

TECHNICAL ANNEX

IRAQ

FINANCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2022/01000 and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

The activities proposed hereafter are subject to any terms and conditions that may be included in the related Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP).

1. CONTACTS

Operational Unit in charge	DG ECHO ¹ /C4
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2. FINANCIAL INFO

Indicative Allocation²: EUR 24 000 000 of which an indicative amount of EUR 3 000 000 for Education in Emergencies.

In line with DG ECHO's commitment under the Grand Bargain initiative, pilot Programmatic Partnerships have been launched in 2020 and 2021 with a limited number of partners. An indicative amount of EUR 950 000 will be dedicated to these Programmatic Partnerships in 2022. In addition, new Programmatic Partnerships could

¹ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

² The Commission reserves the right not to award all or part of the funds made or to be made available under the HIP to which this Annex relates, or to allocate part of the funding to interventions with a regional or multi-country approach.

be signed in 2022 with partners under indirect management. Part of the allocation of this HIP could therefore also be attributed to these new pilot Partnerships.

Breakdown per Actions as per Worldwide Decision (in euros):

Country	Action (a) Man-made crises and natural hazards	Action (b) Initial emergency response/small-scale/epidemics	Action (c) Disaster Preparedness	Actions (d) to (f) Transport/ Complementary activities	TOTAL
IRAQ	23 000 000		1 000 000		24 000 000

3. PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT

a) Co-financing:

Under the EU Financial Regulation, grants must involve co-financing; as a result, the resources necessary to carry out the action must not be provided entirely by the grant. An action may only be financed in full by the grant where this is essential for it to be carried out. In such a case, justification must be provided in the Single Form (section 10.4).

b) Financial support to third parties (implementing partners)

Pursuant to Art. 204 FR, for the implementation of actions under this HIP, partners may provide financial support to third parties, e.g. implementing partners. This financial support can only exceed EUR 60 000 if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or excessively difficult to achieve. Such situations can occur in cases where only a limited number of non-profit non-governmental organisations have the capacity, skills or expertise to contribute to the implementation of the action or are established in the country of operation or in the region(s) where the action takes place.

Ensuring broad geographical/worldwide coverage while minimising costs and avoiding duplications concerning in particular presence in country, prompted many humanitarian organisations to network, e.g. through families or confederations. In such a context, the situations referred to above would imply that the partner would rely on other members of the network. In such cases, justification must be provided in the Single Form.

c) Alternative arrangements

In case of country or crisis-specific issues or unforeseeable circumstances, which arise during the implementation of the action, the Commission (DG ECHO) may issue specific ad-hoc instructions, which partners must follow. Partners may also introduce via the Single Form duly justified requests for alternative arrangements

to be agreed by the Commission (DG ECHO) in accordance with Annex 5 to the Grant Agreement.

d) Field office costs

Costs for use of the field office during the action are eligible and may be declared as unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices, if they fulfil the general eligibility conditions for such unit costs and the amount per unit is calculated:

- i. using the actual costs for the field office recorded in the beneficiary's accounts, attributed at the rate of office use and excluding any cost which are ineligible or already included in other budget categories; the actual costs may be adjusted on the basis of budgeted or estimated elements, if they are relevant for calculating the costs, reasonable and correspond to objective and verifiable information

and

- ii. according to usual cost accounting practices which are applied in a consistent manner, based on objective criteria, regardless of the source of funding.

e) Actions embedded in multiannual strategies

Funding under this HIP may be used to finance actions implemented in the framework of multiannual strategies, as and when provided for in the HIP.

f) Regional and multi-country actions

Regional/multi-country actions can be supported under this HIP (and where relevant in conjunction with other HIPs³), where they are proven more suitable/effective than country-based interventions to respond to identified needs, taking into account the operating context, the strategy and the priorities set out in the HIP (or respective HIPs), the operational guidelines provided in section 3.2.2. of this Annex, as well as the applicant organisation's capacities. The proposals should specify the breakdown between the different country allocations.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE INFO

Allocation round 1

- a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 20 000 000.
- b) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2022 ⁴

³ For multi country actions falling under more than one HIP, partners are requested to submit only one proposal in APPEL. The single form should refer to the HIP that covers the majority of targeted countries.

⁴ 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, whatever occurs latest. In case of amendments to existing agreements, the eligible date will however be the eligible date set in the initial agreement.

- c) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months, including for Actions on Disaster Preparedness. Follow-up actions, which continue/extend ongoing operations financed under the 2021-2027 Multi annual Financial Framework, can be submitted as modification requests for the ongoing action with a time extension of up to 24 months and a total duration of the modified action of up to 48 months. The same approach may also be used to the extent appropriate in furtherance of any multiannual strategies provided for by the HIP (see point e) of section 2 above)⁵. Education in Emergencies actions should have an initial duration of at least 24 months unless there is a need or context-based justification for a shorter duration.
- d) Potential partners⁶: All DG ECHO Partners and the following preselected partner: ACTED, as the Action is part of a pilot Programmatic Partnership.
- e) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of ongoing actions⁷.
- f) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 15/02/2022⁸.

Allocation round 2

- g) Indicative amount: up to EUR 4 000 000.
- h) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2022⁴
- i) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months, including for Actions on Disaster Preparedness. Follow-up actions, which continue/extend ongoing operations financed under the 2021-2027 Multi annual Financial Framework, can be submitted as modification requests for the ongoing action with a time extension of up to 24 months and a total duration of the modified action of up to 48 months. The same approach may also be used to the extent appropriate in furtherance of any multiannual strategies provided for by the HIP (see point e) of section 2 above)⁵. Education in Emergencies actions should have an initial duration of at least 24 months unless there is a need or context-based justification for a shorter duration.
- j) Potential partners⁶: All DG ECHO Partners
- k) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of ongoing actions⁷.
- l) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 21/01/2023⁸.

⁵ Additional guidance may be issued by DG ECHO in this respect, as appropriate.

⁶ Unless otherwise specified potential NGO partners refer to certified partner organisations.

⁷ Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

⁸ 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.

4.1. Operational requirements:

4.1.1. Assessment criteria:

- 1) Relevance
 - How relevant is the proposed intervention and its compliance with the objectives of the HIP?
 - Has the joint needs assessment been used for the proposed intervention (if existing)?
 - Has the proposed intervention been coordinated with other relevant humanitarian actors?
- 2) Capacity and expertise
 - Does the partner, with its implementing partners, have sufficient expertise (country/region and/or technical)?
 - How good is the partner's local capacity/ability to develop local capacity?
- 3) Methodology and feasibility
 - Quality of the proposed response strategy, including intervention logic/logframe, output & outcome indicators, risks and challenges.
 - Feasibility, including security and access constraints.
 - Quality of the monitoring arrangements.
- 4) Coordination and relevant post-intervention elements
 - Extent to which the proposed intervention is to be implemented in coordination with other humanitarian actors and actions (including, where relevant, the use of single interoperable registries of beneficiaries).
 - Extent to which the proposed intervention contributes to resilience and sustainability.
- 5) Cost-effectiveness/efficiency/transparency
 - Does the proposed intervention display an appropriate relationship between the resources to be employed, the activities to be undertaken and the objectives to be achieved?
 - Is the breakdown of costs sufficiently documented/explained?⁹

In case of actions ongoing in the field, where DG ECHO is requested to fund the continuation thereof, a field visit may be conducted by DG ECHO field expert (TA) to determine the feasibility and quality of the follow-up action proposed.

No award will be made to NGO partner organisations which have not complied with their obligations concerning the submission of audited financial statements (i.e. which would not have submitted those in due time to the Commission without a proper justification) or

⁹ In accordance with the relevant section of the Single Form guidelines (section10)

which would appear not to offer sufficient guarantee as to their financial capacity to implement the proposed actions (in light of their liquidity and independency ratios as appearing from their latest available annual statutory accounts certified by an approved external auditor).

4.1.2. Specific operational guidelines and operational assessment criteria:

This section outlines the specific operational guidelines that DG ECHO partners need to take into account in the design of humanitarian operations supported by DG ECHO. It also lists and explains the assessment criteria – based on those outlined in section 3.2.1 - that DG ECHO will apply in the specific context of the HIP to which this Technical Annex relates when assessing proposals submitted in response to the related HIP.

For **Education in Emergencies actions**, priority will be given to funding projects which target at least 50 percentage of girls, unless there is a context-based justification for different targeting.

The HIP Policy Annex should be consulted in parallel.

In 2022, DG ECHO intervention strategy will continue to focus on the most urgent unmet humanitarian needs, focusing on the following priorities: (i) displaced persons living in under-served camp settings (ii) displaced populations living in informal settlements unable to/prevented from returning to their areas of origin (hereafter ‘informal settlement’) and returnees living in critical shelter conditions, and (iii) persons deprived of their liberty. As part of an informal settlement response strategy, priority will be given to informal settlements that have no or limited access to basic services, particularly informal settlements that host people affected by camp closure.

For programming in out of camps areas, priority will be given to partners that can work in consortia and/or with a joint response plan (e.g. inter-organisation/inter-cluster) to support consolidated minimum response coverage, intervention standards and reporting. DG ECHO will support multi-sector mobile programming to cover basic needs and protection needs in these areas.

DG ECHO will support projects that are time-bound with a clear exit strategy and/or transition to mid-long-term assistance and Governmental support. The currently one million vulnerable displaced and returnees residing in informal sites have been disproportionately affected by the increase in prices of essential food commodities, directly impacting their food security conditions and further hindering their ability to achieve durable solutions to displacement or reintegration.

The additional budget (€ 4M) is intended to support the most vulnerable population groups, and particularly undocumented individuals excluded from government social protections schemes, no longer able to meet their essential needs. By contextually supporting the integration of IDP and returnee vulnerable households into government programmes (PDS - Public Distribution System), conditions for a sustainable solution to address their food needs will also be created.

Where assistance is given to support the COVID-19 response, all DG ECHO partners will be expected to ensure COVID-19 mitigation measures are integrated into their action as part of a do-no harm approach. In terms of the COVID-19 health response, actions that can function at a national scale will be prioritised. The response to the COVID-19 crisis must be inclusive, reaching all most vulnerable populations, including IDPs in and out of camps and refugees. Partners must ensure gender sensitivity and effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention and response strategies.

Given the ongoing uncertainty on COVID-19 and its impact, the HIP 2022 will remain a flexible instrument to address operational needs and issues that arise. In relation to actions that specifically address COVID-19, they are expected to be carried out in close planning with the relevant health authorities. For other interventions, technical consultations will continue between DG ECHO and the partner to assess any relevant adaptation of actions based on health cluster and WHO scenario planning and relevant sector mechanisms (e.g. Education planning and response to COVID-19).

All COVID-19 response activities must follow internationally recognized guidelines, such as those outlined by WHO¹⁰.

DG ECHO encourages all partners – irrespective of their specific sector – to include protection mainstreaming considerations into their project proposals. DG ECHO suggests the use of a protection mainstreaming indicator at key objective indicator (KOI) level, that can help partners include mainstreaming considerations into all sectors. Note that protection mainstreaming considerations are complementary to all Age and Gender considerations (including the Gender and Age Marker considerations and analysis).

Mainstreaming of basic protection principles in all programmes is of paramount importance to DG ECHO. For more information, including example of integrated protection programming, please consult the DG ECHO Humanitarian Protection Thematic Policy Document.

All partners are expected to conduct a protection risk analysis at the proposal stage. If the partner cannot do a risk analysis at proposal stage, this should be done as soon as possible. It is also expected that partners do follow up on new or changing risks in their areas of operation.

Advocacy on behalf of particular groups or situations, for example female-headed households or IS affiliated populations is encouraged for partners that work directly with these groups and can provide robust advocacy initiatives and plans.

Protection-related activities

All DG ECHO-funded interventions shall be built upon sound protection and vulnerability analysis, including analysis of displacement situations. Protection programming can be preventive, addressing potential risks and negative coping mechanisms, and/or responsive/remedial, providing services to victims of violence. DG ECHO will consider of relevance the application of an integrated protection programming.

For persons living in camps or informal settlements, attention should be given to addressing issues such as lack of civil documentation, freedom of movement and the use of protection-related negative coping mechanisms. Specific attention should be given to the perceived profile of camp residents. Where protection is in and out of camp settings,

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

people should receive holistic protection services or linked to other referral pathways as part of a multi-sector intervention.

DG ECHO will also prioritise protection programming for people deprived of their liberty because of the conflict. Protection interventions in detention settings, re-establishment of family links, and integrated protection-education activities for juvenile detainees and children accompanying parents will be considered.

For Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) specific programming, actions need to ensure solid and timely case management and demonstrate a proper referral pathway is in place to healthcare providers and other services, including accompaniment where necessary. For child protection specific programming, priority will be given to support to case management, integration of child protection services in education programs and provision of protection to children in detention settings.

DG ECHO will consider the following:

- Prevention of and response to protection risks faced by particular vulnerable groups, including, but not limited to, women and children. Partners must have a demonstrated capacity to provide response activities to risks (not just prevention activities):
 - Provision of specific services to victims of violence, including access to safety, case management, legal aid/counselling;
 - Protection/prevention interventions should demonstrate impact within the timeframe of the action. Stand-alone awareness raising activities will not be considered.
- Programming that targets specific excluded groups. Partners should have a demonstrated track record in working with the excluded groups, both for access but also acceptance of programming.
- Activities that address lack of access to civil documentation, including information dissemination, counselling and support to obtaining documents.
- Activities that address protection issues in detention centres and prisons, particularly for juveniles and children detained with parents. Support to persons deprived of liberty will only be provided for partners with a) access to centres, b) demonstrated institutional capacities in providing support to this caseload, (c) adequate staff welfare policies to ensure staff wellbeing.
- Prevention and response – integrated into a multisector intervention, especially considering negative coping mechanisms (including survival sex). Integrated Programming in relation to negative coping mechanisms must have a protection outcome at its core. These activities will only be supported if the protection outcome is clearly articulated at the proposal stage.
- Mental health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) and referral to healthcare providers, where possible and following the Iraq CP/EiE cluster developed guidelines if provision of MHPSS to children is envisioned. All MHPSS activities need to be reflected in the proposals with an MHPSS indicator looking at improvements in well-being (and not just reflected in terms of persons trained or attended activities).

- When applicable, promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), including activities such as protection monitoring to gain information on the protection context particularly for specifically vulnerable groups. Protection monitoring should always be linked to service provision, either directly or through functioning referral mechanisms for cases encountered (for both protection and other sectors). Partners need to also strongly consider potential advocacy avenues for issues raised in protection monitoring. Though public advocacy cannot always be conducted, partners need to consider how protection monitoring can feed into advocacy at lower levels. Any advocacy activities should be envisioned within an advocacy plan (to be attached to the proposal or as a first activity once the project is started) and should include preventative or mitigating actions for potential backlash of any advocacy initiative.
- Relevant COVID-19 related actions such as securing access to prevention and treatment measures for women and girls, alternative care arrangements when required and other targeted programming will be considered based on relevant context at time of assessment.

Multi sector: Integrated Camp Co-ordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Shelter/NFIs and WASH

Multi-sector programming will be considered for priority interventions in (i) under-served IDP camp context, and (ii) informal settlements and critical shelter conditions areas. The strategy for in-camp response is mindful of the potential for camp closure/camp consolidation. Partners will be required to provide analysis on the contingency scenario around closures/consolidation. Humanitarian actors have a collective responsibility to ensure that their work does not contribute to the deterioration of the environment. This calls for taking all necessary measures to reduce the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid as specified in the HIP Policy Annex.

(i) Under-served camps

- Priority will be given to the least-served camps hosting protracted IDPs unable to or prevented from returning soon.
- DG ECHO will provide support to integrated interventions in CCCM, WASH and Shelter/NFI sectors, aiming to reach applicable SPHERE standards.
- CCCM programming should be integrated and support coordinated programming and multi-sector response. Camp Management actors should try to ensure a balanced and principled approach in responding to the needs of affected population while working in remote management.
- WASH interventions in camps, including water supply, operation and maintenance of WASH facilities and distribution of hygiene and cleaning supplies. The activities should include WASH guidance for COVID-19 prevention and response. Efficient remote monitoring mechanisms to be established.
- Shelter/NFI programmes will be considered in line with multi-sector CCCM approaches.

(ii) Informal settlements, critical shelter condition areas

- Priority will be given to prioritised areas that have limited/no access to services, particularly those that host people affected by recent camp closure and are in situation of secondary displacement/unable to make a successful return.
- Priority will be given to partners who can operate in a consortium/joint operational framework to ensure broad coverage and provision of services.
- Partners will be required to support multi-sector interventions, including EiE and protection where possible (see below on EiE for further information).
- Preference will be given to mobile services.
- Partners will be required to provide a clear rationale of target groups/response locations.

All WASH and CCCM programming should have integrated COVID-19 response capacity. Programming in informal settlements should be in line with the relevant cluster priority response locations. The need to maintain and provide COVID 19 quarantine and isolation facilities in camps will be assessed alongside relevant cluster guidance.

Health Interventions

Health interventions will be considered for priority areas: (i) under-served IDP camps, and (ii) informal settlements and critical shelter conditions areas. Health interventions should align with the Ministry of Health's strategies. Noting the limited support for MHPSS and health response to those affected by SGBV, DG ECHO will support this in camp and out of camp response for affected persons. All health interventions should be in line with DG ECHO health policies, the MHPSS guidelines, Disability and Inclusion guidelines and SGBV in health response as well as the CASH guideline.

- For in camp settings: priority will be given to the continuation of existing health assistance in camps (including primary health care services, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and integrated CMR and integration of MHPSS).
- For informal settlements and critical shelter conditions, priority will be given to CASH and voucher assistance (CVA) to ensure access to health services and medicine in the respective area of a functioning health facility with adequate capacity and quality. The choice of providers is critical to avoid substandard or ineffective services. A good risk analysis and selection of beneficiaries must be considered for each location as this may differ, depending on the context. All should be well documented for learning purposes. Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) modality to be considered for informal settlements are:
 - a. access to medicine (chronic diseases in adults and children)
 - b. access to diagnostic
 - c. transport to access the health facility
 - d. transport to access medicine

Medical mobile clinics as a modality should be reduced to a minimum or stopped and only used as a modality with duly justifications. DG ECHO expects a good monitoring system in place to show impact for the beneficiaries. Regular monitoring visits are

required to service providers to ensure good performance and quality care, followed by a set of SMART indicators. This should be complementary to a feedback mechanism.

With exception for COVID-19 response, DG ECHO will no longer support PHCs and other fixed medical points in out of camp settings, given the commitment to transition facilities to the Government of Iraq. Any support to a COVID-19 response will be assessed based on the response capacity of the relevant health authorities, with support provided through partners able to work at a national level. The need to maintain and provide quarantine and isolation facilities in camps will be assessed alongside relevant cluster guidance.

As Iraq faces recurrent COVID-19 upsurges, promotion of vaccination through Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), facilitation and support to the COVID-19 vaccination response should be inclusive and guided by do no harm principles. While the support should be seen as fair and equitable, the support should target those most at risk of being excluded from the vaccination process, notably women, IDPs, refugees, people living in locations with limited access to health services.

Education in Emergencies

DG ECHO will support education in emergencies assistance for children/adolescents in (i) underserved camp settings (ii) informal settlements. EiE interventions should target out of-school boys and girls through formal and/or non-formal education opportunities.

- DG ECHO will prioritise provision of formal education in camps and out of camp areas that experienced high levels of return in 2019-2020 supporting the capacity of formal education facilities and successful participation of out-of-school children in the formal education system.
- EiE partners should ensure appropriate COVID-19 adaptation measures to facilitate safe access to education, in line with Cluster/Sector frameworks.
- Non formal education will be supported in areas with little or no possibility for formal education. Non-formal education activities should be to the utmost extent aligned with the formal system, providing children with opportunities to enter (or re-enter) the system. Criteria for the beneficiaries' selection as well as the modality and timeframe of re-integration in the formal system in full coordination with the Cluster/Sector Working Group should be specified along with the description of the type of curricula used.
- Child safe-guarding mechanisms must be established to ensure that children are not at risk when attending school, and that child protection related issues are timely and effectively responded to by professional actors (either directly or through referrals).
- Priority will be given to funding projects, which target at least 50 % girls, unless there is a context-based justification for different targeting.
- For cash in education projects, attention should be paid to sustainability of the interventions and, when possible, linkages to longer-term livelihood solutions.

Alignment, complementarity and synergy with other projects, donors and stakeholders, not least to ensure sustained and successful education participation, are strongly encouraged.

definition of a possible exit strategy is to be reflected in proposals. The HIP Policy Annex should be consulted in parallel.

Multi-purpose cash assistance

Where assistance is to be delivered in the form of cash transfers, particular attention will be paid to the principles laid down in DG ECHO's cash guidance note, which will form the basis for the assessment and selection of partners, in particular in the case of large-scale transfers. Partners will be expected to demonstrate a satisfactory efficiency ratio and, to the extent possible and taking into account the operational context, partners will be assessed on their ability to work based on common targeting criteria, single or interoperable beneficiary registries, a single payment mechanism, a common feedback mechanism and a common results framework. In line with the cash guidance note, DG ECHO will expect partners to strive for segregation of duties and full transparency on the costs of implementation. Furthermore, partners should ensure that the efficiency ratio is maintained throughout the action, unless otherwise approved by DG ECHO. For the delivery of smaller-scale cash transfers, DG ECHO will assess proposals paying particular attention the Guidance note's principles of coordination, harmonisation and multi-partner approach.

Where assistance is to be delivered in the form of cash transfers, particular attention will be paid to the principles laid down in DG ECHO's cash thematic policy, including the sector-specific considerations in Annex 2 of that document.

Modality choice should be informed by a needs-based and people-centred response analysis, incorporating market, operational and environmental analyses. The use of cash should systematically be considered, across the variety of response mechanisms (anticipatory action, rapid response mechanisms, crisis modifiers, shock-responsive social protection) funded by DG ECHO, including as a modality to link individuals to essential services where it is more cost efficient and relevant than the provision of direct sector interventions (please refer to 3.2.2.3 Health Interventions as an example)

Utilisation of cash in protection programming must have a clear protection outcome and will not be supported unless embedded within legal assistance, case management or accompaniment, and within a wider comprehensive and/or integrated protection response. Applying cash in healthcare programming will only be considered on a case-by-case basis and if justified by in-depth assessment and analysis of the availability of healthcare in the proposed area of intervention. Potential cash application in supporting access to services should have clear outcomes, with the application of associated indicators in the proposal.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Preparedness (DP)

In line with DG ECHO policy, all humanitarian actions must be risk informed. Therefore, partners are requested to ensure all projects submitted are designed based on a detailed risk analysis, identifying the main threats for both the targeted populations and the action. Anticipatory and contingency measures should be embedded in the action to anticipate and mitigate these risks to the best possible extent (see section below).

In addition to mainstreaming Disaster Preparedness (DP) into humanitarian action, DG ECHO will continue supporting targeted DP actions in line with the approach initiated in 2020. DP interventions should aim at strengthening the existing Disaster Risk

Management (DRM) system capacities at national and regional level. The main risks to be considered are of natural origin, including floods, earthquake, droughts and epidemics. Partners are requested to support in priority: effective and sustainable early warning systems, contingency planning for emergencies (SoPs, response plans, stock management, etc.), capacity building of national actors, and coordination mechanisms in line with the risks identified above. Field oriented DP actions should target areas most at risk of natural disasters.

Pilot initiatives at community level would only be eligible if fully integrated in the DRM framework for greater coherence and sustainability. DP investments at all levels will align with local and national priorities so that tools and mechanisms supported can be easily transferred to or managed by national and local services. Priority will be given to actions reinforcing systemic gaps in the existing DP framework. Project proposals will clearly demonstrate the expected benefits for the targeted local services and populations in terms of preparedness in the short term. Plans for an exit strategy in the next few years should be included in the proposal.

Visibility and Communication

Partners must ensure, through adequate and proactive communication about EU-funded actions, that the public is aware of how the EU is helping and how funding is used, with the objective of fostering continued strong support for humanitarian aid among key stakeholders and the general public. Detailed information on DG ECHO's visibility requirements can be found in the "Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union-funded Humanitarian Aid Actions".

Standard visibility is a contractual obligation for all DG ECHO-funded projects. Partners must ensure EU visibility through the prominent display of the EU emblem with accompanying text on project sites, relief items and equipment, as specified in Section 12.1.A of the Single Form, as well as structured and proactive communication throughout the project duration with broad dissemination (press releases, social media, webpages, blogs, photos etc.), as specified in Section 12.1.B of the Single Form.

Partners with strong and ambitious communication ideas are encouraged to apply for above-standard visibility in addition to standard visibility. DG ECHO may provide additional funding should a partner wish to carry out communication actions such as elaborate audio-visual productions, journalist-visits, campaigns, exhibitions or other events with an important outreach to the European public and media. For above standard visibility, a separate communications plan, costed, with an estimated audience reach and timeline, must be submitted as an annex to the Single Form. The plan is to be first discussed with ECHO's Regional Information Officer (RIO) covering the region, and finally approved by DG ECHO's Communication Unit (ECHO.01) prior to contract signature.