



Humanitarian Aid Decision

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Title: Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan for Central America

Location of operation: DIPECHO

Amount of Decision: EUR 6,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/DIP/BUD/2006/02000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale:

According to Article 2(f) of Humanitarian Aid Regulation (EC) of 20 June 1996¹, DG ECHO's² activities in the field of Disaster Preparedness shall be "to ensure preparedness for risks of natural disasters or comparable exceptional circumstances and use a suitable rapid early-warning and intervention system".

DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) is a programme set up by DG ECHO to improve the capacities of communities at risk to better prepare for and protect themselves against natural disasters. Initially the DIPECHO programme focused on three regions: Central America, South East Asia (including Bangladesh) and the Caribbean. In 1998, the DIPECHO programme was expanded to include two further regions that are highly exposed to natural disasters, that is, South Asia and the Andean Community. In 2003, following the recommendations of a specific evaluation, Central Asia became the sixth DIPECHO region. A diagnostic study was carried out in each of these regions to identify the risks, evaluate the socio-economic vulnerability of the people and the risk to property and to determine what local, national and regional response capability and external support was already in place.

Central America is particularly exposed to natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, tropical storms, tsunamis, landslides, droughts, and forest fires.

¹ EC Regulation N°1257/96 of 20 June 1996, OL L163 of 2 July 1996.

² Directorate-General for Humanitarian aid – DG ECHO.

Additional threats such as global warming, environmental degradation, improper land planning, inadequate agricultural practices, and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and rapid urbanisation continue to make thousands of people more vulnerable to natural hazards.

Hydro-meteorological events have been predominant over the last 15 years and have been on the rise since 1996 in Central America, where 58 floods have affected 1.5 million people since 1990. Over the same period, more than 4.7 million Central Americans have been hit by windstorms, most notoriously by Hurricanes Mitch³ and Stan⁴ in 1998 and 2005, respectively. In fact, 2005 was a record cyclonic season in the Atlantic in terms of tropical storms and hurricanes⁵. Hydro-meteorological events are the cause of more than 93% of human lives lost over the period 1990-2006⁶. The number of droughts, a slow-onset disaster, has risen recently, affecting over 2 million people in Central America alone in the past fifteen years⁷. The same observation can be made concerning economic losses: over a longer period from 1970 to 2000, 70% of economic losses resulting from natural disasters are connected with hydro-meteorological phenomena⁸.

However, leaving aside the impact of the hurricanes Mitch and Stan, geological events and more specifically earthquakes generate the most significant economic losses. For example, the two earthquakes which hit El Salvador in 2001 affected a total of 1.5 million people⁹.

In addition, certain events such as landslides can be associated with geological events (Santa Tecla, earthquake in El Salvador in 2001, causing more than 600 victims), but also with hydro-meteorological events (landslide of the Casita volcano, hurricane Mitch in 1998, with more than 2,000 victims).

Finally, deforestation is a frequent problem in poor countries, and events such as the El Niño phenomenon aggravate its consequences. The drought induced by the El Niño phenomenon in 1997-1998 caused losses of forests (due to fires) corresponding to four years of deforestation¹⁰.

The recurring nature of disasters is a very important element to be taken into account in the analysis of threats and therefore of risks. But independently of the magnitude and of the frequency of the events, the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of a large part of the Central American population leads one to predict an increase in the population exposed to the risks of disasters, in rural areas and on the edges of large cities.

The vulnerability indicators¹¹ of Central American countries, such as the human development index, are the lowest for all Latin America. In particular, Guatemala is positioned 117th, Honduras 116th, Nicaragua 112th, and El Salvador 104th, according to UNDP's 2005 report. Additionally, in Latin America, the within-country vulnerability disparity levels are

³ Hurricane Mitch is a benchmark in Central America's recent disaster history. Its impact was so severe in this region that, for example, 7 years later the PRRAC – The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Plan for Central America- funded by the EC (EUR 250,000,000 approx.) is still being implemented.

⁴ In Guatemala alone, hurricane Stan caused damage of over EUR 800,000,000 (equivalent to more than 3% GDP) and affected to 0.5 million people (4% of its population).

⁵ Registration started by the mid-1850's

⁶ Source: CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster)

⁷ DG ECHO responded to the drought of 2001-2002 through 4 decisions which amounted to EUR 6,820,000.

⁸ According to CIESA (Centre for Economic and Environmental Studies)

⁹ DG ECHO responded to these earthquakes through 3 decisions which amounted to EUR 10,500,000.

¹⁰ According to CCAD (Comisión Centroamericana para el Ambiente y el Desarrollo), the losses of forests in Central America during 1997-1998 amount to 1.5 million hectares.

¹¹ The vulnerability indicators comprise the physical, social, cultural, economic and environmental factors, which increase the probability of a community suffering a negative impact due to a threat.

extremely high: even in relatively favoured countries such as Costa Rica, Panama or El Salvador, vulnerability can be very high in certain regions, without necessarily inciting the respective governments to take corrective action.

The losses and the destruction that result from these disasters are therefore significant from a social and economic point of view and reduce the development potential of the region. Recent studies have shown that despite the many efforts made in the region, disasters have increased gradually over the last thirty years and affect 5% of annual GDP¹². If one takes into account only those disasters considered as such by databases such as CRED, disasters produced losses which, at constant prices, are 600% higher than losses during the 1970s.¹³

Central America also experiences frequent small-scale disasters¹⁴ affecting relatively few communities, where donors are unlikely to intervene due to the limited scale of the event, but which have a considerable negative impact on the livelihoods of those affected. According to CRED, 85% of the population affected by disasters in Central America during 1990-2005 was affected by small-scale events.

In 2003 DG ECHO launched a global evaluation on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)¹⁵. Owing to their exposure to risks, to their economic and socio-cultural vulnerability and to the weakness of the existing local response capacities, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua were classified as having a high level of risk. Certain regions of Costa Rica and of Panama can also be included in this category.

Despite the recent legislative reforms in several Central American countries, Disaster Preparedness (**DP**) is not a strategic priority for many of the national authorities. Consequently their ability to cope with disasters is extremely weak, particularly at local level where many communities and local institutions lack awareness, knowledge, expertise, resources and mandate. In such a scenario, the lack of resilience of populations, institutions, basic services (commonly ruptured during natural disasters) and other infrastructure result in vulnerabilities and losses (both in lives and assets lost) that in many instances could be mitigated or avoided. The resulting erosion of the coping capacities of people and institutions and the additional resources that are subsequently required contribute to undoing much of the relief and development gains of recent years.

It is now generally recognised that the integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in development and cooperation policies should become systematic, as risk and vulnerability are crucial elements in reducing the negative impacts of hazards, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. The more a vulnerable population is exposed to natural disasters which exhaust its coping mechanisms, the more difficult it becomes for it to emerge from the spiral of vulnerability.

¹² CIESA, conclusions of the Mitch + 5 Forum (November 2003).

¹³ UNDP data

¹⁴ For the purpose of this analysis, a disaster is considered of small-scale when it affects less than 50,000 people, according to CRED Database.

¹⁵ December 2003, Evaluation of DG ECHO's strategic orientation to disaster reduction available on DG ECHO's Web site: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/pdf_files/evaluation/2003/disaster_report.pdf

The *Priorities for Action* of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters"¹⁶ provided the strategic logic underlying the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan for Central America.

In April 2005 the European Commission, in its Communication "**Reinforcing EU Disaster and Crisis Response in third countries**",¹⁷ addressed the issue of enhancing preparedness and response to disasters. The document also considers the Hyogo Framework for Action as the starting point of its strategy¹⁸.

1.2. - Identified needs:

The needs identified by DG ECHO in Central America in the field of preparedness and in particular in terms of early warning mechanisms and intervention systems arise from the firm conviction that response to disasters is a mainly temporary action with high costs in human and economic terms, whereas the reduction of risks in the domain of natural disasters can reduce the probability of losses before the risks turn into a tragedy.

If one refers to the "formula" "risk = (threat x vulnerability) / capacity", which is commonly accepted within the international community dealing with risk reduction, risk can be reduced by any action aiming to reduce the intensity of the threat, to reduce vulnerability, or to improve the agents' capacity to respond in a situation of risk.

The high risk levels in certain countries and regions of Central America arise for a great part from the exposure to natural threats and from the vulnerabilities connected with all types of factors: economic, social, cultural, environmental, etc. These vulnerabilities (and to a lesser extent the exposure to the threats) can be reduced by long-term risk reduction policies, closely intertwined with development policies. Humanitarian aid instruments are not the most well adapted to respond to these needs.

However, the risk level in Central America also arises from significant weaknesses in the response capacity, defined as the level of resources, the way in which the communities use these resources, and the capacity of these communities to cope with the unfavourable consequences of a disaster. A diagnosis carried out by CEPREDENAC¹⁹ under a DIPECHO project in 2003-2004 confirmed that the national response and prevention systems of the six Central American countries have become structured, in particular since the advent of hurricane Mitch in 1998, and dispose, in varying degrees of clear and agreed emergency plans. But it also shows that in all cases they are short of financial means²⁰ and trained human resources, which prevents them from being effective in terms of preparedness, prevention and response outside of the capital cities and in the most isolated areas.

¹⁶ The 5 priorities for action are: 1. Ensure that DRR is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation; 2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; 3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors; 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

¹⁷ COM (2005) 153, 20 April 2005.

¹⁸ Such as integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and into programmes in countries that have been affected by disaster; strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels that can build resilience to hazards and disaster preparedness both inside and outside the EU; development of people-centred early warning, better management and exchange of information on risks and protection, education and training; identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks, enhancing early warning; reducing the underlying risk factors."

¹⁹ CEPREDENAC is the Coordination Centre for Disaster Prevention and Response in Central America, an intergovernmental body that is part of the regional institutions.

²⁰ A system like SINAPRED in Nicaragua had, in 2003, less than EUR 500,000 per year for its operation.

After four DIPECHO Action Plans covering the region and in order to take stock of the lessons learned from previous projects, an extensive consultation process was undertaken from March to April 2006 in Central America, involving over 400 DRR experts representing DIPECHO partners, relevant authorities, scientific community, local and international organisations. Notably, four national consultative meetings, as well as one regional seminar, were held to prepare the ground for the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan. Besides offering to the main stakeholders the possibility for a disaster preparedness dialogue that in many countries had hitherto been lacking, this consultation process allowed concrete priorities to be drawn up for the countries targeted by this action plan. The results of these consultative exercises confirm the analysis outlined above of the risk level in the region. These exercises also identify, with regard to the response capacities and notwithstanding the four previous action plans, a need to continue the preparedness work with the communities, given the extent of the risk, in order to extend or consolidate the few local initiatives already launched.

Based on the results of these national and regional consultative meetings²¹ DG ECHO was able to draw up a comprehensive regional and per country strategy with precise identification of needs according to areas and activities.

Even though there is a large presence of donor institutions in Central America, few support DRR strategies by directly financing community-based activities; more attention is paid to support for national/sub-national institutions and large-scale infrastructure projects or structural programming that embraces national priorities, but there is a tendency to neglect local vulnerabilities. Equally, such engagement strategies do little to address critical weaknesses in coordination and advocacy at national and regional levels.

The analysis confirms that disaster preparedness capacities at community level are generally weak or non-existent, except in those areas targeted by previous DIPECHO action plans and by the few similar initiatives sponsored by NGO private funds. DIPECHO has covered approximately 10% of the Central American municipalities through the four previous action plans. This means that there are approximately 1,000 Central American municipalities remaining which have received little (if any) support from either public or private institutions. In practical terms, this means that the majority of the Central American local emergency committees lack the infrastructure and equipment required to manage disaster response in their respective jurisdictions. Within the existing local emergency committees, technical capacities related to specific areas of disaster preparedness remain weak, such as management of emergency aid, damage and needs assessment and shelter management. These committees require further strengthening. Essential information (alerts, damage and needs assessments) does not flow between all actors at all levels. Coordination among governmental levels (municipal, departmental, national) remains weak. Confusion and misinformation persists in the vulnerable population in terms of what to do in case of disaster. In the few cases where mitigation works exist, they are extremely weak and are not receiving adequate maintenance by the municipal authorities. The same applies to the early warning systems: critical information is not being effectively and efficiently communicated to municipal authorities and communities in the few minor river basins and volcanoes where some hazard monitoring equipment exists. Although the communities and municipalities which benefited from previous DIPECHO action plans are better off, these results require consolidation. As stated above, there is still room for the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan to

²¹ The conclusions and recommendations of this process were published in the '*Instructions and Guidelines for DG ECHO potential partners wishing to submit proposals under the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan in Central America*'. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/calls_en.htm#5c_america
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target areas previously uncovered by former DIPECHO programmes, where DP capacities are non-existent (more than 1,000 municipalities in Central America).

Finally, all the assessments confirm the need to work harder on the standardisation, compilation and distribution of best practices at national and regional levels, since numerous good practices of previous experiences have never been replicated in other locations facing similar problems.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan will target the most vulnerable local communities and their institutions, approximately 850,000 total beneficiaries in six countries. The following regions, considered among those with the highest risk levels and the lowest coping capacities, will be targeted on a priority basis for operations aimed at increasing response capacity at local level: there will be projects in four countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua), while Costa Rica and Panama will be covered by the regional projects.

El Salvador

Floods: Pacific coastal plain and Central mountain strip.

Landslides: Central mountain strip.

Earthquakes: Central mountain strip.

Approximately: 96,000 beneficiaries

Guatemala

Landslides: High Plateau.

Floods: Pacific coastal plain and High Plateau.

Approximately: 68,000 beneficiaries

Honduras

Floods: Caribbean coast, Central-East region and urban marginal areas of MDC.

Landslides: Central-East region and urban marginal areas of MDC.

Hurricanes: Caribbean coast and Central-East region.

Approximately: 400,000 beneficiaries

Nicaragua

Floods: Caribbean coast, North and North Pacific regions.

Landslides: North and North Pacific regions.

Volcanic eruption: North Pacific region and Ometepe Island.

Earthquakes: North Pacific region and Ometepe Island.

Forest fires: North region.

Approximately: 176,000 beneficiaries

Regional

The regional projects contributing to the compilation and dissemination of best practices in disaster preparedness will target the most vulnerable areas of the six countries in Central America. These regional projects have a multi-hazard approach.

Approximately: 110,000 beneficiaries

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

As the majority of the proposed activities have a community orientation, their success depends on the desire for cooperation of the identified communities. Moreover, the disaster preparedness projects depend on the link that the partners establish with the competent local authorities, which have to be involved in the project from the beginning, in order to make sure that the objectives are achieved and the results are sustainable. Such dependence on support and collaboration with local institutional structures carries the risk that anticipated cooperation/support/political commitment fails to meet expectations. In order to maximise the possibility of success in achieving the project objectives, DG ECHO has taken account, in the selection, both of prospective partners' experience in disaster preparedness programmes and their operational presence in the target location (thereby providing a pre-existing working relationship with local communities and local authorities).

In addition, a major natural disaster could cause delays in implementation as DIPECHO projects under implementation could be de-prioritised in favour of emergency/humanitarian actions. Furthermore, the disaster itself may prevent access to target beneficiaries and/or locations.

The current political situation in Central America is stable. However, any breakdown in political stability in any of the six countries concerned could affect the implementation of operations financed under this decision.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:²²

2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective:

To reduce risk by better preparing the vulnerable populations in the areas most prone to natural disasters in Central America.

Specific objective:

To support strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for and mitigate natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope, thereby increasing resilience and decreasing vulnerability.

²² Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002). 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 DG 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/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm

2.2. - Components:

Programme strategies which receive DIPECHO support will be developed in the context of existing relevant legislation and decrees and will contribute to existing/planned National Disaster Management Plans and Policies (including the implementation plan of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015) and also in conjunction with the appropriate institutions of national governments at all relevant levels (local, sub-national, national); sectoral line ministries, finance or planning ministries, the National Disaster Management Office of each country, or others.

Successful proposals will include the following components (non-exhaustive):

a) Infrastructure support

Goods and services aimed at providing support to basic infrastructure within emergency plans. This might include: upgrading/refurbishment of storage facilities; rehabilitation of evacuation routes; facilitation of access to emergency shelters, shelter for the animals of evacuated populations etc. (including small bridges); refurbishment of health care posts; temporary shelters for evacuated population; sign-posting of evacuation routes; non-structural rectification/improvement; construction of basic services for emergency response (water and sanitation, etc.).

b) Advocacy and public awareness-raising

One-way communication activities aimed at raising awareness on disaster risk reduction issues among decision-makers and the general public. This might include: radio spots/radio communication in communities; TV broadcasts; media interaction: newspapers, journals, magazines, etc.; Information and Communication materials such as leaflets, posters, billboards, brochures etc.; conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops, peer-to-peer awareness initiatives; awareness campaigns (street drama, theatre, songs...); training for the media.

DIPECHO actively encourages coordinated and collaborative national programming for disaster risk reduction, particularly amongst DIPECHO partners. In this regard it should be noted that proposals for multi-agency advocacy and awareness-raising in any given context (at national or sub-national level) are considered welcome. Joint strategy formulation and programming, with one identified lead agency (with accompanying prior written Memorandum of Understanding between participating agencies), is therefore considered relevant.

c) Small-scale mitigation works

Small-scale infrastructure works aimed at reducing the physical vulnerability of the beneficiaries, which serve to complement the preparedness component of the project strategy. Occasionally, beneficiaries are trained during the implementation of these mitigation works in order to operate/maintain or replicate them in the future. Expenses related to this sort of training would be included in this sub sector. This might include: protection walls along river banks; structural works on existing public buildings to increase their resistance to disasters; identification and reinforcement of safe places; reforestation/plantation; small-scale drainage; and irrigation works.

d) Mapping and data computerisation

Mapping and data computerisation linked with the study of hazards and vulnerabilities and the elaboration of emergency plans. This might include: data collection for risk mapping

purposes (scientific maps); development of mapping software and training on its use; printing and dissemination of risk maps and other collected data.

e) Education and training

Activities aimed at creating a “culture of prevention” within the formal education system pursuing a change of attitude and practice. This might include: design and production of training materials for pupils; training of teachers and pupils; simulations conducted at school level; elaboration of emergency plans for schools; school competitions.

f) Early warning systems

All activities and equipment related to the setting up of an Early Warning System (EWS) and its functioning. This might include: technical studies conducted specifically to set up an EWS (e.g. hydrological study); studies carried out to collect traditional local knowledge specifically to set up an EWS; recovery/strengthening of traditional local EWS; installation of radio networks and hazard monitoring equipment (e.g. rain gauges and hydrometric scales) and training of beneficiaries on their use; development/installation of alternative alert equipments; exchanges between scientists and communities; mock drills; information campaigns, etc.

g) Research and dissemination

Technical studies, workshops and surveys conducted in order to increase knowledge about preparedness issues and dissemination of its results. This might include: organization of workshops/seminars aimed at dissemination of project results; compilation and dissemination of DP best practices and lessons learned; production of dissemination materials (catalogues, brochures, etc); support to national and regional information management centres; technical studies whose results are used in local planning (e.g. for zoning purposes), etc.

All proposals include (i) the Co-organisation of a *National Consultative Meeting* in collaboration with the other DIPECHO partners in the country, and (ii) the participation in a *Regional Consultative Meeting* to be organised by DG ECHO with the participation of national decision makers, other donors, EU services and major stakeholders.

h) Facilitation of coordination and trans-national cooperation

Support initiatives to facilitate coordination among institutions working on disaster preparedness, prevention and response. This might include: inter-institutional meetings; interactive products; work with sectoral line ministries for coordination purposes (health, education, public works, agriculture, etc); creation/strengthening of national and regional networks on DP; support to regional cooperation initiatives; standardisation of materials (e.g. SUMA, Sphere, EDAN, etc); exchanges between projects inter-acting in the same geographical area (beneficiaries and staff).

i) Institutional strengthening

Services and equipment delivered to strengthen institutional capacities on risk reduction. This might include: training of decision makers at different levels (local, sub-national, national) on DP; training of, among others, Civil Protection, Red Cross, fire brigades in search and rescue, emergency communications, first aid, EDAN, etc; provision of rescue kits and first aid emergency kits to institutional emergency brigades (Civil Protection, Red Cross, fire-fighters, etc); delivery of training and scientific equipment to institutions involved in DP and risk reduction; training of health staff on humanitarian supplies management tools.

j) Local capacity building/training

Capacity building/Training for natural disaster preparedness conducted at local level, with a direct involvement of the beneficiary communities. This might include: support in the organisation and training of local emergency committees; workshops conducted at community level for the development and management of community emergency plans; simulations conducted at community level, e.g. evacuations; training of community facilitators; training of community emergency brigades; rescue kits and first aid emergency kits; community risk mapping, etc.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be **18** months. Humanitarian operations funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.

The 18-month duration for this Decision is necessary because the nature of the activities proposed requires sustained engagement and establishment of optimal working relationships with both the target beneficiaries and public personnel. This requires time, even if the partner is already present in the project location. Selected proposals have a duration of between 12 and 15 months (as foreseen in the guidelines for proposals²³) and starting dates between 01/12/2006 and 28/02/2007. Moreover, it is necessary to foresee a margin of at least one month in case certain operations are delayed at start-up or because of unforeseen events such as natural disasters.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 December 2006.

Start Date: 1 December 2006

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

²³ 'Instructions and Guidelines for DG ECHO potential partners wishing to submit proposals under the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan in Central America'. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/whatsnew/calls_en.htm#5c_america

Under the four previous DIPECHO Action Plans (ECHO/TPS/219/1998/01000, ECHO/TPS/219/2000/02000, ECHO/TPS/219/2002/02000 and ECHO/DIP/BUD/2004/02000) DIPECHO has committed EUR 15.055.592 million for Central America.

5.1. Coordination with other Commission departments:

Since September 2001, coordination on DRR has been ongoing with DG External Relations (RELEX) and DG AIDCO in order to encourage an increased involvement of these services in this field. Similar efforts have been made by DG Development (DEV). DG ECHO has stressed the importance of including DRR as a cross-cutting issue in country/regional strategy papers.

Moreover, since the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe, Japan (January 2005), significant progress has been made in promoting DRR dialogue within the European Commission.

At the field level, DG ECHO launched a dialogue with some of the Delegations in the region to explore the possibilities for the incorporation of disaster risk management components in programmes supported under the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) for 2007-2013.

A Disaster Risk Reduction Group has been created in 2006 by DG ECHO and the Regional Delegation in Managua to discuss DRR issues and to ensure proper coordination between all disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention programmes financed by the EC in Central America. This technical group meets on a bi-monthly basis at the DG ECHO field office in Managua.

EUR 20,000,000 was earmarked in the EU regional strategic paper for Central America for a regional programme on disaster prevention (PREVDA) that was launched in 2006. This programme should contribute to a reduction of the vulnerability of the region and the improvement of the environmental situation by reinforcing regional and national capacities in terms of planning, prevention and information management. Under PREVDA, harmonisation of legal frameworks and capacities will be promoted. It also envisages prevention and mitigation actions in strategic main river basins. The fifth DIPECHO action plan, in focusing on preparedness at local level, should complement this regional programme.

EUR 20,000,000 has been approved for a municipal strengthening programme in Guatemala. No infrastructure works are envisaged and technical assistance (including risk management) to municipalities plays a key role in this programme. Its geographical focus is on the Western high plateau, the Verapaces, Zacapa and Chiquimula. Coordination opportunities between this programme and the fifth DIPECHO-action plan may arise in the western department of San Marcos and, to a lesser extent, in Alta Verapaz. DIPECHO community-based projects may complement this municipal approach.

EUR 12,000,000 has been approved for a regional food security programme in Central America (PRESANCA). This programme has prioritised 25 border municipalities and foresees a food security fund which, *inter alia*, has a municipal institutional strengthening component (including risk management). DG ECHO will share information through the DRR Group about target municipalities under the fifth DIPECHO action plan so as to ensure coordination between this action plan and PRESANCA.

5.2. - Member States:

The following information is based on data supplied by the Member States concerned, at the request of DG ECHO. Every effort will be made to facilitate coordination and complementarity of operations funded under this Decision with on-going or planned operations in DRR supported by Member States.

Sweden

The Swedish government, via the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Division for Humanitarian Assistance, supports the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) regional programmes for Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. The programme concerns regional outreach and advocacy for Disaster Risk Reduction. The regional ISDR units undertake activities to promote the strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction and development of strategic national action plans, public awareness and education, information management and dissemination. The regional programmes will support and advocate national and regional implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. For the period 2006-2007, Sida is supporting the regional programmes for Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean with 15,000,000 SEK.²⁴

United Kingdom

The UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) has recently committed GBP 4,500,000 million over three years to fund a World Bank Initiative entitled "Mainstreaming Hazard Risk Management for Sustainable Poverty Reduction." This includes closer collaboration with the World Bank on the integration of DRR into developing country planning processes, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, and more specifically:

- To facilitate mainstreaming of DRR into national planning processes as well as various sectoral development strategies;
- To strengthen national hazard risk management capacity and catalyze increased investment in hazard prevention, mitigation and preparedness;
- To mainstream risk assessment and risk reduction in all operations (lending and non-lending services) of the World Bank in countries at high risks.

The initial work will focus on approximately five countries at risk of high mortality and economic loss due to natural hazards. One of these countries is Nicaragua²⁵.

Spain

²⁴ The Sida report "Reducing the Risk of Disasters" examines Sida's potential for integrating a disaster risk perspective into its development cooperation and obstacles and opportunities:
http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA22204en_web.pdf&a=17204

²⁵ For more information on the UK's Disaster Risk Reduction policy, see
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/disaster-risk-reduction-launch.asp>.

Spanish Cooperation has adopted a regional approach towards disaster prevention and environmental vulnerability reduction in Central America. Spain has supported the institutional strengthening of the Central American Integration System (SICA), focusing this support on the regional institution in charge of disaster prevention, CEPREDENAC.

Spain is currently working on the elaboration of its Disaster Prevention Action Plan for Central America for the period 2006-2008. The current draft has three pillars:

1. The Regional Plan for Disaster Reduction (PRRD) elaborated in 1999 by Central American countries and currently being updated by CEPREDENAC for the period 2006-2015.
2. Spanish Cooperation horizontal lines: the fight against poverty, environmental sustainability and gender equality.
3. Harmonization guidelines adopted in the Paris meeting in 2005.

Spain is considering six components in accordance with the regional priorities established in the PRRD: institutional strengthening; capacity building; development of the legal framework; education; reconstruction coordination; inter-institutional coordination.

Germany

Current projects in the field of disaster reduction financed by the German Government in Central America:

- El Salvador: “Participative disaster risk management on the upper course of Rio Lempa in the Trifinio region” (Trifinio II), for the period 1 June 2006-31 December 2008. (EUR 2,000,000).
- Guatemala: “Local development through good communal governance” (PROMUDEL), for the period 28 October 2005-31 December 2009. (EUR 10,000,000).
- Haiti and Dominican Republic: “Reconstruction and disaster risk management in the frontier region Haiti/Dominican Republic”, for the period 11 October 2005-31 December 2008. (EUR 2,200,000).
- Nicaragua: “Sustainable management of natural resources and strengthening of entrepreneurial competencies” (MASRENACE), for the period 14 October 2004-30 June 2008. (EUR 6,550,000).
- El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua: “Mitigation of georisks in Central America”, for the period 1 August 2005-31 July 2009 (EUR 4,470,000).

Planned:

- Haiti and Dominican Republic: “Participation of civil society in disaster risk management in the southern, rural frontier region Haiti/Dominican Republic” (EUR 0,145,220).

- El Salvador and Guatemala: “Reconstruction and disaster risk prevention after hurricane Stan in El Salvador and Guatemala” for the period 1 October 2006-31 September 2009 (EUR 2,000,000).

5.3 Others

Every effort will be made to coordinate and ensure complementarity with other ongoing or planned DRR operations in the geographical areas concerned.

Most of the programmes financed by other international donors in Central America have focused on disaster prevention and mitigation rather than on preparedness. Regional, national and to a lesser extent municipal levels have been prioritized by those programmes. Community-based projects have been rare. Some complementarity, though, has been achieved by previous DIPECHO action plans with those few municipal and community-based projects funded by other donors in the same geographical areas.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (COSUDE)

COSUDE has been very active in financing risk management initiatives in the entire region:

In Nicaragua (2005-2008):

- Integral Risk Management in Esteli and Nueva Segovia (EUR 663,000)
- Tsunami Awareness Raising (2006) (EUR 110,000)
- Human Resources Training for SINAPRED, the Nicaraguan National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Attention. (2003-2004) (EUR 120,000).

In El Salvador (2005-2008): Integral Risk Management in Sonsonate (EUR 480,000).

In Honduras (2006-2008): Risk Management in Colon with COPECO, the Honduran Permanent Contingency Commission (EUR 314,000).

Although these initiatives have mainly focused on disaster prevention rather than on preparedness, several of the projects coincided in geographical terms with previous DIPECHO projects. In those cases, complementarity between COSUDE and DIPECHO projects was achieved as DG ECHO partners took stock of the technical information produced by those projects.

Norway

In Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Norway will finance through CEPREDENAC a Seismic Risk Reduction Project. (2007-2011) (EUR 1,800,000)

Japanese Cooperation (JICA)

JICA finances two projects in Nicaragua (in the towns of Leon and Chinandega) in vulnerability reduction amounting to EUR 3,000,000 (2006-2011). Also, the National Institute of Territorial Studies (INETER) recently implemented a Risk Mapping project in some Pacific Region areas financed by JICA (EUR 4,000,000).

The World Bank (WB)

The WB is implementing (April 2001-September 2006) an institutional strengthening project in Nicaragua entitled "Natural Disaster Vulnerability Reduction" which amounts to EUR 11,100,000. This project has a wide geographical coverage and has strengthened the national and municipal levels through training and equipment provision. In some geographical areas, previous DIPECHO projects have complemented this WB project at the community level. In Honduras, the WB is implementing (2000-2007) a mitigation project amounting EUR 8,900,000 which focuses on risk mapping. Some previous DIPECHO projects used some data generated by this WB project when drafting municipal and community emergency plans.

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

IDB has recently launched an EUR 8,000,000 disaster prevention fund for Latin America and the Caribbean (2006).

IDB also launched an action plan (2005-2008) for improving disaster risk management at a regional level (LAC) in cooperation with the Japanese government (EUR 600,000)

6 - Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 6,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To reduce risk by better preparing the vulnerable populations in the areas most prone to natural disasters in Central America.</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective(EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners
<p>Specific objective 1: To support strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for and mitigate natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope, thereby increasing resilience and decreasing vulnerability.</p>	6,000,000	<p>Guatemala El Salvador Honduras Nicaragua Costa Rica Panama</p>	<p>Capacity building/training, early warning systems, small scale mitigation works, risk mapping and data computerisation, research and dissemination, infrastructure support, advocacy and public awareness-raising, education, facilitation of coordination, institutional strengthening. Facilitation of coordination</p>	<p>ACH – Spain ACSUR – Spain ACTED – France AYUDA EN ACCION - Spain CARE- France CARE- Netherlands CEPREDENAC CHRISTIAN AID – UK CISP - Italy COSPE – Italy DAN CHURCH AID - Denmark DUTCH RED CROSS - Netherlands GERMAN AGRO ACTION –Germany GOAL – Ireland GVC - Italy INTERMON/OXFAM – Spain IFRC – International Organisation ITALIAN RED CROSS - Italy OIKOS – Portugal OXFAM Solidarité - Belgium OXFAM –UK SPANISH RED CROSS – Spain TROCAIRE – Ireland UNICEF – United Nations UNDP – United Nations</p>
TOTAL:	6,000,000			

7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid 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 DG 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/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 02

-	EC (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2006	19,000,000
Supplementary Budgets	
Transfers	
Total Available Credits	19,000,000
Total executed to date (18 August 2006)	7,000,000
Available remaining	12,000,000
Total amount of the Decision	6,000,000

Estimated payments schedule:

2006	2007	2008	TOTAL
EUR 1,800,000	EUR 3,050,000	EUR 1,150,000	EUR 6,000,000

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Communities in Central America (DIPECHO)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid²⁶, and in particular Articles 15(2) thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) Central America is particularly exposed to natural disasters such as floods, flash floods, cyclones, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and forest fires;
- (2) Local communities are critically vulnerable to all these disasters;
- (3) The countries of Central America have insufficient capacities to cope with the consequences of disasters;
- (4) These countries currently rely on international assistance to promote disaster risk reduction, risk management and preparedness activities;
- (5) Experience from the previous DIPECHO Action Plans implemented in the region as well as from national consultations lead to the conclusion that Disaster Preparedness projects should be financed by the Commission for a period of 18 months;
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 6,000,000 from budget line 23 02 02 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide disaster preparedness activities for at least 850,000 beneficiaries taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors;
- (7) In accordance with Article 17(3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 20 October 2006.

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 6,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations under the Fifth DIPECHO Action Plan for Central America by using line 23 02 02 of the 2006 general budget of the European Communities.

²⁶OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6
ECHO/DIP/BUD/2006/02000

2. In accordance with Article 2 (f) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

Specific Objective 1:

To support strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for and mitigate natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope, thereby increasing resilience and decreasing vulnerability.

The total amount of this Decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be for a maximum period of 18 months, starting on 1 December 2006.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 December 2006.
3. 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 3

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission