

TECHNICAL ANNEX

GREAT LAKES

FINANCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 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 ECHO¹/D3

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¹ The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO).

2. FINANCIAL INFO

Indicative Allocation²: **EUR 105 559 261** of which an indicative amount of **EUR 6 500 000** for Education in Emergencies.

In line with DG ECHO's commitment under the Grand Bargain initiative, pilot Programmatic Partnerships have been launched in 2020, 2021 and 2022 with a limited number of partners. An indicative amount of **EUR 1 750 000** will be dedicated to these Programmatic Partnerships in 2023. In addition, new Programmatic Partnerships could be signed in 2023³. Part of the allocation of this HIP could therefore also be attributed to these new Programmatic Partnerships.

Indicative breakdown per Actions as per Worldwide Decision (in EUR)⁴

Countries	Action (a) Man-made crises and natural hazards	Action (b) Initial emergency response/s mall- scale/epid emics	Action (c) Disaster Preparednes s	Actions (d) to (f) Transport / Complemen tary activities	TOTAL
DRC & Great Lakes Region	94 829 583				94 829 583
Republic of Congo			1 500 000		1 500 000
Burundi regional	7 500 000		1 500 000		9 000 000
Programmatic Partnership Communication & Coordination*	229 678				229 678
Total	102 559 261		3 000 000		105 559 261

*In the framework of the pilot Programmatic Partnership with IFRC

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

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.

³ More information can be found in the 'Guidance to Partners – DG ECHO Programmatic partnerships 2023' <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/humanitarian-partnership-2021-2027/programmatic-partnership>

⁴ For flexibility and fast responsiveness purposes, this breakdown can be adjusted within certain limits based on newly arising needs.

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 HIPs⁵), 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 4.1.2. 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 56 227 967**.
- b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round *if it does not cover all the funding*.
- c) Costs will be eligible from **01/01/2023**⁶
- d) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more, provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner. 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 or more and a total duration of the modified action of up to 48 months (actions that had already been extended with contributions from HIPs of 2 different years should preferably be submitted as a new action).

Education in Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness actions should have an initial duration of at least 24 months, unless there is a needs- or context-based justification for a shorter duration. The same approach may also be used to the extent appropriate in furtherance of any multiannual strategies provided for by the HIP (see point 3e).

- e) Potential partners⁷: All DG ECHO Partners
- f) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests for on-going actions⁸
- g) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by **12/01/2023**⁹

⁵ 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.

⁶ DG ECHO will specify which option has been taken for this round.

⁷ Unless otherwise specified potential NGO partners refer to certified partner organisations.

⁸ Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

⁹ The Commission reserves the right to consider Single Forms transmitted after this date, especially in case certain needs and/or priorities are not covered by the received Single Forms.

Allocation round 2

- a) Indicative amount: up to **EUR 32 285 463**.
- b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: priorities are related to the DRC crisis.
- c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2023
- d) Eligible partners¹⁰: partners that have submitted proposals under allocation round 1.
- e) Information to be provided: N/A
- f) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: N/A

Allocation round 3

- a) Indicative amount: up to **EUR 3 745 831**
- b) Costs will be eligible¹¹ as of 01/06/2023
- c) Potential partners: IFRC. The funding will be allocated to the pilot Programmatic Partnership action ‘Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises’ in the following countries: DRC.
- d) Information to be provided: Single form¹²

Allocation round 4

- a) Indicative amount: up to **EUR 13 300 000**
- b) Costs will be eligible¹³ as of 01/10/2023
- c) Geographic locations: The three provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri targeted by the humanitarian system-wide scale-up and Mai-Ndombe in the DRC.
- d) Potential partners: DG ECHO-funded partners implementing Rapid Response Mechanisms and emergency food security interventions as well as shelter. Protection should be mainstreamed in all actions, in particular protection monitoring.
- e) Information to be provided: Modification requests for ongoing actions.
- f) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: **14/11/2023**.

¹⁰ Unless otherwise specified potential NGO partners refer to certified partner organisations.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

¹³ 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.

4.1. Operational requirements:

4.1.1. Assessment criteria:

- 1) Relevance
 - How relevant is the proposed intervention; is it compliant with the objectives of the HIP?
 - Has a joint needs assessment been used for the proposed intervention (if existing)? Have other recent and comprehensive needs assessments been used?
 - Has the proposed intervention been coordinated with other humanitarian actors?
- 2) Capacity and expertise
 - Does the partner, with its implementing partners, have sufficient expertise (country / region and / or technical)?
 - How does the partner contribute to developing/strengthening 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?¹⁴

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

¹⁴ 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 4.1.1 - 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.

Regarding **logistics** (meaning the entire supply chain), DG ECHO will support strategic solutions such as shared and/or common services, joint procurement, etc., if their cost-efficiency and benefit in increasing effectiveness and timeliness of the response is demonstrated, in line with DG ECHO's Humanitarian Logistics Policy. DG ECHO also encourages the application of the Humanitarian Logistics Policy more widely, in particular the key considerations set out in Annex 1: Framework for Operations.

For **Education in Emergencies** actions, projects will be prioritised that target at least 50 percent girls, unless there is a context-based justification for a 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.

Transfer modalities

Modality choice should be informed by a needs-based response and risk analysis, incorporating joint and timely market analysis, operational and environmental analyses. The use of cash should systematically be considered, across the variety of response mechanisms (anticipatory action, rapid response mechanisms, emergency responses, crisis modifiers, and shock-responsive social protection) funded by DG ECHO. All cash interventions should comply with DG ECHO's cash thematic policy, including the sector-specific considerations in Annexe 3 of that document. In addition, programmes above EUR 10 million should comply with the large-scale cash guidance note.

DG ECHO promotes a common system and/or coordinated programming approaches to reduce fragmentation and avoid duplication and parallel ways of working. This includes better operational coordination, coordinated approaches to vulnerability-based targeting, data interoperability (which respects data protection requirements) to facilitate deduplication and referrals, a common payment mechanism, a common feedback mechanism and a common results framework. DG ECHO will systematically assess the cost-efficiency of different modalities, using the Total Cost to Transfer Ratio (TCTR), alongside the analysis of effectiveness.

DG ECHO promotes, wherever appropriate, a single multipurpose cash (MPC) payment to meet recurrent basic needs, through a common payment mechanism, and timely referral pathways to meet specific multi-sectorial outcomes based on a solid analysis. The value of cash assistance should be adequate to cover or contribute to emergency basic needs and should be complemented by other relevant sectoral interventions, which cannot be met through cash. Cash assistance should be risk informed and targeted based on socio-economic vulnerability, and the protection concerns of individuals and groups.

The sectoral and multi-sectorial outcomes of cash programmes should be monitored against defined objectives in a consistent way. The monitoring of MPC interventions should comply with the cross-cutting and sector-specific Grand Bargain MPC outcome indicators. Multi-sectorial market analysis and monitoring should be ensured, in real time, to inform and adapt assistance, irrespective of the modality. In contexts of high inflation and currency depreciation, partners should put in place sound trigger mechanisms to adapt assistance based on market monitoring data, and design programmes from the outset to anticipate potential inflationary shocks. DG ECHO maintains its commitment to providing cash, even in contexts of high inflation, if programming can be adequately adapted, in line with the good practice review on cash in inflation/depreciation. Whenever duly justified, to cope with market price volatility, partners are encouraged to include contingencies to adapt the transfer value, increase coverage, and/or change to an alternative modality to preserve household purchasing power capacity.

DG ECHO expects cash working groups, under the leadership of the inter-sector/inter-cluster, and in collaboration with relevant sectoral working groups, to provide leadership on the above.

Climate change adaptation and environmental considerations

Adapting responses to climate change as well as reducing environmental degradation are highly relevant in partners' interventions. Such actions also contribute to the European Commission's overall implementation of the European Green Deal¹⁵.

All partners are expected to include context-specific measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the proposed actions, while preserving their effectiveness, in compliance with the minimum environmental requirements set out in the DG ECHO environmental guidance for humanitarian projects.¹⁶

The minimum environmental requirements should be applied through a 'mainstreaming' approach with environmental impacts mitigated across sectors, projects and programs and therefore not implemented as stand-alone or parallel actions to the response activities with the aim to consider the environment holistically when designing and implementing actions. The requirements will apply to all sectors with special attention on mitigating the negative environmental impacts in protracted, chronic situations; responses linked to humanitarian settlements or sites and activities that cause natural resource depletion, including deforestation; exploitation of water sources; air/water/land pollution (e.g., uncontrolled waste disposal linked to humanitarian settlements/sites as well as to communal facilities such as schools, health centres and distribution centres). WASH and Shelter & Settlements programming carry one of the highest risks of negative environmental impacts among humanitarian activities, while at the same time representing an opportunity to minimise potential environmental impacts, (which should be mitigated from the onset) by thorough assessments/screenings and robust environmental management.

The HIP Policy Annex should be consulted in parallel.

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹⁶ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en

4.1.2.1. Sector-Specific Priorities

STRENGTHENING EARLY RESPONSE CAPACITY

(1) Emergency/Rapid Response Mechanisms (ERM/RRM) as standalone actions

Emergency/Rapid Response Mechanisms (ERMs/RRMs) are stand-alone actions pooling capacities of different partners for improved and more coordinated preparedness and early response, guided by early warning and contingency plans. ERMs/RRMs are designed to provide initial lifesaving multipurpose assistance when other response mechanisms are not yet in place. ERMs/RRMs are mostly used for rapid-on-set crisis.

(2) Flexibility embedded into the actions

Whenever relevant, partners should introduce flexibility to mobilise resources from on-going actions and swiftly respond to and/or act in advance of any new emerging shocks occurring and/or forecasted in the area of their operations (a crisis within a crisis). Flexibility measures can be triggered to provide initial lifesaving multipurpose response in the aftermath of a rapid onset crisis, as well as to act in advance of an imminent shock; the three main scenarios are: (i) to fill the time gap, while waiting for additional resources; (ii) to respond to small scale humanitarian needs, which would otherwise remain unattended; (iii) to provide assistance in advance of an imminent shock to prevent or reduce its acute humanitarian impact, according to a pre-agreed plan with defined triggers and actions.

The application of flexibility measures should be based on a multi-risk analysis and the development of worst and most likely scenarios. Partners should develop a detailed plan considering prepositioning of stocks, surge staff, triggers and sectors of intervention.

ERM/RRM and flexibility measures are complementary and do not exclude each-other; flexibility measures enable to act in advance and to bridge the time gap between the shock and the time needed to mobilize ad-hoc resources through the ERM/RRM or additional funding. Timeliness of response is a key element for effectiveness of both flexibility measures and ERM/RRM. Partners should adopt indicators to measure the timeframe required to deliver the first assistance (e.g. lifesaving response for a certain number of persons, life-saving response within a certain number of days from alert/crisis, and/or need assessment within a certain number of days from the displacement/disaster/alert/exceeded triggers). Partners will be expected to have the capacity to conduct direct or joint protection risk analysis prior to any response

(3) European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC)

The EHRC aims at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission disposes of 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), or a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items that can be pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.

DG ECHO might propose directly to one or more partners to manage some of the Common Logistics Services or be in charge of the distribution of the emergency relief items. The choice of the partner will be taken on the basis of a diverse set of criteria, such as presence in the affected area, experience and expertise available. Since the EHRC is an emergency response capacity, decisions of activation will be taken in a consultative yet rapid way. In order to manage EHRC services and/or distribute emergency relief items, partners might make use of the flexibility embedded into the actions (section 2 above).

PROTECTION

Given the deteriorating security and protection environment in eastern **DRC** in 2022, protection of civilians will remain a priority area for 2023. The need to improve protection interventions in areas affected by armed conflict will be supported by the dissemination of and compliance with IHL and the implementation of the Kampala Convention. More specifically, the objectives of the humanitarian protection strategy for DG ECHO will seek to prevent and respond to the protection of internally displaced persons and returnees, sexual violence, gender-based violence (including access to PEP kit, MHPSS support, and an inter-sectionality approach to improve community-based prevention), child protection in conflict (CAAC), protection of medical/humanitarian missions and schools. In addition, strengthening civil-military coordination (CM-Coord) to maintain and/or improve humanitarian access in the most conflict-affected areas will be highly recommended (mediation, logistical access, promotion of humanitarian principles).

Protection mainstreaming and integrated protection programmes will need to be based on protection risk analysis (risk equation tools) in areas of intervention to ensure safe/dignified (do no harm), meaningful, accountable and participatory access to basic services. In addition, projects establishing an "operational link" to ensure a continuum of protection care for beneficiaries and a link to human rights actors/programs focusing on the rule of law will open up alternative approaches for longer-term solutions. Finally, strengthening the quality of protection context analysis and data collection at the country level, high-level advocacy for humanitarian protection and humanitarian diplomacy to address the root causes of conflict and end impunity will be strongly supported.

Regarding the **Burundi** (regional refugee and return) crisis, ECHO's protection strategy will continue to support safe and dignified repatriation, sustainable reintegration and regional coordination. Support to the regional refugee response and the Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (JRRRP) to strengthen the operationalization of the "new way of working", which offers a concrete way to remove unnecessary obstacles to humanitarian and development collaboration, will be essential to achieve durable solutions. Particular attention will be paid to analysing the protection context and response in areas of return in Burundi, as well as maintaining adequate protection services in refugee camps in neighboring countries and monitoring voluntary repatriation to ensure that the tripartite agreement is respected. Regional coordination will also be a key element in strengthening regional advocacy mechanisms and humanitarian diplomacy through the ICGLR, the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the Office of the EAC Secretariat, DG INTPA, etc.

HUMANITARIAN FOOD ASSISTANCE

Food assistance will be supported to save lives responding to food insecurity due to natural hazard induced and/or man-made disasters. While prioritising newly affected such as recently displaced or recent shock-affected populations, the food assistance design should be based on a thorough food security assessments and analysis as part of the wider basic needs approach. Principled beneficiary targeting and verification mechanisms should be in place. Food assistance for protracted displacements and/or in a crisis should be based on clear needs-based vulnerability criteria and livelihoods capacities going beyond the mere status and categorical-based approach giving firstly priority to the identified humanitarian needs. A vulnerability-based assessment/targeting process should be launched as early on as possible into the crisis to ensure most efficient use of resources based on actual needs and avoid aid dependence.

As needs are multiple, food assistance shall be part of the basic needs approach, integrated within an adequate, comprehensive and harmonised response package (NUT, NFIs, EiE, WASH, shelter, protection, etc.) and preferably delivered through unconditional¹⁷. MPC transfer within a common delivery mechanism and enhancing multi-sectoral effective referral pathways (whenever conditions are met). In line with the MEB, partners must justify the frequency and adequacy of the response regardless of the modality (cash, in-kind, vouchers) transfer amounts/values provided, in coordination with other actors, and in accordance with FSC and CWG recommendations. HFA actions demonstrating adequate cost efficiency (TCTR) (refer to the cash policy for more information) alongside other quality programming aspects will be favoured. One-off assistance should be avoided. Markets should be consistently monitored to inform and adapt assistance, irrespective of the modality. Partners must ensure the adoption of the main FS outcome indicators (FCS, LCSi) for targeting and monitoring, in accordance with ECHO KOI and the Grand Bargain multi-purpose cash outcome indicators' guideline.

Solutions to enhance digital and interoperable solutions will be preferred. Digitalisation of registration and monitoring procedures should be promoted to enhance effective multi-sectoral referral pathways (nutrition, protection, health, EiE) aiming at the provision of a comprehensive package facilitating the access to multiple basic needs and services and also promoting linkages with existing SN/SP where relevant.

Partners are also expected to consider minimum environmental arrangements adapted to the context (urban/rural, recent/protracted crisis) to reduce the environmental footprint, while preserving effectiveness of the food assistance.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

It is important to develop sound strategies encouraging linkages with more sustainable and locally-led solutions: In line with DG ECHO's HAC 2021 commitment to expand support for cash-based, shock-responsive social safety nets, linkages with development-funded transfer schemes need to be systematically established by partners involved in direct transfers at scale (any modality), whilst respecting protection and humanitarian principles. This requires shared initial technical assessments to explore feasible linkages at policy, coordination, programme design or delivery chain levels, and response planning accordingly. It also requires support and systematic reporting to a coordination mechanism tracking all contributions, with a view to ensure an adequate response to urgent needs with regards to adequacy, coverage, comprehensiveness of the assistance package provided, by mobilising all available funding streams available during the peak of a crisis in a holistic perspective. It also requires joint investment by partners in evidence-building, showcasing and advocacy.

¹⁷ Any conditionality should be fully justified and adapted to the vulnerabilities of the targeted group (for example, women with young children) or in consideration of the agricultural season.

HEALTH

Access to quality health services, capacitated to respond to life-saving needs to be assured in all crisis situations. Underlying causes of excess morbidity and mortality (Health determinants) need to be assessed to identify the most urgent needs of crisis-affected populations. Early warning systems for disease outbreaks, nutritional situation as well as other public health emergencies need to be assessed and if need be, supported. Monitoring of main health and nutrition indicators needs to be assured. Support to initial phases of health emergencies needs to be assured based on baseline assessment, performance monitoring and evaluation of supported health services; main data needs to be available through existing systems (DHIS2).

Specific attention in the assessment and response needs to go to nutrition, referral services (life-threatening conditions); infection prevention and control measures; gender-based violence; maternal, child and neonatal healthcare and mental health.

Quality healthcare in humanitarian settings should, to the extent possible, be provided free at the point of delivery. Direct involvement of humanitarian organisations in the provision of health care is mandatory.

Procurement and distribution of medicines, nutritional products and medical material should be compliant with DG ECHO procedures. Sound management of these supplies (including performance indicators) should be documented in proposals.

Partners should be looking into ways to complement actions funded through global health initiatives and development actors and prevent parallel actions.

Investment in the documentation of the impact of a crisis on the health status of affected communities and the impact of the intervention (reduction of excess morbidity and mortality; life-saving approaches) is encouraged.

NUTRITION

An intervention's entry point is established based on exceeding the emergency thresholds for global acute malnutrition and/or a high probability that those levels will be exceeded in the short term such as in case of aggravating factors (such as displacement, natural disaster, disease outbreaks).

All nutrition needs' analysis must be supported by surveys, studies and other technically sound evidence.

Direct involvement of humanitarian organisations in the provision of nutritional care is mandatory.

DG ECHO funding will prioritise severe acute malnutrition (SAM), but this could be extended in some cases to the continuum of care for moderately acutely malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women. Stand-alone services for moderate acute malnutrition will not be considered for funding.

The treatment of acute malnutrition and any related medical complications should be integrated in existing health systems and must be provided to the beneficiaries free of charge.

Activities undertaken in all sectors should aim at optimising impact on the nutrition status of target communities to ensure a holistic and multi-sectoral approach for preventing under-nutrition and reducing risk of malnutrition crises.

WASH / SHELTER / NFI

WASH and shelter & settlements' interventions should focus on emergency integrated humanitarian support to populations (IDPs, refugees, returnees and hosts) affected by conflicts, displacement, epidemics (cholera, Ebola, Covid-19 and other water related diseases) and/or areas affected by natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts).

WASH interventions in conflict-affected communities should focus on the restoration (repairs and maintenance mainly) of existing services damaged by the parties in conflicts or natural disasters to provide minimum required services to the affected populations. No upgrading of those services is foreseen unless communities are hosting a high number of IDPs or refugees over long periods. Any long-time presence of IDPs, returnees or refugees may overwhelm initial capacities and/or generate public health related hazards, which must then be mitigated.

A cholera, diarrheal diseases, Ebola and/or Covid-19 related WASH response must complement the health response for affected populations focusing on risk communication (public places, institutions, affected households), community engagement (RCCE) and interventions that aim at preventing further spreading (such as the strengthening of access to safe water).

Shelter & settlement should address access to minimum accommodation, necessary NFI and all basic services for the most vulnerable of the affected populations unless the related needs are already covered (either by local capacities or other humanitarian actors). The provided services should be based on reducing suffering; protection consideration and mitigating public health threats.

Mitigation measures for possible environmental degradation should be put in place (such as deforestation, poor excreta and solid waste disposal, water resources pollution or depletion).

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

EiE interventions should target the most vulnerable children, displaced or affected by conflict, and more specifically out-of-school and drop-out boys and girls, over-age children, through formal and non-formal education opportunities. All EiE actions should target a minimum of 50 percent girls.

Project proposals should aim at increasing access to primary formal and non-formal education opportunities for vulnerable children, with priority given to IDPs and refugees. Interventions should tackle identified barriers to education, i.e. through provision of teaching and learning material, support and compensation to teaching personnel, provision of temporary learning spaces (TLS) or light school building rehabilitation, establishment of, or support to, already existing non-formal education (NFE)¹⁸ programmes.

Project proposals should also aim at increasing education quality and learning outcomes and be aligned with the school academic year to avoid any further disruptions (all EiE actions should have a minimum duration of 24 months).

¹⁸ For NFE programmes, DG ECHO encourages partners to use the definitions, tools and guidance developed by the Accelerated Education Working Group: <https://inee.org/collections/accelerated-education>

Retention and transition of children in the next school year and cycle should be measured. Teachers and other education personnel should be supported with relevant and tailored professional development opportunities through interventions that will also contribute to increased motivation and decreased turnover.

The provision of lifesaving skills and messages will be considered for funding only when they are part of a broader intervention and if developed on the basis of a thorough needs' assessment. For this specific component, coordination and active collaboration with agencies working in other sectors is highly encouraged.

Child safeguarding mechanisms must be established and must be built upon a sound risk analysis and should address the most life-threatening protection risks. Proposed actions should promote protection of the schools from attacks and support the implementation of the 'Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict'.¹⁹

Integrated programming of EiE and child protection is strongly recommended to maximize the impact of the intervention in each conflicted-affected context, including referral systems and/or provision of PSS and MHPSS services.²⁰

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Proposed DP approaches should address all prevailing hazards and risks – including slow-onset, secondary and compounding risks such as conflicts, displacement, epidemics etc, and clearly demonstrate the linkage based on the context. In addition to preparedness in conflict and fragile settings, there is a clear need for preparedness for conflict and other situations of violence. All interventions should as much as possible aim at integrating anticipatory/early actions, based on forecasts from recognized authorities/sources and backed up by a comprehensive risk analysis (that do not only predominantly focus on hazard but take into perspective the analysis of vulnerability, capacity and exposure to risks) and preferably conducted in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Anticipatory action and enhanced predictability of response can only be achieved if local preparedness and response capacities are in place; therefore, preparedness actions must strengthen first responders' capacity to act as locally and as early as possible. National approaches, for purpose of coherence of country interventions, should be coordinated with the National Disaster Management Authorities. A system wide approach is encouraged to ensure linkages and simultaneous capacity-building at community and governmental level, whenever possible, whilst respecting the do no harm principle, and other humanitarian principles.

Besides, regional approaches and strategies are encouraged where relevant.

Taking into perspective the increasing volatility/conflicts in some areas and the impact of climate shocks, conflict sensitive programming is a must. Gender perspectives and cultural diversity, including the local local/indigenous knowledge should be taken on board to ensure no population at risk is left behind.

¹⁹ See:http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/Protection_Mainstreaming_Training_Package_SECTORGUIDANCE_November_2014.pdf

²⁰ Please refer to the ECHO EiE Policy on the need of protection expertise for specialized protection services [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/190328%20SWD%20EiE%20in%20EU-funded%20Humanitarian%20Aid%20Operations%20SWD\(2019\)150%20final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/190328%20SWD%20EiE%20in%20EU-funded%20Humanitarian%20Aid%20Operations%20SWD(2019)150%20final.pdf)

Multi-hazard early warning systems play a crucial role in promoting DP. Actions proposing EWS strengthening should be succinct, interlinking the four EWS components.

Coordination with developmental actors to promote and advocate for the institutionalisation of DP strategies notably around disaster risk financing including adaptive/shock-responsive social protection systems that could be activated by pre agreed, well-defined risk triggers would be crucial. Simulation and drill exercises that are coordinated with the people at risk are crucial in ensuring an effective preparedness.

Lesson learning and documentation of good practices remain a key aspect of all the DP interventions.

For the Great Lakes, targeted disaster preparedness action will only be considered for funding in **Burundi** and **RoC**. In the DRC, disaster preparedness actions/activities can be integrated/mainstreamed in broader programmes. Specific details for each country are in the country sections.

4.1.2.2. Country-Specific Priorities²¹

Democratic Republic of Congo

Humanitarian assistance

Sectorial priorities highlighted earlier in this document must be at the basis of the design of the response. In addition, humanitarian action should take into consideration the significant deterioration of the security context in the eastern part of the DRC, the increased access constraints and the need for an efficient rapid response in reply to higher levels of acute internal displacement and related protection needs, as well as to high impact communicable disease outbreaks and natural disasters.

DG ECHO's geographical focus will remain on the eastern part of the country and its conflict-affected provinces, with the exception of potential support for emergency responses to high impact communicable disease outbreaks and natural disasters.

DG ECHO will focus its interventions on:

- Supporting a multi-sectorial response based on integrated programming and aiming to address the basic needs of those affected by recent conflicts and/or epidemics and/or new displacements (which includes IDP, returnees/refugees and host communities). Mainstreaming of core protection principles is compulsory in all proposed action. The protection of civilians remains a priority and an entry point for DG ECHO supported humanitarian action. Protection mainstreaming, IHL promotion and humanitarian protection interventions and advocacy to influence humanitarian diplomacy are highly recommended.
- Strengthening general rapid response capacity, in focus areas where DG ECHO supports the humanitarian action, is needed. Such rapid response capacity, or mechanism, should be timely, flexible, geographically focused and coordinated with other humanitarian rapid response action (including RRM). It should be guided by information gathered by the provincial coordination structures, such as the “*Coordination Opérationnelle Humanitaire Provinciale*” (COHP). Such a rapid response capacity/mechanism could be run by several partner organisations, who

²¹ Please consult sections 4 and 5 of the actual HIP document.

would work together in a consortium with one lead agency in one programme and defined by one general logframe in rapid response action. In general, all humanitarian projects supported by the European Commission (through DG ECHO) in the DRC should have the capacity to swiftly respond or adapt to a new emerging shock (“crisis modifier”).

- The provision and reinforcement of nutrition and health services is to be aligned to basic principles of humanitarian health, as per DG ECHO health guidelines, and to be implemented by qualified partners. Humanitarian health needs and the added value of the assistance must be measured, analysed and communicated about throughout the action (to in-country humanitarian and development fora). The reinforcement of epidemic preparedness and response capacities in humanitarian settings remains key in the DRC. In addition, the health sector constitutes a relevant opportunity for a multi-annual project and/or a programmatic partnership in a geographical area targeted by the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (such as Ituri province).
- Humanitarian protection: DG ECHO will continue to support protection activities. Partner organisations should focus on: (1) humanitarian protection advocacy and diplomacy at local, regional and/or global level, promoting IHL/International Refugee Law (humanitarian diplomacy); (2) increasing the centrality of protection and accountability to affected population in the humanitarian response; (3) improving meaningful, safe and dignified access to services including child protection, gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection of civilians (including people with special needs, elderly, etc.) in conflict-affected areas; (4) protection of schools, medical facilities and staff against attacks. It is mandatory to apply a “protection lens” in the needs’ analysis and in the planning of activities. In addition, the use of the protection mainstreaming key outcome indicator (KOI) is strongly recommended (when feasible) to ensure that ‘do no harm’, meaningful access, accountability and beneficiary participation are fully considered.
- Education in Emergencies (EiE): DG ECHO will continue supporting EiE projects for the most vulnerable children either displaced and/or conflict-affected to increase their access to primary education (formal and non-formal). DG ECHO will continue encouraging projects that integrate EiE, child protection and mental health and psychosocial support. The aim is to restore a protective and safe learning environment for children by comprising psychosocial and social emotional learning. Projects should include an adequate learning environment for IDPs and non-formal education programmes to transition children to the formal school system. The overall response should address the six grave violations against children in armed conflict.
- DG INTPA²² plans development interventions in 2023 in the health sector in Ituri and North Kivu and in the education sector in North and South Kivu. Given DG ECHO’s ongoing support to health and nutrition as well as to EiE projects in these provinces, advances in a nexus implementation should be sought (including for opportunities establishing a continuum of care in protection, esp. regarding GBV).

²² The European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA).

- DG ECHO is keen to see a more efficient and effective humanitarian response through logistics²³ and could, for example, envisage supporting strategic projects that embrace collaborative approaches and/or technology and/or environmental sustainability, e.g. common services and/or the digitalisation of supply chains.
- Humanitarian action that approaches environmental sustainability in an innovative and strategic way (e.g. through mainstreaming) would also be considered for funding (also multi-annually or in a programmatic partnership).

Gender mainstreaming should be considered in all programming.

DG ECHO encourages the inclusion of national/local NGOs in the implementation of aid projects, also with aim to increase their capacity.

DG ECHO encourages partner organisations to seek (and demonstrate) synergies and complementarities with development action and actors, including e.g. EU programmes in Eastern DRC, also with a view on durable solutions for IDPs, as well as in the health and education sectors and in disaster preparedness (see HIP section 4 on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus). Partners should be aware that, in this context, DGs ECHO and INTPA and the FPI will look pro-actively into ways to create geographical areas of convergence in Eastern DRC that allow the return of displaced persons, but also the reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as to improve the resilience of the host population in general, while promoting a continuum of care and services in different domains for beneficiaries transitioning from a humanitarian setting to a more stable environment,. This should maximise the impact of interventions in the long run, while preserving a surge capacity in case of an unpredictable deterioration of the security situation.

Disaster Preparedness (DP)

There will be no additional funding (from the DP budget line) in 2023 that explicitly and solely focus on DP. However, partner organisations can integrate/mainstream DP in more global programmes. In this respect, any supported intervention should strengthen the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of local communities for both natural and man-made disasters in the provinces of DG ECHO's focus. Community-based DP should prepare the targeted communities in their comprehensive analysis of risks, establishing an efficient (community-based) early warning system and developing community contingency plans or standard operating procedures, in order to reduce the impact of disasters and enhance self-response capacities. In the long run, DP work should aim at increasingly complementing – and finally replacing – INGO-managed humanitarian rapid response mechanisms, with local stakeholders taking over short-term life-saving interventions – and improving thereby the level of preparedness of communities, their first responders, as well as the speed and cost-effectiveness of the response.

In line with ECHO's commitment to expand support for shock-responsive social safety nets, the feasibility of linkages with national social protection and disaster management systems, and technical support to them, is to be explored systematically by partners (risk assessments, response planning).

²³ For guidance see:

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/humanitarian_logistics_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf

Burundi crisis (Burundi – Tanzania – Rwanda – DRC)

Humanitarian assistance

DG ECHO will consider regional interventions that focus on protection of refugees (in the countries of asylum) and returnees (including spontaneous returnees) in Burundi in order to ensure their protection at the different steps of their displacement, to enhance follow-up of displaced people, and to address needs for regional coordination and advocacy. This will include documentation and protection and post return monitoring, community-based interventions enhancing social cohesion (refugees, returnees, IDPs, host communities), prevention and assistance to victims of violence (including GBV, HLP and legal assistance, MHPSS), child protection (UASC, child at risks/affected by psychosocial distress), ensuring refugees' access to basic services through assistance to obtain civil and legal documents.

In preparation of a humanitarian aid exit strategy within the coming years, interventions should establish a link with development actors to set up durable solutions for returnees and host communities as well as ensure inclusion of long-term refugees into development programmes, in line with the CRRF and the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Food assistance will be considered for camp-based refugees who do not have sufficient access to livelihood opportunities. Humanitarian surveillance in Burundi through humanitarian information management and overall humanitarian response coordination remains a priority.

Disaster preparedness

Since 2020, the DG ECHO DP strategy in Burundi is focusing on strengthening the resilience of local communities and building preparedness and response capacities of local actors (mainly the Burundian Red Cross) and complement the DG INTPA funded DRR/resilience interventions (through IOM and Oxfam) at local and district level in areas prone to natural disasters and with a significant number of refugee returnees, through the approach of anticipatory action and forecast-based financing (FbF).

The overall objective of this approach is to reduce proactively the impact of the climate hazards by connecting early-warning systems to prepositioned anticipatory finance and pre-agreed anticipatory actions that protect lives, livelihoods, and development gains of the most vulnerable population. While the current approach is still focusing on preparedness against hydro-meteorological hazards (floods, flash floods and drought), DG ECHO will support a further scaling up to multi-hazards, including civil unrest and epidemics preparedness.

Additional DP funding for Burundi should allow the on-going or potential new intervention to (1) further expand geographical coverage and scale up to a multi-hazards' approach; (2) explore potential other DP approaches building on earlier achievements; (3) consolidate the nexus process (inclusive approach: such as integrating existing social safety nets, early warning systems, other DRR and climate change interventions).

Republic of Congo

Unless a new humanitarian crisis emerges, DG ECHO remains in surveillance mode.

Disaster preparedness

DG ECHO will support project(s) aiming at strengthening and linking Early Warning to Early Community Action (by improving the capacity for emergency response). It should

be a multi-hazard action but could be adapted to focus mainly on climate events, according to the main threats of the area(s) of implementation.

DG ECHO will focus on:

- Backing up the implementation of the ‘National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Catastrophes’ Risks’ at local level, by supporting the setting up of a coordinated, decentralized early warning system and reinforcing the capacity of the main actors to respond to new disasters, natural and man-made;
- Linking the action with longer-term programmes, in particular those implemented with EU support (nexus approach), while keeping a humanitarian prism;
- Mainstreaming protection and including a ‘crisis modifier’ to be able to respond to potential new shocks during the implementation of the action.
