

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Communities in Vietnam

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 aid ¹, and in particular Articles 2 and 15(2) thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) Throughout the months of October and November 2007, Central Vietnam experienced several episodes of serious flooding, caused by typhoons and a very heavy monsoon. These floods were the most disastrous for several decades and followed other floods that had affected Central-Northern Vietnam in August 2007;
- (2) Out of the 59 provinces of Vietnam, 20 were affected by the floods, some of them repeatedly over a period of six weeks. In the 14 most affected provinces close to 400,000 houses were flooded, damaged or destroyed and nearly 200,000 hectares of rice and vegetable fields were damaged;
- (3) Despite the considerable local response and the operations financed by DG ECHO through a EUR 2,000,000 emergency financing decision adopted on 31/10/2007², remaining needs are important. Some provinces have received little or no assistance and pockets of extreme vulnerability persist in several provinces. Additionally, a cold spell in some of the same provinces in January and February 2008 has damaged the new crops and affected livestock.
- (4) Many fields are still unfit for cultivation, pushing the most vulnerable farmers to work on other people's land to earn their family's living, hence delaying the rehabilitation of their own fields, or to sell items which normally secure their livelihoods (tools, poultry, etc.). Drainage systems are blocked with sand and mud, fields have been filled with a thick layer of sediment which raise them beyond the level of drainage systems.
- (5) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 15 months;
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,000,000 is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to up to 300,000 vulnerable victims of latest natural disasters and climatic hazards in Vietnam taking into account the available budget, other donors' intervention and other factors.

¹- OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

²- ECHO/VNM/BUD/2007/01000

- (7) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002³, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002⁴, and Article 15 of the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the general budget of the European Communities⁵.

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 1,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations in favour of populations affected by natural disasters and climatic hazards in Vietnam by using line 23 02 01 of the 2008 general budget of the European Communities.

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

Provision of early recovery assistance to vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters and climatic hazards.

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 15 months, starting on 01 April 2008.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 April 2008.
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

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. The actions supported by this Decision will be implemented by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).
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

³- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007, OJ L 343 of 27.12.2007, p. 9

⁴- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1 Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC Euratom) No. 478/2007, OJ L 111 of 28.4.2007, P. 13

⁵- Commission Decision of 05.03.2008, C/2008/773

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 will take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission



Annex
Humanitarian Aid Decision
23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian assistance in favour of populations affected by natural disasters and climatic hazards in Vietnam

Location of operation: Vietnam

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/VNM/BUD/2008/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale:

In early October 2007, typhoon Lekima hit Vietnam, causing significant damage to infrastructure, followed by heavy rains which caused extensive flooding from 4 to 6 October. In the following weeks until the end of November, the country experienced several episodes of serious flooding, caused by a very heavy monsoon.

These disastrous floods occurred just two months after extensive flooding hit Central Vietnam, thus affecting the same population already badly affected in August, whose coping capacities had progressively been exhausted by these consecutive disasters.

The same provinces were affected several times but the floods moved slowly further south and ended up affecting a geographical region extending from Hoa Binh (close to Hanoi) to Phu Yen, thus covering an area long of nearly 1,000 km. Out of the 59 provinces of Vietnam, 20 were affected by the floods.

The latest figures⁶ show that a total of 13,877 houses were destroyed and 714,343 submerged or damaged by typhoon Lekima and the subsequent waves of flooding. The total number of people affected reaches 2,6 million in total.

By the end of January, an estimated 76,000 families had received rice support. The local Red Cross society plans to distribute household kits to a total of 28,107 families⁷.

⁶- IFRC Operations Update, Appeal n° MDRVN002, 29 December 2007

Through its EUR 2,000,000 emergency decision adopted on 30/10/2007⁸, DG ECHO contributed to the humanitarian response through projects focusing mainly on the distribution of food and non-food items. Access to water and sanitation and especially the cleaning of wells was also financed. Some seeds were distributed to farmers able to go back to their fields, as well as school uniforms and school materials to allow children to go back to normal life as soon as possible. So far, a total of 301,115 persons benefited from DG ECHO funded assistance in 12 most affected provinces of northern and central Vietnam. To date, 1,996 tons of rice, 4400 boxes of noodles, 35,079 household and school kits, 140 tons of rice seeds and 30 tons of maize seeds have been distributed.⁹

International assistance has been modest so far, with New Zealand providing USD 526,462 of bilateral aid, the United States USD 150,000 and the Republic of Korea USD 50,000.

Four EU Member States have responded with small amounts ranging from 30,000 to 200,000 EUR, for a total of 437,101 EUR¹⁰.

However, remaining needs are considerable. Local capacities have been overwhelmed and despite the well organized response, national and local authorities have not been able to attend to the needs of all the affected population. Some provinces have received little or no assistance and pockets of extreme vulnerability persist in several provinces. The situation can be very different between two different locations inside a same province, depending on the impact of the floods, the vulnerability of the population and the external assistance received. There are obvious gaps in the assistance, mainly in areas that were flooded several times.

Many fields are still unfit for cultivation, pushing the most vulnerable farmers to work on other people's land to earn their family's living, hence delaying the rehabilitation of their own fields, or to sell items which normally secure their livelihoods (tools, fishing nets, poultry, etc.). Many people take loans in order to purchase seeds to be planted on pieces of land they have managed to reclaim, which leaves them with debts they will have to pay after a very doubtful first harvest.

Drainage systems are blocked with sand and mud, fields have been filled with a thick layer of sediment which raises them up to 1 meter, beyond the level of drainage systems. Fish or shrimp ponds are also damaged and need rehabilitation.

Water and sanitation remain a concern, with many wells still filled with sediment. Safe access to clean water in case of future disasters is an issue.

More recently, a historic cold wave, the worst since 1989 and the longest that the country has ever experienced has caused considerable damage to agriculture in the North and Centre of the country. The National Disaster Mitigation Partnership mentions that more than 53,000 hectares of rice and 5,000 hectares of grain in 16 provinces had been devastated and that 6,000 heads of livestock had died¹¹. Some of the victims of this cold spell are the same farmers whose livelihoods were destroyed by the October floods, especially in the provinces of Thanh Hoa and Hoa Binh.

⁷- IFRC Operations Update, Appeal n° MDRVN002, 29 December 2007

⁸- ECHO/VNM/BUD/2007/01000

⁹- Updated information from partners as of 14/02/08.

¹⁰- Source: OCHA Financial Tracking System and HOLIS 14 points, date 11/2/2008

¹¹- "Cold snap decimates rice crops", NDMP website

1.2. - Identified needs :

On the basis of the monitoring mission to the region of DG ECHO's Rapid Reaction Coordinator based in Bangkok from 21-25 January 2008, the remaining needs are the following:

The most vulnerable farmers need assistance to restart their livelihoods. Their fields need to be rehabilitated in order to allow them to restart agricultural activities. Drainage and irrigation systems also need repair. Since these people have lost all their stocks in the floods, they need to be provided with seeds and production tools. Some small livestock may also be provided to very vulnerable households. Fish and shrimp ponds have been affected and need to be rehabilitated.

The water and sanitation sector still needs attention. Some wells have not yet been cleaned and some water networks need rehabilitation. In the perspective of future disasters, it is important to ensure access to clean water. This could be done by installing more rain-harvesting water tanks on the roofs of community buildings, where people seek refuge during flooding, and through the establishment of water gravity-fed adduction systems.

For the most vulnerable groups, especially in rural areas having received very little or no assistance, targeted food distribution (mainly rice) will be necessary to allow them to face other very basic needs until the next harvest restores their livelihoods.

Considering the gaps in the assistance, some households with school-aged children need to be assisted with school uniforms and items.

In high risk areas, it would be worthwhile to assist the most vulnerable with house reinforcement, in order to enhance their capacity to resist to future flooding and/or typhoon.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

The targeted communities are mainly vulnerable rural populations, including ethnic minorities seriously affected by the floods, still not assisted and struggling to overcome the impact of the disaster in a number of provinces of Northern and Central Vietnam, including Hoa Binh, Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien-Hue, Phu Yen and others.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

- The major risk faced may be the monsoon period which lasts approximately from June to November every year. Consequently, devastating typhoons might increase the vulnerability of the communities which are not yet fully recovered from last year's flooding.
- Due to more and more frequent extreme weather events, some of the activities meant to rehabilitate people's livelihoods may need to be adjusted or even reallocated to new areas. This process would require coordination with local authorities.
- Continued rainfall and cold spells being currently experienced in the northern part of the country may badly affect the coming harvest which, in conjunction with rising prices of rice in the region, would have a serious impact on the process of livelihood recovery.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: Provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims of natural disasters and climatic hazards in Vietnam.

Specific objective:

Provision of early recovery assistance to vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters and climatic hazards.

2.2. - Components :

Possible early recovery activities to be funded in the framework of the present financial decision include:

- livelihood assistance in the form of seeds, tools, small livestock, rehabilitation of fields and shrimp/fish ponds, restoration of drainage and irrigation systems, etc.
- further restoration of access to water and sanitation such as the cleaning of wells, including preparation for future disasters by securing safe access to clean water through rain-harvesting water tanks on top of community buildings and through water gravity-fed adduction systems;
- additional targeted food distributions for a limited period in order to allow the poorest families to face other basic needs until the next harvest restores their livelihoods;
- additional support to the return to normal life for children, including the provision of school uniforms and materials;
- possible assistance to house reinforcement/rehabilitation for the most vulnerable;
- mainstreaming of disaster preparedness in the above mentioned sectors and through community preparedness for future disasters.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 15 months in order to allow for the necessary flexibility and to ensure that the new operations begin after the end of implementation of the emergency interventions.

Humanitarian operations funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 April 2008.

Start Date: 01 April 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 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.

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

List of previous DG ECHO operations in VIET NAM				
Decision Number	Decision Type	2006 EUR	2007 EUR	2008 EUR
ECHO/VNM/BUD/2006/01000	Emergency	460,000		
ECHO/VNM/BUD/2007/01000	Emergency		2,000,000	
	Subtotal	460,000	2,000,000	0
	Grand Total	2,460,000		

Dated : 20 February 2008

Source : HOPE

DG ECHO has been present in Vietnam with its disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) since 1998. Under the ongoing 5th DIPECHO Action Plan for South East Asia¹² 7 projects are being currently implemented. Vietnam receives about EUR 2,000,000 out of EUR 7,000,000 for in-country disaster preparedness projects in addition to regional initiatives. The Vietnam Red Cross has not only been benefiting from, but also has been closely involved in the various DIPECHO projects which have contributed to its capacity building and organisational strengthening.

¹² ECHO/DIP/BUD/2006/01000

ECHO/VNM/BUD/2008/01000

5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in VIET NAM the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	2,000,000		
Belgium		Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland					
France	170,000				
Germany	30,000				
Greece	230,000				
Hungary					
Ireland	100,000				
Italy					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain					
Sweden	142,390				
United kingdom					
Subtotal	672,390	Subtotal	2,000,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	2,672,390		

Dated : 20 February 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 1,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>Provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims of natural disasters and climatic hazards in Vietnam</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners¹³
Specific objective 1: Provision of early recovery assistance to vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters and climatic hazards	1,000,000	Most affected provinces of Central and Northern Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assistance to the restoration of livelihoods - restoration of access to water and sanitation - gap filling food distributions - possible house reinforcement - assistance to school children with uniforms and materials - DP mainstreaming in above activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACTIONAID - CARE DE - CR-E - CRF - DWF - EMDH
TOTAL:	1,000,000			

¹³ – ACTIONAID (GBR), CARE INTERNATIONAL DEUTSCHLAND E.V. (DEU), CROIX-ROUGE FRANCAISE, CRUZ ROJA ESPAÑOLA, (E), Development Workshop France, ENFANTS DU MONDE - DROITS DE L'HOMME

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://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	CE (EUR)
Initial available appropriations for 2008	486,095,000.00
Transfers Commission	-
Total available appropriations	486,095,000.00
Total executed to date (20 February 2008)	302,100,000.00
Available remaining	183,995,000.00
Total amount of the Decision	1,000,000.00

9. 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.

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.