

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) IRAQ CRISIS

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2016/01000

AMOUNT: EUR 50 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2016/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for ECHO's partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

1. Context

After decades of conflict, vulnerable Iraqis struggle to survive a complex fast-changing crisis, which enters into its third year of widespread hostilities. Its humanitarian consequences are overshadowed by political and military priorities. As the conflict continues to escalate, principled humanitarian action is needed more than ever to increase access and to relieve the suffering of all most vulnerable populations.

Heavy clashes continue across northern, central and western Iraq, including the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs). A decade long situation of political instability and sectarian tensions, erupted in December 2013, and fueled the current armed conflict between government/government affiliated forces and a network of armed opposition groups (AoGs) – including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Since early 2014, with increased ISIL's operations in Iraq, the conflict has deepened with dramatic humanitarian consequences.

On the 8th of August 2014, US aircrafts targeted, for the first time, ISIL positions in Iraq. At the Iraqi government's request, an international coalition has taken military action against ISIL – mainly through air strikes, training and provision of military equipment. The current conflict in Iraq has an impact across the Middle East and compounds regional dynamics that have grown in complexity, with serious repercussions on neighboring countries and beyond.

In 2015, only temporary or geographically limited territorial gains were made by parties to the conflict. Nowadays, ISIL controls large swathes of central and northern Iraq. The current country's landscape is characterized by a stalemate in which central governorates are pounded by the conflict, surrounding governorates are violence-prone and southern/northern governorates are relatively secure. Ongoing military action (aerial bombardment, obstruction of fleeing routes and besiegement of populated urban areas, as well as growing number of indiscriminate asymmetric attacks) continues increasing the number of Iraqis in need of lifesaving humanitarian

assistance. Between January 2014 and July 2015, the conflict resulted in thousands of civilian casualties (16 410 civilians killed and 31 365 civilians injured¹).

Consecutive mass waves of internal displacement have made the Iraq crisis one of the most rapidly unfolding humanitarian crises worldwide, declared by the UN a “Level 3 Emergency”, on 12 August 2014. Disregard of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law (IHL and IHRL) by all parties to the conflict dramatically reduces civilians’ protection space. Access to safety, for populations seeking to flee active conflict, is increasingly constrained/denied by all parties. Displaced civilians are increasingly condemned to settle in violence-prone locations. Access of international humanitarian organizations to violence-prone locations is limited; humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas, where provision of basic public services is extremely poor, is almost absent and, actively, constrained by parties to the conflict.

Following elections in April 2014, since September 2014, a new government is in place. Nevertheless, the political situation remains fragile. Iraqi authorities struggle to address the consequences of the ongoing hostilities. Lower oil prices forecast a national budget deficit for 2015 more than double of the one, initially, estimated. Budgetary demands of the current military effort, biased public wealth re-distribution and public service provision hamper the state’s ability to cater for all affected Iraqis.

The absence of rule of law in areas re-gained by government and government affiliated forces, entrenched political disputes between national/regional governments, historical tensions in the DIBs and, seemingly, irreconcilable interests of neighbouring countries contribute to further security, political and economic instability. Generalized disengagement over the notion of national unity hinders the required burden/resource sharing efforts. Violence and discrimination, targeting specific population groups, has further increased polarization between communities.

ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2015-2016 identified extreme humanitarian needs. Vulnerability of population affected by the crisis is very high.

2. Humanitarian Needs

1) Affected people/ potential beneficiaries:

As per Iraq’s 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), 8.3 million are in need of humanitarian aid in the country, 2.9 million in dire need to survive. Of these, 5.9 million are in areas under governmental control and 2.3 million in areas outside government control. More than 4 million civilians are estimated to live in conflict affected areas, where military action is expected to escalate, possibly, pushing the number of Iraqis in need of humanitarian aid to 10 million, at the beginning of 2016.

By August 2015, 3.2 million Iraqis were internally displaced. Approximately 87% of IDPs are, originally, from the three conflict torn governorates of Anbar (40%), Ninewa (33%) and Salah al-Din (14%). The governorates hosting the greatest number of displaced are Anbar (18%), Baghdad (17%), Dahuk (13%) and Kirkuk (13%).

Only 8% of IDPs live in camp settings, while nearly 20% are in sub-standard shelter arrangements, including unfinished and religious buildings, and informal settlements². Living conditions, in isolated conflict areas and surrounding violence-prone locations, as well as in over-populated peri-urban settlements, are marked by extreme poverty, with little opportunity for employment and access to basic services.

Iraq's 2015 HRP estimates that up to 1 million IDPs would return by end-2015. Up to mid-August 2015, only a third, i.e. 326 346, effectively returned³. Return movements should, ideally, consist of fully informed people able and willing (voluntary) to go back to their pre-displacement place of dwelling. When this is not feasible, local integration or relocation should be an option. Return, local integration or relocation should also be accompanied by support to restore lives, livelihoods and economic independence of the affected individuals. These conditions are often not met in Iraq.

Iraq also hosts, approximately, 250 000 Syrian refugees, mostly in the northern governorates of the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI). Their number has not significantly increased in 2015; less than 40 000, from January till mid-2015. Their needs, as well as those of older IDP caseloads hosted in more secure locations, require sustainable early recovery and resilience focused approaches, to respond to a situation of protracted displacement. In the same period, 11 757 refugees have spontaneously returned to Syria, reporting, as their main reason for departure from Iraq, improved security and access to Kobane (13%), family reunification, better access to medical care and the high cost of living in the KRI⁴.

Newly displaced populations and host communities in violence-prone locations

In 2016, the large majority of the populations that will be forcefully displaced in Iraq will have already experienced multiple displacements in Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah-al-din and Anbar, and will have reduced coping strategies and increased vulnerabilities.

Iraqi civilians, fleeing military offensives against besieged urban centres or against strategic cities across the western and northern axes of the conflict, will seek safer ground in both government/government affiliated controlled territories and AoGs controlled locations. Strict internal border management and restrictions, imposed on fleeing populations on access and registration in safer areas (such as the KRI and the central governorates of Baghdad, Kerbala, Najaf and Babil), will lead to concentration of IDPs in marginal conflict areas or deeper into IS controlled territories, in Iraq and Syria.

Host and displaced communities are faced with high food prices and inflation of basic goods in violence-prone locations, in Anbar, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk. IS and AoGs have resorted to indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure.

² Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), International Organisation for Migration (IOM); <http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page>

³ Ibidem

⁴ Reliefweb; <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/1.IRQ3RPJULY2015ProtectionDashboard.pdf>

Government/government affiliated forces have engaged in retaliatory attacks against Sunni Arab civilians, considered to be supportive of opposition groups. Political turmoil and retaliatory/sectarian/inter-community violence in these locations, where rule of law remains in the hands of military actors and sectarian based civil militias, increase protection risks and trigger further circular displacements.

Furthermore, the possible escalation of the conflict and the economic downturn of North Eastern Syria, as well as further Turkish military engagement against Kurdish armed groups, could trigger a new wave of Syrian refugees towards the KRI.

Civilians living in areas outside governmental control

An estimated 4 million civilians live in areas outside governmental control. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to these locations has been limited by all parties to the conflict. Insecurity, active barriers to access of humanitarian aid by military forces and different priorities for aid provision have rendered these areas very underserved.

ISIL and other Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs), in control of vast areas of Ninewa, Kirkuk and Anbar governorates, resort to indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and deny civilians' access to essential services, such as water and electricity. Reports of summary executions, by the armed opposition, of both combatants and civilians, multiply, together with information on tight barriers imposed on the movement of civilians.

A number of attacks on IS/AoG held areas have not distinguished civilian lives and assets from military targets – the use of explosive weapons with wide impact in urban areas is a regular occurrence, causing civilian casualties. Civilian infrastructure, destroyed or damaged by indiscriminate as well as targeted attacks by government and government affiliated forces, includes hospitals, civilian houses, power plants and essential water supply systems.

Limited access to essential medications and emergency health services increase indirect and preventable deaths. Lack of electricity and breakdown of basic water and sanitation services further raise the vulnerability of civilians in these locations. Multiple factors threaten the survival of this population, including increased exhaustion of existing natural resources and military blockades, impeding access of basic supplies as well as civilians' escape.

Under-served, neglected IDPs and refugees

Various factors have generated pockets of population in need of adapted assistance, in rural and peri-urban locations: lack of access to registration of IDPs and Syrian refugees, inter-community tensions, purposeful neglect of displaced population groups by local authorities and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance by the international community. These population groups have resorted to negative coping strategies, due to, *inter alia*, limited access to employment opportunities, asset depletion, diminished provision of social welfare, overloaded public services and movement restrictions and public policies, aimed at discouraging local integration.

With the majority of IDPs and refugees living out-of-camps, the humanitarian community is to re-double its efforts to identify and support those falling through the cracks of the response and into chronic impoverishment and extreme vulnerability.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Protection

Iraq faces a protection crisis with systematic disregard of IHL and IHRL by all parties to the conflict, e.g. systematic targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructures, purposeful denial of humanitarian assistance and basic public services. Access to safety of fleeing civilians is constrained to violence-prone areas, where access to the very basics for human survival is limited, no livelihoods opportunities exist and very little humanitarian assistance reaches.

Displaced populations in off-camp locations, particularly, are in need of an enhanced network of protection services, including legal support on housing, land and property land (HLP) rights, replacement of civil documentation.

Water and Sanitation (WASH)

Water and sanitation infrastructure is deliberately targeted or lost, as a result of collateral damage of the current conflict, or used for political/military purposes. Most of Iraq's drinkable water comes from surface water and has significantly reduced in quality and overall availability, in recent years. The massive displacements have exacerbated the strain placed on the country's already deteriorated water systems. Desert locations suffer increased seasonal demands due to high concentration of IDPs.

Integrating rapid and immediate lifesaving water services, as well as access to basic sanitation facilities during acute displacement, remains a critical priority. WASH needs remain overwhelming in non-camp situations, where over 90% of IDPs live. IDPs in out-of-camp situations rely in most cases on costly bottled water, water trucking services or illegal connections and open wells.

Management of solid waste, dislodging and treatment of waste water require specific attention, due to both pre-crisis lack of physical facilities and currently overwhelmed local government capacities. Poor water quality and sanitation services, greatly, increase the risk of outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

Shelter / NFIs

Civilians living in areas outside governmental control and violence-prone locations require adapted, integrated shelter/water and sanitation solutions, particularly in out-of-camp settings (collective centres, unfinished/abandoned buildings, informal settlements). Emergency support, aimed at increasing the minimum standards of out-of-camp settings, is essential.

Rapid Response Mechanisms are to provide an integrated response to the basic needs of the population on the move, including the provision of basic and transitional shelter in locations where IDPs are stranded (e.g. checkpoints).

Health

In conflict affected and violence-prone locations, IDPs and host communities face serious health threats due to overburdened local health systems. Primary and secondary health structures function at dramatically reduced levels, with limited

supplies and severe shortages of health care staff. In conflict affected locations, less than 50% of the pre-existing health staff remains.

Civilians, injured in the fighting, are not treated on time, leading to complications such as infections and tetanus. Patients with chronic conditions face serious difficulties in obtaining continuous treatment and medications. The situation is further complicated by the high prevalence of mental health disorders (anxiety-depression), as a result of the conflict, repeated forced displacements and dire living conditions.

The poor WASH and shelter circumstances, described above, increase environmental health hazards and the risk of communicable diseases, with the number of measles cases peaking in 2015 (compared to the two previous years) and a recent outbreak of cholera in certain areas.

Food and nutrition

Extremely vulnerable households are at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition. Erratic food distributions by the national Public Distribution System (PDS) in hard to reach locations, subsidy reduction, inflation and reduced purchasing power require continuous complementary support, targeted to extremely food insecure households.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Host communities all over Iraq have been, and continue to be, the first responders to this crisis. Systemic efforts by central, regional and local governments have followed, progressively, trying to increase their assistance and to align efforts with the international community. The pre-existing National Policy on IDPs⁵, is, currently, been reviewed by the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD).

The Central Government of Iraq - and the Kurdish Regional Government - endorsed Iraq's HRP and are committed towards the implementation of its strategy and activities. Coordination of governmental efforts and international support has been facilitated, during 2015, by the Joint Coordination Centres present in the KRI (Joint Crisis Centre) and Baghdad (Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre). At governorate level, Emergency Cells, enshrined in the Iraqi constitution, aim to provide a decentralized response. The Kurdish Regional Government has derogated responsibility to respond to humanitarian needs in the KRI.

Humanitarian efforts, aimed at alleviating the suffering of IDPs by key line Ministries in Iraq, use pre-existing social protection systems. The National High Committee for IDPs in Iraq has, reportedly, allocated 659 139 203 Euros to state-led humanitarian efforts⁶. Out of that reported total, more than half (56%) was allocated to one-off unconditional cash grants, provided to IDP families having registered with the MoMD. The latter points to the GoI's commitment towards a cash based response to

⁵ National Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) policy, 2008

⁶ Iraq's Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center (JCMC)

the crisis which is in line with the HRP's defined logic and proposed exit strategy of engaging existing social protection systems in Iraq.

Food ration distribution by the Ministry of Trade (MoT) reaches IDPs through the Public Distribution System (PDS). This basic ration card system requires the re-registration of IDPs in the hosting governorate as its beneficiaries. Food assistance through the PDS is not targeted, nor does it prioritize IDP caseloads, and distributions are yet irregular and insufficient.

IDP encampment policies are, increasingly, sought by various governorates in Iraq. Governmental engagement in the development of IDP camps was, reportedly, supported by 28% of the High Committee for IDPs' allocated budget. Public provision of basic services, e.g. health and education, received 3.2% of the allocation.

While a National Development Plan was developed by the Ministry of Planning (MoP) for the 2013-2017 period⁷, its relevance and implementation have been surpassed by the ongoing crisis. Current national engagement, in more adapted frameworks of actions, is being steered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Programmes such as the Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICCRP) are rooted in resilience approaches, including improved governance, rule of law, access to justice, women empowerment and livelihood support, education and social cohesion.

2) International Humanitarian Response

The United Nations (UN) designated Iraq as a Level 3 Emergency on the 12th of August 2014, a status that was renewed during 2015. In line with the latest Operational Peer Review (OPR), the international humanitarian architecture sought to rebalance its physical and operational presence between the two centers of gravity of the response: Baghdad and Erbil. Centering the response over reinforced cluster and inter-cluster structures, maximizing impact through a prioritized, targeted, integrated and harmonized actions, remain a valid objectives.

The HRP was launched on the 4th of June 2015, at the European Parliament in Brussels (total requested for 6 months, USD 498 million). As of September 2015, the HRP was 33% funded⁸. Against a prioritized, sequenced, well balanced humanitarian plan, limited funding threatens the sustainability of the international response.

In June 2015, the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund (IHPF) was established under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), to provide timely, coordinated and principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity in Iraq. On the 9th of July 2015, the first round of IHPF allocations (Euros 20.3 million) was agreed upon by the Advisory Board. Bottlenecks for the disbursement of allocated funds have slowed down the implementation of funding decisions.

⁷ Ministry of Planning (MoP) National Development Plan 2013-2017

⁸ UNOCHA Humanitarian snapshot – July 23;

Commitments and contributions by non-traditional Arab donors, directed to non-traditional actors, mostly fell outside UN-led coordination mechanisms. Contributions by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Red Crescent provided basic assistance -food and water, to 700 000 Iraqis, as off mid-2015. Due to significantly increased needs, in May 2015, the ICRC requested additional CHF 36 million for Iraq in 2015 (on top of the previously requested CHF 78.1 million).

National non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs) continue distributing food, medicines and NFIs outside the cluster system, with differential outreach and access to hard to reach locations.

The Iraq component of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) is the reference document for the humanitarian response to Syrian refugees in Iraq. In May 2015, six months after the launch of the 3RP, the response in Iraq received 24% of the requested budget⁹ (total requested for the 2015-2016 period, 382 million Euros).

3) Constraints and ECHO response capacity

Protection/ IHL violation

Sectarian and/or partisan politics and policies, at the root of the current crisis, have yet to be overcome in Iraq. Their translation into retaliatory cycles of violence, at the frontlines and in territories re-gained by parties to the conflict, as well as their capacity to skew the local response towards partially assisting/neglecting specific population groups, is devastating. The dominant narrative, indiscriminately, presents civilians in armed opposition controlled areas (including women and minors) as affiliated to the armed opposition. This deprives them from the protection during the conduct of hostilities to which they are entitled by international humanitarian law.

Increased national, regional and local pressure towards IDP encampment policies, forced returns, to still insecure locations, and growing institutional barriers, towards the delivery of cross-line humanitarian aid, are significant obstacles towards principled assistance. Uncoordinated social protection initiatives, widespread corruption and limited accountability on public wealth re-distribution play heavily against cost efficient public systems and social justice.

Access

Humanitarian access and delivery of humanitarian aid are constrained by insecurity and impeded by all parties to the conflict, especially to areas outside governmental control. Access barriers, faced by humanitarian actors to reach people in need in these locations, and international alignment with governmental assistance priorities threaten to create a forgotten crisis in certain areas of Iraq, hampering principled assistance.

Unbalanced humanitarian response/whole of Iraq approach

The reviewed HCT, cluster and inter-cluster architecture and synthesis, although a positive development in principle, has yet to be translated into a more effective operationalization of the “Whole of Iraq” approach, promoted by the HRP. It remains

⁹ 3RP, Regional refugees & Resilience Plan 2015-2016, in response to the Syria crisis; <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/3RP-Progress-Report.pdf>

to be seen if the system will be nimble and flexible enough to respond, timely and efficiently, to needs, adjusting to the volatility and mobility of conflict epicentres.

In 2015, most of the UN and INGOs' humanitarian presence remained concentrated in the north.. KRI governorates - Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah - host 31% of IDPs, although they had 50% of humanitarian programmes by mid-2015. Baghdad, Anbar and Kirkuk governorates have 41% of all IDPs and 12% of all humanitarian programmes in Iraq. Furthermore, while IDPs hosted in KRI may benefit from a more comprehensive assistance package, IDPs in central governorates and population in areas outside government control would not even have their survival needs covered.

Breaking such dis-balance, between needs and response, demands principled humanitarian allocations, able to increase access, and capacity of organizations able to operate in hard-to-reach locations. The absence of information on humanitarian needs in areas outside the control of government, and the lack of comparable needs assessments in governmental control areas hinder evidence-based allocations.

Remote Management

Reliance on remotely managed operations, conducted in violence-prone locations and fringe conflict areas, imposes additional challenges to accountability and principled assistance. The robustness and reliability of innovative approaches to remote management, also developed elsewhere in the region, need to be continuously examined and improved. Similarly, support to national NGOs, the cornerstone of the response in hard to reach areas, needs to be made more systematic and relevant.

Insufficient preparedness and contingency planning

The humanitarian response in Iraq has, too often, been overwhelmed and reactive on an ad hoc basis to the sequence of events in this conflict, hampering its capacity to develop adapted emergency preparedness, contingency and response plans. Joint donor-partner coordination, able to respond with an integrated emergency response to forecasted humanitarian scenarios, is to be increased.

Limited funding

Humanitarian funding is far from matching growing needs. Limited humanitarian aid budgets, insufficient in comparison to the sheer scale of identified needs, demonstrate the necessity of complementary with development actors, allowing for humanitarian disengagement from the more secure locations.

- 4) Envisaged ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions.

ECHO's response will be far from sufficient to cover all of the most urgent needs in Iraq. Therefore, life-saving activities will be prioritized and partners will be required to clearly demonstrate their added value. Partners will be assessed, inter alia, in their capacity to address identified needs and contribute to systemic, harmonized solutions, in order to ensure maximal returns for investments (including in terms of reaching underserved locations, gaining wide coverage of most vulnerable, demonstrating effective responses to neglected humanitarian needs or populations of concern).

Confronted with growing pressure to link humanitarian action to counter-insurgency, stabilization or military intervention strategies, ECHO will remain firm in its support to principled humanitarian action in Iraq, requesting partners' compliance with principled driven operations and actively advocating for it.

ECHO will favour project proposals including primary, independent needs assessment, clear analysis/justification of the intervention and preferred assistance modality (e.g. second line response only to be considered once first line is covered) and comprehensive budgets, allowing for cost-efficiency analyses. Vulnerability targeting should be integrated in the response model, post distribution monitoring strengthened and accountability to affected communities included.

Effective coordination is essential. ECHO supports the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda (ITA) and encourages partners to engage in implementing its objectives, take part in coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team/Clusters) and to allocate resources to foster the ITA roll-out.

Sensitive to the different humanitarian scenarios concurrent in Iraq, ECHO aims to support a tailored, integrated and harmonized response, focusing on the needs of:

- (i) Civilians living in areas outside governmental control;*
- (ii) Most vulnerable newly displaced persons;*
- (iii) Under-served/neglected IDP and refugee populations, both in violence-prone and more secure locations.*

Civilians living in areas outside governmental control

In 2016, ECHO seeks to reinforce its response to the basic, emergency needs of populations in conflict affected and active-conflict areas. Organizations, with the aim and capacity to carry out principled humanitarian actions in these areas, should adhere to minimum requirements for their operations, agreed upon by the international humanitarian community in Iraq. ECHO will support a limited number of humanitarian partners with proven networks and capacity to maximize humanitarian access in conflict affected locations. Principled negotiations with all parties to the conflict, without exception, pursuing increased humanitarian space to assist underserved or neglected populations, will be pursued. Emergency, first line, humanitarian aid to entrapped populations should address lifesaving needs (e.g. health, WASH) able to open the way, using phased operations, to more integrated responses, under increased acceptance of humanitarian actors and principles. Where remote modalities are considered, tailored, due diligence analysis and compliance will be required. Multi-sectorial interventions are to be informed by conflict-sensitive information, enable increased visibility of needs and complementary assistance.

Accounting for the fact that direct implementation in hard to reach areas is minimal, particular attention will be paid to the capacity of organizations to, safely and impartially, deliver appropriate humanitarian assistance, according to international and cluster specific standards. Robust humanitarian project cycle management, with adequate control mechanisms in place, will be fundamental. Special attention will be

paid to thorough risk analysis and mitigation strategies, across the project cycle (including to contain risk-transfer to partners).

Most vulnerable newly displaced persons

ECHO will support timely, sequential and comprehensive humanitarian action assisting newly displaced populations. Contingency planning and prepositioning of emergency response operations, in locations likely to receive new waves of displacement, will be favored. First line, immediate lifesaving support to populations, at time of acute displacement, will be the backbone of ECHO supported response. In line with the HRP lessons learnt and good practice of 2015, a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) catering for basic needs and protection, will spearhead the response to newly displaced populations. Given the size and rapid unfolding of displacement waves, targeting processed should be adapted during acute phases. Follow up and inter-cluster targeted, coordinated and integrated responses, in the aftermath of initial displacement, will also be supported, for most vulnerable IDPs.

A policy of encampment is not favored and should remain a measure of last resort. ECHO will sustain its support to adapted, out-of-camp interventions. These could also accommodate extremely vulnerable, conflict affected households from host communities. However, cases of direct assistance should remain limited, promoting referral and follow up to state, locally run, social protection programs.

Where local markets are functional (and allow for equal and safe access to them) and basic commodities' prices are stable, emergency multi-purpose cash based assistance is to be privileged. In these contexts, multi-purpose cash-based assistance ensures better "value for money" by lowering transaction costs; it provides beneficiaries with a wider and more dignified choice of assistance, based on their preferences, and it empowers vulnerable groups. Furthermore, multi-purpose cash-based assistance supports local markets, can enhance communities' economic recovery, preparedness and resilience and complements and enables the transition towards existing social protection systems. The harmonization of the different technical elements of a one card system, through which partners should be able to channel their assistance, is promoted by ECHO. Emergency multi-purpose cash assistance, including seasonal responses, will be encouraged as a viable alternative to non-food item distributions.

Service specific (e.g. health) and integrated interventions, aimed at, e.g improving living conditions in critical out-of-camp settings (informal settlements, unfinished buildings, collective centers), may still require direct provision by humanitarian actors. These interventions should consider increasing the capacity of local public service providers. Integration of shelter and WASH projects will be supported.

Under-served/neglected IDP and refugee populations

Long-term, protracted displacement, of Iraqi citizens and Syrian refugees, requires an adapted humanitarian response. Most vulnerable displaced out-of-camp populations have exhausted their resources and resort to negative coping mechanisms. Emergency responses aimed at mitigating the effects of acute displacement are ill suited to cater for the needs of under-served/neglected out-of-camp, long-term displaced people.

Conflict sensitive actions, to restore immediate livelihoods opportunities and access to income for the most vulnerable of these populations, might be considered. Emergency or livelihood support, through provision of direct inputs for pre-displacement livelihoods' means, for protractedly displaced populations and voluntary returnees, should only be considered after careful analysis of economic environments and markets in the various regions of Iraq. Support to these population groups should focus on facilitating their access to more sustainable livelihood and social protection solutions, e.g. existing government services and social safety nets, development funded livelihood programmes. These actions will need to be linked to information, monitoring and advocacy for fair, non-discriminatory access to labor markets, and provision of legal services aimed at re-registration of displaced populations.

Emergency livelihood/access to income interventions should take into consideration, from their assessment phase, most viable durable solutions for the targeted populations: possibilities for integration, relocation or return – safe, voluntary and non-discriminatory. Planning for increased social protection of extremely vulnerable, long-term displaced populations should be reflected in the proposed actions, considering the conditions in location of displacement, relocation and/or return.

Thematic issues:

International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law IHL/IHRL, protection and access

A sound integration of IHL, able to frame humanitarian access negotiations and increase humanitarian protection space through direct interventions is to be expected. As Iraqi nationals, IDPs are entitled to the full protection and rights provided by national law, without adverse distinction resulting from displacement. Evidence-based humanitarian advocacy and targeted actions are required to ensure and maximize compliance of all parties to the conflict with applicable legal frameworks.

While recognizing that beyond advocacy and negotiation, humanitarian actors can do little to affect the willingness of parties to the conflict to abide by international legal norms, ECHO encourages every effort to do so. Informed and prudent advocacy and communication on grave violations of IHL/IHRL are encouraged. Since 2013 ECHO has supported the dissemination of IHL principles to armed state and non-state actors. Local, national and international engagement of ECHO and its partners on the respect of IHL and IHRL in Iraq will continue to be promoted.

ECHO will also continue to promote the enhancement and implementation of a comprehensive, protection national framework in Iraq. Protection is expected to be streamlined across all humanitarian operations. ECHO will continue to advocate for and support access negotiation solutions throughout the country, for a prompt and needs based emergency response, according to humanitarian principles.

*Education (in emergencies)*¹⁰

¹⁰ ECHO will look into covering gaps in needs of children in conflict-affected contexts who are out of school or face risk of education disruption. Within this HIP, small-scale innovative projects addressing education and child protection with a clear link to other instruments and development funds will be considered. Nevertheless, educational needs related to the Iraq crisis will continue to be primarily addressed through other EU funding mechanisms, such as the 'Madad' Trust Fund and the European Neighbourhood Instrument led by DG NEAR. To

In 2016, ECHO will strive to maintain its support to education in emergencies through the Children of Peace (CoP) initiative. Within this HIP, ECHO might provide support to meet the needs of children in conflict affected contexts that are out of school or risk education disruption including child protection. ECHO will favour education in emergency projects in areas where the % of out-of-school children is particularly high, there are grave child protection concerns and where other sources of funding available are limited. Complementarity and synergies with other EU services and funding instruments will be sought. In addition, complementarity and synergies with funding provided by the Global Partnership for Education is encouraged.

Communication/Visibility

Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with visibility requirements in accordance with the applicable contractual arrangement as well as with specific visibility requirements agreed-upon in the Single Form, forming an integral part of individual agreements. In particular, this includes prominent display of the EU humanitarian aid visual identity on EU funded project sites, relief items and equipment and the acknowledgement of the funding role of and the partnership with the EU/ECHO through activities such as media outreach and digital communication. Further explanation of visibility requirements can be consulted on the dedicated visibility site: <http://www.echo-visibility.eu/>

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

1) Other ECHO interventions

In 2015 ECHO mobilized EUR 104.7 million, making it to one of the top institutional donors for the Iraq crisis. ECHO health support is coordinated with the Iraqi MoH and local health departments. ECHO promotes assistance and building capacity of existing health structures, through the provision of drugs, essential medical dispositive, trainings and improving their WASH and hygiene conditions where/if needed. Under, the 2015 Children of Peace decision, ECHO is supporting two projects for emergency education of Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDPs in the country.

2) Other services/donors availability

Due to limited funding and the magnitude of the needs, it is even more important for ECHO to focus on the lifesaving and emergency response. Increased collaboration with other EU instruments and EU Member States will be pursued in order to free ECHO funding from longer term needs and guarantee the link with more structural financial instruments to avoid gaps and increase sustainability. In the framework of the EU joint strategy tackling the crises in Syria and Iraq, ECHO is promoting coordination with other EU instruments on Iraq, fostering information sharing and planning for its operationalization, to enhance the impact of the global EU response to the Iraqi crisis.

avoid overlap, all ECHO funded projects will be complementary to those funded through other EU funding mechanisms directed towards education in emergencies and the No Lost Generation initiative.

In close cooperation with the other related EU instruments and with the EU delegation in Iraq, ECHO strives to guarantee a smooth transition between emergency humanitarian aid, stabilisation and development support, in those geographical areas that allow for it from a security point of view. Complementarities between different funding streams will be enhanced, keeping the distinction of the respective mandates, in order to preserve the already compromised humanitarian space in the country and avoid blurring the lines between humanitarian action and political priorities.

ECHO advocates for other EU instruments and EU Member States to increase their support to host communities with overstretched resources, in order to mitigate tensions with the displaced populations. EU support shall include interventions in a wide range of sectors such as rule of law, good governance, education, basic infrastructures and services, livelihood.

3) *Other concomitant EU interventions*

In 2015/2016, DEVCO, through the Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI), will be tendering and/or launching new programs worth EUR 100 million. Complementarities between actions supported by the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability (IcPS), the newly established EU Trust Fund (Madad) and humanitarian funding in response to the Iraq crisis have been initiated since the onset of the response and will be continued. A “joint implementation strategy” in response to the Iraq crisis” is under development. *ADD precise INFO on IcPS and DEVCO funding.*

4) *Exit scenarios*

While it is too early to consider exit scenarios applicable to all different contexts in Iraq, a credible solution to the protracted IDP crisis is the link of humanitarian actions with the state-run social protection system. This vision, supported in the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan, can only materialize if the government puts in place a system that allows for specific caseloads to transition from humanitarian aid to state's support. Currently the three line ministries involved (Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Displacement and Migration and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs) have an incoherent and uncoordinated approach that does not allow for complementarity. Learning from the successes and failures in the region, UN agencies can show the way by introducing one multi-wallet card that can simplify last mile deliveries, create economies of scale and, eventually, be handed over to the government. ECHO will continue to advocate for durable solutions for refugees and IDPs and increase funding for development to address the structural nature of the crisis.