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European Commission

Resilience Marker

GENERAL GUIDANCE (NOVEMBER 2014)

Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

1. What is resilience and why is it important?

"Resilience is the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks."
(EU Communication on Resilience)

The European Commission is committed to strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerabilities. Using different policy instruments, including humanitarian and development assistance, the Commission's approach to resilience aims to reduce the impacts of stresses and shocks and to strengthen the capacities of individuals, communities and countries to cope with them[1].

ECHO's mandate is to target the immediate requirements arising out of natural and man-made disasters[2]. Actions addressing the immediate needs of affected populations, however, can also present opportunities for strengthening resilience. ECHO's approach to resilience, and the intent of its Resilience Marker, is to ensure that these opportunities are used to the greatest extent possible without compromising humanitarian principles.

Four steps are key to anchor resilience in humanitarian programmes:
- Conduct an analysis of hazards, threats, vulnerabilities and their causes;
- Be risk-informed (i.e. ensure that activities do not aggravate risks or vulnerabilities and are prepared for likely hazards and threats);
- Contribute to building local capacities so that the most vulnerable can cope better with shocks; and
- Include a deliberate strategy to reduce future humanitarian needs.

For resilience, context matters. The abilities and opportunities of humanitarian actors to integrate resilience in their activities are different in sudden-onset and protracted emergencies, in natural disaster and conflict settings, and in situations with weak or strong local capacities.

1 See EU COM (2012) 586.

2 See Council Regulation 1257/96 (1996).

2. What is the Resilience Marker and why do we need it?

To implement its commitment to resilience, the European Commission is systematically including resilience in its Humanitarian Implementation Plans and it has developed a Resilience Marker. The Marker is a tool to assess to what extent humanitarian actions funded by ECHO integrate resilience considerations. It seeks to enhance the quality of humanitarian actions by:

- Ensuring a systematic consideration and inclusion of resilience considerations in project proposals, implementation and assessment;
- Creating a platform for partners and ECHO staff to discuss how resilience can best be included in humanitarian programming;
- Encouraging reflection on what resilience means in practice in different contexts; and
- Allowing ECHO to monitor its own performance in supporting resilience.

3. Does the mark determine whether or not ECHO funds a project?

No. Project proposals do not need to reach a pre-determined threshold in terms of the mark to be eligible for funding. However, the marker criteria reflect important quality indicators and allow for taking variations between different humanitarian contexts into account. Projects are therefore expected to meet the criteria when the context allows it.

4. How does the Resilience Marker work?

Four key steps help to promote resilience in humanitarian programming:
- An analysis of hazards, threats, vulnerabilities and their causes;
- Risk-informed programming;
- Local capacity building (directly or in cooperation); and
- Longer-term strategies.

These elements are reflected in the four criteria or core questions of the Marker:

RESILIENCE MARKER CRITERIA		
(1) Does the proposal include an adequate analysis of shocks, stresses and vulnerabilities?	Yes	Not sufficiently
(2) Is the project risk informed? Does the project include adequate measures to ensure it does not aggravate risks or undermine capacities?	Yes	Not sufficiently
(3) Does the project include measures to build local capacities (beneficiaries + local institutions)?	Yes	Not sufficiently
(4) Does the project take opportunities to support long-term strategies to reduce humanitarian needs, underlying vulnerability and risks?	Yes	Not sufficiently

The Marker records whether or not humanitarian actions meet each of these criteria sufficiently.

Actions receive an overall resilience mark depending on how many criteria are met:

NUMBER OF CRITERIA MET		MARK
The Marker is not applicable	→	N/A
The action meets none or only 1 criterion	→	0
The action meets 2 or 3 criteria	→	1
The action meets all 4 criteria	→	2

The Single Form contains a text box for partners to summarise their resilience approach, objectives and rationale. This allows partners to provide additional information or further explanation, for example why resilience considerations may not be relevant to a specific context.

5. Who applies the Resilience Marker when?

When partners submit a proposal for funding to ECHO, using the Single Form, they include a self-assessment. ECHO field staff then enter their assessment into the project appraisal form (FICHOP), where it is validated by the responsible desk officers. ECHO staff update their assessment at mid-term as part of the FICHOP's monitoring or mid-term report. This ensures that the Resilience Marker tracks the actual performance of the project (rather than only the proposal) and that changes in the context throughout the implementation period can be taken into account.

The final mark is determined by ECHO as part of the FICHOP's final report, based on the overall resilience performance of the project. The mark is communicated to the partner through the information system APPEL.

6. Are there any cases when the Resilience Marker is not applied? When is Not Applicable (NA) used?

Only in very rare circumstances will the Marker not be applicable. This includes some projects that do not deal directly with affected populations such as, for example, a technical training programme for international staff. Only in cases such as this will the overall Resilience Mark be "not applicable" (N/A).

For urgent actions and actions funded under emergency decisions that use the simplified single form, partners and ECHO staff do not have to fill out the Resilience Marker at proposal stage to speed up the process. However, even urgent actions are expected to take resilience into consideration.

7. What if the context makes it difficult to integrate resilience?

Integrating resilience concerns into humanitarian programmes can be challenging in certain contexts. It may, for example, not be appropriate to align project activities with government plans or strategies if the government is an active party to a conflict. Or it may be appropriate in a very acute emergency response to focus on providing immediate relief, rather than focusing on how to prepare for a better response to future hazards. In this situation criteria 3 and 4 will possibly not be met, not because of a low quality of the project, but because in this particular context there are limits to a real integration of resilience.

It is acknowledged that in very difficult contexts even good projects looking at resilience opportunities might not always be able to meet all the marker criteria. The intention is that when the context evolves, the scoring of the projects would increase. It needs to be re-stated that the mark does not constitute in itself a condition for funding.

Partner organisations are expected to explain any constraints in integrating resilience in the text box of the Resilience Marker (Single Form section 5.2.2).

8. What if a proposal contains different activities, integrating resilience to various degrees?

Some proposals include a variety of activities, partners or implementation areas, and these might integrate resilience to varying degrees. Where this is the cases, the answers for the four criteria, as well as the overall resilience mark, should reflect the average performance of the action and differences should be noted in the text box of the Resilience Marker (Single Form section 5.2.2).

9. Where to include or find relevant information in the Single Form?

The Single Form is the main mechanism for humanitarian organisations to communicate their proposed activities to ECHO. The information included in Single Form proposals or reports therefore forms the basis for completing the Resilience Marker. The table below shows where in the Single Form partners should include, and ECHO staff can find, information related to resilience. However, ECHO field staff should also include additional information from discussions with partner organisations, experiences with previous projects, monitoring visits and other sources such as risk and vulnerability analyses in their assessment.

CRITERIA	RELEVANT SECTION IN THE SINGLE FORM
(1) Analysis of vulnerability, hazards, and threats	Section 3.1.3: Problems, needs and risks analysis
(2) The project is risk informed	Section 3.1.3: Problems, needs and risks analysis Section 3.1.4: Response analysis Section 4: Logic of intervention and in particular Section 4.6: Contingency measures Section 5.2.2: Resilience Marker, text box
(3) The project strengthens local capacities to cope with shocks and stresses	Section 3.1.4: Response analysis Section 4: Logic of intervention
(4) A deliberate strategy to reduce future humanitarian needs	Section 2.2: Synergies with other actions Section 7.1: Operational coordination with other humanitarian actors Section 7.3: Coordination with national and local authorities Section 7.4: Coordination with development actors and programmes
Additional comments or constraints concerning resilience	Section 5.2.2: Resilience Marker, text box

10. How to assess the different marker criteria?

1. Analysis of vulnerability, hazards and threats

INDICATIVE ELEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- **The analysis identifies relevant past and potential shocks and stresses** *(e.g. risk of floods, droughts, storms, landslides, earthquakes, food price hikes, epidemics or technological disasters, climate change and environmental degradation and equally threat of an outbreak or intensification of conflict) and their characteristics (what areas might be affected, intensity and likelihood).*
- **The analysis covers the vulnerability of different population groups to these shocks** *(e.g. which population groups will be most affected by the identified hazards and threats and what capacities do they have to cope with them?).*
- **The analysis identifies what causes and drives these vulnerabilities.**
- **Coping mechanisms and livelihood patterns/strategies are identified.**

Tip

A first step for analysing risks is to use existing data – local, national and international. Though the level of detail may differ according to context, risk information will be available from different sources, for example: communities themselves; local civil society and local institutions; World Bank/GFDRR; country disaster reports; risk management profiles (e.g. OCHA, DFID); global databases (EM-DAT, Desinventar); or existing warning systems (IPC). A major weakness when assessing risks is not using data that already exists.

EXAMPLES FOR THE APPLICATION OF CRITERION 1

"Yes": With no or little prior presence in areas affected by a sudden-onset emergency, humanitarian organisations start immediate, life-saving responses based on needs estimates. They consult existing risk analyses (e.g. on the risk of floods, storms, earthquakes, epidemics or tensions between communities) for their immediate planning and plan for a more detailed risk and vulnerability assessment at a later stage in the response.

"Yes": A humanitarian organisation operating in a protracted emergency conducts a detailed analysis of the root causes of vulnerability building on existing information (e.g. what drives conflict or what livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms do affected populations have to deal with recurring droughts and floods) and co-ordinates this assessment with development actors.

"Not sufficiently": A health clinic operating in a refugee camp in a cyclone prone region was initially not designed to resist high winds because there was no risk assessment. After a project review, protection was strengthened and contingency plans put in place. The original proposal would have been marked not sufficient and the mark would have been revised following this change.

2. The project is risk informed

INDICATIVE ELEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- **The proposal identifies where the proposed activities may create or increase future vulnerability, hazard and threat characteristics and includes adequate measures to avoid or mitigate negative effects** *(e.g. targeting criteria or location of services are chosen in consultation with communities to prevent hostilities potentially leading to conflict and to safeguard access; fuel is provided in camps to limit deforestation and reduce the risk of landslides).*
- **The proposal includes adequate measures for protecting project outputs from risks** *(e.g. choosing sites for warehouses and distributions that are not at risk of floods, landslides or earthquakes; providing tents that are storm proof; continuity measures to ensure for escalation of risk or violence – so services can be maintained if access becomes limited).*
- **Projects are able to adapt or scale up their activities in the event of future hazards or threats** *(e.g. hospitals with mobile teams able to react to disasters or incidents of violence; systems enabling scale-up of operations during emergencies).*

Tip

Investin g in risk management should be proportionate to the risks faced, intensity and consequences. At the start of rapid onset emergency responses it will not be practical or cost effective for temporary solutions (e.g. shelter or emergency water supplies) to be protected against infrequent or intense hazards (e.g. a one in a hundred year storm) – instead different solutions may be considered (mass protective shelter, emergency stockpiles to replace damaged items).

Examples for the application of criterion 2

"Yes": A humanitarian organisation operating in a fragile context identifies a high risk for conflict to break out. It proposes to involve various communities when identifying water points in order to avoid aggravating tensions. It also adopts a decentralised approach to provide water to affected villages. In each village local committees are trained to manage water points and distribution so that if violence escalates, water will still be available.

"Yes": An organisation proposes to build "safe" hospitals, designed to withstand natural hazards. It also plans a targeting and payment system agreed with communities that include mobile teams that can react fast in the event of a disaster. The hospitals can withstand hazards and plans and stockpiles are in place to respond to additional needs.

"Yes": An organisation plans to build temporary sanitation facilities, including latrines and leaching fields, in an area with high groundwater and facing a high risk of flooding. The proposal includes innovative designs for disposing excreta in flooded areas, including raised latrines, pit liners and sealed septic pits that limit the risk of ground water contamination. The organisation also plans to distribute "safe water" kits as a preparedness measure.

"Not sufficiently": A project providing emergency shelter, food assistance and WASH to temporary, tented settlements does not indicate if there will be protective shelter or drainage for the up-coming rainy and hurricane season.

3. The project strengthens local capacities to cope with shocks and stresses

Indicative elements for consideration:

- **Capacities of beneficiaries and local institutions to absorb, respond and recover to these shocks and threats, including resource availability, are analysed** *(the role, capacity, activities and interests of local actors, local authorities, civil society are identified).*
- **The proposal identifies if the proposed activities could undermine the capacities of individuals, communities, local governments and civil society to cope with future hazards and threats and includes adequate measures to avoid or mitigate negative effects** *(e.g. the provision of services by international actors could undermine the capacity of local institutions; the sustained delivery of relief goods could undermine livelihoods and create dependency among beneficiaries; providing relief could reduce incentives for local authorities to address root causes or prepare for disasters).*
- **The project optimises opportunities to strengthen livelihoods and coping capacities against shocks and stresses** *(e.g. cash for work is used for protective structures or productive assets; shelter programmes train and use local masons; interventions boost local economies)*
- **The project optimises opportunities to support local efforts across sectors to manage risks** *(e.g. use cash for work for protective structures; strengthen social safety nets; contribute to sector contingency plans; support a multi-sectoral analysis of needs and response; strengthen the capacity of local institutions).*

Tip

Build on and utilise existing capacities – for example by working with and strengthening local structures and organisations. Use local resources to strengthen the local knowledge base and economies.

Examples for the application of criterion 3

"Yes": During the most acute phase of an emergency response, an organisation focuses on distributing nutritional products to help address acute malnutrition in children. It provides a credible plan showing how, after an initial set-up period, local health providers will be trained and involved in rolling out the programme. It shares data on its caseload with another organisation offering cash for work and livelihoods programmes with the intent of harmonising the target groups.

"Yes": An acute food and nutrition crisis highlighted the low capacity of existing therapeutic feeding centres for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Humanitarian organisations therefore assist the Ministry of Health through a "minimal support" package of training and community mobilisation assistance. The aim of these activities is to establish adequate local services to treat severe acute malnutrition and to enable local systems to scale up in case of future crises.

"Not sufficiently": An organisation operating in a protracted complex emergency proposes to provide free health services. It intends to hire and train local health practitioners. However, it does not explain how it would relate to existing community health committees and it provides no analysis of the effects the project could have on existing private health facilities or how these effects could be mitigated.

4. A deliberate strategy to reduce future humanitarian needs

Indicative elements for consideration:

- **The initial analysis is developed in consultation with other actors and stakeholders** *(including humanitarian and development organisations, government, civil society and private sector – as appropriate).*
- **The project demonstrates a good understanding of the multi-sectoral assistance required and of who delivers it and complements or supports other assistance plans where beneficial** *(e.g. the proposal contains a mapping of humanitarian and development actors and their activities in relevant sectors; it uses existing mechanisms and systems avoiding duplication; funds are requested for international medical teams and supplies, while the need for strengthening local health systems is emphasised).*
- **As much as the context permits, the project links and contributes to relevant government plans or strategies** *(e.g. project activities use existing support channels; necessary information and updates are provided to relevant local actors).*

Tip

Linking up humanitarian interventions with development action and/or national development plans is key. Opportunities for strategic planning will depend on context but may be greater in recurrent or predictable crises.

Examples for the application of criterion 4

"Yes": Humanitarian organisations operating in the Syrian region are setting up multi-purpose cash-based assistance programmes to optimise efficiency of delivery, to meet needs and to contribute to local economies. Existing government-led social safety net programmes are being strengthened by development actors so they can better assist local and displaced populations over the longer term.

"Yes": A post-earthquake project to relocate vulnerable households from temporary and informal settlements intends to provide durable housing solutions, protection (including disaster risk reduction and protection against gender-based violence), income generation and sanitation. The project makes a deliberate contribution to the Government's reconstruction strategy, and is co-ordinated with the shelter cluster that includes national institutions.

"Yes": After responding with emergency interventions during a severe drought and famine, an NGO partner continues to work with communities, building their resilience through water source development, livestock health services, income generation and improved drought early warning. In the intervention different partners co-ordinate with local authorities in a programme that combines disaster risk management, livelihood building, improving basic social services and increasing access to Government safety nets.

"Not sufficiently": An organisation working in a protracted complex emergency argues that it needs to keep a strict distance from development and other actors in order to preserve its credibility, security and access. It therefore does not coordinate with these institutions. Even if ECHO agrees with the reasoning and decision, the criterion will be marked as "not sufficiently" as the context does not allow for a stronger integration of resilience.

"Not sufficiently": An NGO proposes to work in collaboration with a consortium of other NGOs to provide multi-sectoral support to an earthquake affected district to meet immediate and anticipated needs for a six months period. The proposal contains little information on how services provided will be sustainable or how pre-existing capacities (e.g. for water distribution, health) will be utilised or re-established. The NGO is new to the area and has not demonstrated an understanding of the context and has not established mechanisms for co-ordinating with local institutions.

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