

THEMATIC POLICIES ANNEX

GENERAL PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

This thematic policy annex to the Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP) outlines the general principles, policy framework, assistance modalities, crosscutting issues and thematic guidelines that need to be taken into account by DG ECHO partners in the design of humanitarian interventions supported by DG ECHO. The Communication on humanitarian action¹ has also guided the drafting of this document.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY, NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY, AND INDEPENDENCE: In line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid², respect of these principles and a strict adherence to a "**do no harm**" approach by partners remain paramount.

PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: Respect of the provisions of international humanitarian law (IHL) by parties to armed conflicts is key for the protection of civilians, of humanitarian and medical workers, and to safeguard humanitarian space in armed conflicts. As a large part of EU-funded humanitarian action takes place in contexts of armed conflicts, the EU has always been firmly committed to promoting compliance with IHL and, where relevant, support its partners in this endeavour.

SAFE AND SECURE PROVISION OF AID: Partners are expected to include details on how the safety and security of staff, including the staff of implementing partners (both international and local organisations) and assets are considered, as well as an analysis of threats and plans to mitigate and limit exposure to risks. A transfer of risks to local and national responders, particularly in remote management contexts, would go against the principle of safe and secure provision of aid. Partners are encouraged to identify and mitigate risks including for local actors, but also to report specifically on how they have been addressed.

DG ECHO can request the suspension of ongoing actions if the humanitarian context has changed in a way that no longer allows the implementation of the action in accordance with the description set out in the Single Form.

QUALITY OF HUMANITARIAN AID: The quality of any humanitarian aid operation is guaranteed first and foremost by the organisation that designs it and that will carry out its implementation. Partners are expected to take in particular the following aspects into account in the design and implementation of an intervention:

- Identification of beneficiaries and needs through robust, comprehensive and systematic methods, conducted in a coordinated manner with humanitarian partners, including local actors and affected communities as much as possible (and whenever possible, participation in and use of coordinated needs assessment including beneficiaries);

¹ COM(2021) 110 final of 10.3.2021.

² Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission (2008/C 25/01)

- Identification and analysis of constraints and risks in terms of logistics, security and access, and the steps taken to mitigate them.
- Consideration on how to minimise the environmental footprint of assistance and on how to contribute to environmental sustainability in line with the minimum environmental requirements and recommendations;
- Consideration of risks and hazards, ensuring adequate protection for vulnerable populations, to fully minimise risk and not increase vulnerability of communities;
- Ensuring that all interventions are conflict sensitive and are designed accordingly (i.e. assessment of whether they may risk fuelling on-going or underlying tensions or promoting dynamics which may worsen specific dimensions of conflict and fragility such as denial of human rights, shrinking space for civil society, inter-ethnic divisions, land conflicts, gender-based violence);
- Management, monitoring and evaluation of interventions properly facilitated by adequate systems in place, and;
- Monitoring and reporting on activities, outputs and outcomes, through robust and SMART³ indicators including DG ECHO pre-defined Key Result and Key Outcomes indicators. When available at least one KRI should be mandatory per result.

EFFECTIVE COORDINATION can reduce the fragmentation of humanitarian action by coordinated assessments across sectors (including market analysis), enhanced integrated and multisector approach, common targeting methods, response analysis and monitoring and evaluation. Partners are expected to demonstrate how they support effective coordination through active engagement in country-level coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team, clusters and technical working groups). Partners are also expected to share views on issues of common interest with other actors present in the field, including local actors where possible.

GRAND BARGAIN COMMITMENTS: DG ECHO and most of its main partners have signed up to the Grand Bargain, a set of commitments seeking to bring about substantial changes in terms of aid effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to the commitments covered by sectoral sections in this Annex, partners are strongly encouraged to develop proposals that would enable the implementation of the commitments below:

- **Needs assessments and reduction of management costs:** Partners are expected to explore and propose concrete ways of reducing duplication and optimising management costs and contributing to coordinated, impartial and people-centred needs assessments. Partners should adopt a context-specific approach to coordinated needs assessments, demonstrating how they contributed to the exercise via data collection, data sharing and joint analysis, and how assessments by local actors and affected communities informed the process. Partners should ensure that the data collected on needs assessment but also during project monitoring is adequately reported to DG ECHO.
- **Longer-term funding arrangements:** In crises where it is appropriate to engage in multi-year interventions (i.e. 24 months and longer), actions should be grounded in a longer-term strategy that includes contingencies and crisis modifiers for risks that may occur over the timeframe of the intervention, and yields concrete efficiency and effectiveness gains.

³ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- **Local and national actors:** Local and national organisations, authorities and service providers are indispensable in responding to humanitarian needs. In the majority of cases, DG ECHO funding is translated into services and assistance provided via local actors. Partners are therefore expected to take into account the operational space and opportunities for a locally-led response, including the capacity and role of local NGOs and other relevant national/local actors and authorities so that the response builds, to the extent possible, on local capacities. Partners are encouraged to work with hubs or networks or civil society organisations, including local organisations representing marginalised actors. These partnerships should support the organisational growth of the local organisations through the reinforcement of equitable partnership agreements, enabling local organisations to invest in their core functions, and allow for their empowerment to meaningfully influence decision-making about humanitarian priorities in a given country/area. Partners are also encouraged to proactively explore ways of providing indirect costs to local partners, taking into account the level of maturity and capacities of the organisations.
- **Accountability to affected populations – participation revolution:** crisis-affected communities must be considered as partners in response and preparedness initiatives, not passive recipients of aid. Therefore, their voices need to be taken into account in the decisions that affect them, including needs assessments. Furthermore, partners should regularly and systematically use beneficiary feedback mechanisms and apply course correction measures where appropriate in order to improve the quality of humanitarian responses. Partners should systematically collect, report and act on feedback received while explaining how beneficiary views were integrated in all stages of the programming cycle.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

ALL-RISK INFORMED APPROACH

DG ECHO partners are expected to consistently apply a holistic and inclusive risk-informed programming approach to inform all humanitarian interventions: actions must be based on a comprehensive evidence-based, context specific and gender–age sensitive all-risk analysis. Such analysis looks at specific threats and hazards that populations are facing or are likely to face, avoiding generalisations. The analysis should also make use of science-based and internationally recognised models, such as the INFORM Risk index⁴. Risks should not only be analysed individually but their interacting and systemic nature must be also considered, notably in complex scenarios. Furthermore, where feasible, a risk analysis (including triggers, dividers, connectors, etc.) should be conducted with and from the perspective of different groups of the affected population, thus ensuring their meaningful engagement in the analysis, decision-making and implementation of the assessment itself.

An all-risk-informed approach must integrate a disaggregated analysis accounting for pre-existing, current and foreseeable threats/hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities, enablers and barriers for different population groups. This should be done to ensure that the interventions are effectively responding to their specific needs and strengthening their resilience.

Partners are expected to ensure that the all-risk analysis is a continuous process, with a view

⁴ <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk>

to generate updated contextual information that can inform decisions, such as adjustments and responsiveness across the entire programme cycle.

Sub-sections below will provide further details on specific aspects of an all-risk analysis in DG ECHO funded operations, where applicable.

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

Protection mainstreaming in all interventions is of paramount importance and is key for “safe programming”.

What we expect from partners: the four elements of 1) Safety, dignity and avoid doing harm; 2) Meaningful access; 3) Accountability; and 4) Participation must be reflected in the proposal and monitored throughout the action:

- Safety, dignity and avoid doing harm when describing the risk analysis, response analysis and logic of intervention;
- Meaningful access when describing the response analysis, beneficiaries’ identification criteria, and logic of intervention;
- Accountability when describing the response analysis, beneficiaries’ identification criteria and logic of intervention, and;
- Participation when describing the response analysis, involvement of beneficiaries in the design of/an in the action, and logic of intervention.

For these elements to be comprehensively addressed they must be analysed and operationalised according to the different threats, vulnerabilities and barriers faced by different gender, age, disability and contextually relevant diversity groups and taking into account existing capacities and enablers⁵ of these groups to overcome the threats, vulnerabilities and barriers. Particular attention must be paid to ensure that issues of social exclusion and discrimination are not overlooked, and that the specific needs of groups most often affected by this – people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, and very marginalised social groups – are appropriately addressed in the design and targeting of interventions.

Following a consultation with partners, DG ECHO has introduced a protection mainstreaming key outcome indicator (KOI). The indicator aims at ensuring that protection mainstreaming considerations are implemented and monitored at all stages and are operationalised as adaptations/corrective measures in programming. Partners are encouraged to use the indicator for all sectors covered by the programme.

Link to policies and guidance:

- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/resources-campaigns/policy-guidelines_en
- Protection Mainstreaming KOI Guidance
[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/dg_echo_protection_mainstreaming_i ndicator - technical_guidance.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/dg_echo_protection_mainstreaming_indicator_-_technical_guidance.pdf)

GENDER-AGE MAINSTREAMING (INCLUDING GENDER-AGE MARKER)

Women, girls, boys, and men of all ages are affected by crises in different ways, and

⁵ Enablers are external factors that help overcome barriers hindering persons’ access and participation in society on equal basis with others.

emergencies tend to exacerbate gender inequalities. The systematic incorporation of gender and age considerations into humanitarian actions ensures that humanitarian interventions reach the most vulnerable, respond adequately to their specific needs and do no harm. To this end, the needs and capacities of different gender and age groups among targeted populations must be adequately assessed, and assistance must be adapted accordingly.

What we expect from partners:

- Context-specific gender-sensitive needs assessments and gender analysis must be conducted to ensure an accurate consideration of vulnerabilities (for instance, women should not be considered the most vulnerable group by default) and to ensure a more effective targeting.
- Based on the identified needs, practical examples of assistance adapted to the needs of different gender and age groups must be provided. Actions targeting one specific gender and/or age group – particularly when one group is clearly more vulnerable than others – may be deemed necessary in some instances. While assistance may specifically target one group, the participation of other groups may prove crucial for reaching the expected impact.
- The Gender-Age Marker tool is aimed at assessing how strongly DG ECHO funded humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations. Partners are expected to apply the Marker at proposal, monitoring and final report stage, in accordance with the guidance provided in the Gender and Age Marker Toolkit. Since 2019, an e-learning for DG ECHO partners on the Marker is available on the partners learning platform (see link below).

Link to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid_en
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf
- <http://else.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/learn> (for e-learning on DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker)

DISABILITY INCLUSION

In line with DG ECHO Operational Guidance on The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations, partners are expected to pay specific attention to the measures ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in their proposed actions.

What we expect from partners:

- Partners are expected to demonstrate how they plan to reinforce enablers and identify, remove, reduce and mitigate barriers preventing meaningful access to and full and effective participation of people with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian assistance and protection programming. It is recommended to actively use the all-risk analysis and the four aspects of protection mainstreaming (as above) to address the identified barriers and strengthen the enablers and capacities to overcome these.

Link to policies and guidance:

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

RESILIENCE MAINSTREAMING (INCLUDING THE RESILIENCE MARKER)

DG ECHO's objective is to respond to the acute humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable and exposed people while taking opportunities to increase their resilience. By doing so, DG ECHO fully aligns with the EU's resilience approach, which was expanded over the last years by placing a greater emphasis on addressing protracted crises, the risks of violent conflict and other structural pressures including environmental degradation, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, migration and forced displacement.

What we expect from partners: Partners are expected to use resilience-building opportunities to the greatest extent possible, without compromising the humanitarian principles. Four elements are key:

- Conduct an analysis of risks, hazards/threats, vulnerabilities and their causes;
- Be risk-informed (i.e. ensure that activities are based on risk analysis, reduce risks to the extent possible for humanitarian operations or at least do not aggravate risks or vulnerabilities);
- Contribute to building local capacities so that the most vulnerable can cope better with shocks in the medium term; and
- Where feasible, include a deliberate humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) strategy to reduce future humanitarian needs. The nexus strategy should be adapted to the specific context and should be in full respect of the core humanitarian principles.

The Resilience Marker⁶ also ensures a systematic attention to the environmental impact of humanitarian actions and inclusion of corresponding preparedness and resilience building measures in project proposals, implementation and assessment. Partners are expected to use the Marker for all projects. Since 2022, an e-learning for DG ECHO partners on the Marker is available on the partners learning platform (see link below).

Link to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_marker_guidance_en.pdf
- [Placeholder: for e-Learning on DG ECHO's Resilience Marker](#)

RISK-INFORMED PREPAREDNESS AND EARLY ACTION⁷

Risk informed preparedness and early action are an integral part of the EU approach to resilience and are embedded in the majority of DG ECHO funded Humanitarian Aid programmes. This implies that preparedness should not only be considered as a separate policy sector but also as an essential element of all DG ECHO's humanitarian sector policies.

DG ECHO's approach to preparedness is multi-hazard/threat - i.e. it addresses natural and biological hazards as well as human-induced threats such as conflict/violence. Furthermore,

⁶ For more information on the DG ECHO Resilience Marker refer to Section 4 of the electronic Single Form (eSF) at www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/action-proposal/fill-in-the-single-form and to the Resilience Marker guidelines - https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_marker_guidance_en.pdf.

⁷ For DG ECHO, anticipatory actions and early actions are the same concept. Anticipatory or Early Actions (AA and EA) are taken when a disaster is imminent (or, in the case of a slow-onset disaster, when it is about to reach a peak). Therefore, they are carried out before a crisis occurs, or before a significant development within a crisis. Early actions are implemented according to a pre-determined protocol, which describes the activities to be undertaken and pre-agreed triggers established on the basis of historical and current forecast analysis.

in view of the increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation, DG ECHO's approach also specifically accounts for these factors and their interaction with situations of conflict and fragility, to help at risk people and communities to adapt and boost their resilience.

DG ECHO places an emphasis on anticipation and early action as a means to reduce the impact of shocks on vulnerable people and their livelihoods. Early action should be an integral element of DG ECHO funded interventions to achieve more effective and flexible preparedness and humanitarian response.

What we expect from partners:

- Mainstream preparedness and risk reduction measures into all DG ECHO's humanitarian actions, except in justified cases such as unpredictable contexts. The objective is to make humanitarian assistance more effective, while increasing the coping capacities and resilience of people and communities at risk;
- Adopt a needs-based approach that consistently integrates risk analysis and crisis severity;
- Targeted preparedness interventions and early warning systems that strengthen response capacities in advance of a hazardous and/or threatening event will remain critical and should therefore be considered as specific actions⁸.
- Early action and predictability of response can only be achieved if local⁹ preparedness and response capacities are in place and reinforced. The core objective of the interventions must strengthen, in a sustainable way, the in-country preparedness and response systems to act as locally and early as possible. To this end, partners are encouraged to strengthen national and local government capacities for preparedness and response alongside its community-based actions, to ensure linkages and simultaneous capacity-building at community and governmental level, whenever possible, whilst respecting the humanitarian principles.

Cooperation with other actors on preparedness and early action also remains important. It includes cooperation with development counterparts in a humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) approach¹⁰ and whenever relevant, cooperation with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). EU civil protection actors are active in disaster preparedness and they can reinforce humanitarian interventions. In this regard, the prevention and preparedness missions of the UCPM are of particular relevance as they are tailor-made and provide expertise and recommendations on preparedness at the request of a national government or the United Nations and its Agencies.

Link to policies and guidance:

- Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note:
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/document/download/13015e8b-acaf-4d8a-b665-d2aab142c97b_en?filename=dg_echo_guidance_note_-_disaster_preparedness_en.pdf

⁸ These actions are funded by the dedicated Disaster Preparedness Budget Line under a limited number of priorities for a five-year cycle. See Technical Annexes for the various regional HIPs for further information.

⁹ *Local* refers to both national and local government actors, civil society, academia, private sector and communities. It also includes international partners working in country in support of preparedness and response systems.

¹⁰ See section on 'Humanitarian – Development – Peace Nexus' below.

MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The gravity of environmental and climate-related challenges coupled with the dependency of affected populations on natural resources calls for a collective responsibility for humanitarian actors to reduce their programmes' environmental and carbon footprint. The greening of the humanitarian response, by introducing environmentally sustainable alternative ways of working, could directly contribute to the ambitions of the overall implementation of the European Green Deal.¹¹

What we expect from partners:

- Partners are expected to mitigate potential environmental impacts of an action by applying the cross-cutting minimum environmental requirements across interventions, as well as the sector-specific requirements for the relevant sector(s), as specified in DG ECHO's Environmental Guidance for humanitarian projects.
- DG ECHO applies a mainstreaming approach, meaning that environmental impacts should be mitigated across sectors, projects and programmes and not implemented as stand-alone or parallel actions to the response activities. This means that every activity should undergo be scrutinised and if needed, modified in order to become more environmentally compliant.
- Some sectors might require more effort and research to transition, while, in other sectors, quite advanced greening strategies have been implemented already. The minimum environmental requirements reflect this accordingly. They are called "minimum" environmental requirements because DG ECHO expects these measures to be reflected in project proposals, in the applicable contexts, as a minimum, and are hence not meant to be exhaustive.

Link to policies and guidance:

- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en.

DIGITALISATION, INNOVATION AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Incorporating innovative practices, expanding the use of digital tools and services for humanitarian aid delivery and engaging the private sector as a source of finance or as a partner in the provision of technology can all play a role in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of aid delivery. Digital approaches and solutions built into the design and the proposed implementation of humanitarian actions will represent an asset when funding requests from partners are assessed.

What we expect from partners:

- Expand and scale up digital solutions that have been successfully rolled-out in their other actions.
- Proposals with a digital dimension should highlight any underlying activities which support the overall enabling environment for use of digital programmes in a given country context (for example, how data collection activities feed into and support the interoperability of systems between implementing organisations¹²).

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹² See for reference, DG ECHO's [Thematic Policy Document on Cash Transfers](#) and the [guidance](#)

- Programmes with a digital dimension should pay particular attention to data protection in the design and implementation, with a thorough risk assessment carried out and mitigation measures put in place, including data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) for all programmes involving the collection, storage or sharing of sensitive personal data¹³.

Innovative partnerships with the private sector that seek to promote technological innovation, technical skills and to leverage local networks are also encouraged as a means to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action, against a background of environmental sustainability.

- DG ECHO encourages partners to seek the increased involvement of private sector actors to support the financing of actions, to help access new technologies to address humanitarian challenges, and, where relevant, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Engagement of non-traditional actors in the financing or delivery of programming should be considered an asset and highlighted in the project proposal.

HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

The objective of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) approach is to better link urgent relief and longer-term solutions, aiming at reducing needs and tackling the root causes of conflicts and crises. Without compromising the humanitarian principles, DG ECHO seeks to contribute to longer-term strategies to build the capacity and resilience of the most vulnerable people and address the underlying reasons for their vulnerability.

Linking humanitarian assistance with longer-term investments is also important for principled durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations. It includes developing strategies aiming at building resilience at all levels, empowering displaced populations, including through access to livelihoods and self-reliance, as well as to national services, whilst ensuring legal and physical protection, and integration when appropriate and possible.

Humanitarian partners have an important role to convey expertise and knowledge to development actors in fragile and conflict contexts to trigger investment aimed at providing people-centred services without doing harm, and in partnership with the authorities and the private sector, for example linked to the creation of jobs and other livelihood opportunities.

The appropriate nexus approach to be adopted differs by context, and a sound preliminary analysis and the definition of context-specific nexus objectives is required. Partners are encouraged to provide an analysis of nexus opportunities such as partnerships/synergies with other programmes and actors, as well as enhanced dialogue/advocacy opportunities and coordination mechanisms. DG ECHO's Resilience Marker will contribute to a systematic assessment of project proposals in this regard (see above).¹⁴

What we expect from partners:

[note series on data responsibility](#) developed by the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data

¹³ DG ECHO's [Single Form Guidelines](#), and [Thematic Policy Document on Cash Transfers](#) provide guidance on how to take into account data protection risks in a project proposal.

¹⁴ See 'Resilience mainstreaming – including Resilience Marker', page 6.

- Whenever feasible, partners are expected to apply a HDP nexus lens throughout the whole project cycle, in full respect of humanitarian principles. In practice, this should include:
 - sharing information and building evidence to strengthen analyses, preparedness and response;
 - participating in needs assessments (including post-crisis) to help the systematic integration of preparedness, risk and vulnerability concerns into development processes;
 - if appropriate, being actively involved in joint context and risk analyses with development and peace actors;
 - engaging in a ‘people-centred’ dialogue with a view to addressing risks and vulnerability, in order to decrease humanitarian needs over time;
 - pilot and advocate for approaches aimed at providing continuity of access to quality services by crisis-affected people (continuity of service) in different contexts, without doing harm;
 - ensuring a conflict-sensitive approach throughout the project cycle.
- Without compromising the humanitarian principles, partners should consider if it is appropriate to link humanitarian assistance to existing national social protection systems, or if it is possible to use the humanitarian response to trigger investments in the development of "nascent" social protection systems, with a view to make them more inclusive.

Link to policies and guidance:

- Council Conclusions on Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, May 2017: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24010/nexus-st09383en17.pdf>
- Communication on “Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance”, April 2016: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf and accompanying Staff Working Document: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Staff_working_document_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf
- Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (“SPaN”) Feb. 2019, including a Supplementary Volume of Operational Notes, May 2019: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus/wiki/guidance-package-span-resources>

ASSISTANCE MODALITIES AND APPROACHES

BASIC NEEDS APPROACH (BNA)

DG ECHO prioritises an integrated cross-sectoral approach to the design of interventions

that aims to meet or contribute to the basic needs¹⁵ of affected populations.

A basic needs approach (BNA) actively seeks to address people’s needs in a coordinated and demand-driven way, by putting them at the centre of interventions. DG ECHO encourages partners to strategically layer projects to optimise synergies as crises evolve over time, based on a multi-sector needs, risk and response analysis. This includes consideration of interventions that directly support market actors as part of a market systems approach.

Programmes designed within a BNA should be based on coordinated, multi-sectoral independent and impartial needs assessments, informed coherent and comprehensive risk analysis, and the preferences and prioritisation of the affected populations. Assessments should include market, operational and environmental analyses. They should be conducted in a coordinated way.

Assessments should be complemented by robust response analysis to maintain a demand-led process, whereby the most appropriate modality (or mix of modalities) is selected based on evidence.

The collective outcomes (sectoral and multi-sectoral) of complementary interventions within a BNA should be monitored to analyse how the package of interventions is contributing to basic needs.

CASH TRANSFERS

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. This is in line with the EU’s Grand Bargain commitment to deliver 35% of its humanitarian aid through cash transfers globally. When designed appropriately, cash transfers can confer choice and a sense of dignity, and empower people to tailor the assistance to meet their own priorities through transfers designed to meet multiple needs.

As part of the Basic Needs Approach (BNA), DG ECHO prioritises multipurpose cash (MPC) to meet basic needs, complemented by other modalities and timely referrals to meet specific sectoral outcomes. When cash is used to meet sector-specific objectives, DG ECHO expects a clear justification on the use of conditional cash transfers and/or of vouchers.

What we expect from partners’ cash interventions:

- Operationalise the HDP nexus: as far as the context allows, DG ECHO-funded humanitarian cash should link, preferably at the outset, to a systems approach which strengthens local capacity and links to durable solutions.
- Target the most vulnerable: DG ECHO supports cash assistance that targets the most vulnerable people based on needs alone. A prepared, risk-informed and protection-sensitive approach should be mainstreamed throughout cash programme design. Targeting criteria for DG ECHO-funded cash assistance should include socio-economic vulnerability, and the protection concerns of individuals and groups.
- Adequate, equitable and timely: humanitarian cash assistance must be provided in a way that does not increase risks, and that upholds the safety, participation of and accountability to affected communities and individuals. It should be sufficient to cover or contribute to recurrent basic needs or other sector-specific needs, and should be complemented by other relevant sectoral interventions. Transfers should seek to be

¹⁵ Basic needs are the essential goods, utilities, services or resources required on a regular or seasonal basis by households for ensuring long-term survival and minimum living standards, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms or compromising their health, dignity and essential livelihood assets.

timely and anticipatory where possible in order to meet needs with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Provide value for money:** Better harmonisation of tools and approaches for cash assistance is a key driver of efficiency and effectiveness gains. DG ECHO therefore promotes a common programming approach to reduce fragmentation, with interoperable systems created to avoid duplication and parallel ways of working. DG ECHO also encourages digitalisation (see section “Digitalisation, innovation and private sector”).
- **Accountable:** DG ECHO prioritises cash programmes that put people at the centre, and that seek, share and act upon their feedback. DG ECHO cash programmes should also minimise financial risk, whilst safeguarding beneficiary data.
- **Measurable:** The sectoral and multisectoral outcomes of cash programmes should be monitored in a consistent way that allows comparisons over time and space. Systematic monitoring of outputs, through participatory process monitoring, should allow for timely adaptation of programmes, including responding to changes in inflation and the depreciation of currencies, as well as to potential risks that might arise. In line with the principle of segregation of duties DG ECHO encourages partners to establish third-party arrangements for monitoring and evaluation (MEAL) activities.

[DG ECHO’s thematic policy on cash transfers](#)¹⁶ elaborates on each of the above and includes a check-list with key considerations for partners, structured according to DG ECHO’s single form.

For large-scale cash programmes (i.e. EUR 10 million and above), DG ECHO expects partners to apply specific requirements regarding segregation of functions, cost-efficiency (including indirect costs) and transparency.

Links to policies and guidance:

- [DG ECHO thematic policy on cash transfers](#) (March 2022).

SPECIFIC SECTOR POLICIES

In the design and implementation of interventions dealing with specific sector policies, partners should demonstrate how they address the abovementioned considerations, cross cutting issues, assistance modalities and approaches. Partners must provide a humanitarian response complying with internationally recognised minimum standards of quality, as indicated in the respective sections below.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

The main objective of the EU’s humanitarian food assistance (HFA) is to save and preserve life, and to increase resilience for populations facing food crises, or recovering from them. It

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/thematic_policy_document_no_3_cash_transfers_en.pdf

intends to ensure the availability of, access to, and consumption of safe and nutritious food for the hungriest and most vulnerable people in anticipation of, during and in the aftermath of humanitarian crises. HFA also aims to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of a crisis-affected population, to prevent or reverse negative coping mechanisms that could engender harmful consequences for their livelihood base, their food-security and nutritional status.

What we expect from partners:

- Humanitarian food assistance interventions should be well targeted according to a commonly agreed methodology so that it is used only where it is most urgently required, on the basis of vulnerability related to food insecurity;
- Nutritional perspectives should be incorporated into all HFA needs assessments and responses, paying particular attention to nutritional needs of specific groups (including of children under five years old and pregnant and lactating women);
- Whenever possible, interventions should consider the possibility to take action in anticipation of foreseeable shocks, to reduce their potential impact. This can be done through the inclusion of flexible crisis modifiers allowing anticipatory actions.
- Interventions should be coordinated with other humanitarian actors, and complementary with relevant development programmes. Participation in nexus platforms and joint assessments related to food security is strongly encouraged.
- Emergency livelihood activities should be considered in the response when they are prompted by emergency needs, meet humanitarian objectives, and support strategies for self-reliance and livelihood protection for the most vulnerable.
- The feasibility and appropriateness of the livelihood interventions, including seasonality factors, should be carefully considered and documented, and should not be confined to agricultural and pastoral livelihoods.

Links to policies and guidance:

- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/food_assistance/them_policy_doc_foodassistance_en.pdf
- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/food-assistance_es

NUTRITION

The main objective of the EU's humanitarian nutrition assistance is to avoid excess mortality and morbidity due to malnutrition in humanitarian situations and to address the immediate and underlying causes of undernutrition.

Specifically, in emergency situations Commission interventions strives to:

- Reduce levels of moderate and severe acute undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies, to below-emergency rates, through timely, efficient and effective humanitarian response;
- Prevent significant and life-threatening deterioration of nutritional status by ensuring access by crisis-affected populations to adequate, safe and nutritious food, through food and non-food responses depending on the context;

- Reduce the specific vulnerability of infants and young children in crises through the promotion of appropriate child care, with special emphasis on infant and young child feeding practices;
- Reduce specific vulnerability of pregnant and lactating women in crises through appropriate support of maternal nutrition;
- Address the threats to the nutritional status of people affected by crises from an inadequate public health environment, by securing access to appropriate health care, safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene inputs.

Other areas of possible support have been identified as key to reach the above objectives, namely information systems, quality programming, capacity building, research and advocacy. However, these are neither entry points nor stand-alone activities.

What we expect from partners:

Nutrition interventions need to:

- Treat and prevent malnutrition based on needs assessment of the target population and at individual level.
- Respond to the needs of the individuals most vulnerable to undernutrition - pregnant and lactating women, children under 5; elderly and chronically ill
- In acute emergencies, priority should be given to severe acute malnutrition, which is associated with a higher risk of mortality and morbidity
- Use methods and tools which have demonstrated their efficiency and cost-effectiveness;
- Respond to well-defined humanitarian risks as well as immediate emergency needs;
- Promote a multi-sector approach, which is essential to tackle the causes of undernutrition;
- Promote a joint humanitarian and development approach to help build resilience.

Links to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/tpd04_nutrition_addressing_undernutrition_in_emergencies_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/2014/toolkit_nutrition_en.pdf
- https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/OECD_PolicyMarkerNutrition.pdf

HEALTH

The main objective of the EU's humanitarian assistance in the field of health is to limit excess preventable mortality, permanent disability, associated with humanitarian crises and improve overall dignity of affected populations.

Over the past two years, health systems have been pushed to their limits by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the deterioration of pre-existing humanitarian crises, which have added another layer of complexity to the already fragile health systems in humanitarian settings. Long-standing gaps in public health and disruption of essential health services have highlighted the need to advance more on preparedness and response to health emergencies as well as to ensuring continuity of care.

The multifaceted features of humanitarian crises have highlighted the importance of incorporating a people-centred approach to address health needs in a holistic way and through the most efficient strategies to deliver healthcare assistance, with quality.

What we expect from partners:

- A quantitative health (needs) assessment should be conducted as soon as possible and repeated frequently; the health assessment should not only guide health/medical assistance but help guide the multisector assistance (social/economic determinants of health).
- Health and multisectoral interventions that are contributing to overall health should be based on the best possible evidence of their effectiveness, to potentially save more lives and reduce excess morbidity in a timely manner. Cross-sectoral aspects of delivering healthcare (e.g. nutrition, WASH, protection) should be taken into consideration.
- High quality assistance should be accessible to those most in need. Other factors like feasibility and cost should also be taken into account for the choice of interventions.
- Both support to an existing weakened or disrupted health system and/or in the form of a parallel additional healthcare provider are possible, depending on circumstances specific to the emergency or crisis.
- Quality health services, adapted to the crisis situation (and its specific needs) must be accessible to all crisis-affected individuals and segments of population without discrimination. Health services are a public good. All obstacles to accessibility (such as geographic, economic and socio-cultural) should be explored and addressed to the extent possible/feasible.
- Health services should comply with recognised international quality standards such as those endorsed and promoted by WHO, the Global Health Cluster, or equivalent norms, including standards on quality of medicines.
- All necessary measures to ensure the safety of health staff and supporting personnel need to be implemented.
- The risk and frequency of disease outbreaks have increased in humanitarian crisis settings and early warning and response systems should be assessed for performance and supported in case of needs.

Links to policies and guidance:

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health2014_general_health_guidelines_en.pdf

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

The main objective of the EU's WASH assistance is to save and preserve life and alleviate the suffering of populations facing severe environmental health risks and/or water insecurity in humanitarian crises. The WASH interventions can be either stand-alone in acute crises where the objective is the (re)establishment of WASH services or in support of other interventions as part of integrated programming.

What we expect from partners:

- WASH interventions should be primarily designed to reduce severe environmental health risks and as such conceived as a contribution to public health. Integrated

WASH interventions components primarily support other sector/thematic outcomes interventions (i.e., Health, Nutrition, EiE, DP).

- Any WASH related support should be properly designed, implemented (resourced) and monitored to ensure the quality of this support. In principle, the WASH outcome(s) and output(s) of assistance should be measured against ECHO's WASH KOI/KRI. Any deviation is to be properly justified.
- WASH is to be delivered as a full and integrated 'package' of constituent sub-sector actions in response to the most acute sector needs. Interventions aiming to achieve partial (sub-sectorial) WASH outcomes are only justified when the implementation of complementary WASH actions to achieve a full-sectorial outcome are already in place; or when the likelihood of such timely implementation by third parties is credibly assessed, documented and monitored; or to alleviate severe water insecurity risks and increase people's resilience to withstand water stress and shocks (e.g., water supply in dispersed, arid drought situation; massive destruction and/or contamination of water supplies).
- All WASH outputs should be supported by proper documentation of required inputs, in terms of material/equipment (i.e., designs, kits contents/specifications, materials, bills of quantities) and human resources. Monitoring and the technical supervision of the effective delivery and usage of these inputs should be documented. Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) alone is usually insufficient monitoring tool to assert the achievement of (a) WASH outcome(s).
- When carrying out a vulnerability and coping capacity analysis, the targeting of humanitarian WASH programming should be based on priority humanitarian needs rather than on coverage of WASH services.
- All WASH related services should be monitored in accordance with locally accepted WHO standards and guidance (if available) or international standards (WHO).
- Long-term sustainability of WASH services should be taken into account from the outset: using locally appropriate technologies and designs and considering covering costs of operation and maintenance (for instance through fee-based service provision).

Links to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/WASH_policy_doc_en.pdf
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37022/st13991-en18.pdf>
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39776/st10145-en19.pdf>

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The main objective of the EU's humanitarian Shelter and Settlements (S&S) assistance is to preserve life and alleviate suffering, for disaster-affected populations in need of basic shelter in secure and appropriate settlements, where conditions have significantly deteriorated and fallen below commonly accepted minimum humanitarian standards or are anticipated to imminently do so.

What we expect from partners:

- S&S needs assessment and response analysis should describe and consider the needs

of the affected population including its physical needs (i.e. climate/environmental exposure, injuries, settlement conditions), as well as psychological, protection or specific vulnerabilities related needs. Information provided typically include the main S&S damages/gaps and their causes, prevalent local/imported S&S typologies, main S&S response actors and related coverage, risk and vulnerability analysis of existing shelter practice/stock, analysis of S&S constraints/opportunities (i.e., subsidies/co-funding, skills, markets, supply chain, timelines).

- S&S actions should address people's needs holistically, rather than simply aim to deliver a product, NFI or cash. As such, S&S responses should consider a suitable combination of specific individual, collective and/or host S&S solutions, to be delivered through a range of implementation modalities including technical support (planning and settlement expertise), financial support (individual/Household (HH) level cash), material support (shelter items and construction materials) and contracted works and /or product.
- S&S intervention strategies must always be settlement-based and people-centered, context-specific, displacement-sensitive, environmentally friendly and risk-informed, aiming to build and settle back safer, where relevant.
- Actions aiming to achieve S&S outcomes/outputs should include a stand-alone S&S result(s) and be measured against ECHO's S&S KOI/KRI. Expected S&S outputs should be supported by proper documentation and monitoring of required inputs, in terms of material/equipment (i.e. designs, kits contents/specifications, materials, bills of quantities) and human resources. PDMs alone are usually insufficient monitoring tool to assert the achievement of (an) S&S outcome(s). This also applies to the mobilization of pre-positioned EHRC S&S kits/items.
- Interventions should focus primarily on enabling and assisting household self-recovery and support community coping mechanisms (partners can provide support but they must avoid anything best undertaken by crisis affected populations themselves); S&S recovery is a continuous process, rather than a set of isolated and finite actions.

Furthermore, all sectors requiring construction, rehabilitation and/or repair activities of buildings or other physical infrastructure should ensure that these structures are designed and built safely, according to local building codes, and using skilled personnel. Such expertise may be available in sectors such as Shelter & Settlements, Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM), Disaster Preparedness or WASH from local technical institutes, local authorities and/or technical departments of DG ECHO partners. Application of the 9 guiding principles of the Global shelter cluster Construction Good Practice Standards 2021¹⁷ is mandatory.

Links to policies and guidance:

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

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

¹⁷ GSC Construction Good Practices (June, 2021). Shelter Cluster. [20210515_gsc-construction-good-practices-ver4_final-compressed.pdf](https://sheltercluster.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/20210515_gsc-construction-good-practices-ver4_final-compressed.pdf) (sheltercluster.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com)

The main objective of the EU's Education in Emergencies (EiE) assistance is to restore and maintain access to safe and quality education during humanitarian crises, and to support out of school children to quickly enter or return to quality learning opportunities.

To protect the right to education for the growing number of children affected by emergencies and protracted crises, numerous attacks on education and global learning losses provoked by COVID-19, DG ECHO works towards four EiE objectives focusing on a) access, b) quality, c) protection and d) strengthened EiE response capacity. EiE actions must be tailored to the different needs of children based on their age, gender, disability, diversity and other specific circumstances.

What we expect from partners:

- EiE actions should focus on children and adolescents (up to eighteen years) most in need, based on a strong needs and risk analysis. Relevant vulnerabilities are likely to include out-of-school girls and boys and those at risk of having their education disrupted due to a crisis, emergency or displacement.
- Priority will be given to funding projects which target at least 50 % girls, unless there is a context-based justification for different targeting.
- Projects should have a duration of at least two years and cover full academic year(s), unless there is a needs- or context-based justification for a shorter duration.
- EiE responses may include non-formal and formal education to prevent and reduce disruptions in education, to develop learners' skills and competences, to address learning gaps and losses, and to support authorities to be better prepared to resume education services during or after a crisis. Actions should focus EiE support on the levels of education that are covered by states' commitments to free and compulsory basic education - usually primary, lower and upper secondary levels of education.
- All EiE actions are expected to be designed and implemented with due regard to the INEE (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies) and IASC Minimum Standards¹⁸ to the principles of conflict sensitive education.
- For cash in education projects, an exit strategy must be foreseen, and the cash transfers need to be accompanied by proactive measures to ensure sustainability and referral of beneficiary families to livelihood solutions.
- Child protection must be considered as a core component of the EiE response, and all actions must ensure that child safeguarding mechanisms are in place.
- In conflict-affected contexts, protecting education from attack and providing safe learning spaces with psychosocial support for children is essential.
- EiE actions should promote an integrated approach with relevant sectors to ensure holistic responses to children's needs while also leading to explicit education outcomes. EiE actions should also promote child participation, innovative approaches, including those developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and alignment across the HDP nexus.

Links to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/Communication_on_Education_in_Emergencies_and_Protracted_Crises.pdf

¹⁸ 'INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery', <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>, and 'IASC Minimum Standards for Child Protection' <https://spherestandards.org/resources/minimum-standards-for-child-protection-in-humanitarian-action-cpms/>

- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/eie_in_humanitarian_assistance.pdf

PROTECTION

The overall aim of the EU’s Protection policy is to prevent, reduce, mitigate and respond to the risks and consequences of violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for persons, groups and communities in the context of humanitarian crises.

Protection is viewed as a single sector, encompassing all aspects of protection, including e.g. child protection, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Housing, Land and Property (HLP) and Mine Action. This stems from the perspective that a comprehensive analysis is needed to determine the most appropriate response “package” in a given context.

Protection can also be seen in relation to cash interventions, both in terms of cash interventions contributing to reducing protection risks, mitigating protection-related negative coping-mechanisms and producing potential protection outcomes as well as using cash to explicitly contribute to clearly defined protection outcomes embedded within legal assistance, case management or accompaniment, and within a wider comprehensive and integrated protection response.

What we expect from partners:

- The design and targeting of all interventions should be based on a comprehensive risk analysis. The analysis should bring out external and internal threats, including freedom of movement restrictions, as well as the coping strategies adopted to counteract these threats. It should take into account the protection concerns of individuals and groups based on:
 - the risk of exposure to harm, exploitation, harassment, deprivation and abuse, in relation to identified threats;
 - the inability to meet basic needs;
 - limited access to basic services and livelihood or opportunities to generate income;
 - the ability of the person or population to cope with the consequences of this harm; and
 - due consideration for individuals with specific needs.
- SGBV prevention and response interventions should be built upon solid knowledge of the context of intervention. As part of the all risk analysis, all humanitarian interventions funded by DG ECHO must take into consideration any risk of sexual and gender-based violence and should develop and implement appropriate strategies to actively prevent such risks. Respect of ethical and safety considerations regarding the collection, storage and sharing of data must be demonstrated. Partners are expected to prioritise the establishment of quality, comprehensive and safe SGBV response services accessible to all from the onset of emergencies, ensuring that survivors’ wishes, safety and dignity remain at the centre of the response.
- Child protection interventions will be supported both as standalone programmes, as well as integrated into other sectors. Individual case management and the provision of specialised services such as family tracing and reunification (FTR) for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), alternative care and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) might be supported. Additionally, support to

programmes focusing on children associated with armed forces and armed groups and children deprived of their liberty might be considered. All child protection activities should be grounded in a thorough risk analysis and compliant with international guidance (e.g. Child Protection Minimum Standards¹⁹).

- Humanitarian Mine Action interventions such as non-technical surveys, marking and clearance (when feasible) might be supported with a view to ensuring access to life-saving and basic services, and particularly when longer-term development and recovery funding is not available. Explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance may also be supported. Any victim assistance should be fully aligned to internally agreed upon standards for victim assistance and implemented in an integrated manner (e.g. with health, education in emergencies, and livelihoods).
- Partners should consider the need for housing, land and property (HLP) interventions with a particular focus on ensuring security of tenure and prevention of forced evictions in displacement situations or to prevent forced displacement when forced evictions are used as a deliberate tool. HLP restitutions for durable solutions may also be supported. HLP interventions should always be implemented in an integrated approach with the S&S sector and when relevant the livelihoods interventions.

In order to address protection issues fully, it is also necessary to consider the relevance and feasibility of advocacy interventions aimed at stopping the violations by perpetrators and/or convincing the duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibilities. Opportunities for more effective advocacy should also be sought in the framework of the HDP nexus approach.

Link to policies and guidance:

- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2016-05/staff_working_document_humanitarian_protection_052016.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf

LOGISTICS and EUROPEAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE CAPACITY

The objective of the EU Humanitarian Logistics policy is to support all humanitarian actors to update their approach to logistics. This includes support to a more efficient and effective humanitarian response; support to the greening of humanitarian aid; and raising the profile of humanitarian logistics.

DG ECHO's vision of logistics is that:

- Practitioners prioritise logistics in their project planning and include it at an early stage, as from project conceptualisation²⁰ onwards;
- Logistics expertise is valued and developed at all levels of humanitarian organisations, including at management level;

¹⁹ Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action. Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) (2012).

²⁰ In the policy's Annex 1 a list of areas is set out where DG ECHO partners – and all humanitarian actors – should consider logistics when planning and implementing projects.

- Organisations share data and knowledge, and work together both on the ground and in HQ, in areas such as procurement; and
- Donors better coordinate on logistics.

Complementarity with all partners' activities (particularly the Global Logistics Cluster) and with DG ECHO tools and instruments such as the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) will be key.

The EHRC is a gap-filling instrument for humanitarian responses, based on operational capacities made available by the Commission to its humanitarian partners and to the EU Member States. Its objective is to provide support to humanitarian partners and emergency responders to enable a more effective and efficient humanitarian action in the field of logistics and supply chain. All deployments of EHRC capacities will be carried out in full transparency and communication with all DG ECHO's partners and Member States. In all circumstances, opportunities for cooperation and collaboration will be sought out actively, avoiding duplication with partners.

What we expect from partners: The main priorities outlined for DG ECHO partners and other humanitarian actors are to:

- Consider logistics throughout the entire project cycle, including at the project conceptualisation stage, taking a strategic approach;
- Allocate sufficient, qualified staff to logistics functions;
- Cooperate with other humanitarian actors by sharing information and pooling resources, and cooperating in logistics on the ground²¹;
- Test new technologies, including digital technologies, to support delivery of aid and share information about supply chains.

Link to policies and guidance

- DG ECHO Humanitarian Logistics Policy document²²

²¹ Like joint procurement, common or shared services.

²² DG ECHO Thematic Policy Document. Humanitarian Logistics Policy. (January, 2022). European Commission.

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

OTHER ISSUES

DG ECHO VISIBILITY

Partners shall ensure full compliance with visibility requirements and acknowledge the funding role of and partnership with the EU/DG ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.²³

What we expect from partners: Partners are obliged to fulfil their contractual obligation regarding visibility through:

- standard visibility in the field, including prominent display of the EU humanitarian aid visual identity on EU-funded relief items and equipment; alternative arrangements are justified where visibility activities are not possible by the nature of the action (e.g. partners who do not provide any relief items), or where they may harm the safety and security of the staff of the partner, staff of the implementing partners, the safety of beneficiaries or the local community and provided that those alternative arrangements have been explicitly agreed upon in the individual agreements, and;
- standard visibility recognizing the EU funding through activities such as media outreach, social media engagement and provision of photos stories and blogs; alternative arrangements are only justified when based on security concerns.

For standard visibility activities partners may, in principle, allocate a budget of up to 1% of the direct eligible costs of the action with an absolute ceiling of EUR 10 000. However, for individual agreements equal or above EUR 5 million this absolute ceiling does not apply. In such cases, the standard visibility budget may go up to 0.5% of the direct eligible costs of the action. When the amount exceeds EUR 10 000, partners must provide a dedicated communication plan prior to signature.

The partner can also opt for "above-standard visibility". The purpose of these more elaborate communication activities is to raise awareness of humanitarian issues among defined audiences in the EU Member States, and to highlight the results of the partnership with DG ECHO.

DG ECHO can provide budget exceeding 1% of the direct eligible costs, when a partner wishes to engage in above-standard actions. To this end, a separate communication plan must be submitted to and approved by DG ECHO prior to the signing of the agreement. The plan must be inserted as an annex. A standard template is available on the visibility webpage, together with a guidance document on the design of communication campaigns.

Further explanation of visibility requirements and reporting as well as best practices and examples can be consulted on the dedicated DG ECHO visibility page.²⁴

²³ The full text of relevant documents, such as the Model Grant Agreement and the Single Form, will be available at a later stage.

²⁴ <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/reference-documents-visibility>