



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMISSION DECISION

approving a Grant Facility for improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid actions delivered by non-governmental humanitarian organisations

(ECHO/-GF/BUD/2008/01000)

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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 aid¹, and in particular Article 2 and Article 4 thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 lays down that Community humanitarian aid may be used to finance small-scale training schemes and general studies in the field of humanitarian operations, as well as measures to strengthen the Community's coordination with, inter alia, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and organisations representing them;
- (2) Article 1.2.b of the 2008-2012 Framework Partnership Agreement (hereafter "FPA") between DG ECHO² and NGOs mentions that the Commission will support capacity building initiatives and other activities that aim to improve the quality of the humanitarian response of its partners;
- (3) The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid³ states that "for the EU, supporting the development of the collective global capacity to respond to humanitarian crises is one of the fundamental tenants of our approach";
- (4) The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – Action Plan⁴ calls for actions which inter alia reinforce response capacities, to increase coherence, coordination, networking and partnership, to implement quality aid approaches with respect of minimum quality standards, to increase the accountability of humanitarian aid and to reinforce the training for humanitarian aid professionals with strong emphasis on operational aspects. In this context, it is inter alia proposed to conduct seminar programmes aimed primarily at newly acceded EU Member States institutions and civil society;
- (5) The Commission established the Grant Facility with the aim of improving the quality of humanitarian aid and increasing its effectiveness by strengthening the preparedness and response capacities as well as the technical skills of non-governmental humanitarian organisation partners of DG ECHO, their staff and their related local actors;

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1

² Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO

³ OJ C 25 of 30.01.2008, Adopted by the Council, European Parliament and Commission on 18.12.2007

⁴ Commission Staff Working Paper "European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – Action Plan", SEC(2008)1991 of 29.05.2008

- (6) An external evaluation of the "Thematic Funding and the Grant Facility Approach"⁵ which was finalised in May 2008 concluded that offering NGOs and research institutes support for capacity building and "research and development", beyond projects at the operational level, is highly relevant and that there is a need for allocating more funds to this facility;
- (7) This evaluation , underlined in particular that the Grant Facility has been highly relevant for DG ECHO 's NGO partners and that it has contributed to enhancing political dialogue among NGOs and improving the quality of humanitarian aid through the development of methodologies and training;
- (8) Beside the more general recommendations for creating a common capacity building policy in which also the Grant Facility should be positioned, the evaluation highlighted the need to involve more NGO consortia in the consultation processes, to invite key research institutes in the capacity building context, to support innovation and research and to widen impact at local level;
- (9) The Grant Facility should also strengthen the civil society in the Member States which are nowadays underrepresented in DG ECHO's FPA, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- (10) The FPA defines two types of control mechanisms for Actions. One (called the P-control mechanism) where the technical capacity, the financial solidity and the procurement rules are favourably assessed prior to the signature of the FPA. The other (called the A-control mechanism) where the financial solidity and procurement procedures need further attention.
- (11) It is therefore appropriate to provide in priority capacity support to NGOs partners from underrepresented Member States and to those using the A control mechanism.
- (12) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that the Grant Facility should be financed by the Community for a period of 16 months;
- (13) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,800,000 from budget article 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to realise the objectives of this Decision, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. The actions covered by this Decision should be financed for a maximum of 85 % of the total cost of the action;
- (14) It is necessary to establish a Contingency reserve to respond to any unforeseen circumstances;
- (15) Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented through direct centralised management by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), by non-profit organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria for Community financing established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 or by key research institutes and high level training schools and through joint management with International Organisations in conformity

⁵ Evaluation of Thematic Funding and the Grant Facility Approach, Final Report 20.05.2008, Particip GmbH

with Article 163 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002⁶

- (16) As stated before in (4), the Commission favours to increase the coordination and networking between NGOs in creating awareness and contributing to the European Consensus priorities. Therefore the actions supporting these networks will be supported through running costs grants, as defined in Article 108.1.b) of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002⁷ and take the form of flat-rate financing grants as foreseen by Article 108a 1.c) of the Financial Regulation.
- (17) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Communities⁸.

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 1,800,000 for the 2008 "Grant Facility for improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid actions delivered by non governmental humanitarian organisations" by using article 23 02 01 of the 2008 general budget of the European Communities.

2. In accordance with Articles 2 and 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

- Support to NGO partner's programmes which strengthen their own capacity, in particular for partners using the A control mechanism and for candidate partners from European Union-countries which are underrepresented under the current Framework Partnership Agreement, to programmes strengthening local actors in the field and to programmes reinforcing the participation to and implementation of the cluster approach. An amount of EUR 550,000 is allocated to this specific objective.
- Reinforce networking between non-governmental organisations for the sound implementation of humanitarian aid projects by DG ECHO's NGO partners with a focus on raising the awareness and contributing to the priorities identified in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adding value to the FPA-partners or reinforcing the humanitarian aid coordination mechanisms. An amount of EUR 550,000 is allocated to this specific objective.
- Enhance the quality of management in delivering humanitarian aid, and the accountability to beneficiaries of NGOs. An amount of EUR 320,000 is allocated to this specific objective.

⁶ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1

⁷ OJ L 248, 16.09.2002, p. 1

⁸ Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

- Invest in people in order to increase the availability of skilled people for implementing humanitarian aid. An amount of EUR 200,000 is allocated to this specific objective.

Article 2

A contingency reserve of EUR 180,000 is established for use within the specific objectives set out in Article 1(2). Without prejudice to this contingency reserve, the Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the specific 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.

Article 3

1. The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be for a maximum period of 16 months, starting on the date of its adoption.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from the date of its adoption.
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 implementation of this Decision.

Article 4

1. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented
 - through direct centralised management by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), by non-profit making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria for Community financing established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 or by key research institutes and high level training schools or
 - through joint management with International Organisations in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

For the implementation of the second specific objective, running cost agreements will be concluded with networks of European non-governmental humanitarian organisations following the flat-rate financing form. A percentage of the human resources, infrastructure and logistics costs for the covered period will be fixed in the agreement which will not exceed EUR 150,000.

2. Taking account of the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the maximum rate of co-financing shall be 85 %.

Article 5

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

Done at Brussels

*For the Commission
Member of the Commission*



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Grant Facility for improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid actions delivered by non-governmental humanitarian organisations (NGO)

Location of Action: European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,800,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-GF/BUD/2008/01000

Supporting document

1. RATIONALE, NEEDS AND TARGET POPULATION.

1.1. Rationale and identified needs

Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 lays down that Community humanitarian aid may be used to finance small-scale training schemes and general studies in the field of humanitarian operations, as well as measures to strengthen the Community's coordination with, inter alia, non-governmental organisations and organisations representing them.

Also Article 1.2.b of the 2008-2012 Framework Partnership Agreement (hereafter "FPA") mentions that the Commission will support capacity building initiatives and other activities that aim to improve the quality of the humanitarian response of its partners.

Furthermore, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid¹, adopted by the Council, European Parliament and the Commission on 18 December 2007 and its successive action plan² stated that it is one of the fundamental tenants to support the development of the global capacity to respond to humanitarian crises. It calls inter alia for actions to reinforce response

¹ OJ C 25 of 30.1.2008

² SEC(2008)1991 of 29.5.2008

capacity, to increase coherence, coordination, networking and partnership, to implement quality aid approaches with respect of minimum quality standards, to increase the accountability of humanitarian aid and to reinforce the training for humanitarian aid professionals with strong emphasis on operational aspects. In this context, it is inter alia proposed to conduct seminar programmes aimed primarily at newly acceded EU Member States institutions and civil society.

The Grant Facility has funded 39 actions over the period 2000-2003 and 17 actions over 2004-2007. In 2007, 6 grants were awarded to NGOs for a total amount of EUR 987,000 and in 2006 4 grants representing a budget of EUR 648,000 EUR.

An external evaluation of "Thematic Funding and the Grant Facility", which was finalised in May 2008, underlined that the Grant Facility has been highly relevant for DG ECHO³'s NGO partners and that it has contributed to enhancing policy dialogue among NGOs and improving the quality of humanitarian aid through the development of methodologies and training. Beside the more general recommendations of the study for creating a common capacity building policy in which also the Grant Facility should be positioned, some specific recommendations for NGOs are worthwhile to highlight points such as the need to involve more NGO consortia in the consultation processes, to invite key research institutes in the capacity building context, to support innovation and research and to widen impact at local level.

A consultation with DG ECHO partners on 25 April 2008 reviewed existing gaps in humanitarian response that could be addressed through capacity building initiatives. Global needs were identified in the areas of logistics and pre-positioning; disaster preparedness; roll out of the cluster approach; local capacities; needs assessments and related methodologies and strengthened response capacity in the areas of health, water and sanitation, shelter, food assistance and protection, including child protection. Partners agreed that key cross cutting priorities should include enhanced sustainability of the actions; a positive impact of actions on other humanitarian organisations, especially NGOs; inclusion of other donors and local partners; building local capacity; as well as specific attention to vulnerable groups (including children) and to gender mainstreaming.

Therefore, DG ECHO intends to establish the Grant Facility with the aim of improving the quality of humanitarian aid by financing the capacity building of NGO partner organisations, of local implementing partners and of non-profit making organisations thus providing added value to humanitarian aid and providing appropriate training facilities to strengthen the civil society in the Member States which are nowadays underrepresented in DG ECHO's FPA, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

1.2. Target population and regions concerned

The direct beneficiaries of this Grant Facility will be humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the FPA, as well as other non-profit making organisations active in the humanitarian aid sector and fulfilling the eligibility criteria defined in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96.

³ Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid – ECHO

As foreseen in the budgetary comments of budgetary article 23 02 01, networks of European non-governmental humanitarian organisations⁴ and key research institutes and high level training schools⁵ will also be selected in order to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of humanitarian aid and to strengthen the civil society in the Member States that are nowadays underrepresented in DG ECHO's humanitarian aid partnership. In this context, Article 109.2⁶ of the Financial Regulation has also to be respected.

Actions funded by this Decision will result in the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian aid operations implemented by DG ECHO partner organisations and their local partners. Beneficiaries of humanitarian aid operations are, therefore, indirect beneficiaries of this funding Decision

The regions concerned are the European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid.

1.3. Risk assessment and possible constraints

The implementation of the objectives of the Grant Facility requires a high degree of technical specialisation, a good knowledge of DG ECHO procedures, and appropriately qualified staff available during the whole project lifetime. In order to maximise the possibility of success in achieving the project objectives, prospective partners are requested to have proven technical experience in the chosen area of intervention. The above requirements are likely to have an impact not only on the selection of projects but also on the timeframe of project implementation. Extensions of the initial duration of projects or suspensions might become necessary due to technical constraints or in case of sudden onset crises.

2. OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS OF THE HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION PROPOSED

Principle objective: Improve the quality of humanitarian aid and increase its effectiveness by strengthening the preparedness and response capacities as well as the technical skills of non-profit making organisations, non governmental humanitarian organisations, their staff and the related local actors.

2.1. Specific objectives

Specific objective 1: capacity building of NGOs

Support to NGO partner's programmes which strengthen their own capacity, in particular for partners using the A control mechanism and for candidate partners from European Union-countries which are underrepresented under the current Framework Partnership Agreement, to programmes strengthening local actors in the field and to programmes reinforcing the participation to and implementation of the cluster approach.

Specific objective 2: reinforce networking between NGOs

⁴ "action grants and running cost grants in favour of humanitarian networks"

⁵ "studies and training linked to the achievement of the objectives of the policy area"

⁶ "Grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary"

Reinforce networking between non-governmental organisations for the sound implementation of humanitarian aid projects by DG ECHO's NGO partners with a focus on raising the awareness and contributing to the priorities identified in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adding value to the FPA-partners or reinforcing the humanitarian aid coordination mechanisms.

Specific objective 3: strengthen quality and accountability

Enhance the quality of management in delivering humanitarian aid and the accountability to beneficiaries of NGOs.

Specific objective 4: invest in people

Invest in people in order to increase the availability of skilled people for implementing humanitarian aid.

2.2. Specificities for selecting proposals for each specific objective

The procedure for selecting proposals (in line with article 168.1.a of the Implementing Rules) will be the same procedure as used for all Humanitarian Aid Decisions. The potential partners mentioned in section 6.2 will be informed directly after the adoption of this decision and this decision will be posted on DG ECHO's website in order to permit all interested organisations to submit proposals. The first individual grants, for a maximum of 80% of the decision amount, will be awarded at least one month after the information being posted on the website and will be awarded to the proposals best fitting the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, results of previous interventions and the additional criteria for the Grant Facility mentioned per specific objective hereafter. Later submissions of proposals will be analysed against the same criteria and awarded taking the available remaining credits into account.

Specific objective 1: capacity building of NGOs

Eligible Partners: only NGOs who signed the FPA will be eligible for funding.

Specific award conditions for selecting proposals: only the projects with one of the following focuses will be eligible for funding:

- Only for partners using the A control mechanism under the current FPA, projects strengthening the own capacities as well as the technical skills of their staff,
- For all partners, projects assisting (potential) candidate partners from EU-countries which are underrepresented under the current FPA: the newly acceded EU-12 Member States, Greece, Portugal and Finland,
- For all partners, projects strengthening the preparedness and response capacities of local actors in the field.
- For all partners, projects reinforcing the participation to and implementation of the cluster approach with the objective of further strengthening the institutional capacity of NGOs to ensure effective participation and inclusion of civil society in the implementation and functioning of the cluster approach and other coordination mechanisms, especially at field level.

Specific objective 2: reinforce networking between NGOs

Eligible Partners: networks where at least 4 FPA partners participate as active member and at least 1 partner is present in the steering board or committee of the network. The headquarter of the network has to be located in the EU. The activities have to be focused mainly on the cooperation between European NGOs or the results of the network activities have to be available for the NGO-partners who signed the FPA.

Specific award conditions for selecting proposals: As these networks will be supported through running cost grants ("subvention de fonctionnement"), on condition that:

- it reinforces networking between NGOs in order to facilitate added value for the sound implementation of humanitarian aid projects, with a focus on raising the awareness and contribute to the priorities identified in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, or
- the network creates added-value for the NGOs who signed the FPA.
- the network focuses on reinforcing the participation of NGOs in the cluster approach and other coordination mechanisms such as the Hyogo Framework for action 2005-2015 related to disaster risk reduction.

Form of the grants: running cost agreements shall be concluded following the flat-rate financing form as foreseen by Article 108a 1.c) of the Financial Regulation. A percentage of the human resources, infrastructure and logistics costs of the network for the covered period will be fixed in the agreement which will not exceed EUR 150,000.

Specific objective 3: strengthen quality and accountability

Eligible Partners: In order to meet the highest standards of accountability and quality management in the field of humanitarian aid, well-known research institutes, universities and organisations in the domain of humanitarian aid can be selected.

Specific award conditions for selecting proposals: only the projects with one of the following focuses will be eligible for funding:

- projects contributing to the enhancement of quality management in delivering humanitarian aid,
- projects contributing to the enhancement of accountability to the beneficiaries of the non-governmental organisations

Specific objective 4: invest in people

Eligible Partners: As the goal is to attract additional resources and to reinforce the training for humanitarian aid professionals with strong emphasis on operational aspects in order to increase the availability of skilled people for implementing humanitarian aid, only European organisations and academic institutions offering or developing appropriate short-term training programmes or executive seminars are eligible for funding.

Specific award conditions for selecting proposals: only the projects with one of the following focuses will be eligible:

- Organisation or development of seminar programmes aimed primarily at EU Member States institutions and civil society in EU-countries which are underrepresented under the

current FPA. In this context, also universities of these countries that develop new educational programs can propose projects for funding,

- Educational programmes with strong emphasis on operational aspects in humanitarian aid, such as logistics and procurement, needs assessment, disaster preparedness, strengthened response capacities in the areas of health, water and sanitation, shelter, food assistance and protection.

3. DURATION EXPECTED FOR ACTIONS IN THE PROPOSED DECISION

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 16 months.

Actions funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.

The 16-month duration for this Decision is necessary, since, as a general rule, the nature of the activities proposed requires sustained engagement for a period up to 12 months. The 16-month timeframe takes account of possible delays in implementation linked to the constraints mentioned under section 1.3.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from the date of its adoption.

Start Date: date of adoption.

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 THIS CONTEXT

List of previous DG ECHO interventions within this context

		2005	2006	2007
Decision Number	Decision Type	EUR	EUR	EUR
ECHO/ADM/BUD/2005/01000 *	Non Emergency	525.000		
ECHO/-GF/BUD/2006/01000	Non Emergency		650.000	
ECHO/-GF/BUD/2007/01000	Non Emergency			1.000.000
	Total	525.000	650.000	1.000.000

Dated : 29 October 2008

Source : HOPE

* Part of Decision allocated to the Grant Facility (total Decision : 4.605.000 EUR)

5. OVERVIEW OF DONORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Not applicable.

6. AMOUNT OF DECISION AND DISTRIBUTION BY SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

6.1. Total amount of the Decision: EUR 1.800.000.

Taking into account the specificities of humanitarian aid and the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the maximum rate of co-financing will be 85%. In this context, DG Echo will pay special attention to avoid double-funding of activities with other programmes and projects financed by the different European Commission Services.

6.2. Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: Improve the quality of humanitarian aid and increase its effectiveness by strengthening the preparedness and response capacities as well as the technical skills of non-profit, non-governmental humanitarian organisations, their staff and the related local actors			
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Potential partners
<p>Specific objective 1:</p> <p>Support to NGO partner's programmes which strengthen their own capacity, in particular for partners using the A control mechanism and for candidate partners from European Union-countries which are underrepresented under the current Framework Partnership Agreement, to programmes strengthening local actors in the field and to programmes reinforcing the participation to and implementation of the cluster approach.</p>	550,000	European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid	All NGOs signatory to the FPA;
<p>Specific objective 2</p> <p>Reinforce networking between non-governmental organisations for the sound implementation of humanitarian aid projects by DG ECHO's NGO partners with a focus on raising the awareness and contributing to the priorities identified in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adding value to the FPA-partners or reinforcing the humanitarian aid coordination mechanisms.</p>	550,000	European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid	VOICE, Red Cross National Societies, CordAid (European Interagency Security Forum), the Supply chain consortium initiative, Caritas, MDM, MSF, Oxfam, Save the Children, Merlin

<p>Specific objective 3</p> <p>Enhance the quality of management in delivering humanitarian aid and the accountability to beneficiaries of NGOs.</p>	320,000	European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid	IFRC (Sphere), Transparency International, ODI, HAP International, Bioforce, URD, RedR, FRIDE
<p>Specific objective 4</p> <p>Invest in people in order to increase the availability of skilled people for implementing humanitarian aid.</p>	200,000	European Union and third countries in receipt of Community humanitarian aid	Lugano University, INSEAD, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Mango UK, Copenhagen Business School, HANKEN (Swedish school of Economics and Business Administration), INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre), Cambridge University, Oxford Business School, SDA Bocconi, IESE Spain, Cranfield University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, HEC Paris, University of Manchester, ESADE Spain, ESC Toulouse, Humacoop Grenoble.
<p>Contingency reserve</p>	180,000		
<p>TOTAL:</p>	1.800.000		

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 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." Such an evaluation has taken place by Particip and resulted in a final report on 20th May 2008. 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/policies/evaluation/introduction_en.htm.

8. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission under this Decision are implemented under direct centralised management by NGOs and the Red Cross National Societies on the basis of FPA or through joint management with International Organisations 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/about/actors/partners_en.htm.

Also networks of European non governmental humanitarian organisations will be able to benefit from this facility through running cost grant agreements which will take the form of flat rate financing agreements (cfr. Art. 108a 1.c of the Financial Regulation).

Finally, key research institutes and high level training schools will be selected for grants contributing to the enhancement of the quality of humanitarian aid and to strengthening the civil society in the Member States which are underrepresented under the current FPA.

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, results of previous interventions and the specific criteria per specific objective mentioned in section 4.2.