

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

BANGLADESH

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

The HIP, published on December 2010, was first amended in April 2011 to include reference to cyclone Aila crisis, as new developments (main embankments repaired leading to a return of most of the displaced population to their home areas) had allowed DG ECHO to start the early recovery phase of the long-term displaced affected people. EUR 10 Million was budgeted for this purpose. While the vast majority of the ECHO supported population has managed to regain self-sufficiency and restart former livelihood activities, a residual caseload of approximately 50,000 people remain in dire need of continuing Humanitarian assistance for their daily survival, as conditions for their recovery are not yet met. In view of the critical humanitarian situation faced by these communities, it has been decided to allocate a further EUR 2,87 Million to provide Food assistance, emergency water and sanitation facilities and support to cyclone resilient shelters for this extremely vulnerable population.

The HIP is also revised to include EUR 130,000 in support of humanitarian coordination. Bangladesh is one of the few countries in South-Asia where OCHA¹ is not present, despite the recurrence of humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters,² and Climate change challenges ahead.

1. CONTEXT

With a population of 162 million inhabitants³, the country ranks 146th out of 182 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. While long term nutritional trends are encouraging at national level, the numbers of stunted and underweight children remain extremely high⁴ and wasting is not only above the WHO⁵ emergency threshold but is actually on the increase⁶.

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world exposed to a variety of natural disasters, including cyclones, floods and earthquakes. Being mostly low-lying and in the confluence of two of the large Asian rivers (the Ganges and the Brahmaputra) much of the country is prone to widespread seasonal flooding and is also among the most vulnerable to climate change⁷. The frequency and severity of these disasters could be adversely affected by global warming, population growth, environmental degradation, and ill-maintained infrastructure, all contributing to increased acute humanitarian needs. In this context, every disaster is putting an important number of extremely poor and vulnerable people in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

Cyclone Aila reflects very well how the effects of a natural disaster can significantly impact on people's food security status and exhaust their coping capacities. Cyclone Aila struck the western part of Bangladesh on 25 May 2009, directly affecting some 3.9 million people, rendering homeless some 1 million people and destroying a major part of village protection embankments.

¹ OCHA : Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

² Global Climate Risk Index 2010 (German Watch) notes that Bangladesh is the country most affected by extreme weather events

³ Population Reference Bureau, United Nations Population Fund , Mid-2009

⁴ 43% and 41% respectively

⁵ World Health Organisation

⁶ Source : Government of Bangladesh / IFPRI 2010

⁷ The Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI), which calculates vulnerability of countries to the impact of climate change over the next 30 years, ranks Bangladesh at 'extreme risk'.

As a result, hundreds of thousands had to leave their flooded villages to spend two consecutive years displaced on roads or to take refuge on remaining sections of embankments, relying mainly on external humanitarian assistance⁸ and negative coping mechanisms to survive. Considering the prolongation of this forced displacement, DG ECHO allocated a total of EUR 12M⁹ to address people's immediate relief needs and EUR 10M for the early recovery phase. Recent needs assessments missions by DG ECHO and partners¹⁰ have confirmed that the situation has improved for the vast majority of the affected population but the humanitarian crisis remains acute for a residual caseload. This situation is compounded by the 30 to 40% price hike for essential food commodities in the Aila areas.

DG ECHO is also intervening in the protracted crisis of unregistered **Rohingya refugees** from Burma/Myanmar¹¹. The Rohingyas are an ethnic, religious and linguistic minority in Myanmar, mainly inhabiting North Rakhine State (NRS), bordering Bangladesh. The Rohingyas face exclusion and severe discrimination in Myanmar, from which many have fled since the 70's. Some 28,000 Rohingya refugees officially recognized by the Government of Bangladesh have been living in two UNHCR refugee camps since 1992. An estimated 200,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees have settled among the local population. With no process for them to seek protection they are rendered vulnerable to persecution, exploitation and arrest. Recently anti-Rohingya sentiment has increased as they are perceived locally as economic migrants putting an additional strain on Bangladesh's limited livelihood opportunities; the Government of Bangladesh would like to see them ultimately to return to Myanmar. While recognising that a regional political solution needs to be pursued to find a durable solution to this long lasting crisis, over the last two years DG ECHO has been supporting, through emergency and basic humanitarian aid, two caseloads totalling approximately 40,000 unregistered Rohingyas in two unofficial settlements (Kutupalong makeshift camp and Leda site). Providing humanitarian assistance to the unregistered Rohingyas has recently been challenged by humanitarian access restrictions. DG ECHO has classified the Rohingya crisis as a 'forgotten crisis'.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Cyclone Aila

When Government of Bangladesh (GoB) finally managed to repair the main embankments, leading to a return of most of the displaced population to their home areas, in March 2011, an estimated 210,000-230,000 people were still acutely affected by Cyclone Aila.

According to the latest needs assessments carried out between November and December 2011¹², the EUR 10M allocation provided to support the early recovery phase of the returnee population, did allow the vast majority of the ECHO supported population to regain self-sufficiency and restart former livelihood activities. However, two residual caseloads of cyclone affected people have been identified as being in continuing dire need of Humanitarian assistance for their daily survival, as conditions for their recovery are not yet met. An estimated 50,000 people in the

⁸ DG ECHO is by far the largest single donor responding to the crisis. Government provided partial safety net programmes which contributed to control food insecurity.

⁹ Emergency Decision ECHO/BGD/BUD/2009/03000, EUR 4M; Ad Hoc Decision ECHO/SA/BUD/2009/01000, EUR 8M. Funds of this ad hoc Decision were finally almost entirely spent on emergency relief.

¹⁰ DG ECHO assessment missions (ECHO Desk officer and Technical assistant mission November 2011), DG ECHO Partners joint needs assessments (December 2011)

¹¹ Which has lead DG ECHO to rank Bangladesh with a crisis index of 3, vulnerability of 2.

¹² DG ECHO Partners joint needs assessments (9 December 2011)

south-western districts of Khulna and Satkhira¹³, the majority of whom are either displaced and living on embankments or outside of ring embankments with their land inundated with salt water, remain acutely affected. All are in a high state of vulnerability, without livelihoods opportunities, and inadequate shelter and watsan facilities.

Despite several attempts by GoB to close embankments breaches, works undertaken so far did not hold in Dokhin Bedkasi and Gabura unions, leading to prolonged flooding and displacement. As a result, continuously ebbing and flowing saline flood waters have, over a period of over 2 years destroyed the main income generating activities - primarily agriculture and shrimp culture - as well as other forms of livelihood assets including rickshaws, boats and livestock, making it impossible for people living in these unions to re-establish their livelihoods unaided. After such prolonged saline water flooding, the land has been polluted by high levels of salinity preventing the cultivation of local crops. Shrimp culture could not re-start following a recent ban from GoB¹⁴.

The situation is therefore very critical for these affected communities that are left without livelihood opportunities for their survival. The majority of affected people are adopting detrimental coping mechanisms¹⁵ to survive, such as reduced consumption of food. It is, therefore, crucial to continue emergency assistance.

The main priorities identified by the needs assessments are the following:

As markets are functioning, a comprehensive cash programming approach to help people meet their basic needs and regain a minimum of self sufficiency would be the preferred option. Cash for training will be the main activity to be provided, as a major source of revenue for households, through women. As a consequence of the food insecurity situation, many male family members are migrating for extended periods to seek work outside the community, leaving behind highly vulnerable female-headed households for which cash transfers should not be made conditional upon intensive manual labour. Given the chronic malnutrition of adult women (which is itself recognized as a key factor underlying child malnutrition) and high prevalence of anaemia, the delivery of well designed training and awareness raising programmes to womens' groups on issues of nutrition and child care, health and hygiene, homestead gardening and other livelihood related trainings would provide a way to ensure cash transfer to women, while integrating crucial nutritional issues into the operation. Cash for work (CFW) activities will be prioritised, whenever possible, based on their positive contribution to bridging the food gap, on livelihoods and/or building the communities' resilience to future disasters. Unconditional cash transfer to the most vulnerable (disabled, elderly, women headed households) will also be contemplated.

In order to make a positive contribution to the outstanding needs in the water and sanitation and shelter sectors, activities supported will focus on essential infrastructure renewal (potable water catchment ponds/canal rehabilitation, sanitation infrastructure repair, shelter repair and construction of Disaster resilient shelters such as raised plinths and cyclone resilient shelters). In areas where drinking water is a critical issue, the resort to water trucking will be envisaged.

Rohingyas crisis

A roughly estimated 200,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees have settled among the local Bangladeshi population. At present, the two DG ECHO-supported caseloads amount to some

¹³ In particular in Dokhin Bedkasi Union (under Koira upazilla of Khulna District) and Gabura union (under Shaymngar upazilla, Shatkhira District)

¹⁴ Shrimp farming is blamed for weakening the embankments structures as they draw water from the river into the shrimp ponds

¹⁵ taking loans with high interest rates, sending children to urban areas for garments industry, selling labour in advance (at low rate)

40,000 people living in the unofficial settlements of Leda and Kutupalong makeshift camp in Teknaf and Ukhia Upazilla. The population of the two unofficial settlements supported by DG ECHO remains stable and, in the case of Kutupalong makeshift camp, has even decreased over the last months. This suggests that there is no direct link between the aid provided to the settlements and the number of refugees occupying the settlements. It is rather the political situation in Myanmar and the local context that trigger population movements around the camps.

Protection

The absence of legal status is the main factor underlying the vulnerability of the Rohingyas, as this makes them easy targets for mistreatment, exploitation and violence, since perpetrators can act with impunity. Tensions exist with local communities, particularly those who are competing for job opportunities with Rohingyas willing to work for lower wages.

Food security and nutrition

If the refugees are unable to engage in income generating activities and humanitarian access is challenged, food insecurity will worsen into an acute and protracted humanitarian crisis requiring extended and more substantial assistance. The latest nutritional survey of Kutupalong makeshift camp indicates a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) of over 30%¹⁶, reflecting a significant deterioration of the humanitarian situation that needs to be addressed immediately. Intensive case finding and early detection of malnutrition are needed to facilitate early treatment of malnourished children. A comprehensive therapeutic feeding program would need to be put in place, including treatment of moderate malnutrition and of under 6 months' children, to avoid a further deterioration of the current nutritional status. While acknowledging that the survey results also reflect inadequate water / sanitation / hygiene / care practices, in the event of intensification of the existing crisis targeted food assistance (cash or kind) may be needed to complement therapeutic / supplementary feeding for the most vulnerable groups.

Water and sanitation

Provision of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is proving difficult in the Leda settlement due to scarcity of accessible water resources. Concerns remain about providing sufficient safe drinking water throughout the dry season and adequate sanitation. Shallow wells, hand-pumps, rain and spring catchments are being extended by DG ECHO partners in an attempt to further meet the needs. To ensure satisfactory sanitation, more facilities should be provided, within the space constraints of the sites, making sure that such systems will be as sustainable as possible. In the Kutupalong makeshift camp, water access is easier but space to install additional facilities is also restricted.

Health care

Access to health services is extremely limited for Rohingyas. Health promotion is an important activity that complements the basic health care. Mental health care should be provided for continued support to distressed persons. Particular attention should also be given to the specific needs of persons with disability.

Shelter

Shelter conditions have deteriorated significantly over the last months to the extent that many would not withstand the coming cyclone/monsoon season in that state. In order to prevent an increased vulnerability due to shelter damages, emergency repair and plastic sheeting are urgently needed before the rainy season starts.

¹⁶ Released in October 2010

Humanitarian coordination

GoB has, over the last year, resurrected the Disaster & Emergency Response sub-group of the Local Consultative Group under the auspices of Disaster Management and Relief Division of Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. In order to support the disaster management efforts of the country, for which the impact of climate change is likely to intensify in the coming future, it is essential to establish a more formal humanitarian coordination structure in country. With no OCHA presence, it has been regularly noted that post-disaster coordination mechanisms are Ad Hoc and fragile. Disaster and emergency preparedness for effective response, including establishment of linkages with national authorities and humanitarian partners need to be strengthened. There is room for improvement to optimise coordination during disasters, to provide timely, balanced, evidence-based assessments, speed up the response at the local level (information, planning). The humanitarian community needs a mandated representative to raise sensitive humanitarian issues with the authorities and to advocate for durable solutions to be taken.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**(1) National / local response and involvement**

GoB, through its Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, usually, but not always, responds promptly to emergency needs arising from natural disasters. The magnitude of the needs is most of the time by far greater than the GoB capacity to address the situation and assistance, is frequently scaled back long before the need for it has passed. In response to cyclone Aila, the GoB safety net programme did contribute to providing employment opportunities and food rations for a number of affected people but it has now stopped despite the significant needs uncovered. The GoB grant of EUR 200 for shelter assistance to some 50,000 households has not materialised yet. The DG ECHO support package outlined above should help ensure that the GoB grant is, indeed, committed to shelter provision and not to the purchase of food.

GoB stance appears to have hardened towards the rohingyas issue: Humanitarian access to this population has been restricted with GoB's refusal to grant formal approval to Humanitarian organizations working with this population, UNJI development assistance programme for vulnerable populations of Cox's Bazar region has been rejected by GoB which recommended diverting funds to other regions of Bangladesh, the resettlement programme of Rohingyas to third countries has been suspended.

(2) International Humanitarian Response

For anything other than large-scale natural disasters, international humanitarian response is frequently negligible; DG ECHO is invariably the largest donor of humanitarian aid. This applies in the case of Aila also, where the limited international assistance provided at the time of the disaster has since all but ended.

DG ECHO is the only donor responding directly to the humanitarian needs of the inhabitants of Kutupalong makeshift camp, while at Leda DG ECHO's support has been complemented in small measure by UNICEF. The Commission has made funds available for a EUR 13 million programme (support to the USD 33 million UN Joint Initiative) under the Aid to Uprooted People line for 2010/11, intended to support the entire vulnerable population in the two Upazilas of Ukha and Teknaf, including non-official refugees and local communities. This programme has not received government approval. The Commission has also been supporting official refugees since 1992 in UNHCR camps.

(3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

i) Access/humanitarian space

In case of cyclone Aila, access is generally possible, although logistic is often challenging.

Humanitarian access is challenging in the Rohingyas crisis, which leads to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation¹⁷. Access to the sites can also be made difficult due to local tensions, which can lead to camp blockade.

ii) Partners

In the Rohingyas crisis, particular emphasis needs to be given to humanitarian principles given the acute protection concerns that prevail.

iii) Absorption capacity on the ground and efficiency of operations

Highly qualified staff with international experience in sensitive environments is crucial for maintaining humanitarian neutrality.

(4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

With this last financial envelope, the residual caseload should be able to cope with their immediate humanitarian needs until a more sustainable solution is found with GoB, enabling DG ECHO to exit end of 2012. The proposed intervention can be considered as emergency support for people sheltering on the embankments while their homes remained inundated - thus saving the most vulnerable from resorting to extreme coping mechanisms (indebtedness to meet food needs, sale of children, forced marriage etc).

DG ECHO envisages maintaining its assistance to the two Rohingya sites for as long as is required, GOB allowing, since both populations are extremely vulnerable (no assistance other than DG ECHO's, no protection, levels of malnutrition above the international standards warranting an emergency intervention). Efforts will continue to be made by DG ECHO partners to encourage self-help strategies amongst beneficiaries with regard to site maintenance, while partners will continue to contribute to the core services of water and sanitation, health, nutrition and protection. DG ECHO will remain in close contact with partners, Commission services and other donors to foster advocacy for adequate humanitarian access, to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

DG ECHO is aware of the potential pull factor that any aid may create and therefore has adjusted its levels of assistance to the essential humanitarian minimum, including basic nutritional support for the most under-nourished, water, sanitation, and primary health care with the aim to save lives, ensure protection, avoid excessive rates of acute malnutrition and detrimental coping mechanisms (reduced food consumption, sale of productive assets, distress migration, sale of children, forced marriage etc).

Importantly, while helping the Rohingyas and facilitate their acceptance by the neighbouring communities, DG ECHO is also supporting the surrounding Bangladeshi populations through nutrition and health services. Furthermore, DG ECHO interventions aim at preventing disease outbreaks (cholera or other contagious diseases), which also constitutes an important benefit to the surrounding villages.

¹⁷ In Kutupalong Makeshift camp for example, the nutritional situation has deteriorated significantly over 2010 with malnutrition rates beyond emergency threshold.

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

(1) *Other DG ECHO interventions*

During 2010, in addition to humanitarian support to unregistered Rohingyas and Cyclone Aila affected people, DG ECHO intervened in the following crises in Bangladesh: (a) Haor Flash Floods : EUR 10.8M; (b) Rodent infestation in the Chittagong Hill tracts: EUR 1.2M; (c) ; DIPECHO: EUR 2.4M, (d) Response to tropical storm, landslides, cold wave through DREF/IFRC totalling some EUR 0.35M, (e) Small scale response to tropical depression: EUR 0.2M. In 2011, DG ECHO intervened in response to the water-logging situation caused by the seasonal flooding through an emergency decision of EUR 5M.

(2) *Other services/donors availability*

5MEUR of Instrument for Stability funding (EU funding) is being implemented to 'Support the restoration of socio-economic stability and strengthening of community resilience in areas affected by Cyclone Aila'. Activities include repair of rural roads, support for fish culture, establishment of small business for displaced people, and provision of rickshaw-van to the distressed communities. This funding complements very well DG ECHO intervention.

A UN programme amounting to USD 33 million, with the objective of improving livelihoods, food security, basic services and governance of the region where the vast majority of Rohingyas are settled, and to which the EU intends to contribute EUR13M, has been rejected by Government of Bangladesh.

(3) *Exit scenarios. If none, say why.*

It is not expected that DG ECHO will allocate an additional funding to cyclone aila crisis, once the proposed envelope has been used.

A solution to this rohingyas crisis must be a regional one and hinges on respect for human rights in Myanmar. The complete exit scenario lies with Myanmar for allowing a safe and dignified return. Unfortunately, it is not anticipated that the Rohingyas will be able to return, under acceptable terms, to Myanmar in the short term. Nor is it expected that GoB will accept responsibility for them.

5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL DETAILS

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2011/01000 and the general conditions of the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

5.1. Contacts¹⁸

Operational Unit in charge: ECHO/A4

Contact person at HQ : Sandra Descroix (sandra.descroix@ec.europa.eu)

Contact in the field: David Hill (david.hill@ec.europa.eu) and Olivier Brouant (Olivier.brouant@ec.europa.eu)

¹⁸ Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL (e-SingleForm)]

5.2 Financial info

Indicative Allocation: EUR 16 million

Forgotten crises: Hum. Aid: EUR 3 million

Natural disasters : food aid EUR 10 million

Hum. Aid EUR 3 million

Total: Hum. Aid: EUR 6 million

Total food assistance: EUR 10 million

5.3 Proposal Assessment

Assessment round 1

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to the Rohingyas crisis. (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP)
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 3 million from the humanitarian budget line.
- Costs will be eligible from 01/ 01/ 2011¹⁹.
- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 12 months.
- Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 10 /01/2011²⁰.
- Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

Assessment round 2

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to Cyclone Aila crisis (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP)
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 10 million from the Food assistance budget line
- Costs will be eligible from 16/04/ 2011²¹.
- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 7 months.
- Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 02 /05/2011²².

¹⁹ The eligibility date of the Action is not linked to the date of receipt of the Single Form. It is either the eligibility date set in the Single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, what ever occurs latest.

²⁰ The Commission reserves the right to consider Single Forms transmitted after this date, especially in case certain needs/ priorities are not covered by the received Single Forms.

²¹ Please refer to footnote 15.

²² Please refer to footnote 16.

- Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

Assessment round 3

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to Cyclone Aila crisis (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP)
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 2,87 million from the Humanitarian aid budget line
- Costs will be eligible from 15/12/ 2011²³.
- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 9 months.
- Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 09 /01/2012²⁴.
- Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

Assessment round 4

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to Humanitarian coordination in Bangladesh (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP).
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 130,000 from the Humanitarian aid budget line
- Costs will be eligible from 01/03/ 2012²⁵.
- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 9 months.
- Preselected partner: DG ECHO considers that an improved coordination of humanitarian aid is crucial in Bangladesh. As such, UNOCHA will be requested to submit a project proposal in line with its coordination mandate.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 15 /01/2012²⁶.

²³ Please refer to footnote 15.

²⁴ Please refer to footnote 16.

²⁵ Please refer to footnote 15.

²⁶ Please refer to footnote 16.