

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) YEMEN

AMOUNT: 145 119 246

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 annexes ⁽¹⁾ is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO ⁽²⁾'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.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

MODIFICATION 3 – OCTOBER 2023

Yemen remains one of the most food insecure countries in the world both in scale and severity, with an estimated 17 million people – more than half of the population – facing severe food insecurity and requiring assistance. Despite the scale of needs, funding is decreasing and the appeal is funded at 33.3% only ⁽³⁾.

In August 2023, 58% of the population living in areas under control of the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) and 45% of the population living in areas under control of Ansar Allah (AA) reported inadequate food consumption. According to the latest data from FEWSNET, significantly above-average food prices, limited availability of income-earning opportunities and funding shortages will likely worsen the situation throughout January 2024, with millions of households continuing to face difficulty meeting their basic food needs.

In addition, the IPC Acute Malnutrition Analysis for the government-controlled areas, published in June 2023, reports record highs of acute malnutrition. In 2023 about half a million children are projected to be acutely malnourished in the IRG-controlled areas, including nearly 100 000 children who are likely to be severely malnourished, and up to a quarter million Pregnant and Lactating Women and Girls (PLWG) acutely malnourished. Child stunting levels are also very high (45.1 percent) with over 2 million children under the age of five affected. Countrywide information is not available, but partners report increased admissions of malnourished children throughout the country, also linked to ongoing epidemics outbreaks (i.e., measles).

In August, WFP announced that food aid will have to be further reduced from 13.2 million beneficiaries to 8.8 million, equalling to a cut of up to 3 million beneficiaries in AA-controlled areas and up to 1.4 million in IRG-controlled areas. Already, WFP beneficiaries received only 41% of rations since 2022. Earlier this year, WFP was also forced to make substantial reductions in the number of beneficiaries of critical nutrition

⁽¹⁾ *Technical annex and thematic policies annex*

⁽²⁾ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

⁽³⁾ Financial Tracking Service, 13 October 2023

prevention, nutrition treatment, school feeding, and resilience interventions, with only around one third of the total planned target for the year likely to be reached.

In this context, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected to remain widespread at the governorate level⁴. The risk of famine and IPC Phase 5, that was avoided in 2022, cannot be excluded considering the ongoing reduced rations for WFP beneficiaries, malnutrition rates and severe funding shortages.

For these reasons, the Commission has mobilised an additional amount of **EUR 7 174 456**. These additional resources will enable WFP to address the urgent gaps in food assistance and malnutrition. DG ECHO will prioritise those locations with most urgent needs, in line with the latest IPC analysis.

MODIFICATION 2 – 6 JULY 2023

This modification is intended to transfer EUR 1,944,790 to be allocated to the IFRC pilot Programmatic Partnership action ‘Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises.

MODIFICATION 1 – FEBRUARY 2023

According to the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan 2023, an estimated 21.6 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection services. The number of people in acute need of assistance increased from 12.9 million to 13.4 million compared to last year, including 4.3 million Internally Displaced People.

Despite a stabilisation of the global food prices in recent months, 17 million people remain highly food insecure, including 6.1 million people one step away from famine (IPC 4). Millions of households will continue to face difficulty meeting their basic food needs due to significantly above-average food prices, the limited availability of income-earning opportunities and the humanitarian assistance cuts due to limited funding available.

In 2022, only 51.4% of the Humanitarian Response Plan was funded (USD 2.21 billion of a total of USD 4.27 billion, the lowest coverage recorded since the onset of the conflict). This funding shortage has led to drastic reductions of food assistance (rations are now equivalent to 65% of the planned standard food basket) and of other lifesaving sectors of activity.

Considering the worsening humanitarian situation amidst severe funding shortages, the Commission has mobilised additional EUR 26 million. These additional resources will enable humanitarian partners to scale up their responses with a focus on the populations directly affected by conflict, notably those in displacement, and vulnerable communities affected by the food security, nutrition and related health crises.

Food assistance programmes will be supported both with in-kind and cash/vouchers delivery modalities. Additionally, multi-sector health and nutrition programmes, including water and epidemics components will be implemented to further address not only food insecurity and malnutrition, but also the consequences of the needs stemming

(⁴) Yemen - Food Security Outlook Update, August 2023, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET)

from them. DG ECHO will prioritise locations directly affected by conflict and high levels of vulnerability, in both north and south Yemen.

1. CONTEXT

DG ECHO's needs assessment for 2023 identified extreme humanitarian needs in Yemen. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be very high.

The conflict has entered in its eighth year. While 2022 started with an intensification of hostilities and increasing political fragmentation, a UN-brokered truce was agreed for two months on 2 April, and further extended until early October when it came to an end amidst calls from the international community to renew the truce again and avoid violence. The truce provided a respite for millions of Yemenis and allowed some access to previously inaccessible areas. Despite this period of relief, the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate due to the combined effect of violence on civilians, collapsing state institutions, an economic crisis and the food crisis resulting from the Russian war against Ukraine. Yemen remains one of the worlds' largest humanitarian crises driven by conflict, economic and humanitarian factors that exacerbate pre-existing developmental vulnerabilities. Without a commitment to peace negotiations, the immediate, medium, and long-term trajectory of Yemen remains extremely uncertain. All scenarios remain possible, from a return to full-scale and intensified violence to a low-intensity conflict or cessation of hostilities between warring parties.

During early 2022 the Houthi offensive against Marib intensified while other frontlines remained active triggering forced displacement and damaging essential civilian infrastructures. In parallel, the political and security situation in the south became more complex. The President and Vice-President were replaced by a new governing body, the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) with a chairperson and seven members representing different but not all groups in the south. Meanwhile, instability continues with increasing clashes between political factions in the south, compounded by a rise of extremist armed groups and targeted improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and deadly attacks, mostly in Aden city.

The economy has been devastated by the conflict. Since 2020, declining inflows of government revenue, foreign assistance, and remittances exacerbated foreign exchange shortages and limited government capacity to support importation of commodities, pay salaries and fund public services. The de facto existence of two different currencies and monetary policies in north and south continues to damage exchange rates, with a high depreciation in the south. Yemen is highly dependent on imports (90% of staple food and most of fuel). In 2022, imports were increasingly hampered due to insufficient government revenue, the global rise of wheat and fuel prices and insufficient availability resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine, and the depreciating currency. As part of the truce, fuel imports have increased via Hodeida, though they still fell short of the needs because of remaining import restrictions. Since 2021, prices of food, transport and basic services continued to increase in both Internationally Recognised Government of Yemen (IRG) and Ansar Allah (AA) controlled areas. Continuous power cuts and shortages risk triggering further instability in the south.

Despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis, mixed migrations flows continue with both refugee and migrant arrivals, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia, who face dire humanitarian conditions.

The impact of COVID-19 remains largely underreported, with partial caseloads only acknowledged in IRG controlled areas, while AA denies its existence. Health facilities struggle to respond with limited treatment and testing capacities. Vaccination efforts had very limited uptake among health workforce or other priority groups.

	Yemen
INFORM Risk Index ⁽⁵⁾	8.2
Vulnerability Index	8.2
Hazard and Exposure	8.4
Lack of Coping Capacity	8
Global Crisis Severity Index ⁽⁶⁾	4.8
Projected conflict risk	10
Uprooted People Index	10
Humanitarian Conditions	5
Natural Disaster Index	4.3
HDI Ranking ⁽⁷⁾ (Value)	179
Total Population ⁽⁸⁾	33.6 million

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance:

People in need	Food insecure people	Internally displaced people (IDP)	Returnees	Migrants	Refugees and asylum seekers
23.4 million	17.4 million (projected to be 19 million in the second half of 2022)	4.3 million	1.3 million	191,800	102,110

The 2022 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) identified 23.4 million people in need. 17.9 million were targeted for humanitarian assistance. 12.9 million were considered in acute need of humanitarian assistance.

After years of war, the rate of conflict-related injuries, psychological trauma and malnutrition have increased substantially. Displacement dynamics evolved in 2022. New and protracted conflict displacement continued compounded by natural disaster

⁽⁵⁾ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters (mid-2022)

⁽⁶⁾ INFORM severity ranking (mid-2022)

⁽⁷⁾ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP

⁽⁸⁾ World Bank data, 2022

displacement, while the UN-brokered truce also opened-up possibilities related to durable solutions for the first time since the start of the conflict.

The crisis has a particularly intense impact on **women and girls**. In 2022, 4.3 million women and 6.3 million girls were estimated to require humanitarian assistance, amid severe gender inequality. Among the displaced population, 77% are women and children while more than 30% of internally displaced people (IDP) households (HH) are headed by women.

The 2022 YHRP highlights that specific population groups including migrants, IDPs, persons with disabilities and socially excluded groups, such as the Muhamasheen (who comprise 3.2 million or 10% of Yemen's population) face specific challenges and multiple barriers including accessing basic services, protection and humanitarian assistance and are disproportionately affected by the crisis, while refugees and asylum seekers are unduly affected due to their status.

Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Humanitarian needs remain concentrated around two major axes: i) the direct exposure to conflict and disasters caused by natural hazards, resulting in displacement and ii) the combined health, nutrition and food security crises. These needs are both compounded by rising protection concerns.

In terms of **food insecurity**, Yemen remains at high risk of famine⁽⁹⁾, with 19 million people projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in the second half of 2022. Out of these, an estimated 11.7 million people will experience crisis conditions (IPC Phase 3), 7.1 million emergency conditions (IPC Phase 4) and close to 160°000 catastrophic conditions (IPC Phase 5). In July 2022, the proportion of households lacking access to adequate food reached 55% in areas under the IRG, and 50% in areas under the Sana'a-based authorities. Food insecurity reached critically high levels in 20 out of the 22 governorates. With no prospects for short term economic recovery, and political agreement, the food security situation is expected to further deteriorate.

Protection of civilians and systematic IHL violations are major concerns in Yemen. Violence, displacement and limited access to humanitarian assistance and protection have had a serious impact on the physical and mental well-being of the population and led to increased reliance on life threatening coping mechanisms, including child recruitment, child labour, transactional sex and gender-based violence (GBV). IDPs' legal safety is also a concern: lack of proper identification documents and increased risks of forced eviction further contribute to their vulnerability. Mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination are a daily threat to civilians, including during the truce, as people, particularly children, accessed previously inaccessible/frontline areas. Migrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers face acute threats to their safety and dignity in Yemen, including killing, GBV, arbitrary and prolonged detention, forced labour, indiscriminate violence, and trafficking.

Conflict and disasters caused by natural hazards have continued to generate new displacement in 2022 adding to the estimated caseload of 4.3 million people living in **protracted displacement** since the beginning of the conflict. Many of them have been displaced more than once and around 1.8 million are living in informal sites and the

⁽⁹⁾ IPC 2022 update: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/es/c/1155479/>

others hosted by communities. The need for rapid and flexible response mechanisms remains important to cover their lifesaving needs. New IDPs and people in protracted displacement need emergency and transitional **shelter solutions** and **basic household items/NFI**. Anticipatory actions and contingency planning will remain a priority.

If the truce is renewed and holds, opportunities for **durable solutions, including returns**, will likely materialise; however, there is insufficient evidence and analysis of the intentions of the displaced population, as well as of the conditions to ensure adherence to Durable Solutions' guiding principles. Moreover, local integration and increased returns will likely lead to demands on already over-stretched basic services. The current priorities are to analyse intentions of IDPs and to ensure access to different durable solutions, including **principled return** that is **voluntary, safe, and dignified**. Particular attention to greening and environmental considerations should also apply.

Limited access to safe **water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)** remains a major public health threat, fuelling malnutrition, waterborne diseases and other epidemics. Despite the water scarcity, aquifers are still overexploited. The increasingly damaged water infrastructure by conflict and lack of maintenance is unable to cope with the demand. Repair and maintenance of large-scale WASH systems is beyond the current capacity of local authorities and humanitarian actors. Water management is also impacted by the increasing influence of climate change with extreme cycles of dry periods and heavy rains and floods.

Malnutrition levels in Yemen are among the highest in the world. Over 2.2 million children aged 0 to 59 months, and 1.3 million pregnant and lactating women were projected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2022. Among those, 538°000 children will likely suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition. Major contributing factors include: i) high prevalence of communicable diseases and common childhood morbidities, ii) acute food insecurity, iii) poor infant and young child feeding practices, iv) poor access to quality nutrition and health services, and v) poor water, sanitation and hygiene services.

The routine primary, secondary and tertiary activities of the **healthcare** system have nearly collapsed. The system struggles to address excess mortality due to recurrent epidemic outbreaks and the direct effects of the conflict, leaving 21.9 million people in need of health assistance. In 2021, 273 districts (82%) were in severe need of health assistance, and only half of the health facilities in Yemen were considered functional. Even functional health facilities do not offer adequate care or expected level of services. Violence against health workers, assets and patients remains a serious concern. In 2020 and 2021, 175 attacks on health workers, patients, facilities, ambulances, warehouses, and other assets were reported⁽¹⁰⁾. In addition, **mental health and psychosocial** needs are high. A study⁽¹¹⁾ indicated that 19.5% of the Yemenis suffer from some type of mental disorder. The integration of mental health in the pre-crisis health system was already very limited. Only three severely underfunded and overcrowded government psychiatric hospitals and 46 psychiatrists are present in the country. The level of needs is likely further exacerbated by the years of conflict, economic and food crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁽¹⁰⁾ World Health Organization (WHO);2022; Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care-(SSA) dashboard SSAHome | Index (who. int) Accessed on Feb. 20, 2022

⁽¹¹⁾ Psychological impact of the war on Yemenis (December 2017 - Family Counselling & Development Foundation) <https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://fcdf-ye.org/Uploads/637799113203088990.pdf>. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of recent studies on the impact of the current humanitarian crisis on the mental health.

An estimated 8.5 million children – with over 2.4 million out of school - are in need of **safe quality education** assistance largely due to conflict, displacement and associated vulnerabilities, including damage to schools. Some 2°900 schools have been destroyed, partially damaged, or utilised for non-educational purposes; discontinued payment of teachers' salaries, poor infrastructure, lack of supplies and equipment, poor WASH facilities in schools, lack of documentations for children to register (especially IDPs), limited economic capacity on household level, lack of social integration of IDPs and high mine and UXO contamination on the way to school are main barriers to access education.

Logistical common services are critical most notably to support safe and efficient access, into and within the country, by humanitarian workers and logistical support to ensure timely provision and cost-effective storage and movement of supplies and materials. Key challenges ⁽¹²⁾ are mainly administrative impediments, especially custom clearance and movement of goods in country. Additionally, the lack of reliable transport and lack of suitable temperature-controlled storage further aggravate logistical constraints especially in remote locations.

The **environment** is also impacted by the prolonged conflict, with deforestation and desertification, key environmental issues driven by the crisis and the increasing frequency and impact of disasters induced by **natural hazards** and **climate change**. It further impacts the already devastating food insecurity. Poor water management and water scarcity as well as uncontrolled waste disposal are also key environmental problems.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

1) National / local response and involvement

The national response remains highly dependent on external support, both in north and south of Yemen. The conflict resulted in a de facto split of the country around major areas of influence with separate administrations. The challenging complex working environment in the north and the political fragmentation in the south, impact heavily on the capacities of line ministries, both at central and local levels. Control over the Central Bank of Yemen, public salaries, tax revenues and humanitarian programmes have become political tools in the conflict. This has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and the subrogation of responsibilities towards foreign humanitarian assistance. The dysfunctionalities in security governance are leaving room for radical armed groups, militias and criminal groups to act freely and expand their influence. While national NGOs play an irreplaceable role in the overall response, they face direct pressures by authorities.

Yemen lacks a solid national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework while epidemics and flash floods are increasing. There is a clear need to improve coordination and tools in place to ensure preparedness. This concern is valid for both local actors and for the humanitarian community that tend to favour emergency response at the extent of contingency planning.

2) International Humanitarian Response

⁽¹²⁾ Logistics cluster – January 2022

The international humanitarian response is guided by the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP), which is largely underfunded. By 20 October 2022, a total of USD 2.05 billion have been funded against an appeal of USD 4.27 billion (47.5%). Additional USD 94 million have been committed outside the YHRP. Mobilisation of additional humanitarian funding remains critical to safeguard lifesaving programmes. There is large consensus among major donors and humanitarian partners about the importance of the protection dimension of the crisis requiring integrated programming, including dedicated protection services, with greater focus on the centrality of protection throughout the response. More efforts are also needed to link humanitarian aid with longer term solutions including priority sectors and identifying appropriate coordination models.

The EU is one of the largest donors in Yemen, having mobilised over EUR 1 billion in development, crisis response and humanitarian assistance since 2015. Of this amount, DG ECHO has allocated EUR 827.36 million in humanitarian aid. By September 2022, the European Commission is the third single largest donor to the YHRP 2022 ⁽¹³⁾, and the EU (combined support of EU Member States and EU Institutions) ranks second as humanitarian donor in Yemen.

DG ECHO is a lead actor on advocacy in the donor community, promoting coordinated and principled humanitarian action, a role that will remain central in DG ECHO's action in Yemen during 2023. Jointly with Sweden, DG ECHO has set up the Yemen Humanitarian Senior Official Meetings (SOM), a key coordination process which helped articulating a united voice among humanitarian actors advocating for a principled, robust and accountable humanitarian response and which will be continued to be strengthened. DG ECHO and Sweden have also regularly co-hosted high-level events on Yemen in the margins of UNGA.

3) Operational constraints in terms of:

i.) access/humanitarian space:

Despite the truce, humanitarian access to people in need has remained challenging. Nearly half of the people in need (10.1 million people) were estimated to be living in areas considered Hard-to-Reach ⁽¹⁴⁾. While access has, to a certain extent, improved while the truce remained active, a growing number of administrative and bureaucratic barriers imposed by the authorities in both north and south are hampering access to the most in need. ⁽¹⁵⁾

In the south, for example, humanitarian organisations are subjected to recurrent attacks and security incidents, including kidnapping, carjacking and smear campaigns, which impact on safe and unhindered access and shrink humanitarian space. In the north, major access constraints are witnessed especially with the introduction of female Yemeni workers needing a *Mahram* ⁽¹⁶⁾ to undertake their work, impacting on women's access to services. Restrictions on the movement of humanitarian personnel and goods within and into Yemen, irregular clearances and taxes and interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities are frequent across the country. Principled and accountable

⁽¹³⁾ OCHA Financial Tracking Service, accessed on 29 September 2022

⁽¹⁴⁾ UNOCHA updated 2022 figure

⁽¹⁵⁾ UNOCHA Access Snapshot June 2022

⁽¹⁶⁾ Whereby female Yemenis working for humanitarian organisations need a close male relative to travel with them.

humanitarian action is threatened by recurrent attempts to instrumentalise humanitarian assistance for political or economic gains by parties to the conflict.

Such pervasive hurdles delay the response and increase the cost of operations. The humanitarian community has developed measures on advocacy and risk mitigation to address those obstacles. Accordingly, DG ECHO implementing partners have retained the ability to assess needs and deliver assistance.

The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) report was officially released in July 2022 and the related Humanitarian Country Team-led Management Response Plan (MRP) was released in September 2022. The IAHE and the MRP include valuable recommendations in the improvement of quality of aid, targeting and centrality of protection among others. The findings and conclusions of the IAHE and the MRP should be factored in the actions to be funded by DG ECHO in 2023.

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

During the first six months of 2022 (Jan – June), 170 organisations were active in Yemen (12 UN Agencies, 54 INGOs and 104 national NGOs). When compared to the same period in 2021, there has been a slight increase of INGOs (51), and a decrease of national NGOs (111). The challenging operational environment demands reinforcement of human resources' capacities at field level. To this end, the UN has established 7 hubs ⁽¹⁷⁾, with sub-hubs in Hajjah, Mokha and Turbah (operating with various degrees of presence). DG ECHO has prioritised the support to decentralised field functions, seeking to incentivise and support INGO direct presence, field capacity and proximity to beneficiaries, while advocating for more INGOs to start operations.

National NGOs play a critical role with local access and contextualised knowledge that is vital to the analysis and design of the humanitarian response in Yemen. To further localisation, supportive efforts need to be fully integrated into the programme cycle that builds on capacities. Partnerships with local organisations should strike an appropriate share of risks as well as emphasising institutional gains such as capacity building to be obtained from joint programming and adapted capacity development plans. Additionally, continuous improvements in accountability and humanitarian principled delivery should remain a priority also when enhancing partnership with local organisations.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

Already the poorest country in the MENA region before 2015, the conflict has regressed Yemen to development levels of decades ago. The scope of the crisis makes a nexus approach essential to address the needs of millions, protect its human capital through the provision of basic public services and administrative functionalities and pave the way for post-crisis development.

Despite the current unstable and fluid situation, humanitarian and development assistance increasingly converge in recognition of critical sectors, relying often on cash transfers as a modality of assistance and focusing on common target groups such as poor and food-insecure populations and IDPs.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Sana'a, Hodeida, Sa'ada, Ibb, Mukallah, Marib and Aden.

The EU continues to lead initiatives linking humanitarian, development and peace action in the country (e.g., DG ECHO support to development of “interoperability of beneficiary data systems” complemented by DG INTPA support to data collection on food security and nutrition – IPC, famine alert-, critical to provide an evidence-based humanitarian response).

DG ECHO has identified the following priority areas in which nexus linkages require further strengthening and scale up:

- Multi-purpose cash assistance: linking the increasing use of humanitarian cash assistance to social protection mechanisms funded by the World Bank.
- Food and nutrition security: Strengthening synergies with recovery and development actions, assisting vulnerable and food insecure households towards self-reliance.
- WASH/Disaster Risk Reduction and public health: Linking up emergency WASH support with long term initiatives required to restore dilapidated infrastructure and address severe water scarcity and climate change impacts.
- Education: Bringing together focus on education in emergency (targeting most at risk, out-of-school children) with formal education led by developmental actors and building on the progress achieved by recent DG ECHO assistance in EiE in non-formal education.
- Protection: Enhancing advocacy messages to uphold the rights of vulnerable groups, principled durable solutions and continuing cooperation and coordination on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) and the implementation of EU Gender Action Plan III.

From a development perspective, the EU’s response is framed around three priority areas: i) integrated human and social development; ii) promoting economic stability and growth; and iii) promoting peace and security. The continued focus of interventions will be on sustaining the resilience of local communities, both rural and urban, as well as the support to local authorities in providing basic services while building their capacities. Development actions will also support UN-led peace efforts in the area of the economy, seeking to ease tensions and create a better climate for employment and livelihoods across the country.

Collaboration is also ongoing with the World Bank in strengthening complementarities around common areas of interest such as health, nutrition, food security and education with the aim of improving resilience programming, protecting human capital and enabling national institutions to deliver basic services.

Together with the UN, the EU is playing a coordination role to allow for a multi-track process to guarantee an inclusive and sustainable peace process. The EU will continue supporting crisis response and stabilisation actions to facilitate peaceful conflict transformation through its stabilisation and development instruments, while ensuring the independence, neutrality and impartiality of its humanitarian assistance. These actions complement the UN-led peace process and support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy to mediate an agreement to end the conflict.

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

General considerations for all interventions

The humanitarian response shall be compliant with EU thematic policies and guidelines that are described in the HIP policy annex.

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

DG ECHO will continue focusing on covering most urgent, life-saving assistance⁽¹⁸⁾ and humanitarian protection, through integrated programming.

The response will be articulated along a two-point entry strategy:

1. Integrated response to populations directly exposed to conflict, disasters caused by natural hazards, and displacement. DG ECHO will prioritise emerging needs resulting from ongoing violence and sudden disasters while continuing to address acute needs of most vulnerable hosting communities and protracted IDPs.
2. Integrated response to the health, nutrition (CMAM and IYCF¹⁹) and food security crises, including WASH to prevent transmission of epidemics and malnutrition.

Key horizontal and support actions will further reinforce DG ECHO's response:

- Priority to address acute needs and targeting the most vulnerable in all actions, as it remains highly relevant for partners to ensure and demonstrate that the most in need are targeted for humanitarian assistance.
- Strengthen protection by mainstreaming protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity, accountability and participation within any sector of intervention.
- Depending on evolving displacement dynamics and scenarios, it can be envisaged multi-faceted support that includes new and protracted displacement as well as priority activities supporting principled durable solutions, including return.
- The use of cash as a delivery modality will be favoured whenever possible, considering the functionality of local markets, accountability standards and conditions of the operating environment.
- Advocacy, in coordination with humanitarian mechanisms in-country, will remain a priority. DG ECHO encourages partners to closely coordinate and participate in mechanisms strengthening evidence-based advocacy capacities. DG ECHO will continue playing an active role in the mobilisation of other donors and reach out to national and local authorities through the SOM and other relevant structures. It will also contribute to EU and international efforts to strengthen humanitarian advocacy.
- Supporting complementary enabling activities such as enhanced rapid response capacity, logistical support and coordination as well as promoting and supporting the safe access for humanitarian workers and aid delivery. Mainstreaming health and WASH disaster preparedness where appropriate and to promote community-based preparedness in areas at risk of floods while fostering durable solutions to mitigate the risks of water scarcity and the adverse effects of climate change. DG ECHO response to COVID-19 will continue to be integrated as relevant. Analysing

⁽¹⁸⁾ Life-saving activities are to be understood as activities that within a short time span mitigate or avert direct loss of life, physical harm, loss of dignity or damage to targeted beneficiaries.

¹⁹ Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition; Infant and Young Child Feeding.

environmental impact and mitigating risks of proposed actions is required, in due consideration of limited natural resources and associated conflict dynamics.

DG ECHO will address lifesaving needs across the country prioritising its response in those locations with the highest concentration of needs, which are: 1) areas of active conflict and populations trapped in conflict zones; 2) areas hosting large numbers of newly and protracted displaced people, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and consideration of support for durable solutions, including return and 3) areas with high levels of malnutrition, food insecurity or epidemics.

DG ECHO will give priority to operations adopting an integrated, multi-sector, cost-effective approach seeking maximised impact and geographical coverage in prioritised areas. A conflict-sensitive response is crucial. Particular attention will be paid to “do no harm”. Proposed actions are to demonstrate their assessment and due consideration of self-reliance capacities of targeted households/communities and define efforts to build upon them. DG ECHO supported actions should present their coordination with other humanitarian actors, as well as with recovery/development actions to optimise potential linkages and synergies for concomitant and transitional programming (graduation approaches). Contingency planning, adaptability to respond to emerging needs and efficient referral systems are encouraged.

Quality of information and data analysis are fundamental to ensure accurate identification of needs, effective prioritisation, response quality and accountability. Partners should demonstrate the needs based on localised assessments and/or programmatic data, to complement country wide assessments. Particular attention will be paid to the ability and capacity of partners to safely access and impartially deliver appropriate humanitarian assistance, with adequate international and national staff capacities in proximity to beneficiaries. Accountability and quality of operations will need to be clearly outlined through participatory mechanisms, monitoring plans and due consideration of lessons learned from previous operations.

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide 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.