



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels,  
C(2008)

**COMMISSION DECISION**

**of**

**on the financing of emergency humanitarian Actions from the general budget of the  
European Communities in Bangladesh**

**ECHO/BGD/BUD/2008/03000**

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**on the financing of emergency humanitarian Actions from the general budget of the European Communities in Bangladesh**

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THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 2 (a) and Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Heavy monsoon downpour at the end of September 2008 combined with heavy water flow coming from Indian rivers upstream, resulted in waterlog flooding in Jessore and Shatkhira Districts in south-west Bangladesh.
- (2) It is estimated that the floods have so far affected over 196,000 people and around 80,000 have been displaced and are living in appalling conditions in makeshift shelters or under the open sky. Over a hundred villages have been inundated and/or marooned so far.
- (3) A recent Commission field assessment to the affected area confirmed the alarming situation reporting house destruction and consequent population displacement, complete loss of livelihoods due to crop and livestock destruction with consequent food crisis, water contamination and breakdown in basic sanitation. The next planting season is also at stake given the very slow rate at which the water is receding in these areas.
- (4) Because these regions of Bangladesh are not usually flood prone, the communities have low local coping capacities to deal with the current situation. People's vulnerability is further exacerbated by the fact that during the present lean season, employment opportunities are very limited and people do not generally have food in stock.
- (5) While there has been limited government food distribution, the magnitude of the needs appears to be far greater than the local response mobilised to address the situation. No other assistance has been made available to date.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

- (6) Considering the severity of the crisis and the high number of those fully dependent on humanitarian assistance, the weak local coping mechanism, the limited response by the local authorities and the likely medium-term adverse impact, the urgent needs are in the areas of food security, shelter, emergency water and sanitation activities, livelihood restoration and health. Some disaster preparedness measures will also be included in the operations, as much as is possible in the context of an emergency intervention.
- (7) To reach populations in need, emergency aid may be channelled through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), or International Organisations, including United Nations (UN) agencies. Therefore the European Commission may implement the budget by direct centralized management or by joint management.
- (8) Humanitarian aid Actions financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of 6 months.
- (9) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,500,000 from budget article 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 150,000 affected people taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. Therefore the activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.
- (10) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>2</sup>, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002<sup>3</sup>, and Article 15 of the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the general budget of the European Communities<sup>4</sup>.

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 1,500,000 for emergency humanitarian aid Actions to provide the necessary assistance and relief to affected people in BANGLADESH by using article 23 02 01 of the 2008 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian Actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:  
  
To provide integrated relief assistance to the most vulnerable flood-affected families in south-west Bangladesh  
  
An amount of EUR 1,500,000 has been allocated to this specific objective.

#### *Article 2*

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid Actions funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of 6 months from their starting date.

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<sup>2</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 22 October 2008.
3. If the Actions 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 humanitarian aid Actions.

*Article 3*

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented either by:
  - Non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96;or International organisations
3. Taking account of the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

*Article 4*

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

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*

*Member of the Commission*



**Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision**  
**23 02 01**

Title: Emergency Humanitarian aid in favour of communities affected by floods and waterlogging in south-western Bangladesh

Location of Action: BANGLADESH

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,500,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/BGD/BUD/2008/03000

## **Supporting Document**

### **1 - Rationale, needs and target population.**

#### 1.1. - Rationale :

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries and most of the country is near or at sea level. It is therefore extremely vulnerable to a large range of natural disasters<sup>1</sup> and suffers each year at monsoon time from severe flooding and erosion, coming from the large rivers crossing the country, and this is being exacerbated by climate change factors.

While the 2008 monsoon flood in Bangladesh was considered no worse than normal this year, the situation deteriorated drastically in the south-west region during late September. Heavy monsoon downpour combined with heavy water flow coming from Indian rivers upstream, resulted in waterlog flooding in Jessore and Shatkhira, two Districts located in the south-west of the country.

This part of the country does not usually experience heavy flooding, but this is changing as a result of silting of local rivers and poorly maintained embankments. Inappropriate construction of sluice gates along the rivers and distributary channels, unplanned shrimp farming/dams have resulted in sedimentation and raising of river-beds that drastically reduces the carrying capacity of the rivers, leading to semi-permanent water stagnancy with significant impact on the overall livelihoods of the people living along those river basins.

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<sup>1</sup> such as tidal waves and high winds, cyclones, tropical storms and earthquakes

The floods caused embankment breaches<sup>2</sup>, which in turn resulted in sudden-onset flooding of villages and farmland where water remains trapped as riverbeds are above the villages.

It is estimated that the floods have so far affected over 196,000 people. Over a hundred villages have been inundated, damaging 53 educational institutions and some 230 km of roads.

Over 15,000<sup>3</sup> houses have been partially or completely damaged, people have been marooned for weeks resulting in 80,000 being displaced and living in appalling conditions in makeshift shelters or under the open sky. Displaced people are in urgent need of food and emergency shelter support. There is a scarcity of safe drinking water in affected areas and no proper sanitation facilities exist in areas where families have been forced to seek temporary shelter. Displaced families are living in cramped shelters in very unhygienic conditions. People have been forced to defecate in floodwaters and nearby bushes – practices which could create significant health hazards since the polluted floodwater is also used for bathing.

Damage includes loss of standing crops, serious erosion of farmland and property, destruction of livestock, food and tools, as well as the contamination of surface water supplies, open wells and tube-wells and of latrines.

Over 20,000 hectares of crops have been partially or totally damaged and shrimp farms washed away in affected areas. Flood water levels are more than two feet higher than in previous years and local communities said they would not be able to cultivate any crops in the coming season, making families even more vulnerable.

A recent DG ECHO<sup>4</sup> field assessment<sup>5</sup> in the affected areas confirms the alarming humanitarian situation, with house destruction and consequent population displacement, complete loss of livelihoods due to crop and livestock destruction with consequent food crisis, water contamination and breakdown in basic sanitation. The next planting season is also put at stake given the very slow rate at which the water is receding in these areas.

While there has been limited government food distribution<sup>6</sup>, the magnitude of the needs appears to be far greater than the local response mobilised to address the situation. No other assistance has been made available to date which results in an acute food crisis, thus increasing people's vulnerability.

In the absence of a centralised appeal, authorities at the local level (state, district and sub-district) have stated that they would welcome assistance from international aid agencies, and are cooperative in facilitating aid agencies to provide assistance on the ground.

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<sup>2</sup> 55 km of embankment have been damaged according to Jessore based local NGO "Samadhan" assessment.

<sup>3</sup> Source : Jessore based local NGO "Samadhan" assessment as of 21 October 2008

<sup>4</sup> Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO

<sup>5</sup> DG ECHO mission report to waterlogged flood areas in south-west region of Bangladesh, 21 October 2008

<sup>6</sup> Since the crisis started, Government of Bangladesh (GoB) distributed one time 5-10Kg of rice covering 50% of the families in the makeshift shelters .

## 1.2. - Identified needs :

Various assessments of the humanitarian situation by international organisations are still on-going but on the basis of DG ECHO emergency assessment mission to the affected areas<sup>7</sup>, a number of basic humanitarian needs have been identified to be addressed in priority:

The report recommends emergency relief, focusing on food, shelter and water-sanitation for the displaced, host and stranded families; and ultimately to assist in the recovery of livelihoods and rehabilitation of damaged housing and water-sanitation facilities<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, a group of international organisations in the country have called for a coordinated emergency response and describe this localised flooding as a "silent disaster".<sup>9</sup>

The floods have damaged large areas of crops and seedbeds, livestock and fish ponds<sup>10</sup>; long-term flood damage thus includes the loss of the expected harvest and reduced ability to provide seeds for the following year, both of which additionally result in daily wage labourers experiencing a reduction in work available, exacerbating the vulnerability of the poorest. These are being forced into selling, at bargain price, what remaining livelihoods assets they have, a disinvestment for the future.

As affected areas are not among the normally flood-prone areas of Bangladesh, the populations do not have the coping capacities developed elsewhere in the country and so are more vulnerable when floods strike. Poor resilience to face natural disasters is further exacerbated by the fact that during the present lean season, employment opportunities are very limited.

The situation of access to food in the makeshift shelters is alarming: people living close to starvation or eating once a day with very low quantity and calories; some of the families have to manage food on credit from relatives/shops; distress selling of household assets/livestock has also been observed.

Marooned people in the flood-affected districts are suffering due to the lack of food, drinking water and fodder for their livestock as waterlogging is hampering agriculture and other income generating activities.

Consequently, there is a need to provide food assistance for at least a 3-month period and in some areas that suffered total crop loss, this type of assistance may need to be extended until the next crop, thus for up to 5 months.

In a context of a severe reduction of employment opportunities and sources of income caused by the destruction of harvests, fodder stocks, seeds, and livestock, restoring livelihood as soon as possible is a priority. It is necessary to help people return to subsistence self-sufficiency through the promotion of short-term emergency agricultural activities (provision of seeds, agricultural inputs and tools). Cash-for-work programmes are also needed to provide a small initial income to the most vulnerable ones who have lost everything, so that they can meet their essential immediate needs, pending the recovery of the local economy. These programmes will also facilitate the rehabilitation, through self-help initiatives, of

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<sup>7</sup> DG ECHO mission report to waterlogged flood areas in south-west region of Bangladesh, 21 October 2008

<sup>8</sup> DG ECHO mission report to waterlogged flood areas in south-west region of Bangladesh, 21 October 2008

<sup>9</sup> Including Oxfam-GB, ActionAid, Save the Children UK and USA, CARE, CONCERN Worldwide, DanChurchAid, Islamic Relief and MuslimAid- 22 October 2008

<sup>10</sup> 11,480 ponds/fish farms destroyed

shelters and key community infrastructures destroyed by the floods, including water points (for the provision of safe drinking water), and embankments (so that crops and shelters are protected during the next floods).

Shelter: the inundation has left over 16,000 households flooded, with over 6,600 completely destroyed<sup>11</sup>. Tens of thousands families have been living in makeshift shelters in road-side camps for weeks, others are being housed in schools or other public buildings; all are in urgent need of improved emergency shelter materials, and their houses are in need of repair. Their current shelters are only made of leaves/straw/jute sticks with almost nothing on the roofs; as the winter approaches and it is likely that they will have to live there for some additional months, the humanitarian situation, especially for the children, will deteriorate rapidly if measures are not taken urgently to address the situation.

The water and sanitation system has also been seriously affected by the floods. This has resulted in hand pumps being inaccessible and water in the tube-wells being contaminated. Rudimentary pit latrines<sup>12</sup> (and open defecation sites) are similarly inundated, resulting in the contamination of standing water that is now out of necessity being used for drinking, washing and cleaning. The problem is compounded by the presence of the decomposing corpses of livestock. This enhances the likelihood of water-borne diseases (though no major outbreaks have been reported so far), which is exacerbated by the fact that the standing water is stagnant, providing a breeding ground for other disease vectors such as mosquitoes. In this scenario, the provision of regular and reliable drinking water, safe and secure sanitation, primary healthcare and promotion of personal and public hygiene are urgently needed.

The makeshift-shelters visited so far by DG ECHO assessment mission, found that people are living under very inhuman conditions – very limited or no sanitary facilities; access to drinking water is very limited, forcing women to collect water from shallow tube-wells, most of which are arsenic contaminated; Deep Tube Wells are hardly available in the area as they are too expensive for the communities. It is therefore a priority to provide basic water and sanitation facilities to the affected population as soon as possible to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

Victims are exposed to the threat of diseases (respiratory infections, diarrhoea, skin diseases) from being in contact with polluted water. However, the health situation seems to be kept under control, most probably thanks to the Government support in the camps, and no outbreak have been reported so far.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

This Decision will target over 150,000 people affected by the floods.

The Decision will benefit the rural populations living in the most heavily-affected *upazillas*<sup>13</sup> of two districts of the south-west region, namely Jessore, and Shatkhira.

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<sup>11</sup> Source : Jessore based local NGO "Samadhan" assessment as of 21 October 2008

<sup>12</sup> 23,966 latrines have been inundated and damaged and 7,640 tube wells are under water and not useable (Source : Jessore based local NGO "Samadhan" assessment as of 21 October 2008)

<sup>13</sup> The districts of Bangladesh are divided into subdistricts, or upazillas



Operations will need to take into account the special needs of vulnerable groups such as children, women heads of family, elderly, disabled and ethnic minorities.

Priority will also be given to operations that mainstream disaster risk reduction into their relief activities as the population targeted by this Decision will most probably continue to live in disaster-prone areas

#### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

Most of the areas are under two to three feet water and the villagers are rather isolated from other areas as boat is the only means of communication. Access to the affected areas and swift delivery of humanitarian aid could therefore be a challenge.

The political situation in Bangladesh could become unstable ahead of the parliamentary elections planned in December 2008. However, the current environment is rather favourable to the deployment of international humanitarian organizations.

The second cyclone<sup>14</sup> season of the year is about to commence and may hamper the timely delivery of humanitarian aid.

There are at present no major security concerns in Bangladesh.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:**

### 2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To respond to the emergency humanitarian needs of the most flood-affected communities of south-west Bangladesh

Specific objective: To provide integrated relief assistance to the most vulnerable flood-affected families in south-west Bangladesh

### 2.2. - Components :

This Decision will focus on saving and preserving the life of the population affected by the floods. DG ECHO will focus on targeted food aid, shelter, water-sanitation, health and livelihood recovery interventions. Disaster Preparedness and disaster risk reduction measures will be mainstreamed as much as possible in activities and in particular in the shelter sector, to improve the communities' resilience to future natural disasters and flooding cycles.

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<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing this Decision, tropical storm Rashmi with winds of up to 80 km per hour lashes southern Bangladesh early on 27 October 2008.

The following actions will be considered per sector:

#### **Food aid**

- Distribution of food rations to highly vulnerable groups

#### **Shelter**

- Provision of temporary shelter and basic reconstruction material
- Small-scale rehabilitation of severely damaged houses

#### **Water and sanitation**

- Provision of safe drinking water and improved storage
- Emergency rehabilitation of water sources, including wells
- Provision of temporary sanitary latrines
- Emergency Rehabilitation of sanitation facilities

#### **Health**

- As a complement to the government's efforts, medical support to the most needy and vulnerable may be provided, together with hygiene education and water purification to help avoiding disease outbreaks from contaminated polluted water supplies

#### **Emergency Livelihoods / Food security**

- Cash for work
- Short-term early livelihoods recovery
- Fodder for livestock

#### **Disaster preparedness**

- Awareness-raising and training for local communities, community-based organisations and authorities
- Small-scale mitigation works

### **3 - Duration expected for Actions in the proposed Decision:**

The duration of humanitarian aid Actions shall be 6 months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 22 October 2008.

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 Actions.

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.

#### 4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis

List of previous DG ECHO operations in BANGLADESH				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2006 EUR	2007 EUR	2008 EUR
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2006/02000 (*)	Emergency	1,000,000		
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2007/02000 (*)	Emergency		2,500,000	
ECHO/-SA/BUD/2007/03000 (*)	Non Emergency		4,000,000	
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2007/01000	Prim. Emergency		1,500,000	
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2007/02000	Non Emergency		1,500,000	
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2007/03000	Emergency		5,000,000	
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2007/04000	Emergency		1,925,000	
ECHO/DIP/BUD/2007/04000 (*)	Non Emergency		0	
ECHO/-FA/BUD/2008/01000 (*)	Non Emergency			3,650,000
ECHO/-FA/BUD/2008/02000 (*)	Non Emergency			351,000
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2008/01000	Emergency			10,000,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	1,000,000	16,425,000	14,001,000
	<b>Grand Total</b>	31,426,000		

Dated : 24 October 2008  
Source : HOPE

(\*) decisions with more than one country

In 2006, DG ECHO responded to a similar waterlogging situation in three Districts including Jessore and Shatkhira to address the needs of over 28,000 household affected with EUR 1,000,000 mainly for food support. This response has been successful even in the volatile political situation of the country at the time; and it contributed in reducing vulnerability and humanitarian sufferings of the waterlogged people. Effective coordination with relevant stakeholders including the government authorities was also possible.

DG ECHO has also been present in the country with its Disaster Preparedness Programme (called DIPECHO) since 2001. Under the on-going 4<sup>th</sup> DIPECHO Action Plan for South Asia (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2007/04000; EUR 7,000,000), five projects are currently being implemented in Bangladesh for a total amount of EUR 1,380,000. The affected region is a potential area of intervention under the forthcoming DIPECHO Action plan.

As far as other Commission services are concerned, DG RELEX/AIDCO are supporting the CDMP (Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme) which aims at putting in place the foundations for long term sustainable risk reduction in the country. Commission contribution amounts to EUR 9,000,000 (2004-2009 period) and a second phase amounting to EUR 13,000,000 is currently under preparation for the period 2010-2014. This programme complements very well DG ECHO community based Disaster Preparedness interventions in the country.

## 5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in BANGLADESH the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	27,926,000		
Belgium	1,240,156	Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic	57,518				
Denmark	2,043,729				
Estonia	31,955				
Finland					
France	500,000				
Germany	3,263,301				
Greece	200,000				
Hungary					
Ireland	874,716				
Italy	3,057,000				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands	6,370,240				
Poland	81,000				
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia	601,400				
Slovenie					
Spain					
Sweden	2,973,364				
United kingdom	400,429				
Subtotal	21,694,808	Subtotal	27,926,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	49,620,808		

Dated : 24 October 2008

(\*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac>  
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 1,500,000

## 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To respond to the emergency humanitarian needs of the most flood-affected communities of south-west Bangladesh</i>			
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>15</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To provide integrated relief assistance to the most vulnerable flood-affected families in south-west Bangladesh	1,500,000	south-west region	- CONCERN WORLDWIDE - DANCHURCHAID - DNK - ISLAMIC RELIEF - MUSLIM AID - OXFAM - UK
TOTAL: 1,500,000			

<sup>15</sup> CONCERN WORLDWIDE, (IRL), FOLKEKIRKENS NODHJAELP, (FKN), ISLAMIC RELIEF WORLDWIDE, MUSLIM AID, OXFAM (GB)

## **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 Actions financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent Actions." 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://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## **8. MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Humanitarian aid Actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm).

For International Organisations identified as potential partners for implementing the Decision, actions will be managed under joint management.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.