



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HUMANITARIAN AID OFFICE (ECHO)

Humanitarian Aid Decision
Humanitarian aid (Title 23.02.02)

Title: Second DIPECHO Action Plan for Central Asia

Location of operation: Central Asia

Amount of decision: 2,500,000 euro

Decision reference number: ECHO/DIP/BUD/2004/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

Article 2F of Council Regulation 1257/96 stipulates that a principal objective of EC humanitarian assistance is “to ensure preparedness for risks of natural disasters or comparable exceptional circumstances”. Article 1 states that EC humanitarian aid also comprises “operations to prepare for risks or prevent disasters”. Given that the latter is best addressed by longer-term development instruments, in 1996 ECHO created its Disaster Preparedness (DP) programme DIPECHO. While including prevention activities, the programme focuses on preparedness actions.

A number of DP operations in Central Asia were funded between 1995 and 2000, outside DIPECHO but as an integral part of ECHO programmes in areas already affected by humanitarian crises. In September 2001 ECHO decided to evaluate the most recent operations. The evaluators were asked to assess the need and scope for a regional DIPECHO Action Plan by examining the response-capacity of existing mechanisms and to identify lessons from recent DP operations in the region that could inform the strategy. The study was carried out in April-May 2002 and the final report¹ submitted to ECHO in August 2002.

The evaluation concluded that the five operations examined in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were relevant. The effectiveness and sustainability of the operations’ outputs varied. In view of prevailing regional political tensions, it was found that a reduced regional cooperation strategy focusing on Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan would be preferable to an Action Plan that attempted to cover all five countries. The evaluation also recommended a focus on fostering participatory disaster preparedness activities at the local level among the most vulnerable communities.

¹ Evaluation of ECHO Disaster Preparedness Actions in Central Asia, Prolog Consult/Transtec

In April 2003 the Commission approved the first DIPECHO Action Plan for Central Asia. The programme (€3 million) aimed to strengthen the capacity of local actors to predict, respond to and cope with disasters and to protect vulnerable groups from likely natural disasters through small scale infrastructure works. 10 projects were selected under the decision and are ongoing. The majority will complete operations in April-May 2004. This second Action Plan shares the same objectives and will build on the achievements of the first Action Plan. A call for draft proposals for the second Action Plan was published in January 2004. 19 responses requesting a total of almost €6 million were received. ECHO has selected 10 projects from those received.

While ECHO agreed with the overall recommendations made in the first evaluation report and decided to concentrate on Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, a second evaluation published at the end of December 2003² considered Uzbekistan to be a higher priority than Kyrgyzstan, due to high earthquake risk and high level of vulnerability. However, at the local level, some regions of the two countries can be considered as similar priority areas in terms of frequency and effects of disasters, combined with low coping mechanisms. A project focusing on Uzbekistan, in partnership with the Uzbek Red Crescent Society, was already funded in 2003. Uzbekistan was also included in a regional project in the Ferghana Valley, a region that spans all three countries. The Action Plan 2004-2005 intends to continue supporting operations in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, in the most disaster prone areas, on the basis of thorough needs assessment by our partners as well as on the experience gained throughout the first Action Plan.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Between 1991 and 2002 around 2,500 people were killed and 5.5 million (10% of the total population) were affected by natural disasters in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan³.

Tajikistan is the most affected country in terms of the number of disasters, level of damage and loss of life and has been identified by the recent ECHO evaluation as “high disaster risk with very high level of hazards”. It is permanently threatened by several potential large-scale natural disasters such as flooding from Lake Sarez or extensive damage to the capital Dushanbe by an earthquake. The country is also regularly affected by small-scale but high-impact disasters. According to the CRED Database, between 1991 and 2002 almost 70,000 people were made homeless as result of natural disasters. Government statistics⁴ for 2003, show that there were almost 120 incidents of flooding, avalanches and mud/land slides and 12 small to mid scale earthquakes. Tajikistan is also regularly affected by epidemic outbreaks of infectious diseases. Although health is not always an obvious component of disaster preparedness, in Tajikistan the total absence of co-ordination mechanisms, analysis and prevention, combined with high effects of recurrent small scale disasters within communities, place this dilapidated sector at the core of interventions. The preparedness of medical personnel but also of non-medical structures to health-related issues in prevention and reaction is an essential part of the work of disaster preparedness agencies in the country.

² Overall Evaluation of ECHO's Strategic Orientation to Disaster Reduction, December 2003

³ Source : EM-DAT The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database www.cred.be/emdat

⁴ Statistics from the Tajikistan Ministry of Emergency Situations available at www.untj.org

Since gaining independence in 1991, Tajikistan has suffered economic collapse (83% of the population currently live below the poverty line), drought and civil war. These factors combined with systemic weaknesses in government structures have left most of the country without appropriate disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. Existing legislation envisages a response at village, district or regional level for all but the biggest disasters. In reality however, the response structures at all three levels lack the necessary equipment and skills. Many communities either ignore or are unaware of the threats facing them. In addition, 93% of Tajik territory is mountainous, making communication and access an ongoing problem.

Uzbekistan was ranked as “medium risk” in the ECHO evaluation due to high earthquake risk and high level of vulnerability. In 1966 a large earthquake destroyed large parts of the capital Tashkent and in 2002 the Ferghana region suffered significant earthquake and flood damage. Over the last few years districts in Kashkadarya and Navoi provinces have experienced earthquakes and mudslides while Khorzem and Karakalpakstan have been affected by drought. Much of the country is characterised by inadequate response capacity and low levels of awareness and preparedness among vulnerable groups.

Kyrgyzstan was identified in the evaluation as “low disaster risk” but earthquake exposure was analysed to be “very high”. This is another poor and highly mountainous country, characterised by frequent small or mid-scale disasters, low levels of awareness and preparedness and inadequate response capacity, in particular in Southern areas of the country. In 2000-2002 the Ministry of Emergencies and Ecology recorded 784 floods, 91 landslides, 37 avalanches, 18 earthquakes and nearly 10,000 earth tremors. Seepage from over 20 nuclear waste storage sites in Mailuu-Suu district of Jalalabad is a permanent and bigger-scale threat.⁵

Turkmenistan and **Kazakhstan** are the least vulnerable to natural disasters and the best able to respond without the need for external assistance.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

The Action Plan will focus on vulnerable local communities in the following regions:

Tajikistan: Gorno Badakshan, Khatlon, Rayons of Republican Subordination, Sughd.

Kyrgyzstan: Batken, Djalal-Abad, Osh, Issyk-Kul.

Uzbekistan: Andijan, Ferghana, Kashkadarya, Khorzem, Namangan, Navoi, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Tashkent.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

A major natural disaster or renewed armed conflict in the region (low risk) might necessitate the diversion of resources to the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance and/or the suspension of DIPECHO projects. Epidemic outbreaks of infectious diseases or an increase in poverty-driven economic migration could deprive certain operations of key personnel.

All operations will depend on a degree of cooperation with local communities, local authorities and/or other international actors. Relations between Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz

⁵ The Mailuu-Suu district has been the recipient of large technical assistance projects, including under the EC Technical Assistance Programme for the NIS, TACIS. In the past and current interventions, ECHO has rather concentrated its funding on public awareness among communities of the area.

communities living in the Ferghana Valley remain strained and may hinder the trans-border aspect of the planned operation in that region.

Most of the partners selected have been working in the target areas for many years and have therefore developed constructive working relationships with the local communities. Most partners envisage making DP work an integral part of their broader community development work. This will help sustain the impact of the outcomes. The call for proposals stipulated that projects should be replicable. ECHO Dushanbe and where possible ECHO Brussels will monitor all of the operations.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

Principal objective:

To reduce the impact of natural disasters by strengthening the relevant local physical and human resources in high-risk areas

Specific objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of local communities to predict, respond to and cope with disasters
- To protect vulnerable groups from likely natural disasters through small scale infrastructure works

2.2. - Components:

2.2.1. Strengthening local predictive, response and coping capacities

- Draw up local disaster management plans that include a hazard and vulnerability assessment, preventative and response measures and the identification of roles and responsibilities of key actors;
- Establish early warning systems;
- Train and equip rapid response, search and rescue and medical teams;
- Train trainers to promote sustainability of outcomes;
- Develop curricula on safe construction practices and train communities in these practices;
- Conduct simulation exercises;
- Improve radio communication systems in remote areas;
- Coordinate with relevant regional and national authorities and establish clear channels of communication with them;
- Develop database tools and systems and train the relevant persons and institutions in these tools;
- Strengthen local Red Crescent Societies;
- Conduct public awareness campaigns using leaflets, brochures, workshops and radio and television programs;
- Share key lessons learned between districts, regions and countries;
- Ensure broad participation of target groups in project conception and implementation of activities relating to 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

2.2.2. Protecting vulnerable groups

- Construct anti-avalanche, anti-rockfall, anti-mudslide and anti-flood protection barriers;
- Clean and rehabilitate mudslide and flood channels;
- Reinforce landslide-prone slopes through tree planting;
- Strengthen beds and banks of flood-prone rivers;

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

5.1. Other Commission instruments

Some operations under the current 2003-2004 Global Plan and the proposed 2004-2005 funding Decision for Tajikistan contain DP elements (food-for-work activities, education schemes, surveillance systems). This is in line with ECHO's strategy of mainstreaming DP activities when possible. There will be no overlap of activities but on the contrary encouragement to integrate approaches and complement actions wherever possible.

The 2002-2004 and 2005-2006 TACIS Indicative Programmes for Central Asia do not envisage any DP activities. ECHO shares information about its DP work with RELEX and AIDCO and will continue to explore ways in which future EC assistance might address DP needs, for instance through complementary of interventions within the Poverty Alleviation ("track 3") framework in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan-North Tajikistan (Ferghana valley) and the Khatlon region in Tajikistan and through TACIS projects such as Vocational Training. The NGO component of the Food Security Programme also indirectly addresses DP issues, through encouragement to better use land, avoid degradation and erosion schemes, or through sustainable rehabilitation of irrigation systems. Since some of the agencies funded or potentially funded through both TACIS and the FSP work directly with ECHO or in close contact with ECHO partners, there is good ground for synergies.

5.2. Member States

As far as ECHO is aware no Member States provided funding for DP work in the region in 2003.

5.3 Other DP actors in the region

Tajikistan has a Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) chaired by the UN Coordination Unit and involving other key international, government and non-state organisations. REACT's primary task is to ensure the rapid deployment of a joint assessment team to the site of natural or man-made disasters. Several REACT members are among the potential partners listed in this text. ECHO is in regular contact with the UN coordination Unit, other donors (CIDA, SDC, USAID, Asian Development Bank, Japanese Government) and other key government (Ministries of Emergency Situations) and non-government (National Red Crescent Societies, UN Agencies) actors about DP issues. In particular, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation is currently preparing a multi-annual Programme for disaster preparedness in Tajikistan, and USAID is funding the three-year initiative Central Asia Region – Earthquake Safety Initiative (CAR-ESI) in Almaty, Tashkent and Dushanbe. All DIPECHO partners and the ECHO office are closely co-operating with these initiatives.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. – Budget Impact

<i>23.02.02</i>	<i>CE (in Euro)</i>
<i>Initial Available Appropriations for 2004</i>	<i>10 000 000</i>
<i>Supplementary Budgets</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Transfers</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Total Available Appropriations</i>	<i>10 000 000</i>
<i>Total executed to date</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Available remaining</i>	<i>10 000 000</i>
<i>Total amount of the Decision</i>	<i>2 500 000</i>

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To reduce the impact of natural disasters by strengthening the relevant local physical and human resources in high-risk areas</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (Euro)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁶
Specific objective 1: Strengthen the capacity of local communities to predict, respond to and cope with disasters	2,000,000	Tajikistan (all districts), Uzbekistan (9 districts), Kyrgyzstan (4 districts)	DM plans, hazard & vulnerability assessment and mapping; early warning systems; training; set up of respond teams; safe construction practices; simulation exercises; radio communication systems; co-ordination; database tools and systems; local capacity-building; public awareness campaigns; regional co-operation.	AKF, ACTED, GAA, IFRC, NLRC, Hilfswerk Austria, IOM, MERLIN, Mercy Corps, CARE NL
Specific objective 2: Protect vulnerable groups from likely natural disasters through small scale infrastructure works	500,000	idem	Anti-avalanche, anti-rockfall, anti-mudslide and anti-flood protection barriers; Cleaning and rehabilitation of mudslide and flood channels; tree planting; strengthening of river beds and banks; structural mitigation (anti-earthquake) demonstration projects; use of safe and low-cost construction practices.	idem
TOTAL	2,500,000			

⁶ AGA KHAN FOUNDATION (United Kingdom), AGENCE D'AIDE A LA COOPERATION TECHNIQUE ET AU DEVELOPPEMENT, (FR), DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIETES DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT ROUGE, HET NEDERLANDSE RODE KRUIS (NLD), HILFSWERK AUSTRIA, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (INT), MEDICAL EMERGENCY RELIEF INTERNATIONAL (GBR), MERCY CORPS SCOTLAND (GBR), Stichting CARE Nederland

7 – Evaluation Policy

Under article 18 of the Regulation the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender, etc. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

COMMISSION DECISION

of

on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in Central Asia (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Union,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid⁷, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Central Asia regularly experiences a wide range of natural disasters and in particular landslides, mudslides, floods and earthquakes,
- (2) In Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in particular, vulnerable communities and the local, regional and national authorities are ill-prepared and ill-equipped to cope with these disasters,
- (3) These countries largely rely on international assistance rather than promote preparedness activities,
- (4) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 18 months.
- (5) It is estimated that an amount of 2,500,000 euro from budget line 23 02 02 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance for the vulnerable population of Central Asia, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
- (6) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 29/04/2004.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of 2,500,000 euro for humanitarian aid operations for the second DIPECHO Action Plan for Central Asia by using budget line 23 02 02 of the 2004 general budget of the European Union.

⁷ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

2. In accordance with Article 2 (f) of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:
 - Strengthen the capacity of local communities to predict, respond to and cope with disasters
 - Protect vulnerable groups from likely natural disasters through small scale infrastructure works

The amounts allocated to each of these objectives are listed in the annex to this decision.

Article 2

The Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the objectives set out in Article 1(2) to another objective mentioned therein, provided that the re-allocated amount represents less than 20% of the global amount covered by this Decision and does not exceed 2 million euro.

Article 3

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 18 months, starting on 01/05/2004. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from that date.
2. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision

Article 4

This decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

Principal objective :Reduce the impact of natural disasters by strengthening the relevant local physical and human resources in high-risk areas	
Specific objectives	Amount per specific objective (Euro)
Strengthen the capacity of local communities to predict, respond to and cope with disasters	2,000,000
Protect vulnerable groups from likely natural disasters through small scale infrastructure works	500,000
TOTAL	2,500,000

Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Regulation No.1257/96 are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof.⁸

Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm.

⁸ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, , OJ L248, 16/09/2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 pf 31/12/2002.