2003 but which could be developed further especially on the subject of indicators for DG ECHO's exit or handover, or the commencement of an LRRD phase. In the meantime, if the Commission wishes to implement LRRD in its current format then these concrete measures should be taken:
- i. ***DG ECHO requires a clear definition of strategic sectors for itself*** in the LRRD plan, in close coordination with the Delegation so that it will be understood from the beginning, if an exit strategy is required for the partners or if the partners need to shift to other instruments.
  - ii. ***DG ECHO should encourage the gradual introduction of counterpart funding*** in those sectors that will be taken over by the Delegation or member states, as the DG ECHO team attempted to do, strenuously, in Tajikistan.
  - iii. ***Joint programming missions*** between the delegation, member states and ECHO (possibly facilitated by DG ECHO depending on presence or otherwise of delegation) for country programming once all instruments are in the country; something that happened in Tajikistan and should be held up as an example for future LRRD situations.
  - iv. ***Clearer/more robust communication to partners*** about the Delegation and ECHO strategy of transition (LRRD) including timeline, funding opportunities, priorities, and the need to exit. (Once again in Tajikistan DG ECHO could not have done much more in this respect, even if some of the partners chose not to factor it into their strategies). This could be done in a number of ways such as providing guidelines or developing a toolkit on the design of LRRD-appropriate interventions in the main sectors health, water and food – with inputs from both ends of the LRRD spectrum, i.e. relief and development.
  - v. ***The need for contingency plans*** from ECHO and its partners, in the sense that there cannot always be total reliance on government activities, where the government is developing or weak. There must be alternative or back-up plans when government strategies fail, given the importance of Governments to achieve sustainability and to re-establish trust with the population (part of conflict mitigation). As ECHO is not best placed to work with government, those activities that rely on government during the transition phase should be led by the Delegation. ***In situations where Delegations may not yet be present in a country***, there is a need for a communication channel from ECHO to the EC to provide information on plans and to take current ECHO activities into account at the time the Delegation does enter the country. They should, also, start to fill in a more detailed section on the sustainability of their activities that could, already, mirror the sustainability section of the follow up instrument to TACIS.
  - vi. ***Many projects were implemented as if they were addressing emergency aid***, i.e., they did not address such issues as, migration of labour (and competences), community surveillance, self-sufficiency, ownership, legality, capacity of electricity, power cuts etc, a whole range of extremely complicated long-term issues not normally associated with relief. It is important to emphasise or take into account that LRRD cannot be implemented in the same way as emergency aid; it has to understand many of the rules that are applicable during development aid, and must focus on sustainability and ways to achieve it, whether it is capacity

building in the government or communities, developing the self-sufficiency of the communities such as is done with DIPECHO projects, or, probably the least preferable solution, although an adequate one for DG ECHO, handing over to longer-term donor that can ensure that these aspects are fulfilled. It is important in many of these issues to work through the government and **this is where DG ECHO should move out and the Delegation move in.**