



Humanitarian Aid Decision

F9 (FED9)

Title: Humanitarian aid to the victims of climatic hazard and food insecurity

Location of operation: ERITREA

Amount of decision: EUR 620.000

Decision reference number: ECHO/ERI/EDF/2005/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

The 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia, together with four successive years of partial or complete rain failure have had a major impact on the food security situation in Eritrea. Ground water levels have been receding, mortality and morbidity amongst livestock populations has increased, agricultural production has reduced. Further erratic rains in 2004 have compounded this problem and increasingly led to growing pockets of acute emergency needs where populations run out of water or basic food supply. Furthermore, the successive droughts have disrupted traditional seed-saving practices, this against a background of government policies which have accelerated the virtual collapse of the state-run seed industry, which in turn has failed to provide sufficient quantities of new germplasm of existing varieties of the main species. This has resulted in a gradual degradation of the most common varieties in terms of purity and disease resistance. In addition, many households simply had to dispose of their limited seed stocks in order to survive. The complex and fragile situation of the agriculture sector in Eritrea represents a vicious circle in which poor soil and lack of water compound the paucity of the seed quality – or absence of seed for many vulnerable farmers – leading to poor yields or lack of harvest and the inevitable descent into further vulnerability and dependence on food aid.

Furthermore, the adverse climatic conditions of the last 4 years have resulted in a growing and acute fodder deficit far above the “normal” chronic situation. Livestock is closely integrated with crop production, thus adverse climatic conditions affect both in equal measure, resulting in much lower than average planted surfaces. Quantity and quality of fodder decreases in the course of the long dry season. The resulting deficit peaks in the weeks between March and June, when the first spring rains are due. This is the time when the demand on oxen for agricultural land preparation is highest.

In the medium to long-term, any recovery of the agricultural sector requires government policies which target poverty alleviation, and which address the needs of the population.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Rapid emergency assistance in the form of distribution of seeds, tools and animal feed distribution is required to secure the 2005 planting season, and to provide vulnerable Eritreans with the possibility of a harvest, while longer term assistance addresses the underlying chronic structural problems affecting the agricultural sector. This particular intervention will target those who simply do not have access to seeds/tools through the emergency purchase of carefully selected locally available seed stocks, while at the same time importing desperately needed limited quantities of new germplasm of suitable varieties in order to provide the minimum basis for future seed multiplication programmes. Furthermore, the distribution of animal feed will contribute to offsetting the chronic animal feed deficit nation wide, which is affecting draught animals in particular.

In order to make emergency assistance sustainable, the type of intervention to be funded from this decision needs to be linked to longer-term development policies , which the Government has a prime responsibility to design in order to address vigorously the causes of chronic vulnerability and poverty of its population. This approach also fits the LRRD context which aims to ensure the coherence and consistency of EC funding.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

This decision will directly address the provision of emergency agricultural inputs for up to 35.000 vulnerable households in Gash Barka and Debub regions. Targeted populations will include returnees and resettled, HIV/AIDS affected households, vulnerable farmers, agro-pastoralists and small-scale seed producers. Almost half of the rural population of Debub is female-headed households - consequences of the compulsory military conscription - in dire need of extra support during the crucial period of ploughing.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

There is a risk of reduced access due to logistic, administrative and security constraints. A constraint with regard to seed procurement is that the cereal strain suitable for reinforcing the Eritrean gene pool for planting in Eritrea is only available externally, mainly in Ethiopia. Poor external relations may hamper this purchase.

The implementation of interventions funded by this decision will be carried out by ECHO's implementing partner, FAO, which will be working directly through local non-governmental partners in Eritrea.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective :

To improve food security for the most vulnerable populations

Specific objective :

To distribute emergency agricultural inputs and animal feed for draught oxen to the most vulnerable in order to support the planting season.

2..2. - Components:

- a) Seeds and tools distribution and training
- b) Supplementary livestock (oxen) feeding

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

Donors in ERITREA the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	1,000,000		
Belgium	0	Other services			
Denmark	1,075,992				
Finland	1,300,000				
France	0				
Germany	1,099,629				
Greece	0				
Ireland	300,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	2,714,800				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	1,073,000				
United Kingdom	0				
Subtotal	7,563,421	Subtotal	1,000,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	8,563,421		

Dated : 01/03/2005

(*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://nac.cec.eu.int>
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 620,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives:

Principal objective: To improve food security for the most vulnerable populations				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners
Specific objective 1: To distribute emergency agricultural inputs and animal feed for draught oxen to the most vulnerable in order to support the planting season	620,000	Gash Barka and Debub regions	- seeds, tools and animal feed distribution and training	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
TOTAL	620,000			

7 - Evaluation

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. 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 9th European Development Fund in Eritrea

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, in particular Article 72 thereof¹,

Having regard to the Internal Agreement of 15 December 2000 on the Financing and Administration of the Community Aid under the Financial Protocol to the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Community and its Member States signed in Cotonou (Benin) on 23 June 2000, in particular Articles 24(3) and 25(1) thereof².

Whereas:

1. Eritrea has been subject to four years of poor rains resulting in decreasing water availability and reduced food supply;
2. It is urgent to secure a harvest for vulnerable groups in order to avoid increased vulnerability and dependence on food aid;
3. An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 12 months;
4. In accordance with the objectives set out in Article 72 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, it is estimated that an amount of EUR 620,000 from the 9th European Development Fund is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to up to 35.000 people, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
5. The amount represents less than 25% of the indicative programme ;
6. The EDF Committee has been duly informed in accordance with Article 24(3) of the 9th EDF.

¹ OJ L317 of 15.12.2000, p.3

² OJ L317 of 15.12.2000, p.354

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 EUR 620,000 from the 9th European Development Fund for humanitarian aid operations to vulnerable populations in Eritrea.
2. In accordance with Article 72(3)(d) of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
 - To distribute emergency agricultural inputs and animal feed for draught oxen to the most vulnerable in order to support the planting season.

The full amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The implementation of the humanitarian aid operation(s) funded by this decision shall have a maximum duration 12 months, starting from 01/04/2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision is eligible from 01/04/2005.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended due to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision

Article 3

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission