

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) WEST and CENTRAL AFRICA¹

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/ BUD/2023/01000²

AMOUNT: EUR 181 500 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes³ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO⁴'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

The West and Central Africa (WCA) region, one of the poorest and most fragile regions in the world, is affected by a combination of major protracted and recurrent humanitarian crises driven by conflicts and exacerbated by food insecurity, chronic undernutrition, natural hazards, recurrent epidemics, often linked to poor sanitary conditions in displacement contexts, and the growing effects of climate change. In 2022, more than 38 million West and Central Africans require emergency assistance. The main conflicts and violence across the region are affecting Central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), the Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad), the Central African Republic (CAR) and neighbouring countries hosting CAR refugees, the North West/South West (NW/SW) provinces of Cameroon, and North Central/North West Nigeria (with displacements into Niger). The armed conflict in Central Sahel is rapidly intensifying, expanding further south (Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire).

Conflict, insecurity, forced displacement and climate shocks are the main drivers of the humanitarian crisis in the region. Widespread violence and violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are resulting in large-scale displacement, disruption of livelihoods and lack of access to basic services. The civilian population is increasingly victim of targeted attacks against its own integrity and livelihood. These attacks include sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), abuses, kidnappings and child recruitment.

The situation in Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger) is most affected by the insecurity crisis and continues to worsen, with high conflict intensity in Burkina Faso, and the highest level of civilian deaths in Mali⁵; more civilians were killed in central

¹ This HIP covers eight countries, for which budget allocations are foreseen: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria. It may also respond to sudden or slow-onset new emergencies in Benin, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, if humanitarian needs arise.

² *Conditionality clause to be inserted if the HIP is released before adoption of the Worldwide Decision. To be deleted after the formal adoption of the decision.*

³ Technical annex and thematic policies annex

⁴ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

⁵ <https://acleddata.com/10-conflicts-to-worry-about-in-2022/sahel/mid-year-update/>

Sahel in the first six months of 2022 than in all of 2021. In Burkina Faso, the security situation continues to deteriorate, as violent attacks against civilians by armed groups have escalated, resulting in forced displacements marked by the highest and faster increase in Central Sahel. The Malian conflict, concentrated in the Northern and Central regions, is moving South, with an increasing number of violent attacks against civilians reported in all regions and consequences on humanitarian access and access of population to basic social services. In Niger, the spill-over of the Malian conflict has pushed hundreds of people to seek help at the western border (Tillabery region), as has the spillover of the Lake Chad crisis on the eastern border (Diffa region). Following the escalation of violence at the borders with Mali and with Burkina Faso, Niger has reached a new record in terms of internally displaced people.

Within the Lake Chad Basin regional crisis, North East Nigeria remains one of the most severe humanitarian crises, characterised by a high number of displaced people living in hard-to-reach and non-accessible areas. The environment remains very fluid, depending on the inroads made by non-State armed groups (NSAGs), e.g. Boko Haram and the Islamic State in the West Africa Province – ISWAP, or the state forces. The return policy to areas of Borno State (North East), still considered unsafe by humanitarian partners, increases the exposure of civilians to protection incidents. Furthermore, there are increasing concerns regarding access in the North West of Nigeria, considered a “forgotten crisis” by ECHO in 2022, in which criminal gang violence overlaps with intercommunal violence. The humanitarian needs of Chad result from a variety of humanitarian crises in the country. In the Lake province, high insecurity and attacks towards civilians prevail, resulting in large scale displacements. Chad is also subject to influxes of refugees from Sudan in the East. In Cameroon, the crisis is not limited to the Lake Chad Basin conflict in the Far North but includes also the CAR refugee crisis in the East of the country and the North West/South West crisis in the anglophone part of the country, where human rights violations and violent attacks frequently affect the population. The crisis in the North West/South West of Cameroon is considered a “forgotten crisis” by ECHO in its 2022 assessment. Finally, the protracted humanitarian crisis in CAR, also ranked as a “forgotten crisis” by ECHO, remains characterised by fragmented and unpredictable conflict dynamics, which make access to those in need extremely challenging. Almost 2 years after a renewed outbreak of violence and mass displacements in the context of the last presidential election, new forced displacements continue to take place across the country. At the same time, there is a return movement, with communities previously on the move, deeming their original locations to be safe.

The WCA region is experiencing an unprecedented food crisis driven by a conflict, a decline in agricultural production, due to underinvestment, violence and displacement, and climate change, and soaring prices of food and commodities. As a consequence, the protractedly poor nutrition status of the region’s children may rapidly deteriorate to widespread emergency levels in the second semester of 2022 and beyond. Nutrition survey data collected during the lean season in 2022 shall better inform on the nutrition status of populations and hence funding priorities. Compared to last year, the cost of food increased on average between 40 and 60% due both to local factors (local currency depreciation, especially of the Franc CFA, and disappointing rainfalls in 2021) and global trends (post-COVID 19 economic recovery and the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine). Several Sahel and Central African countries are highly dependent on wheat and other cereal imports from Russia and Ukraine. Similarly, the surge in prices of energy and fertilisers is increasing the burden on food prices and the cost of agricultural production. Given the steady increase in needs affecting the countries in the

region, the ongoing inflation is expected to exacerbate poverty, hunger and worsen inequalities while at the same time decreasing the coverage of humanitarian assistance by decreasing the purchasing power of humanitarian aid organisations.

Low levels of COVID-19 lethality have been reported in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, where travel and movement restrictions have been partially lifted. This being said, positive cases of COVID-19 infection remain vastly underreported and new variants can still emerge. Up to now, the health impact of COVID-19 has been more limited than its socio-economic consequences where the restrictions to movement have affected access to livelihood and social services.

The security situation is worsening in Togo and Benin, as NSAGs operating in Central Sahel seek to expand their operations moving into neighbouring border areas. Coastal countries are not only affected by the spill-over of the Sahel crisis but are also experiencing the same issues at the root of the crisis in Central Sahel (climate change, demographic explosion, insufficient and dysfunctional social services and rule of law institutions). The global inflationary context in the food and fuel sectors, as well as the high debt of coastal countries since COVID-19, are also weakening factors. Benin, Guinea and Capo Verde were put in the spotlight of the last FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspot report, owing to the rapid decline in food security⁶.

Civil-military coordination, under the leadership of OCHA, is crucially important in the region, together with the promotion of IHL - the latter featuring regularly in the political dialogue conducted by the EU Delegations in the region. The promotion of IHL and of humanitarian principles is mainstreamed through coordination among EU services, e.g. in the case of the EU support to the Lake Chad Basin's Joint Multinational Task Force (MNJTF). Support of the European Peace Facility (EPF) envisaged for activities and reforms related to defence and security in WCA may also have a bearing on the way ECHO and its partners are perceived and are able to operate in the field.

WCA countries are extremely vulnerable to weather-related hazards, intensified by climate change, such as droughts and floods. Six of the thirteen most vulnerable countries to climate change worldwide are in WCA⁷ with Chad and CAR being respectively the two most vulnerable. Besides the impact of climate shocks, the populations living in WCA are affected by environmental degradation trends also impacted by the humanitarian response. For example, in the health and nutrition sectors, disposable plastic material is used on a large scale, often without sustainable solutions for waste treatment. Scarce natural resources, particularly water and pasture, fuel tensions and conflicts between herders and farmers. Deforestation and desertification are further increasing risks of other disasters.

Against this background, humanitarian partners are often confronted with an uncondusive operating environment, with logistical and security challenges, bureaucratic impediments and threats to principled humanitarian action that recurrently impede access, hamper operations, or make them costly in financial and human terms.

⁶ https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000139904/download/?_ga=2.132032207.1144241578.1658148459-452021810.1618588550

⁷ Chad, CAR, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Liberia, Mali. Cf. ND-GAIN Country Index (2020): [Country Index // Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative // University of Notre Dame](#)

The outlook for the region is bleak with no foreseen substantial improvement in the short to medium term. According to the overall INFORM risk index⁸, eight countries where DG ECHO is supporting operations are classified as “high” or “very high risk” in terms of humanitarian crises and disasters, with the potential for the national response capacity being rapidly overwhelmed. The intensity of the humanitarian crises, as measured by the INFORM severity index⁹, is “high” or “very high” in 7 of these countries, with the vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis, being assessed to be high to very high.

The breakdown by indicator is provided in the table below. DG ECHO's needs assessment for 2023 identified high humanitarian needs in all the 8 countries of this HIP.

Main risks & vulnerabilities	Cameroon	CAR	Chad	Nigeria	Burkina-Faso	Mali	Mauritania	Niger
INFORM Risk Index 2022	6.1	7.7	7.8	6.5	6.4	7.0	5.3	7.4
Vulnerability Index	6.6	8.6	7.5	5.7	7.3	7.0	5.6	7.2
Hazard and Exposure	5.6	6.2	7.3	7.3	5.5	7.3	4.0	7.3
Lack of Coping Capacity	6.1	8.7	8.8	6.5	6.4	6.7	6.6	7.6
Global Crisis Severity Index	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.5	3.9	4.2	2.8	3.5
Projected conflict risk	9.3	7.5	9.9	10	9.9	10.0	3.2	9.4
Uprooted People Index	9.3	9.8	9.3	6.4	9.5	7.4	6.7	8.0
Conditions of people affected	4.5	4	4.4	2.3	4.3	4.4	2.9	3.7
Impact of the crisis - geographical	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.3	3.4	4.1
HDI Ranking (Value) ¹⁰	153 (0.563)	188 (0.397)	187 (0.398)	161 (0.539)	182 (0.452)	184 (0.434)	157 (0.546)	189 (0.394)
Total Population (in millions) ¹¹	27.2	4.9	16.9	211.4	21.5	20.85	4.77	25.13

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

i.) People in need of humanitarian assistance:

The total number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in the eight target countries has increased by almost 10% between 2021 and 2022 (38.6 million people in 2022 vs 35.2 million people in 2021). The number of severely food insecure people (IPC 3+)¹² is estimated to have risen to 36.8 million (compared to 25.8 million in 2021), again

⁸ INFORM Risk Index (July 2022): [INFORM Risk \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/inform)

⁹ INFORM severity index (June 2022): [Results and data \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/inform)

¹⁰ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP (2019)

¹¹ [Countries | Data \(worldbank.org\)](https://data.worldbank.org)

¹² Cadre Harmonisé (CH) and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC): Level 3 = Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis; Level 4 = Humanitarian Emergency; Level 5 = Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe

an unprecedented figure which represents a 43% increase on 2021¹³. Needs are on the rise in all sectors. The largest caseloads of severely food insecure people are in Nigeria, with 19.4 million people, Niger with 4.4 million, Burkina Faso with 3.5 million, Cameroon with 2.4, CAR with 2.2 million, and Chad with 2.1 million. The number of countries in need of humanitarian assistance is also increasing, and includes now countries on the Coast of West Africa.

Pays	People in need (HRP ¹⁴)			IDPs + refugees		
	2021	2022	2022 vs 2021	September 2021	2022	2022 vs 2021
Cameroon	4 400 000	3 900 000	-11.4%	1 405 825	1 451 733	3.3%
CAR	2 800 00	3 100 000	10.7%	740 871	665 771	-10.1%
Chad	5 500 000	6 100 000	10.9%	921 629	952 888	3.4%
Nigeria	8 700 000	8 400 000	-3.4%	2 958 472	3 254 987	10.0%
Burkina Faso	3 500 000	4 900 000	40.0%	1 446 155	1 752 866	21.2%
Mali	5 900 000	7 500 000	27.1%	445 000	495 134	11.3%
Mauritania	566 613	1 003 890	77.2%	72 632	98 916	36.2%
Niger	3 800 000	3 700 000	-2.6%	551 354	599 823	8.8%
Total	35 166 613	38 603 890	9.8%	8 541 938	9 272 118	8.5%

Pays	Food insecurity (phase 3-5)			SAM cases ¹⁵ (children 6-59 months)		
	2021 lean season	2022 lean season	2022 vs 2021	2021	2022	2022 vs 2021
Cameroon	1 920 802	2 413 288	+25,6%	90 716 ¹⁶	64 407 ¹⁷	-29%
CAR	2 289 736	2 208 845	-3,5%	55 842	44 352	-21%
Chad	1 778 630	2 098 861	+18%	401 090	348 160	-13%
Nigeria	12 816 622	19 453 312	+51,8%	1 134 982	671 890 ¹⁸	-41%
Burkina Faso	2 867 061	3 453 510	+20%	151 214	179 252	+19%
Mali	1 307 073	1 841 067	+40,9%	161 206	309 821	+92%
Mauritania	484 151	878 921	+82%	36 653	32 949	-10%
Niger	2 309 137	4 402 406	+91%	457 200	491 822	+8%
Total	25 773 212	36 750 210	+43%	2 488 903	2 142 653	-14%

ii.) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Humanitarian Protection

The deteriorating situation found across WCA has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of civilian populations. The protection risks faced by men, women, and children continue to rise. International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and IHL violations are reported to be on the increase. Arbitrary arrests, abduction, killing and maiming of civilians, kidnapping of

¹³ Food Crisis Prevention Network – RPCA (<https://www.food-security.net/en/>)

¹⁴ Humanitarian Response Plan

¹⁵ Number of cases of severe acute malnutrition to be expected during the year

¹⁶ 4 Northern Regions + NW+SW of Cameroon

¹⁷ 4 Northern Regions + NW+SW of Cameroon

¹⁸ Nigeria 12 Northern States + BAY

women and girls for sexual exploitation, forced and early marriages, as well as recruitment to and use of children by armed groups and armed forces, are frequent occurrences across these crises. As the armed conflicts have geographically spread and shifted, so have the affected civilian populations. Faced with increased threats of violence and insecurity and worsening political contexts, populations have been forced into displacement or, in some cases, forcibly returned to unsafe and undignified living conditions, with limited access to services. The rule of law in some contexts is weak or non-existent, which undermines an already fragile social coexistence, and results in an increase in intra-community conflicts. Surviving these conditions has impacted significantly on the mental wellbeing of the affected populations. Mental health and psychosocial needs often remain unaddressed. Negative coping mechanisms, such as survival sex and worst forms of child labour are being reported to be on the rise. There is also a concern that SGBV incidents remain underreported and that many such cases are thus left unaddressed. The delivery of humanitarian assistance is under threat, as more frequent cases of denial of access to affected areas, and attacks against humanitarian workers and organisations have occurred.

Food Assistance

An unprecedented caseload of more than 36.8 million people (+43% versus 2021, +128% over the last 5 years average) were in need of emergency food assistance during 2022 in the eight target countries. While armed conflicts and forced displacements are largely considered as the main driver of acute food insecurity, the 2021 regional food production deficit may continue in 2022. Faced with this deficit and because of the current impact globally of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, most countries will most likely continue to face a food price crisis that limits the poorest households' purchasing power and food access, and affects their ability to prepare for the next planting season. The rising cost of fertilisers is also having an impact. The price of the three main cereals, has increased by between 57 to 87% above the five-year average in many Sahelian and Central African countries (and also coastal countries).

Nutrition

WCA countries are suffering from a protracted nutrition crisis, which has seen little progress over the last decade, outpaced by population growth and insecurity. Death rates of children under 5 years are among the highest in the world and 45% of infant mortality is associated with undernutrition. Across the region more than 2 million children, in the age group 6-59 months, suffered from severe acute malnutrition in the course of the year. The traditional determinants of undernutrition in this region - extreme poverty, poor infant feeding practices, infectious diseases and lack of access to healthcare - have been compounded in the last few years by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 prevention measures, widespread conflict, acute food insecurity and inflation. As a consequence, critical levels of acute undernutrition, exceeding 15%, are found in several areas of Chad, Mauritania, Mali (Menaka) and Niger (Diffa). Serious levels (10-15% GAM) are recorded in the majority of the remaining areas of the HIP countries. The local response capacity by health authorities has been improving and nowadays the Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) programme is widely integrated into most health centres and hospitals. However, the actual coverage remains very low even in the most stable areas, limited by the cost and logistics needed for procurement and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food.

Health

Healthcare systems in WCA have historically produced the worst values in most health indicators and proven inadequate to deal with the needs of their population because of several structural problems (underinvestment, regular underfinancing, chronic shortage of skilled health workers, mismanagement, poor maintenance, logistic challenges, competing priorities). The region is prone to multiple epidemic risks that overwhelm countries' weak disease surveillance and response capacity. Violence has and continues to aggravate the situation, disabling many health facilities and leaving the functional ones to deal with the surge of displaced populations.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), shelter and settlements

Regular and reliable access to safe water for drinking, sanitation and shelters is a major challenge across the region. Areas plagued by conflicts and forced displacement, in particular IDP as well as refugee camps and settlements, are especially affected. These humanitarian settings are congested and overburdened by a growing demand for WASH. An estimated 18 million people are in urgent need of access to WASH services and facilities and 10.4 million people are in urgent need of shelter and essential items in the countries covered by this regional HIP – 2.2 and 1.5 million more than in 2021 respectively.

Education in Emergencies

2022 saw a significant increase in the number of schools closed in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger (Tillabery in particular)¹⁹ either due to general insecurity or because they have been the direct target of attacks. Naturally, the number of children not attending schools has risen with around 1.8 million children being affected. Increasingly, host-communities are unable to deal with the influx of IDP children - a product of pre-existing and urgent structural needs. Furthermore, with the geographic expansion of the conflict and reduced humanitarian access, the implementation of classical EiE responses has become more and more challenging. Food insecurity is also having a detrimental effect on advances in terms of access to and retention in education. Children are pulled out of school because families can no longer afford to send them to school – direct and indirect school fees as well as opportunity costs. Thus, both supply and demand for education has waned and advances in terms of enrolment, retention and transition have and are continuing to dwindle. Vulnerabilities and child protection risks have been aggravated, particularly for girls - sexual violence, early marriage, early pregnancy, child labour and forced recruitment. Adolescent (over-age) boys and girls are also further victimised often being excluded from education due to the absence of alternative and/or accelerated learning options.

Disaster preparedness

Armed conflicts, forced displacement and increased vulnerabilities, push more and more people into disaster-prone areas and reduce their coping capacities. Countries like Chad, CAR are just after South Sudan the countries with world's lowest coping capacity index²⁰. Climate change, environmental degradation, and rapid urbanisation, contribute to eroding livelihoods and incomes, making local communities less resilient to shocks and more reliant on assistance. Over the past 3 years (from 2019 to June 2022) the region

¹⁹ 12,000 schools closed at the time of writing of the HIP 2023

²⁰ INFORM Lack of Coping Capacity index mid 22

has registered more than 67 climate related events and more than 21 million people have been directly impacted²¹. The countries covered by this HIP are classified by the ND GAIN Country Index with the highest vulnerability to climate impacts affecting life-supporting sectors, such as food, water and infrastructure, and have the lowest capacities to implement adaptation solutions²².

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

(1) National / local response and involvement

In **Cameroon**, government-led Humanitarian Coordination Centres (HCC) were set up to coordinate the humanitarian response to the complex crisis unfolding in the NW/SW regions. As regards the refugee response, it is worth recalling that a Tripartite Agreement was signed in March 2017 between the Governments of Cameroon, Nigeria and UNHCR regarding Nigerian Refugees in Cameroon. Another Tripartite Agreement signed in June 2019 started UNHCR's coordinated and comprehensive cross-border programming on the voluntary repatriation of CAR refugees from Cameroon. Furthermore, the organisation in April 2022 of the Ministerial Conference on durable solutions in the context of Forced Displacement related to the CAR crisis along with the conclusions of this conference marked de facto the launch of the Central Africa support platform to durable solutions for the CAR refugees. Finally, while Cameroon might not currently possess a fully-fledged disaster risk management (DRM) strategy, this policy area is a key component of Cameroon's 2021 - 2030 National Development Strategy (NSD 2030), which is the key document for longer-term development planning.

The government of **CAR** depends largely on foreign assistance for the delivery of public services and the functioning of its administration as the part of external financing into the annual national budget exceeds 40%. Following the significant decrease of international assistance in 2022, the capacity of the authorities to contribute to the humanitarian response and coordination have further declined. Outside the capital Bangui, after the peak of instability that followed the presidential elections in 2021, the national armed forces, supported by the non-conventional forces of the private military contractor Wagner Group, regained control of most of the main cities in the country – yet significant parts of the country remain under the control of multiple armed groups, leading to continuous confrontations with the security and defence forces and its allies. The persistent insecurity and the limited presence of the administration and public servants render rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives more arduous, leaving a large part of the offer for basic services in the hands of international partners. Generally, dialogue at local level with the authorities to ensure access to the population for humanitarian aid is taking place without difficulties. Technical dialogue at central level varies among the different ministries. So far NGOs were able to operate in the country without many constraints (except security), but risks of administrative impediments and increasing control of the assistance cannot be excluded. With the support of the Humanitarian Coordinator, advocacy for the necessary preservation of principled humanitarian aid remains possible. While a National Strategy for Disaster preparedness and response was elaborated in 2022, the capacities of the authorities to prevent and manage disasters (floods, fires essentially...) remain very limited.

²¹ EM-DAT, CRED / UCLouvain, Brussels, Belgium, Aug 2022

²² July 2022- Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>

In **Chad**, dealing with the political transition and the security situation remain the main priorities of the government despite the country's weak crisis prevention and response capacities. In general, the Government acknowledges the magnitude of these crises as it was captured for instance earlier in 2022 through the emergency declaration in relation to the ongoing food crisis. Chad keeps her borders open and allows access to asylum-seekers and people fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries. The humanitarian response is conducted mainly by international partners who rely on national institutions that themselves depend on external funding to operate (National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees/CNARR, Early Warning Information System/SISAAP, Permanent Secretariat of NGOs and Humanitarian Affairs/SPONGAH, etc). Against this backdrop, the forthcoming creation of a Humanitarian Consultation Framework (HCN) under the leadership of the Prime Minister is likely to strengthen dialogue between the State and partners on humanitarian issues. At decentralised level, the governance of aid revolves around a pyramid of Action Committees (provincial, departmental, local levels) that have weak capacities on the one hand and erratic functioning on the other hand. While local communities are most often the first responders in the event of a sudden shock (floods and forced displacements of populations), the Chadian Red Cross also provides a local response given its presence throughout the country. It is noteworthy that despite the weak State capacity to implement disaster risk reduction and prevention approaches, Chad has acquired, over the years, a multi-layered policy framework for disaster management with a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and its action plan (December 2020) that is supported by multi-risk contingency plans at regional level. Chad has the lowest ND GAIN Index in the world (182/182).

In **Nigeria**, the main national actors at federal level for humanitarian assistance are the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, in charge of coordinating development investment and INGO registration, and the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHDS), created in 2019. The national response to the crisis in Northeast Nigeria is based on the Buhari Plan of rebuilding the Northeast, which covers emergency assistance, social stabilisation, protection and early recovery. The creation of the FMHDS and the recent constitution of different coordination platforms, to include the Presidential Committee on the Repatriation, Return and Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons in the North East of Nigeria, which was inaugurated in February 2022 and Chaired by the Vice President, demonstrate Nigeria's willingness to lead relief response in the country. This willingness is also felt at the sub-federal level. For instance, the Borno State Agency law, adopted in 2019, has certain restrictive provisions that may hamper the capacity of humanitarian aid organisations to provide aid in accordance with the humanitarian principle of independence.

In **Burkina Faso**, rapid changes in the political landscape, with a coup in January 2022, and a second coup in October 2022, create an uncertain context regarding the stance of the authorities vis-à-vis humanitarian action. The Transitional Authorities established following the January coup set the humanitarian response as the second most important priority of the National Transition Plan. In October 2022, the new Prime Minister confirmed the need to improve the living conditions of the people as second priority for the nation. The National Committee for Emergency Assistance and Recovery (CONASUR) struggles to have access to areas controlled by armed groups. CONASUR has a weak organisational capacity owing to limited and insufficient qualified staff. While humanitarian access is constrained severely under the current circumstances, local

NGOs, which converted from their traditional roles in development aid to embrace humanitarian action, play a vital part in the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance in the country. Considering the pace of the crisis, they have conducted direct implementation, starting off with limited capacity, especially in the field of security management and access negotiation. The current surveillance, early warning and response capacity to recurrent or sudden on-set shocks, epidemics and acute health and nutritional crisis is characterised by short-term project that are largely dependent on external actors. The set-up is inadequate in its current arrangements particularly so in areas prone to high security challenges. Most regions and municipalities do not have updated, tested and implemented contingency plans due to lack of resources and appropriate expertise. The national multi-hazard contingency plan is outdated in its current situation, and its update remains uncertain as all energies are focussed on the emergency response.

Mali is reeling from the 2021-2022 political crisis. The gradual increase in insecurity, the intensification of attacks by NSAG and the strengthening of military operations have resulted in significantly greater access constraints and shrinking humanitarian space – besides reducing the presence and capacity of the state to provide basic social services. As a result of low investment in national capacities in the social sectors and services, the response to the needs of crisis-affected populations is considered weak. Limited State presence in conflict-affected areas, together with limited resources available, and the country's high dependency on international funding, worsen the situation. While there is willingness to address the needs of the affected populations, the Ministry for Social Welfare (and the delegated ministry for humanitarian assistance, displaced and refugee populations, responsible for coordinating the emergency response), lacks resources. The National Response Plan (PNR - covering only Food Security needs) may cover less than 20% of food security needs identified by the cluster in 2022. In the same vein, the national budget may cover only 5.8% of national food needs identified by humanitarian actors, with important delays in its implementation. At decentralised and local levels, capacities are limited as transfer of resources from central government is very reduced. However, local authorities are involved and committed to helping their populations and facilitating the delivery of assistance to the extent that is possible. Local NGOs and civil society organisations are present in almost all regions and play an active part in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations, in coordination and partnership with international humanitarian actors. They are relatively well structured, notably with the existence of a national platform and permanent representation within the HCT. Finally, while preparedness strategies and contingency plans exist at central and decentralised levels, they are not adequately funded and supported, and often not updated to reflect the current challenging multi-crisis situations that Mali faces. Similarly, vulnerability to climate impacts affecting life-supporting sectors, such as food, water, and infrastructure, remains a challenge (Mali ND GAIN Index is 170/182). Civil Protection (CP) services seem well trained and equipped with an adequate response capacity regarding small scale events (i.e., floods), albeit they are characterised by a centralised governance structure.

Since 2021, the government in **Mauritania** has demonstrated increased efforts and willingness to respond to emergency needs of both the internal population and the Malian refugees. The government has carried out significant reforms showing a sense of ownership, as illustrated by the increase in scope of the adaptive shock-responsive social

protection programme for the 2022 lean season response. Both “Taazour”²³ and the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (CSA) are gaining momentum in the response to food and nutrition crisis and other shocks such as floods. The introduction of health insurance for the poorest households and the extension of the government’s regular safety net programme “Tekavoul” to cover the most vulnerable refugee households in Mberra camp in 2022 are positive developments. Furthermore, the Government honoured its engagement to progressively take over the procurement of nutritional inputs, even though the full supply chain covering the last mile delivery remains an issue. Despite this, Government’s capacity to manage the Social Register remains a key concern. Political and ethnic considerations often underpin Government targeting processes while the lack of access to civil documentation, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised communities, contributes to exclusion. The forthcoming exploitation of a large natural gas field off the coast of Mauritania promises an increase in the state’s resources that would allow it to accelerate its development, provided that the risks associated with the “curse” of natural resources are avoided.

In **Niger**, the main national actor in charge of humanitarian affairs is the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Crisis Management (MAH/GC), which leads the coordination of humanitarian action throughout the country. The *Dispositif National de Prévention et Gestion des Crises Alimentaires* (DNP-GCA), under the direct authority of the Prime Minister, is tasked to elaborate a yearly Support Plan to cover the needs of people in nutritional and food insecurity and ensure its implementation in coordination with the international humanitarian community. The humanitarian strategy and its implementation plan are based both on the Support Plan of DNP-GCA and on the UN-led Humanitarian Response Plan, jointly presented and signed off by the government of Niger. The capacity of the State to provide basic social services, including education, health, nutrition, social safety nets and seasonal food assistance, remains low, particularly in areas affected by conflict dynamics. Insecurity, encompassing incidents involving humanitarian actors, drives the government’s resolve to take unilateral administrative measures – notably the imposition of armed escorts unanimously refused by humanitarian actors.

(2) International Humanitarian Response

HRP funding and coverage (USD, end of November 2022)

Country	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	CAR	Chad	Mali	Niger	Nigeria
2022 HRP funding needs	805 million	376 million	461.3 million	511 million	685 million	553 million	1.12 billion
2022 HRP funding	272.8 million	131.4 million	361.1 million	214.8 million	230.35 million	264.3 million	599.24 million
% of funding needs covered	33.9%	34.9%	78.3%	42%	33.6%	47.8%	53.2%

In **Cameroon**, international humanitarian assistance plays a vital role in the response to the unfolding crises. However, the lack of humanitarian and development financing for Cameroon limits joint planning and programming opportunities on a larger scale. In 2022, the bulk of humanitarian financing is provided by the US Government followed by

²³ Délégation Generale à la Solidarité nationale et à la Lutte contre l’exclusion

the EU representing respectively 58.3% and 18.5% of the 2022 HRP financial needs. At the end of 2021, 224 humanitarian organisations (12 UN agencies, 36 INGOs, 150 national NGOs, 4 members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, 20 Government agencies and the donor community) were involved in the coordinated delivery of principled humanitarian aid in Cameroon.

In **CAR**, an important UN integrated mission, MINUSCA (15 000 staff), is present and led by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The mandate of the mission, which includes protection of the civil population and support for secured delivery of humanitarian assistance among its priorities, is expected to be renewed in November 2022. The humanitarian sector is under the lead of a Deputy Special / Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator. The main humanitarian donors are the US, Germany, Sweden, Canada, the EU and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). There is a common CAR Humanitarian Fund in place, managed by the Humanitarian Coordinator with the support of OCHA. HRP funding has been comparatively high in CAR over the recent years. However, the current political context is resulting in the suspension of development and macroeconomic support programs, which is impacting economic activity and reducing the ability of State structures to provide social services in particular.

In **Chad**, the humanitarian architecture is under the lead of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (HC/RC). In 2021, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) experienced a historically low level of funding (35%), and the trend has only slightly improved in 2022 (see table above). The main humanitarian donors besides the EU are the US (BHA/BPRM), with a focus on Food Aid, nutrition and RRM (Rapid Response Mechanism) and Refugee Response. Other significant contributors are Germany (to UN agencies only), Sweden, Canada, France, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, France and Italy are direct contributors to national NGOs. Following the Food Emergency declaration on 1 June 2022, the World Bank activated the Contingency Emergency Response Component and funded key UN crisis response agencies. Finally, the CERF (the UN-led Central Emergency Response Fund) is regularly activated in Chad.

In **Nigeria**, the current humanitarian response is primarily targeting the North East crisis, driven by conflict between non-state armed groups and the Nigerian army. As a result, in-country humanitarian coordination arrangements within the traditional UN-led system are in place in North-East Nigeria through dedicated fora/working groups, while UNCT and HCT take place in Abuja. Food assistance, health and nutrition, protection, and WASH and shelter and support for operations are priority sectors of ECHO in Nigeria. The EU/ECHO is leading actor in humanitarian advocacy in Nigeria as the ongoing crisis in the North East is characterised by a growing number of IHL violations. Needs are also increasing in the North West of the country, but access challenges limit the presence and action of humanitarian partners; the North West is thus not yet covered in the HRP, but this might change soon. The main bilateral humanitarian donors are the US with a focus on food security, health and WASH, the EU and Germany, with a regional approach on the Lake Chad Basin, as well as the UK. Sweden, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Norway, Belgium and the Country Pool Fund are other key humanitarian donors. OCHA office in Maiduguri is central to ensuring coordination in the North East, including civil-military coordination.

In **Burkina Faso**, humanitarian coordination scaled up in 2019 when the cluster system was activated. While the humanitarian response is boosted with the arrival of new

humanitarian partners particularly in 2021-22, the overall coordination system remains only partly efficient, as was underlined by a recent peer-to-peer mission. UN agencies largely resort to localisation in order to implement their activities in the field and overcome access issues. The initial 2022 HRP required USD 591 million but was updated in September to USD 805 million to reflect ever growing needs; the coverage remains low. Burkina Faso is the second most neglected crisis in the world²⁴. Major funding gaps are observed in protection, education and Site management. Some major donors (e.g., FCDO and the US) have decreased their funding while DG ECHO has increased it. Donor coordination is functional and has led to concrete synergies around common priorities such as Access/CMCoord, Protection and Rapid Response but also food security and health services.

Mali hosts the UN integrated mission MINUSMA whose mandate was renewed until June 2023 without full agreement with Malian authorities on the Human Right mandate of the mission. The humanitarian architecture is under the lead of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General / Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator in Mali (DSRSG /HC/RC) seconded by a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator. The main humanitarian donors besides the EU are the US, with a focus on Food security / nutrition and RRM (Rapid Response Mechanism); the CERF fund focusing on local NGOs funding, Canada, with a focus on health and food security; the UK and Germany, with a focus on food security and nutrition. Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and France are also relevant donors. DG ECHO is part of the Good Humanitarian Donorship group with US, UK, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Canada, and Denmark. This group coordinates with the GEC (*Groupe Exécutif de Coordination*, gathering all technical and financial partners in Mali) which is hosting all thematic and dialogue groups with the government of Mali.

Mauritania has not been covered by humanitarian response plans since 2019. Humanitarian food and nutrition needs are regularly monitored and responded to by a range of partners (UN agencies, NGOs and Red Cross movement). According to OCHA, humanitarian funding has significantly decreased, from USD 75.5 million in 2020 to USD 38.2 million in 2021 and 30.3 million in 2022. Food, nutrition and needs of forcibly displaced people constitute the main priorities of key humanitarian donors in the country (US, EU, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and Germany). In 2022, CERF pool-fund mechanism was mobilised to respond to needs of newly forcibly displaced in the East of the Country (both Malian refugees and Mauritanian settled in Mali). Despite the absence of a cluster architecture, Government-led coordination is progressively starting, notably for food and nutrition under the umbrella of the DCAN (national framework for prevention and response to food and nutrition crisis). Humanitarian donors are progressively phasing out longer-term investments are required to cope with recurrent and structural needs of the most vulnerable.

In **Niger**, besides DG ECHO, the US government remains the main contributor to the Plan (supporting food, nutrition, RRM, multisectoral assistance to refugees), along with Germany (supporting food, nutrition, displaced population), Canada, Sweden and FDCO that also support the multisectoral assistance. At national level, the standard humanitarian architecture, led by the HCT, is in place with clusters and inter-cluster coordination as well as a humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination mechanism, an Access Working

²⁴ <https://www.nrc.no/news/2022/june/the-worlds-ten-most-neglected-crises-are-all-in-africa/>

Group and an RRM Strategic Group. The same architecture is being decentralised at regional level.

(3) **Operational constraints in terms of:**

i) access/humanitarian space:

Security threats

Conflict-affected areas are characterised by a multiplication of armed groups, a volatile security situation and an overall limited knowledge and respect of IHL. Humanitarian organisations are also increasingly affected by criminality in areas with low or no State presence. As at mid-2022, the number of security incidents-related fatalities (in the countries covered by this HIP) affecting humanitarian workers exceeded the 2021 figure.

Non respect of humanitarian principles

In Mali and Burkina Faso, blockades of villages by NSAGs, which resulted in the disruption of supply routes that equally compounded access to services, livelihoods and assistance, contravenes the obligation of the parties to the conflict to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. Similarly, National Government legislations equally constrain access severely. In Nigeria, the obligation for humanitarian actors to work only in zones controlled by the military is a breach of the principle of neutrality. In the same vein, several governments (such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria) in the region, are either formally prohibiting or not clearly authorising the dialogue with NSAGs, as part of their counter terrorism measures, thus obstructing the delivery of assistance in areas under the control of these actors. In Cameroon, humanitarian health assistance has been increasingly criminalised, leading to the detention of humanitarian workers. In Nigeria and Niger, the imposition of armed escorts on all international organisations undermines the capacity to provide neutral humanitarian relief, and limits access of humanitarian organisations in areas with presence of non-state armed groups.

Blurring of lines

Humanitarian access in the region lies in the capacity of humanitarian actors to be perceived and recognised as neutral, impartial, and independent. Any misperception of the humanitarian objective endangers humanitarian workers and jeopardises hard-won humanitarian gains considering the lack of access (to people in need) that ensues. Therefore, it is crucial to preserve the humanitarian space and prevent the blurring of lines between humanitarian and military, security, stabilisation or political agendas. Against this backdrop, a functional CMCOORD is an essential framework to enhance mutual understanding of roles and mandates, to maintain a clear distinction between humanitarian and military actors. Practices such as the use of armed escorts by humanitarian actors or the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) implemented by national and international armed forces to "win the hearts and minds" of populations, create a risk of confusion between humanitarian and military activities. Clarity on the operationalisation of the triple nexus agenda is necessary to avoid blurring the lines between humanitarian and other objectives. In some situations, in particular those where acute levels of conflict are prevalent, the expectations of a (HDP) Nexus-driven approach at the operational level may not be appropriate as it could undermine principled

humanitarian response. However, joint conflict analysis and collective humanitarian advocacy could still be relevant and reinforce a Nexus approach.

ii) partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground:

Partners' implementation capacities are stretched in areas newly affected by insecurity. Options for international actors to work with local implementing partners exist in the region and DG ECHO encourages the identification of opportunities for a locally based response built on fair partnership that includes provision for a safe and secure provision of aid that avoids an ill-prepared transfer of risk to local responders.

iii) other:

Logistical challenges are often hindering the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the region. The poor quality of infrastructure, notably roads and airstrips, present a serious challenge for an effective and efficient humanitarian response. In addition, the closure of roads due to floods and/or insecurity/fighting restricts the movement of humanitarian actors and prevents the affected populations from accessing humanitarian services. Transportation to secondary locations, hard-to-reach areas and towns or villages under blockade requires expensive operations and can limit the capacity of the humanitarian community to provide common services and ensure last mile delivery. Such logistical issues require coordinated efforts with suppliers and transportation partners.

The growing insecurity and complexification of access requires adequate and specific means that have an impact on the cost of operations. Besides dedicated means in individual actions, DG ECHO will consider funding mutualised services supporting the safeguarding of humanitarian space and access such as coordination services including the ones under OCHA's mandate, INGO forums, as well as security and logistics services. To remain effective and efficient, DG ECHO expects its partners to make the best use of existing mutualised services and to ensure that new initiatives in this respect are strongly coordinated with them.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

Coordination, complementarity and continuity of action with development counterparts, concerned authorities, other Commission services, the EEAS, EU Member States and other donors is paramount to building a shared vision, focusing on consistent investment in social services and building the resilience of the most vulnerable in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030 and the Team Europe approach. The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe is the main EU instrument to provide external development assistance through multi-annual indicative programmes or through individual measures.

The West and Central Africa region offers numerous examples of coordination, complementarity and synergies. In Mauritania, DG ECHO is piloting an exit strategy from humanitarian aid using the triple nexus approach to ensure a smooth transition to development support for all sectors of intervention as well as for refugee response in M'Bera camp. There are also interesting synergies between humanitarian and development aid in the sectors of food security and nutrition in the Sahel belt in Chad. The issue of IDP returnees in Niger, and the need to put in place sustainable conditions of return based on international conventions, is treated under a triple nexus angle. The

regional approach supported by development funding from DG INTPA²⁵ is now spearheading the implementation of the agenda on durable solutions for CAR refugees in the neighbouring countries, including Chad and Cameroon. Widespread conflict, such as in North East Nigeria (Borno State particularly) and in various areas of Burkina Faso, is limiting the scope for a joined-up approach between development and humanitarian aid in the field. Another challenge is the change of geopolitical context in countries such as CAR and Mali, which is leading to the suspension or reprogramming of development programs, including macro-economic support. The nexus opportunities in these countries need to be reassessed in light of these new aid dynamics. The transition phase that several countries in the region are undergoing before a return to civilian rule, in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad (in addition to Mali) is also changing the priorities of development partners, and their relations with the public authorities in these countries. This has also an effect on the development agenda and by extension, on the nexus opportunities available there.

EU-funded projects in the area of defence and security forces (CFSP, FPI, EPF) also provide opportunities to develop a common understanding of the contexts and vulnerabilities within the different EU services. Such projects can also be good gateways to ensure that the forces in question are trained on IHL and the protection of civilians.

In **Cameroon**, since the endorsement in October 2019 of the Nexus Task Force's collective outcomes by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach has been integrated into successive Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026. The HDP collective outcomes are also linked to the World Bank Country Partnership Framework (CPF), the World Bank Lake Chad Region, Recovery and Development Project, and the World Bank IDA²⁶RSW (Refugee Sub-Window) for refugees and host communities. There is a country-specific nexus roadmap exists, and its successful rollout assumes that all stakeholders will embrace its content and vision collectively.

The EU commitment to the HDP nexus may be captured specifically through two of the three priority areas of the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) national programme that offer scope to advance the nexus approach in Cameroon, namely: democratisation, peace, governance and stabilisation (on the promotion of IHL and the delivery of social services in conflict affected areas), and the Green Deal (on disaster preparedness and food security). Nexus opportunities also arise from global tools such as the Education Cannot Wait initiative, both in NW/SW and the Far North of Cameroon.

In **CAR**, the Bêkou Fund, although nearing its end, remains a good illustration of nexus operationalisation in CAR. The recent mobilisation of residual funding enabled the continuation of several Bêkou actions (some ending in 2024) that provide useful complementarities with the humanitarian response. This is particularly the case in the areas of health, wash, rural development and economic recovery. Other linkages are envisaged in the context of the implementation of NDICI. This is notably the case in the

²⁵ The department for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) is responsible for formulating the EU's international partnership and development policy.

²⁶ International Development Association

health sector where the EU launched new partnerships in 2022 that complements recent engagements from the World Bank (SENI+) and the French cooperation (AFD) in support of the public health services in the country. Additional opportunities for the nexus are expected in the education sector, combining ECHO EiE actions in ‘hot-spot’ areas with programs foreseen in the education sector under the national MIP managed by the EU Delegation, which could be targeting specifically displaced populations. Other sectors where linkages with NDICI actions could materialise include protection and gender as well as agri-food systems.

Chad is one of the 6 EU pilot countries chosen for the implementation of the triple nexus approach. The Nexus Task Force created in 2020 is bringing together the main donors and development banks, with the aim of further institutionalising an already strong collaboration between DG ECHO and the EU Delegation, whilst at the same time enlarging the coordination framework to EU Member States, other like-minded donors and the World Bank. The Task Force is following the OECD/DAC Recommendation on the Triple Nexus and its objective is to guide and supervise the operationalisation of the nexus, with a view to strengthening coordination and partnerships.

Based on a joint analysis of needs and risks, a ‘Nexus/Territorial Approach’ group bringing together members of the Task Force and the main implementing partners including WFP and FAO, seek to align their strategic food security and nutrition decisions, thus allowing for a coordinated, efficient and effective response to food crises. Joint inter-donor missions for needs assessments are organised regularly.

DG ECHO and INTPA, together with other donors like AFD, have also joined forces to better address the mixed situation of forced displacement in the country where protracted displacement coexists with new influx of populations fleeing violence and conflicts. In the host area for Sudanese refugees (East of the country), ECHO and INTPA are exploring the possibilities of complementary funding to both anticipate and respond to new shocks while pursuing actions in favour of the socio-economic resilience of refugee and host populations. The search for synergy also prevails between humanitarian and development programming in the Lac Province.

In **Nigeria**, the EU has been operationalising the Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework since 2015 and the country is now one of the six EU nexus pilot countries. On top of yearly humanitarian support, the EU has since 2017 invested close to EUR 350 million in the Northeast through several instruments (the EU Trust Fund for Africa, the European Development Fund, the IcSP; and thematic lines) in close coordination with other nexus actors such as FCDO, GIZ and the World Bank.

Advocacy on IHL remains a strong part of the peace component of the nexus, especially in the North East where the political agenda pursued can run counter to the rights of forcibly displaced people, as shown by the recent decisions made on camp closures or refugee returns, and undermine a principled humanitarian response. Implementing the peace component of the triple nexus also implies a consistent and well-coordinated position of the EU on the stabilisation agenda applying to North East Nigeria but also the broader Lake Chad region. Advancement in the triple nexus approach must be based on robust conflict analysis identifying the potential risks for the civilian populations and for aid workers, and taken forward in a “do no harm” approach that protects the respect of humanitarian principles in areas of active conflict. The 3 priority areas of the national Multiannual Indicative Programme of NDICI for Nigeria in 2021-2024 offer various opportunities for the advancement of the triple nexus approach: Green economy (including food security sector); Governance and peace; and Human development for

poverty reduction (including social protection, education and development). There are several sectors such as Education, DRR, social protection and Durable Solutions that seem promising for further implementation of the triple nexus approach, especially between DG INTPA and DG ECHO in Nigeria in 2023.

In **Burkina Faso**, despite the conflict that has challenged various gains from the past, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus remains very much on the agenda of all stakeholders. In particular, the pressing need to scale up resilience and livelihood restoration activities to prevent a spiralling cycle of food insecurity and malnutrition that could only fuel conflict and social tensions even further, is commonly acknowledged. Basic state presence in essential services such as education, health and water in many areas (including in conflict-affected ones) may also enable an adapted development support to local structures.

Humanitarian Coordination architecture, development coordination institutionalised frames as well as the recently created Peace Consolidation Group are existing assets that could boost Nexus joint programming. Within the European Commission as well as in the Team Europe format, concrete opportunities have been considered in the field of resilience and health which should provide results in 2023 at the earliest as the bilateral cooperation and budget support (Troika estimate of 600M USD) suspended after the coup resumed in July 2022.

In **Mali**, previous gains of the nexus (particularly in the area of structural food and nutrition security, and National Nexus task force initiatives) are now being challenged. Even if the coordination mechanism in place favours HD nexus planning, concrete opportunities for nexus between EU instruments are limited in this context. Political considerations impact the way of working and areas of concentration of development and stabilisation donors, including EU and EUMS cooperation. Increased insecurity, violence against civilians, IHL and IHRL violations, and consequent access constraints make nexus more complicated. However, EU joint programming in Mali²⁷ is still effective and active (action plan 2020-2024). Three Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) are pursued: (i) Youth; (ii) environment / climate; and (iii) “stabilisation / basic services”. DG ECHO participates in the third TEI group to promote support to the reestablishment of basic social services and Humanitarian-Development (HD) nexus approach. The 2021-2024 NDICI has three priority areas, aligned with European joint programming: (i) Improving the functioning of the State; (ii) Job creation promoting the green economy; and (iii) Meeting human/basic needs (focus on access to education and access to food security combined with correct nutrition). In financial terms, 70% of the funds will be programmed over the period 2021-2024. The current political situation has not made it possible to unlock all the planned actions on the 2021 AAP, with uncertainty on actions under the 2022 AAP. At programmatic level, EU instrument complementarity is expected between food assistance and longer-term programmes in support of food security and nutrition through WFP (CRIALCES) as well as with a new resilience programme funded under 2021 AAP. In addition, DG ECHO works in close collaboration with the Swiss cooperation to pursue actions initiated on HD complementarity programming in the protection sector. Within the development partners’ coordination platform (GEC), the thematic working group “support for programming in conflict affected areas /*commission appui à la programmation dans les zones affectées*

²⁷ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/mali?tab=jpt>

par le conflit” is active under the lead of MINUSMA stabilisation unit. DG ECHO is part of this group, aiming at promoting pilot areas for nexus implementation.

Mauritania presents a conducive context to operationalise the nexus “security, resilience, development”. The humanitarian modus operandi fails to leverage real and sustainable improvements. The situation in Mauritania calls for more long-term investment to improve food and nutrition security, support basic social services, and the development of economic opportunities in deprived areas. Moreover, strengthening the preparedness and response system through early warning and social protection systems is key to reducing the humanitarian burden. The World Bank is co-funding the establishment and functioning of the “*Dispositif National de prevention et de response au crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles*” (DCAN). It significantly supports the Government in expanding its shock responsive social safety nets for the most vulnerable that is reducing the humanitarian burden. Both WB and EU are reinforcing health systems. Particular attention is needed to advocate for increased shared responsibility with development actors in building the self-reliance of Malian refugees living in the Hodh El Chargui willaya since 2012, boosting economic opportunities for both refugees and local populations, and supporting climate change adaptation. A development cell has been set up in Hodh El Chargui to promote nexus operationalisation according to a territorial approach not linked to the status of people, and including durable solutions for education of forcibly displaced children. Actions supported by both humanitarian and development donors should be envisaged to support complementarity between various mandates of actors to retain gains achieved so far. The nexus must be brought into the policy dialogue with the Government to better understand its capacity to fill structural gaps with development actors’ support, such as those currently covered by humanitarians.

In **Niger**, an institutional nexus framework led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Crisis Management (*Comité Technique Tripartite Nexus Urgence Développement*) is trying to strengthen capacity at decentralised level to ensure coherence and coordination between short-term emergency actions and longer-term programmes. In 2022 this Committee adopted an operational orientation note about the returns of IDPs with the plan of reconcile the objectives and contributions of humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors according to their respective mandates for coordinated and complementary action combining immediate and durable solutions.

There is scope for better articulation between the DG ECHO and more structural EU support aiming at strengthening crisis management governance mechanisms at national and decentralised level and work is ongoing in that direction. Coordination remains important between development and humanitarian actors to maintain the past gains related to food security and nutrition, and to make the best of the Nutrition Transition Roadmap still supported by the EU Delegation until the end of 2022. Another possibility would be to better link DG ECHO’s support to emergency responses and specific shocks with a broader recovery by the State services (post-RRM approach) with the support of EU-funded projects in support of the defence and security forces (CFSP, FPI, EPF) also provide opportunities to develop a common understanding of the contexts and vulnerabilities within the different EU services. Such projects can also be good gateways to ensure that the forces in question are trained on IHL and the protection of civilians.

5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

The response strategy under the 2023 HIP will address the growing needs across the region, fuelled by country-specific factors such as political instability or the increase in conflict, climatic factors such as the disappointing rainfalls in the previous year, as well by the global trend of inflation related to food items, agricultural inputs and petrol (for the transport of food items and agricultural inputs). The HIP 2023 response is complemented by other support efforts, including actions funded under Commission Decision C(2022)6535 of 7 September 2022²⁸, as well as actions funded under the 2022 HIP which continue into 2023.

The context in the region also requires determined action to advocate for and support an enabling environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid. In order to enhance access and effectiveness of humanitarian action, DG ECHO will keep supporting humanitarian coordination, humanitarian air services, logistics, humanitarian safety and information-gathering on safety. The mobilisation of EHRC (European Humanitarian Response Capacity)²⁹ and ECHO Flights will possibly contribute to DG ECHO's response to specific needs related to logistics and, more specifically, air services. The same objective also implies partnerships, where relevant, for the promotion of IHL and effective humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination.

In addition, and as part of preparedness within the humanitarian response, support to RRM's will be provided if there is added value in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and timeliness of the response. The focus will be on issues linked to the humanitarian priorities, such as food or nutrition crises and enhanced capacities to react to forced displacement. This approach should integrate early measures to address access in hard-to-reach areas. These mechanisms should seek complementarity with existing coordination structures, while progressively handing over to national or local mechanisms when possible. The use of Crisis Modifiers will be considered where adequate.

A permanent field presence and efficient communication/reporting lines (within the organisation and with DG ECHO) are required from all partners to deliver more effective assistance respecting quality standards; to enhance protection through field presence and negotiations on access; to increase accountability and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; to minimise fiduciary risks; and to strengthen security management.

While DG ECHO receives an annual budget and most of the projects it funds run within that timeframe, in 2023 DG ECHO will also continue to support **multi-year projects**³⁰ when these can demonstrate efficiency gains and a sound operational logic, for example in the framework of nexus approaches, disaster preparedness actions or Education in Emergencies. Multi-year projects are fully resourced upfront.

⁽²⁸⁾ C(2022) 6535 final - COMMISSION DECISION of 7.9.2022 on the financing of a special measure for humanitarian assistance in favour of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to be financed from the 10th and 11th European Development Funds (EDF) following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine for 2022.

²⁹ Cf. section 5.2 of this document.

³⁰ 24 months or more

When deemed strategically relevant, DG ECHO will also continue to support **programmatic partnerships (PP)** with INGOs holding a programmatic partnership certificate, UN agencies and/or the Red Cross/Crescent family, if these can demonstrate in a convincing manner the added value of the proposed multiannual strategy, an innovative character and clear efficiency gains as compared to an annual intervention. PPs can be implemented through multi-year funding (fully resourced upfront) or through a staged approach, where funding is allocated annually.

For West and Central Africa, DG ECHO will consider proposals for Programmatic Partnerships in the following sectors: education in emergency, protection, nutrition, health, logistics and RRM. DG ECHO's interest is mainly driven by the expected benefits that this type of multi-annual strategy might yield, in terms of increased outcomes, cost efficiency and economies of scale, and strategic dialogue on policy priorities such as the triple nexus or localisation. Such benefits will have to be demonstrated at proposal stage.

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

Humanitarian Protection

Preventing and responding to threats and strengthening protection capacities to mitigate protection vulnerabilities remains one of DG ECHO's core priorities. To achieve this, DG ECHO will support a range of activities that include case management services to all victims of human rights violations that includes SGBV survivors and children affected by armed conflicts. Multisectoral mobile teams equipped to provide rapid protection responses and to respond to protection needs following the displacement of populations or rapid onset emergency situations, and in coordination with rapid response mechanisms (RRM), will be highly valued. Psychological first aid should be mainstreamed into all responses, while Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services will be needs based and context appropriate. Activities aimed at monitoring and promoting compliance to IHL, IHRL, and Refugee law are highly valued, as are actions aimed at strengthening risk management capacities and duty of care to better protect and safeguard humanitarian workers. Additionally, activities to prevent and respond to the recruitment and use of children, as well as child protection rapid responses, (including for Unaccompanied And Separated Children - UASC) that are able to provide children with dignified, safe and protective environments are considered important. Protection monitoring activities should be coupled with the provision of relevant and appropriate individual protection related assistance, or case management services. The collected data should be integrated into an advocacy strategy. DG ECHO is particularly interested in supporting protection and gender interventions that demonstrate context specific and needs based analysis and that can be explained using the protection risk equation.

Food Assistance

The most acute food needs of conflict-affected households and communities, irrespective of their status (forcibly displaced, hosts and locals) should be addressed as rapidly as possible. The response should be delivered as a priority in areas with the highest level of new IDPs in IPC/CH Phase 3+ (IPC/CH Phase 4 areas in priority) and where food gaps not captured by IPC/CH are identified (Hard-to-reach/under blockage). DG ECHO will prioritise rapid food assistance to sudden and unforeseen shocks, in particular Rapid Response Mechanisms (RRM) to forcibly displaced people and post-RRM based on vulnerability analysis. Secondly, DG ECHO will support the lean season response in IPC/CH 3+ areas with aggravating factors such as conflict areas, areas under

blockage and areas where national systems are not present anymore. Thirdly, DG ECHO will consider food assistance to protracted forcibly displaced populations (IDPs or Refugees) only based on a robust context and vulnerability analysis and where it is clearly established that food insecurity is conjunctural and not structural, and is linked to humanitarian priorities. In protracted crises, DG ECHO will support food assistance in the period of greatest needs, and not on an annual basis (except if strongly justified by the context - areas under blockade, for example – and based on a sound technical analysis of the food needs). Finally, based on strong justification, DG ECHO might consider funding emergency livelihood recovery actions with a clear focus on increasing direct food consumption for the most crisis-affected over the timeframe of the project.

Targeting should be justified based on the severity of food needs³¹ and should demonstrate how the poorest who have not yet been assisted (national safety net included) will be reached³². While the household targeting process might contribute to the establishment of national social registries, these should not necessarily be used as the main entry points for targeting. The response will support food assistance based on a sound risk analysis including protection and conflict sensitivity and will, whenever possible, promote rapid and anticipatory actions. DG ECHO endeavours to promote the use of cash transfers, when appropriate, in the interest of the affected populations, of cost-efficiency and of effectiveness. The response will adopt the most appropriate modalities and delivery mechanisms (preferably electronics ones) to respond to the identified gaps in the food diet. The analysis of food gaps at household level will be considered to determine the size of the food basket, so as to enable vulnerable households to reach 2 100 Kcal/p/day for at least three consecutive months with an acceptable diet in quality and quantity, and according to their level of vulnerability. It will be adapted to the household size with a maximum size and solid and reported verification mechanisms. It will also consider energy needs for cooking, taking into account the environmental (energy) impact of different food options. All food assistance and emergency livelihood interventions must be designed with a clear protection mainstreaming lens and conflict sensitive approach and in the respect of all humanitarian principals.

Nutrition

DG ECHO-supported nutrition response shall be as much as possible integrated with health assistance, and partners are requested to ensure that the needs of both sectors are systematically addressed when either is concerned. The nutrition-specific response will focus on the screening and treatment of severe acute undernutrition in children under 5 in areas where the humanitarian needs exceed the national response capacity. Conflict-affected populations (internally displaced, refugees, returnees, host and local communities) are therefore expected to be the main target population for nutrition assistance as they face high malnutrition rates and poor access to public services. Notwithstanding integration with health and the national healthcare systems (HR, supplies, facilities), partners shall ensure adequate performance and free treatment for the beneficiaries. When integration into a public healthcare system is not possible, partners are expected to develop appropriate strategies to maintain access to services (i.e., external human resources, mobile setup, etc.), and to submit and work toward an exit strategy.

³¹ Through the HEA principles: Household Economy Approach

³² Exceptions can be considered if sound verification processes are established to eliminate inclusion errors and if partners can identify people in acute needs who are excluded from national registries.

While responding to humanitarian nutrition needs, DG ECHO partners are also expected to empower local actors (community health workers, qualified healthcare staff, district officials, etc.) to become effective and independent in screening undernutrition, monitoring the nutrition situation and the CMAM (Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition) performance, anticipating and addressing peaks, managing supplies, treating children, and counselling caretakers, e.g., for IYCF³³ promotion. The nutrition response can be integrated into RRM to provide quick and short-term³⁴ assistance in case of sudden onset crises involving a limited number of people. One-off nutrition assessments, including SMART (Standardises Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) surveys, can be supported to quickly measure the prevalence of undernutrition and other indicators of humanitarian relevance in areas likely to face an acute crisis and in view of a possible scaling up of the response. Coordination mechanisms for enhanced preparedness and response, contributing to strengthening local capacities with a clear humanitarian focus, can be considered for funding. Care should be taken to adequately deal with the waste originating from the response. DG ECHO will consider proposals for Programmatic Partnerships in the nutrition sector in view of the expected benefits that this type of multiannual strategy might yield, in terms of increased outcomes, cost efficiency and economies of scale, and strategic dialogue on policy priorities such as the triple nexus or localisation.

Health

While acknowledging that all components of the health system need reinforcing, DG ECHO interventions will prioritise targeting populations outside the reach of health authorities (i.e., reopening of health facilities) – including for insecurity reasons – focusing on primary healthcare but ensuring continuity of care for both war wounded and medical referrals. Accessibility of health services must be guaranteed for all affected populations. These interventions may involve reopening of health facilities, RRM, mobile clinics or other outreach approaches aiming to provide temporary integrated medical, nutrition and protection (MHPSS and GBV) services where public health facilities are no longer operational.

A second priority should be addressing the health needs of newly displaced populations in a comprehensive and cost-efficient manner. Where existing health services are overwhelmed, temporary approaches may be envisaged. The duration of the support needs to be discussed in advance with the health authorities and agreed with DG ECHO.

Only when interventions addressing these first two priorities have been resourced could support to other health interventions be considered with the remaining funds.

It is important that all types of health services are organised to screen all the children on their vaccine and nutrition status and ensure all undernourished children are adequately treated. Quality of services in referral structures should also be assessed and ensured by partners (from complicated malnutrition cases to obstetrical emergencies to medical care for SGBV). Support to secondary healthcare should be accompanied by a detailed plan of action for each health facility to be supported (i.e., list of staff provided, medical equipment and supplies donated, syllabus of trainings to be funded, etc.). Care should be

³³ Infant and young child feeding

³⁴ The duration should take account of the fact that the average length of stay in the outpatient exceeds 30 days

taken to adequately and safely deal with the healthcare waste (including hazardous waste) originating from the response.

Given the high occurrence of epidemics in the region, a timely response to epidemics remains a regional priority. Measures to strengthen existing Early Warning Systems (EWS) can be proposed. Partners must also indicate their capacity to intervene in the event of an epidemic.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), shelters and settlements

There is a need to increase and improve access to safe water and adequate sanitation, and to upgrade WASH facilities/services, their management and sustainability, including environmental sustainability, notably by promoting self-reliance while ensuring access to the most vulnerable ones. Depending on the magnitude of the needs, standalone WASH and Shelter projects can be considered where relevant. Priority in all interventions will be given to IDP sites, host communities burdened with significant caseloads of forcibly displaced populations, with high human concentrations, rendering them prone to the spread of epidemics. In a fragile environmental context such as the Sahel or the Lake Chad regions, the realisation of new water supply facilities shall integrate their possible negative impact on the local environment in line with existing good practices and assessment tools. Support to short term water solutions such as water trucking should be justified and can be foreseen only on the condition of a reasonable exit strategy. Safer, smarter and more environment friendly shelters are also elements to be considered, including for returnee households. Camp / site coordination and camp management (CCCM) needs to be reinforced, informed, and better covered to actually target and reach humanitarian guidelines.

Education in Emergencies (EiE)

The primary target of EiE projects are conflict-affected, hard to reach, forcibly displaced, out-of-school children (IDPs, refugees, returnees) in camps and in host communities. When planning the response, a thorough analysis of the context is essential, not only from a political and security perspective but also in terms of what educational services are on offer and what is considered ‘acceptable’ or not – especially in a context where education is under attack. Continued advocacy and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) is paramount. Within this framework, DG ECHO considers that there are clear links to be made with larger DP initiatives, where the school contingency planning is a leverage for integrated community level SSD and DP implementation as well as introducing environmental awareness and greening initiatives³⁵. This work prepares the foundations for the anticipatory preparedness actions for the sector. Furthermore, it is crucial that partners identify and analyse the multiple barriers to education (social, cultural, economic, gender, linguistic, status, geographic, etc.). DG ECHO’s funding cannot focus on repairing the structural deficiencies of the system but can act as a catalyst to work in complementarity with development donors to build the nexus bridge, notably with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the World Bank and the Agence française de développement (AFD). More specifically, in deciding what educational response is most appropriate, partners must undertake a thorough profiling of children (age, gender, time out of school,

³⁵ These initiatives, like the digitalisation agenda should however not introduced at the detriment of the core business of EiE actors.

never been to school, etc.) and continue testing, piloting and innovating, providing the entire range of accelerated education options as well as other alternative programmes to increase access to learning. DG ECHO wishes to continue to see partners providing critical psychosocial support (PSS) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) support to children as well as their educators, recognising the direct impact that teacher well-being has on learning. In 2023, DG ECHO will favour actions that analyse the issue of language at all phases of the programme cycle but specifically those that pay attention to what is happening in the classroom.

Expanding rapid EiE responses will be necessary but in order to do this, efforts to improve coordination of actors (development and humanitarian) within the sector will be essential. Furthermore, understanding and addressing the root causes of children not attending means incorporating EiE actions within multisectoral responses (child protection, food security, health and WASH) and partners will be requested to define their actions as part of an area-based approach. With a reduction in humanitarian access and with the highly politicised issue of education many of our education actors are struggling to have access first hand to affected populations and are increasingly relying on local NGOs and associations, thus challenging traditional partnerships and ways of working. DG ECHO will encourage partners to integrate a holistic localisation approach in their programmes.

Disaster preparedness

Targeted stand-alone DP actions will be supported under the dedicated DP budget line in all countries under this HIP. Where possible, support to Disaster Risk Management authorities will be considered in addition to community-based interventions. The contribution in this sector must allow the development of approaches that integrate a better preparation to act upstream of the deterioration of shocks and crises and should consider gaps identified from recent disaster management responses. Strengthened collaboration with development actors will be encouraged. Four priorities are identified:

- (i) risk- and forecast-based anticipatory actions such as strengthening early warning systems that will incorporate the following key elements: 1) Risk knowledge; 2) Monitoring and warning; 3) Alert dissemination and communication; and 4) Response capability;
- (ii) preparedness in conflict and fragile settings to build capacity for surveillance, warning, and protection as well as for integrating conflict sensitivity into contingency planning. Contribution to contingency plan will have to consider: 1) scenarios; 2) existing coordination mechanism; 3) strengthening or development of emergency tools and resources; and 4) involvement and empowerment of first responders.
- (iii) climate and environmental resilience to address specific climate-related challenges (e.g., displacement) and greening of humanitarian operations through environmentally friendly solutions; action such as strengthening shock readiness system that will consider contribution to improve the: 1) information management, 2) targeting process, 3) delivery capacity, and 4) coordination mechanism; and
- (iv) urban preparedness to target specific challenges of crises in urban contexts.

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon to prepare and respond to crises that could not be foreseen in ECHO's humanitarian implementation plans. Within the Emergency Toolbox, the Small-Scale tool (SST), the Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT), the Epidemics tool, and the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) are the specific instruments that provide additional funding options.

In view of the importance of logistics for humanitarian operations, DG ECHO remains also committed to contribute to logistics operations, via funding or any other tool, such as the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), at its disposal.

The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) is a global initiative, aiming at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance with a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission has at its disposal several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disasters, e.g. a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), and a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items to be pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.