

TECHNICAL ANNEX

GREATER HORN OF AFRICA

FINANCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2024/01000 and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

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

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2. FINANCIAL INFO

Indicative Allocation²: **EUR 243 000 000** of which an indicative amount of **EUR 32 100 000** for Education in Emergencies.

Programmatic Partnerships:

Programmatic Partnerships have been launched since 2020 with a limited number of partners. An indicative amount of **EUR 26.5 million** will be dedicated to ongoing Programmatic Partnerships in 2024. New Programmatic Partnerships could be funded under this HIP³.

Indicative breakdown per Actions as per Worldwide Decision (in euros):

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

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

Countries	Action (a) Human-induced crises and natural hazards	Action (b) Initial emergency response/small-scale/epidemics	Action (c) Disaster Preparedness	Actions (d) to (f) Transport / Complementary activities	TOTAL
Djibouti	500 000				500 000
Ethiopia	38 000 000				38 000 000
Kenya	11 500 000				11 500 000
Somalia	37 000 000				37 000 000
South Sudan	49 500 000				49 500 000
Sudan	72 000 000				72 000 000
Uganda	26 000 000		1 500 000		27 500 000
Regional			7 000 000		7 000 000
Total	234 500 000		8 500 000		243 000 000

3. PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT

a) Co-financing:

Under the EU Financial Regulation, grants must involve co-financing; as a result, the resources necessary to carry out the action must not be provided entirely by the grant. An action may only be financed in full by the grant where this is essential for it to be carried out. In such a case, justification must be provided in the Single Form (section 10.4)⁴.

b) Financial support to third parties (implementing partners)

Pursuant to Art. 204 Financial Regulation, for the implementation of actions under direct management under this HIP, partners may provide financial support to third parties, e.g., implementing partners. This financial support can only exceed EUR 60 000 if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or excessively difficult to achieve. In such cases, justification must be provided in the Single Form (section 10.6) based on the following grounds: a limited number of non-profit NGOs have the capacity, skills or expertise required; there are only a limited number of organisations in the country of operation, or in the region(s) where the action takes place; in a confederation, family or network context, the partner would rely on other members of the confederation, family or network to ensure geographical coverage, while minimising costs and avoiding duplication.

c) Alternative arrangements

In case of country or crisis-specific issues or unforeseeable circumstances, which arise during the implementation of the action, the Commission (DG ECHO) may issue specific ad-hoc instructions which partners must follow. Partners may also introduce via the Single Form duly justified requests for alternative arrangements to be agreed by the Commission (DG ECHO) in accordance with Annex 5 to the Grant Agreement.

⁴ Single form guidelines: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/action-proposal/fill-in-the-single-form>

d) Field office costs

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

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

and

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

e) Actions embedded in multi-annual Programmatic Partnerships⁵

Funding under this HIP may be used to finance actions implemented in the framework of multi-annual strategies (Programmatic Partnerships), as and when provided for in the HIP. Programmatic Partnerships can be at country, multi-country or regional level. If multi-country/regional, the proposals should specify the breakdown between the different country allocations.

f) Regional and multi-country actions

Regional/multi-country actions can be supported under this HIP (and where relevant in conjunction with other HIPs⁶), where they are proven more suitable/effective than country-based interventions to respond to identified needs, taking into account the operating context, the strategy and the priorities set out in the HIP (or respective HIPs), the operational guidelines provided in section 4.1.2. of this Annex, as well as the applicant organisation's capacities. The proposals should specify the breakdown between the different country allocations.

g) Multi-year funding actions⁷

HIPs may be used for multi-year funding actions, which should have a duration of minimum 24 months and the full budget is committed upfront. Specific policy areas for multi-year funding may be mentioned in the respective HIP. Multi-year funding actions aim at generating additional efficiency gains and improve design and delivery of humanitarian assistance. The submitted proposals should demonstrate these gains, which should be monitored during the implementation of the action and will have to be reported in the final reports of the action.

It is possible to request multi-year funding in the context of a Programmatic Partnership to be concluded with DG ECHO. In this situation, see section 3.e.

⁵ See the dedicated [guidance](#) on Programmatic Partnerships.

⁶ For multi country actions falling under more than one HIP, partners are requested to submit only one proposal in APPEL. The single form should refer to the HIP that covers the majority of targeted countries.

⁷ For more information - See the factsheet on EU Humanitarian Aid Multi-Year Funding available on the DG ECHO Website ([DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](https://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu)). Additional information can be found here: Grand Bargain Quality funding commitments: [Grand Bargain Caucus on Quality Funding - Outcome Document - final - 11Jul22.pdf \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#) and Grand Bargain definitions: [Multi-year and flexible funding - Definitions Guidance Summary - Narrative Section January 2020.pdf \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)

4. ADMINISTRATIVE INFO

Allocation round 1

- a) Indicative amount: up to **EUR 243 000 000**.
- b) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2024.⁸
- c) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more⁹ provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner¹⁰. Education in Emergencies actions do not need further justification and should have an initial duration of at least 24 months unless there is a needs- or context-based justification for a shorter duration. For Disaster Preparedness, justification is needed only for particularly volatile contexts. Follow-up actions, which continue/extend ongoing operations financed under a previous Humanitarian Implementation Plan, can be submitted as modification requests to extend the overall duration to a maximum of 48 months. Actions that are extended further to modification requests can be funded under a maximum of three successive Humanitarian Implementation Plans. The same approach may also be used to the extent appropriate in furtherance of any multi-annual strategies provided for by the HIP (see point e) of section 2 above)¹¹.
- d) Potential partners¹²: All DG ECHO Partners
- e) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of on-going actions¹³
- f) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information¹⁴:
 - Somalia: by **12 January 2024**
 - Djibouti: by **15 January 2024**
 - Ethiopia: by **15 January 2024**
 - Kenya: by **15 January 2024**
 - South Sudan: by **16 January 2024**
 - Sudan: by **16 January 2024**
 - Uganda: by **8 January 2024**
 - Greater Horn of Africa Disaster Preparedness actions: by **23 January 2024**

⁸ The eligibility date of the Action is not linked to the date of receipt of the Single Form. It is either the eligibility date set in the Single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, whatever occurs latest. In case of amendments to existing agreements, the eligible date will however be the eligible date set in the initial agreement.

⁹ Maximum duration of an action is 48 months.

¹⁰ See the factsheet on EU Humanitarian Aid Multi-Year Funding (November 2022) available on the DG ECHO Website ([DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](https://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu))

¹¹ Additional guidance may be issued by DG ECHO in this respect, as appropriate.

¹² Unless otherwise specified potential NGO partners refer to certified partner organisations.

¹³ Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

¹⁴ In case of regional or multi-country action, the first deadline of a country covered by the action applies.

4.1. Operational requirements:**4.1.1. Assessment criteria:**

- 1) Relevance
 - How relevant is the proposed intervention; is it compliant with the objectives of the HIP?
 - Has a joint needs assessment been used for the proposed intervention (if existing)? How have the local partners been included in the needs assessment efforts? Have other recent and comprehensive needs assessments been used?
 - Has the proposed intervention been coordinated with other humanitarian actors and local and national actors?
- 2) Capacity and expertise (including in support to the localisation approach)
 - Does the partner, with its implementing partners, have sufficient expertise (country / region and / or technical)?
 - How does the partner contribute to developing/strengthening local capacity?
- 3) Methodology and feasibility
 - Quality of the proposed response strategy, including intervention logic / logframe, output & outcome indicators, risks, and challenges.
 - Feasibility, including security and access constraints.
 - Quality of the monitoring arrangements.
 - Quality of the proposed localisation approach, and measures taken to minimise the transfer of risks.
- 4) Coordination and relevant post-intervention elements
 - Extent to which the proposed intervention is building on ongoing local response and in coordination with other humanitarian actors and actions (including, where relevant, the use of single interoperable registries of beneficiaries).
 - Extent to which the proposed intervention contributes to resilience and sustainability, including the sustainability of locally driven responses.
- 5) Cost-effectiveness/efficiency/transparency
 - Does the proposed intervention display an appropriate relationship between the resources to employed, the activities to be undertaken and the objectives to be achieved?
 - Is the breakdown of costs sufficiently documented/explained, including the information on percentage of funding to be implemented by local actors and the share of overhead costs transferred to them?¹⁵

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

¹⁵ In accordance with the relevant section of the Single Form guidelines (section10)
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No award will be made to NGO partner organisations which have not complied with their obligations concerning the submission of audited financial statements (i.e., which would not have submitted those in due time to the Commission without a proper justification) or which would appear not to offer sufficient guarantee as to their financial capacity to implement the proposed actions (in light of their liquidity and independency ratios as appearing from their latest available annual statutory accounts certified by an approved external auditor).

All awards made using EU Funds must respect the Conditionality Measures¹⁶ issued under any Council Implementing Decision adopted in accordance with Article 6 of EU Regulation 2020/2092 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget¹⁷ (“Conditionality Decision”).

The Commission hereby notifies applicants under this HIP/TA of the following Conditionality Decision (valid at the date of publication of this HIP/TA):

- **Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary¹⁸.**

This Conditionality Decision, in particular its Article 2.2, prohibits legal commitments under direct and indirect management with any public interest trust established by Hungarian Act IX of 2021¹⁹, including those entities listed in Annex I to Hungarian Act IX of 2021²⁰ and other affiliated entities maintained by them (“Concerned Entities”). The Commission will further notify when the above-mentioned Conditionality Measures are lifted.

4.1.2. Specific operational guidelines and operational assessment criteria:

This section outlines the specific operational guidelines that DG ECHO partners need to consider in the design of humanitarian operations supported by DG ECHO. It also lists and explains the assessment criteria – based on those outlined in section 4.1.1 - that DG ECHO will apply in the specific context of the HIP to which this Technical Annex relates when assessing proposals submitted in response to the related HIP.

The current exposure to aid diversion in the region also requires **strengthening transparency, accountability and effectiveness of targeting**, enhancing direct referral pathways for the fast tracking of the first-line response. A thorough risk framework is also encouraged to reinforce the tracking and reporting capacity of assistance provided. Increased monitoring, community feedback and reporting mechanisms to unearth and quickly escalate issues on misuse should be considered, including full transparency with all stakeholders.

In line with the DG ECHO guidance on **localisation**²¹, and unless duly justified, DG ECHO will expect that proposals are based on partnerships with local actors, including through the participation and leadership of local and national actors in the project cycle, giving them

¹⁶ Conditionality Measures against a Concerned Entity, may, for example, include, amongst others, the requirement to: suspend payments or the implementation of the legal commitment to/with the Concerned Entity; and/or terminate the legal commitment with the Concerned Entity; and/or prohibit entering into new legal commitments with the Concerned Entity. Conditionality Decisions and Measures issued under Council Implementing Decisions may impact the implementation of grants, contributions and procurement contracts awarded, as the Commission is required to ensure the application of these Conditionality Decisions and Measures in the implementation of the EU budget via both direct and indirect management.

¹⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, p. 1–10

¹⁸ OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94–109

¹⁹ Act IX of 2021 on public interest trust foundations with a public service mission (entry into force 01/01/2023).

²⁰ Available (in Hungarian) at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-9-00-00>

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/dg%20echo%20guidance%20note%20-%20promoting%20equitable%20partnerships%20with%20local%20responders%20in%20humanitarian%20settings.pdf>

space in the governance process, allocating an appropriate share of funding to local partners. In case of proposals of similar quality and focus, DG ECHO will give priority to proposals where at least 25% of DG ECHO's contribution will be spent on activities implemented by local and national actors. DG ECHO also expects partners to provide an adequate share of overhead cost to their local implementing partners. In addition, DG ECHO will prioritise proposals where the locally led action constitutes a central element and which are designed bottom up and where DG ECHO partners provide relevant support to local partners' response through technical training, peer learning, capacity strengthening and institutional support, including safety- and security-related resources and equipment to mitigate risks).

Regarding **logistics (meaning the entire supply chain)**, DG ECHO will support strategic solutions such as shared and / or common services, joint procurement, etc. if their cost-efficiency and benefit in increasing effectiveness and timeliness of the response is demonstrated, in line with DG ECHO's Humanitarian Logistics Policy. DG ECHO also encourages the application of the Humanitarian Logistics Policy more widely, in particular the key considerations set out in Annex 1: Framework for Operations. The majority of organisations' environmental footprint comes from their logistics/supply chains, and as such these offer an opportunity to minimise environmental impacts²². Preference should be given to local procurement, distribution, and use of environmentally sustainable items, reducing and optimising secondary and tertiary packaging, avoiding procuring single-use items, and favouring products with greater durability and high recycled content

For **Education in Emergencies actions**, priority will be given to funding projects which target at least 50 % girls, unless there is a context-based justification for different targeting. For actions addressing protracted situations with existing presence of partners, the logic of intervention is expected to be based on relevant capitalisation findings and supported by contextual information with regards to the local response capacity (including environmental features: water resources, etc..) and include technical studies as relevant.

Where assistance is to be delivered in the form of **cash transfers**, particular attention will be paid to the principles laid down in DG ECHO's cash thematic policy²³, which will form the basis for the assessment and selection of partners. Partners will be expected to demonstrate a satisfactory efficiency ratio and should ensure that it is maintained throughout the action, unless otherwise approved by DG ECHO. To the extent possible and considering the operational context, partners will be assessed on their ability to work based on common initial assessments, targeting criteria, interoperable beneficiary data bases in line with minimum data protection standards enhancing a needs-based integrated and multisectoral approach through identification of gaps/ duplication and accountable referral pathways, a single payment mechanism, a common feedback mechanism and a common results framework. The large-scale cash guidance note (Annex 1 of the cash thematic policy) includes specific considerations for large-scale cash transfers: segregation of functions, cost-efficiency (including indirect costs), and full transparency on the costs to calculate the efficiency ratio.

Multi-sectoral market analysis and monitoring should be ensured, in real time, to inform and adapt assistance, irrespective of the modality. In contexts of high inflation and currency depreciation, partners (under the leadership of Cash Working Groups) should monitor markets and define inflation and currency-related triggers; design programmes and budgets

²² Preference should be given to procurement, distribution, and use of environmentally sustainable items, reducing and optimising secondary and tertiary packaging, avoiding procuring single-use items, and favouring products with greater durability and high recycled content.

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/thematic_policy_document_no_3_cash_transfers_en.pdf

from the outset to anticipate inflation and depreciation; and adapt programmes and budgets based to maintain purchasing power and programme effectiveness.

Partners should invest in preparedness measures for cash assistance, as a key enabler of timely response e.g. through anticipatory action or rapid response mechanisms, and, wherever feasible and appropriate, by engaging also with existing national systems, such as Disaster Management and Social Protection as part of a Disaster Preparedness objective

The sectoral and multisectoral outcomes of cash programmes should be monitored against defined objectives in a consistent way, using the relevant DG ECHO KOIs and KRIs, which are aligned with the Grand Bargain MPC outcome indicators.

DG ECHO will consider to support Cash Working Groups, under the leadership of the inter-sector/inter-cluster, and in collaboration with relevant sectoral working groups, to provide leadership on the above, in line with the IASC model and CWG ToR²⁴ including on cash – social protection linkages.

Specific implementation of the following elements in the proposal should be demonstrated as appropriate:

- Mainstreaming of protection, gender, age and disability inclusion based on a comprehensive needs and risk analysis;
- Strategies for effective prevention of and response to Gender Based Violence (GBV);
- Strategies for effective prevention of and response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), including adequate and victim/survivor-centred response approaches and reporting channels.

Environmental considerations

All partners are expected to include context-specific measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the proposed actions, while preserving their effectiveness, in compliance with the minimum environmental requirements set out in DG ECHO's Guidance on the operationalisation of the Minimum Environmental Requirements and Recommendations for EU-funded humanitarian aid operations²⁵.

The minimum environmental requirements should be applied through a 'mainstreaming' approach with environmental impacts mitigated across sectors, projects and programmes with the aim to consider the environment holistically when designing and implementing actions. The requirements will apply to all sectors with special attention on mitigating the negative environmental impacts in protracted, chronic situations.

The HIP Policy Annex should be consulted in parallel.

4.1.2.1. Sector-Specific Priorities

STRENGTHENING EARLY RESPONSE CAPACITY

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

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

²⁴ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/global-cash-advisory-group/cash-working-group-cwg-co-chair-terms-reference-tor-global-cash-advisory-group-gcag>

²⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en
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yet in place. ERM/RRMs are mostly used for rapid onset crises. For slow onset crises, objective indicators with thresholds for engagement / disengagement should be defined in coordination with other stakeholders including the State Authorities.

(2) Flexibility embedded into the actions

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

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

ERM/RRM and flexibility measures are complementary and do not exclude each-other; flexibility measures enable to act in advance and to bridge the time gap between the shock and the time needed to mobilise ad-hoc resources through the ERM/RRM or additional funding. Timeliness of response is a key element for effectiveness of both flexibility measures and ERM/RRM. Partners should adopt indicators to measure the time required to deliver the first assistance (e.g., lifesaving response for xxx persons, and/or need assessment within xxx days from the displacement/disaster/alert/exceeded triggers).]

(3) European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC):

DG ECHO can decide on the activation of the EHRC should operational and logistical gaps emerge. The use of the EHRC support is described in the relevant EHRC Humanitarian Implementation Plan and its Technical Annex.

Under this HIP, DG ECHO can propose directly to one or more partners to receive and be in charge of the distribution of emergency relief items or hosting an EHRC humanitarian expertise. The choice of the partner will be taken by DG ECHO based on a set of criteria, such as presence in the affected area, and experience. The EHRC inputs will be part of the partner's response action and will, where relevant, be included in existing grant agreements.

(4) Disaster Preparedness actions

During the last years, an increasing number of countries and regions have been implementing targeted Disaster Preparedness actions, stretching the limited resources assigned to Disaster Preparedness to the maximum. In order to adapt to this increased demand in Disaster Preparedness, while ensuring an efficient use of the limited funds, and with the recommendation for actions to have an initial duration of 24 months, starting from 2024 the Disaster Preparedness budget line will be allocated on a biennial basis. This means that a given country/region will receive Disaster Preparedness funding every two years, unless exceptional circumstances would require otherwise. Two-year allocations will allow more predictability and sustainability of the DP strategy in the relevant countries/regions, with expected higher impact and effectiveness of its objectives.

In order to ensure a smooth transition from the previous annual allocation of funds to the current biennial frequency, a limited envelope has been established in 2024 to facilitate the shift between modalities and address specific gaps in some countries impacted by the transition. These “bridge funds” will be typically allocated for the extension of ongoing actions that, based on strategic and programmatic considerations, are considered eligible for a top up to ensure expected objectives are met, and to mitigate any identified gaps resulting from the shift to the new allocation frequency. This measure will be applied only in 2024 to avert discontinuity and it is not meant to be repeated in 2025.

PROTECTION

Considering existing and exacerbated conflict dynamics in the Greater Horn of Africa, all proposed interventions should ensure conflict sensitivity and be driven by a thorough vulnerability-informed conflict risk analysis, looking at specific protection risks in specific areas and for specific populations.

In light of deteriorating dynamics for protection of civilians, DG ECHO will consider supporting activities linked to enhanced IHL awareness, and responses to violations, including on issues of deprivation of liberty, freedom of movement and others. Partners need to have specific expertise on these topics to ensure adequate implementation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) concerns in the region should be looked at in detail, proposing sustainable responses, and focusing on most acute needs relating to GBV (including clinical management of rape and extending services to peripheral areas). In addition, child protection responses, including within regional crises, need to be strengthened, including on children in armed conflict. The regional dimension of specific crises should be taken into account when designing protection responses, for example through monitoring cross-border movements. Focus on principled responses to protection crises, including on durable solutions (e.g. returns of IDPs and refugees), should be strongly considered.

To enhance protection dividends, integration of protection (including GBV and child protection) into other sectors – particularly looking at Education in Emergencies, nutrition, health and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) is paramount for all responses. Integrated approaches need to demonstrate added value and ensure quality considerations.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Food assistance will be supported to save lives within an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to programming that aims at meeting basic needs of the most affected populations. DG ECHO prioritises the provision of multi-purpose cash (MPC) through large-scale delivery schemes, joint assessments and continuing through the cycle with protection-sensitive and needs-based vulnerability targeting, accountable referral pathways, and common tendering, monitoring and evaluation, aiming to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

To strengthen the accountability of humanitarian food assistance, heavily affected by limited access, logistic constraints and security issues, DG ECHO encourages the promotion of digitalised, common and interoperable delivery mechanisms. Such mechanisms should aim to prioritise those most in need within an integrated and multi-sectoral approach tackling acute food insecurity situations, as measured at household level by main assessment and

outcome indicators (FCS, L-CSI²⁶). Clean energy for cooking needs should be foreseen to limit deforestation.

NUTRITION

Nutrition programming will be supported where emergency needs are demonstrated and aggravated by low response capacities and significant caseload. Supporting data based on technically sound evidence must be included in the needs assessment.

The treatment of wasting through the continuum of care (SAM with and without medical complications, and MAM) for children and pregnant and lactating women will be prioritised. Partial support to the nutrition programme will not be accepted unless duly justified. Treatment must be provided free of charge for the beneficiaries and their caretakers along with supporting referral capabilities to ensure continuity of care (transport and board for in-patient treatment). Partners are encouraged to include growth monitoring for children under 6 months in their response.

The treatment of acute malnutrition and any related medical complications should be integrated in existing health systems. In areas with no health systems in place, partners will be requested to ensure the availability of a quality minimum health package in the sites to complement nutrition activities. Care should be taken to adequately deal with the waste originating from the response. Access to drinking water and adequate sanitation must also be taken into consideration for all supported sites. The needs and response analysis should clearly appear in the assessment and proposed activities for support.

Proposed nutrition actions must be compliant with the national policy in effect in each country. However, innovative approaches (i.e. simplified protocol, Family MUAC, ICCM+, CMAM surge²⁷) are strongly encouraged when demonstrated as safe for beneficiaries and approved by national institutions.

Adequate waste management, including of packaging waste, should be ensured.

Lastly, nutrition programming should be used to inform on needs and their evolution, to create linkages between services and maximise impact on affected populations. DG ECHO partners are encouraged to elaborate on their intention to participate actively in coordination meetings, help generate reliable data and collaborate closely with other stakeholders to create referral mechanisms (i.e. toward services such as protection, food assistance, etc.) and facilitate timely provision of support to the most vulnerable.

HEALTH

Evidence-based health interventions having the highest potential for reducing high morbidity burdens, permanent disability and /or preventable mortality targeting the most vulnerable, especially in case of new shocks or newly accessible areas, will be prioritised for support.

Support to integrated multisectoral interventions (protection, health, nutrition and WASH) is expected from partners as a critical cornerstone to reduce mortality. Integration can take different shapes: mainstreaming, joint programming or integrated programming.

Health facilities supported need to adhere to universal precautions, to prevent transmission of communicable diseases.

²⁶ Food Consumption Score, Livelihood Coping Strategy Index

²⁷ Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), Integrated Community Case Management (ICCM+), Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM)

Free access to a package of basic health services must be ensured in any crisis, including quality primary and secondary health care, integration of nutritional programmes, war surgery and basic and comprehensive emergency obstetrics and neonatal care. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is part of the essential package. Whenever possible, prevention and early diagnosis / treatment of cervical cancer (major cause of premature avoidable mortality among women) is expected from partners. Timely (<72 hrs), confidential, safe and comprehensive medical support to survivors of GBV must be provided in all primary health care (PHC).

Health interventions should include lifesaving referral support to beneficiaries including transport and the cost of referral treatment and laboratory tests. Partners will be accountable for follow up and will report on referral cases.

Support to community health activities is recommended in all health interventions: health promotion activities, active defaulter tracing, community surveillance, nutrition screening/treatment and integrated community case management (ICCM) for sick children of families with difficult access to case management at health facilities.

Temporary/provisional outreach PHC services will be supported, but mobile clinics should be implemented only where they support specific outbreak control activities, in extremely hard-to-reach areas, displacement/conflict without access to PHC services or in the delivery of mass public health intervention packages (i.e. “child survival campaigns”) as well as integrate, when feasible, a referral pathway to secondary levels.

Financial incentives for Ministry of Health seconded staff are discouraged in DG ECHO-funded projects, unless fully justified and coordinated at sectoral level (health cluster/coordination).

Capacity building and training components should focus on the main health priorities, address critical capacity gaps with preference for on-the-job training and supportive supervision and building the basis for future sustainability.

All health projects should include activities that actively contribute to early warning, preparedness, surveillance, prevention and response (EWARS) to potential outbreaks.

Drug procurement, storage and distribution should be properly anticipated so to ensure adherence to the DG ECHO quality assurance standards. Adequate waste management, including of packaging waste, should be ensured.

WASH & SHELTER

Most of the proposed interventions in WASH and Shelter and Settlements should fall within an emergency humanitarian response in conflict- and/or natural hazard-affected areas and the post-emergency support to conflict-affected populations in camps or informal type of settlements. Sustainability of services and self-reliance of the affected populations should be considered from the onset of the humanitarian interventions.

Water supply interventions in communities affected by conflict and/or natural hazards should focus on the restoration (repairs mainly) of existing services damaged during conflicts or on improving the affordability of sustainable WASH services. No upgrading or expansion of the services/new constructions is foreseen unless communities are hosting a high number of IDPs or refugees whose presence is likely to overwhelm the initial capacity and/or generate a public/environmental health-related hazard.

WASH in protracted refugee situations should focus on long-term integration into local institutions/development plans or community-led management for sustainability of the

services, building self-reliance (including, when relevant, approaching water supply as a market) and mitigation of environmental degradations.

Water trucking is to be considered only as a last resort with a clear demonstrated (preliminary feasibility study) exit strategy and should be funded by default using cash (or vouchers), in line with Annex 3 of DG ECHO's cash thematic policy. In general, cash (or vouchers), should be promoted as modality of intervention in the WASH and shelter/NFI sectors, unless duly justified.

Water quality standards assurance and monitoring is a must for all interventions (including quality of technical survey/design and quality control of construction materials). Centralised water chlorination should be done during water trucking. In case of action on infrastructure, the cost of water production per m3 should be estimated based on operations and maintenance needs and cost assumptions. In case of action on sanitation (latrine), beyond the number of facilities to be built, the duration of the access should be provided based on the size of the pit and estimated number of users. In case deslugeable latrine planned to be implemented, the feasibility to safely collect and dispose the sludge should be demonstrated (with cost estimation).

Monitoring of capacity to ensure safe and quality WASH services delivery should be demonstrated. Routine capacity-building and hygiene promotion measures are only accepted if needs-based.

Flood and drought mitigation measures should be linked to long-term development projects to get long-lasting solutions.

All WASH and Shelter and Settlements interventions must be developed based on the outcomes of the environmental screening which should be carried out before implementation. An environmental report must complement the screening and should outline the main environmental challenges specific to the interventions and the mitigation strategies that have been considered to address them.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

Education in Emergencies (EiE) actions will focus on providing access to safe, quality and accredited primary and secondary education to boys and girls, particularly adolescents, affected by the crises. EiE interventions should target out-of-school and drop-out boys and girls, over-age children, through formal and non-formal education opportunities, including Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP), bridging and catch-up programmes where needed. Non-formal education activities should be, to the extent possible, aligned with the formal system, providing children with opportunities to enter (or re-enter) schooling.

The proposed actions should tackle context-specific barriers to education for girls and boys. Proposals should aim at increasing both enrolment and learning outcomes and be aligned with the school academic year to avoid any further disruptions. Retention and transition of children to the next school year and cycle should be measured. The proposed activities can include the provision of ad hoc support for enrolment amongst the most vulnerable groups (cash-transfer modality envisaged).

Teachers and other education personnel should be supported with relevant and tailored professional development opportunities, so that teachers are at ease with the curriculum and can deliver it to their classes which often have an overwhelming number of students. This is important for increasing motivation and attendance and decreasing turnover. Teacher well-being is important recognising the direct impact that it has on learning. The provision of psychosocial support to students and teachers, especially those recently affected by

conflict and/or displacement, will be encouraged, together with equipping education staff with referral skills.

Child safe-guarding mechanisms must be established to ensure that children are not at risk when attending school, and that child protection-related issues are timely and effectively responded to by professional actors (either directly or through referrals). In this regard, integrated EiE and child protection actions are strongly encouraged: school-based protection activities must be built on a sound risk analysis and should address the most life-threatening protection risks. Moreover, proposed actions should promote the protection of schools from attacks and support the implementation of the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.

Where relevant to the context, partners are expected to provide or complement initiatives in other sectors, such as school-based WASH, to ensure an adequate learning space for children.

For cash in education projects, particular attention should be paid to sustainability of the interventions and, when possible, linkages to longer-term livelihood solutions.

DG ECHO is encouraging partners to increase the timeliness of their interventions in EiE, through rapid education responses, following the guidelines developed by the Global Education Cluster. These rapid education responses may be integrated into multi-sectoral Rapid Response Mechanisms or could be in parallel or standalone, ensuring established exit strategies.

Proposals should explicitly and transparently demonstrate sound coordination with other education initiatives and development actors (such as Education Cannot Wait, Global Partnership for Education and EU development funds), be in line with existing government-led education response plans and prepare where necessary the transition of programmes to education authorities and communities. Environmental activities (e.g., extracurricular activities) should also be considered in the day-to-day running of schools.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Proposed disaster preparedness (DP) approaches should have a multi-hazard focus address all prevailing hazards and risks – including slow-onset, secondary and compounding risks such as conflicts, displacement, epidemics etc, and clearly demonstrate the linkage based on the context. In addition to preparedness for natural hazards in conflict and fragile settings, there is a clear need for preparedness for a better humanitarian response for conflict and other situations of violence. All interventions should as much as possible aim at integrating anticipatory/early actions, based on forecasts from recognised authorities/sources and backed up by a comprehensive risk analysis (that do not only predominantly focus on hazard but take into perspective the analysis of vulnerability, capacity and exposure to risks) and preferably conducted in collaboration with other stakeholders. Anticipatory action and enhanced predictability of response can only be achieved if local preparedness and response capacities are in place; therefore, preparedness actions must strengthen first responders' and local actors' capacity to act as locally and as early as possible. A system-wide approach is encouraged to ensure linkages and simultaneous capacity-building at all levels, whenever possible.

All the risk assessments should include an environmental screening and risk-mitigation component to help identify the most vulnerable areas and outline possible opportunities to

tackle specific environmental issues that aggravate disasters impact and in turn improve disaster risk preparedness and contingency planning.

Sensitization campaigns and outreach activities led by local community organizations can help raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable resource management in improving disaster preparedness.

Multi Hazard Early Warnings Systems (MHEWS) play a crucial role in promoting DP: actions proposing EWS strengthening should be strategic on the interlinkage of the four components of EWS and ensure impact-based forecasting alerts reach the level where humanitarian actors operate.

Coordination with developmental actors to promote, advocate for the institutionalisation of DP strategies notably around disaster risk financing including adaptive/shock-responsive social protection systems that could be activated by pre-agreed, well defined risk triggers, will be crucial.

For this region, DG ECHO will prioritise targeted disaster preparedness actions in Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda. Specific information for each country is detailed in the country sections below. Besides, regional projects that promote regional or multi-country approaches and strategies are encouraged where relevant, see below for further details.

NEXUS

DG ECHO expects partners to include context-specific elements in their proposals to demonstrate intentional synergies and coordination with development actions (particularly actions supported by the EU) focusing on the priority areas described above.

Some nexus opportunities have been explored in education in emergencies, migration and forced displacement/protection, Disaster Risk Management and social protection initiative.

4.1.2.2 Country-Specific Priorities

REGIONAL

Given the cross-border / regional dimension of some of the shocks and humanitarian crises in the Greater Horn of Africa, DG ECHO is already supporting regional projects notably on displacement, protection and International Humanitarian Law, humanitarian access and security. When regional /multi countries projects are proposed, and promote a regional approach and coherence, they could also include elements such as harmonised assessment and monitoring tools, interoperability and data sharing. Initiatives promoting coordination (incl. with regional bodies and initiatives), advocacy, forced displacement, protection and mixed migration could also be considered.

DG ECHO will also consider supporting regional projects that aim at promoting coherence and regional coordination for anticipatory action, bringing together different stakeholders and workstreams, under a multi-hazard focus. Such regional projects should be addressing all risks, including conflict. Partners should demonstrate their capacity to bring coherence and coordination at national and regional level and their capacity to ensure early warning systems are of multi-hazard nature as well as to develop joint triggering mechanisms and protocols. Where relevant, such actions could provide a critical analysis of the disaster risk financing landscape in this region, and identification of new and innovative funding strategies and approaches for anticipatory action.

DJIBOUTI

DG ECHO will continue to focus on extremely vulnerable populations, specifically on mixed migration population. DG ECHO will consider supporting partners to ensure access to protection services (whether through direct service provision or through accompaniment) and an active follow up of cases. Ensuring them protection information and awareness is paramount. Advocacy on issues on mixed migration in the region will also be considered for support.

KENYA

DG ECHO will continue to support the refugee operations in Dadaab and Kakuma, including Kalobeyi integrated settlement, with a focus on the provision of timely, adequate and appropriate access to basic services to the most vulnerable individuals with critical or unmet needs. Given the regional instability and the increasing number of newcomers and asylum seekers to Kenya, priority will be given to these specific groups, both in reception centres and camps.

As the refugee crisis evolves in parallel to the new policies of the Government of Kenya, DG ECHO emphasises the need to adopt a needs-based vulnerability targeting of assistance to use aid resources more effectively and equitably based on humanitarian needs. Therefore, all proposed interventions shall provide for a mechanism by which the most vulnerable among the refugee and hosting community population can be identified and prioritised for available assistance.

DG ECHO will favour actions implemented by actors already present in the camps and which are either implementing programs through local partners/refugee led organisations, or are at least building their capacity, with clear exit benchmarks presented.

Pilot initiatives promoting innovative models and/or programs to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of operations (including the possibility to document the gains) should be supported. This might also include supporting innovative environmentally sustainable solutions that tackle food security and waste management. Strong consumer markets and entrepreneurship of affected populations provide a favourable environment to expand livelihood opportunities with environmental outcomes and increase private sector investments in sustainable energy solutions and climate adaptive agricultural activities.

In their response, partners should aim at expanding the use of Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) as part of a comprehensive approach to responding to basic needs (whenever services are available). In addition, DG ECHO partners should consider supporting actions contributing to inform and enable the environment towards establishing safety net schemes in refugee settings, in coordination with other donors and relevant authorities.

The drought in 2021-2023 heavily impacted Kenya, creating a food and nutrition crisis and internal displacement in the country. The growing frequency and intensity of climate related hazards will continue to pose a significant risk to food systems and livelihoods in the ASALs, contributing to the deterioration of the food security situation of the affected populations. Should fund become available, a potential DG ECHO response in the ASALs would prioritise the most affected vulnerable population and support a coordinated and well harmonised response.

DG ECHO priority actions include:

Protection: standalone activities, with emphasis on undocumented and newly arrived asylum seekers and activities aimed at prevention and response to violence. Activities relating to

population movements – including border monitoring, or intentions surveys can also be supported. Advocacy activities that help highlight issues in relation to compliance with Refugee Law, refoulement or other risks can be considered if part of a detailed advocacy plan.

Education in Emergencies: activities that support access to protective learning environments for vulnerable refugee and hosting community children and adolescents to enter, re-enter or be retained in formal education. Actions with a focus on Children with Disabilities are encouraged. Actions supporting girls and women in the secondary education and actions supporting teachers' professional development and the newly rolled out Kenyan Competency Based Curriculum can also be considered.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter & Settlement (S&S): Interventions limited to emergency response for newly affected population (newcomers and reception sites) as part of a multi-sector response.

Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA): through multi-purpose cash transfers. DG ECHO will positively assess proposals promoting the rollout of a Joint Needs Based Vulnerability Assessment to guide the targeting of assistance for the refugees and hosting communities aimed at using aid resources more effectively and equitably. In this regard, there is need to boost interoperability between different databases sets requiring sound coordination and data sharing agreements between partners respecting data sharing protocols. Any cash intervention must be guided and comply with the recommendations of the Kenya Cash Working Group, to ensure coordination and harmonisation. Follow up will be required on the operationalisation of the ongoing efforts to develop MEB guidelines for refugees setting.

Health and Nutrition: actions building the preparedness for potential health related outbreaks through early warning systems. Lifesaving health and nutrition integrated programming are highly encouraged. Similarly, health and nutrition emergency responses integrated with protection programming will be considered. In proposed actions for both refugees and ASALs, the partners must provide evidence to efforts towards enhancing the inclusion in national programs (e.g. NHIF).

ETHIOPIA

The main objective of DG ECHO's interventions in Ethiopia is the provision of life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people, highly impacted by man-made crises and natural hazards in areas where needs are the most acute. Particular attention will be given to populations in displacement, including those recently displaced and/or unable to return to their areas of origin, with priority to the geographical areas mentioned below. DG ECHO will not consider humanitarian activities associated with forced relocations or returns.

DG ECHO expects partners to clearly explain the measures they have in place to ensure their independence in conducting real-time and relevant needs assessments, needs- and vulnerability-based targeting, and in using robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Specific emphasis will be given to these aspects during assessment.

Interventions are to be guided by a people-centred approach, built around basic needs. When not covered by the action itself, the necessary referral pathways and coordination with other interventions in the same area are to be ensured.

At household level, the coverage of basic needs will be supported through multi-purpose cash as preferred modality, ensuring full alignment with the Cash Working Group, and sectoral complementary responses as relevant. DG ECHO encourages initiatives to move

towards digital, common and interoperable delivery mechanisms. DG ECHO aims to contribute to a significant scale-up of cash-based programming in the country.

In addition to household level assistance, DG ECHO will support actions ensuring access to immediate communal basic service delivery that benefits IDPs and host communities in the prioritised areas, with a clear exit strategy. For nutrition, the focus is on SAM case management and nutrition programming at all levels of the health system based on identified gaps through nutrition-health integration.

For 2024, DG ECHO's will prioritise:

1. Response to new emergencies:

- Crisis modifiers and Rapid Response Mechanisms

DG ECHO will continue to support response to new emergencies through (i) Crisis Modifiers (CM) - which may be foreseen in any action informed by a risk analysis/contingency plan and/or (ii) a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). RRM responses must include multi-sector life-saving interventions and encourage the involvement of local first-responders. RRM actions should be time-bound, rapid and build complementarities between frontline actors.

- Address refugees' emergency needs

DG ECHO will focus on addressing basic needs of ongoing influxes of refugees and asylum seekers (for instance, those coming from Sudan) and those impacted by internal emergencies (relocated by conflicts/natural disasters). Context allowing, actions should present an exit strategy while linking up to development interventions with durable longer-term solutions for refugees.

2. Life-saving interventions in specific priority areas:

DG ECHO will focus its life saving interventions in the priority geographical areas indicated below, including hard-to-reach areas, in order to favour integrated and complementary approaches seeking high impact for the populations in need. DG ECHO will also consider other emerging high-need areas, depending on the context evolution and based on robust justifications.

- Addressing emergency needs from the aftermath of the northern Ethiopia conflict

DG ECHO will focus on covering the basic needs of vulnerable populations, including IDPs, in Northwest and Central Tigray, and Zones 2 and 4 in Afar. Additionally, DG ECHO may consider humanitarian mine action based on a needs assessment and if deemed relevant, feasible and coordinated with authorities.

- People affected by ongoing conflict:

DG ECHO will focus on people affected by ongoing conflict in Benishangul Gumuz region, Western Oromia zones and populations displaced to East Amhara.

- Supporting populations affected by climate-related hazards

DG ECHO will focus on vulnerable populations directly impacted by shocks in southern Somali and Oromia regions, in areas presenting GAM and SAM prevalence levels beyond emergency thresholds (or on a critical rise) and high levels of food insecurity (equivalent to IPC 4 or above).

3. Humanitarian responses' effectiveness:

- Support to humanitarian coordination, information management, civil-military coordination and advocacy.

DG ECHO will focus on the following: support to strengthen humanitarian coordination including the clusters system; civil-military coordination; coordinated comprehensive data collection and analysis (including support to multisectoral needs assessment); support to information management systems such as the Nutrition Information Management System; and actions aiming at achieving key strategic advocacy outcomes, including on IHL, supported by advocacy plans.

- Support to the core supply pipelines (health, nutrition and water treatment)

DG ECHO will contribute to the countrywide emergency pipelines, mainly health and nutrition as well as water treatment, to ensure they are maintained, reliable, and are able to deliver in a timely manner without compromising quality. Partners are expected to give close attention to pipeline management and related accountability monitoring, including essential treatments at primary and secondary level stabilisation centres.

4. Disaster Preparedness:

In addition to the above indicated DP priorities specified in 4.1.2.1 actions ensuring effective operational linkages between existing RRM and the Government-led Disaster Risk Management System in Ethiopia will be considered in priority, such as the definition of commonly harmonised triggers and thresholds for emergency response. Relevant Anticipatory Action approaches should be informed by reliable Early Warning Systems and be part of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder response plans.

SOMALIA

Operational guidelines for Somalia are structured around three main priorities:

1. Local populations most affected by acute malnutrition/food insecurity and epidemic outbreaks.

DG ECHO will give priority to actions that secure an integrated approach, demonstrating direct and/or coordinated interventions in WASH, health, nutrition and food security including joint assessments, monitoring and intervention strategies in line with the Integrated Response Framework. Only locations where mortality/acute malnutrition/food insecurity indicators surpass emergency thresholds and those affected by epidemic outbreaks will be prioritised. Integrated actions must include inter-operability or data sharing agreements at the outset, incorporate epidemic outbreak response capacities and facilitate effective access of most affected populations to basic services through an area/catchment-based approach. DG ECHO expects actions to secure and be resourced by quality assured, accountable countrywide pipelines of essential commodities (health, nutrition), and conduct regular quality of care reviews – including Infection Prevention and Control). Protection to be integrated with Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Health and Nutrition as required entry points – others to be considered.

Assistance and protection at most affected/priority IDP catchment areas:

- CCCM (fixed or mobile) to provide mapping and monitoring of availability and accessibility of area-level services, reporting on overall gaps and mobilising remedial actions at area level. Integration of housing, land and property is to be pursued, as is community participation and ownership.

- MPCA and sector specific interventions are to be considered based on directly assessed household level barriers to access basic services, enabling their transition towards sustained assistance (safety nets, food assistance, etc.).
- Support to primary, secondary health facilities and community-based referral pathways providing lifesaving health and nutrition services, following an area-based approach. Epidemic outbreak response must consider community-based interventions effectively linked to referral facilities and sustainable, self-reliant, public health informed WASH interventions.

Assistance and protection in priority districts – including hard-to-reach:

- Digitalisation of data collection and analysis to inform local drivers of acute malnutrition, food insecurity and epidemic outbreaks - accounting for assessed barriers to accessing healthcare (facility bias).
 - Emergency lifesaving health and nutrition interventions to include service mapping and rationalisation of efforts by catchment area. Epidemic outbreak response should include surveillance and analysis, early warning and rapid response activities. Acute malnutrition responses are to consider simplified protocols and define quality improvement plans based on analysed CMAM bottlenecks. Child protection included in treatment of malnutrition/epidemic outbreak response.
 - In hard-to-reach locations, interventions must be guided by localised access strategies and risk assessments (including for targeted population) and demonstrate programme criticality. Adapted programming could include MPCA to cover basic needs, emergency health and nutrition services at community level and small-scale water source repairs to enable services at emergency response standards, among others.
2. Newly displaced populations, due to conflict or extreme climatic events (drought/floods)

DG ECHO will prioritise integrated emergency life-saving interventions providing immediate relief and protection to most vulnerable populations in the acute phase of displacement (within three months, also considering forced multiple displacements). Responses should generate information on needs, gaps, household registration (NAT 2.0) and set the foundation (e.g. access, networking, community mobilisation) for follow up assistance and protection. Provision of information to affected populations, identification, and referral of those in need of specialised assistance and/or protection services shall be mainstreamed. Type and duration of assistance should be tailored to displacement patterns and intentions of those displaced (eg. short term flood related displacement). Attention should be given to inclusion and exclusion factors. Conflict sensitive programming is particularly relevant, with emphasis on dynamics between affected populations and host communities.

Priority actions include:

- Emergency assistance at first point of access to newly displaced populations (even if multiple). Identification of multi-sectoral needs (ex. NAT 2.0), response providers and referral systems. In displacement sites, CCCM shall monitor and support sectoral needs-based assistance through area-based approach. Protection data collection to be conducted where specialised protection services are available.
- Education in Emergencies (EiE) actions may include temporary learning spaces and need to integrate the provision of child protection and PSS services. EiE actions

should focus on integrating newly displaced children into the formal system (including non-formal education options with a clear pathway to formal education).

- Nutritional and vaccination status screening and referral to treatment facilities and follow up. Primary and secondary health care facilities supported (area-based approach) shall cater for additional inpatient and outpatient caseload and link up with community-based services.
- Emergency MPCA within integrated response framework, targeting the most vulnerable households based on household level assessments, and enabling transitions towards sustained assistance (safety nets, food assistance, etc.).
- Emergency WASH/Shelter to be provided in IDP sites with involvement of affected communities. Consideration of up-grading emergency solutions and coverage of WASH needs within a public health targeted approach and ensuring coordination with water sector development plans.

3. Disaster Preparedness

In addition to the above indicated DP priorities specified in 4.1.2.1 DG ECHO will prioritize in Somalia multi-hazard actions demonstrating: i) capacity to develop triggering mechanisms and protocols able to incorporate the linkages between and cumulative impact of key hazards, risks and events; ii) anticipatory/early actions strategies to ensure multi-sectorial and integrated humanitarian interventions with clear role for protection services in areas of conflict; iii) ensure better knowledge management, coordination between key actors working in the field and involvement of state and local actors, as well as development interventions for policy and practice consolidation. The action should ensure clear and strengthened linkages between data available at (inter)national level and proposed systems, triggers and protocols for the different disaster-prone locations (and vice versa).

SOUTH SUDAN

DG ECHO will prioritise lifesaving interventions via emergency responses (to shocks, be man-made or natural hazards) targeting the most vulnerable people in the most severely affected areas of South Sudan. DG ECHO will aim at:

1. Reducing excess mortality and morbidity in country, addressing in particular severe food insecurity, acute malnutrition, maternal and child health, and epidemics, water and sanitation crises in priority locations.
2. Providing protection assistance to communities affected by violence in the country, new displacement and/or climate change, including by integrating protection and education and enhancing the referral pathways for the access to basic services.
3. Contributing to advocacy efforts towards protection of civilians, respect of IHL and accountability.
4. Supporting the humanitarian community's activities in coordination, logistics, safety and security, context analysis, data collection, assessment, monitoring and conflict sensitivity.

Mobile response and coordinated area-based approaches should be expanded. DG ECHO will favour needs-based multi-sector integrated programming and localisation (including solid capacity development) through consortia to expand outreach and efficiency. Within an integrated approach, the scale-up of cash transfers is increasingly promoted when market,

security and technical conditions are met. Interoperability between cash programmes, and with other forms of assistance, is strongly encouraged.

Considering the high number of emergencies arising from conflict, natural hazards, and other causes, all over the country mechanisms allowing for swift and effective response to acute humanitarian needs remain a priority. DG ECHO will continue to support this response through (i) Crisis Modifiers (CM) - which may be foreseen in any action informed by a risk analysis/contingency plan and/or (ii) a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). RRM responses must include multi-sector life-saving interventions and encourage the involvement of local first-responders. RRM actions should be time-bound, rapid and build complementarities between frontline actors.

Collaborative efforts should include joint advocacy, common delivery platforms, effective communication, contingency planning, rapid multi-sectoral assessments, implementation framework/scenarios, accountable referral pathways, and streamlined logistics services. Furthermore, partners are encouraged to prioritise localisation by enhancing the capabilities of local actors through capacity-building initiatives.

Sectoral specificities

Priority will be given to direct response and delivery of protection services to GBV survivors, children at risk and persons with special needs, while support to systematic protection data collection and analysis, to inform humanitarian response and advocacy will be considered.

Lifesaving food assistance will prioritise areas and households with most severe vulnerabilities to food insecurity, mainly in IPC 4 & 5 hotspot areas and those affected by new shocks, with preference to use of cash Transfers where markets are functional and security allows.

WASH and Shelter/Settlement interventions will mainly be carried out as part of an integrated multisectoral mobile emergency response. Only small WASH rehabilitation/repairs of infrastructures to enable the resumption of services and following emergency response standards will be eligible. It should only be planned in densely populated IDP/refugee settlements to respond to and/or prevent water borne epidemics, or in health, nutrition, education facilities.

In the health sector, priority will be given to epidemic outbreaks (measles, cholera and malaria) with a focus on surveillance, analysis and response and underpinned with a strong community engagement (early warning, surveillance, health promotion). Emergency health interventions to be short-term (mobile response) and complementary to existing health programming.

Scale up of core pipelines (food/cash, shelter/NFI, WASH, health and nutrition supplies), to allow for urgent scale up of the crisis responses, while ensuring these pipelines are mainly addressing the hard-to-reach areas.

In the Education in emergency sector, priority will be given to actions providing access to integrated, safe and qualitative primary education to conflict/disaster affected children (formal and non-formal), with an aim to addressing clearly identified education barriers in hard-to-reach under-served locations impacted by multiple layers of shocks. Actions should ensure integration of child protection and other relevant sectors such as WASH to ensure an integrated approach relevant to the context. Rapid education responses (in RRM or stand-alone) need to have a clear exit strategy and well-coordinated with the education Cluster.

SUDAN

DG ECHO will prioritise lifesaving interventions with a focus on:

1. Addressing critical needs by delivering multi-sectoral emergency lifesaving basic services (health and nutrition, including basic MHPSS, food assistance, WASH and shelter/NFI) and protection assistance (including protection of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence and child protection) to populations affected by conflict, displacement, natural hazards and epidemics outbreaks.
2. Considering the current context and continuous closure of schools, partners should ensure innovative teaching and education opportunities, which reinforce the child's resilience to face the changed environment, while addressing child protection and psychosocial needs which have increased due to the conflict. In their education in emergencies programming, partners need to factor in the high probability of continued conflict and schools' closure to ensure continuity of MHPSS, teaching and educational services. Where possible, partners should seek complementarity and alignment with longer-term funding that could concentrate on gathering sites in easier accessible areas.
3. Humanitarians continue to face tremendous obstacles in reaching people in need, including bureaucratic and administrative impediments that are limiting the response capacity. DG ECHO will therefore support efforts for increased access including principled coordination (especially on civil-military coordination, access and strengthening the INGO Forum coordination), context analysis, logistics (including air transport and logistics cluster), safety and security. Reinforcing advocacy on population's access to basic services provided by humanitarian actors is also crucial to ensure an efficient response.
4. Small-scale infrastructure repairs to enable resumption of services at emergency response standards will also be eligible, especially in Khartoum or other affected urban centres and in relation to WASH, health and possibly other sectors.

Geographical priorities

DG ECHO will prioritise actions targeting populations trapped in the worst conflict-affected areas, including hard-to-reach locations. Those include the Darfur, Kordofan, and Khartoum states. Recognising that the situation is dynamic, DG ECHO will consider additional conflict hotspots if critical humanitarian needs are identified.

DG ECHO will also target displacement hotspots, especially the new temporary and more permanent gathering sites with the highest uncovered needs, while noting that populations on the move should be supported along their entire displacement route. Resident populations/host communities will only be considered for support in IPC 3+ areas, however prioritising populations in IPC 4+ areas may be necessary due to the magnitude of needs.

Modalities

Early and flexible response mechanisms, such as – but not limited to – crisis modifiers, will be a must in each relevant action. Scale up of core pipelines (food, shelter/NFI, WASH, medical and nutrition supplies) will be supported to allow for the urgent scale up of the crisis responses, with a particular focus on ensuring these pipelines also address hard-to-reach areas in the fastest and most integrated way possible.

Mobile modalities for protection and the integration of protection into health will be paramount (especially for GBV and MHPSS).

In consideration of DG ECHO sustained commitment to expand cash transfer while adapting to challenges (e.g., inflation, cash liquidity, disrupted financial services), the operational feasibility of cash modality for food assistance and other basic needs should systematically be analysed to ensure flexibility and adaptive approaches. The use of the services by legally registered cash transfer agents in Sudan can be approved as eligible expenditure in the framework of DG ECHO grant or contribution agreements (including costs extension) with the application of a maximum of 5% of each amount transferred through the concerned cash transfer agent, in line with the principles of reasonable and justified costs and of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency. At the latest in the final report, the Partner must provide a justification for the use of such cash transfer agents as a temporary and last resort option as well as information as to internal control measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with the use of such agents, such as risk of diversion of funds to persons or entities designated under the EU sanctions or to entities engaged in illicit activities. Beyond cash programmes, such agents can also be used under the same conditions as above where cash transfers are necessary on a last resort basis to meet Partners' organisational and operational needs (such as paying staff or suppliers).

Taking into account the current context and prevailing insecurity:

- projects should be conflict-sensitive;
- collaboration with other actors and community participation are strongly encouraged;
- partners must demonstrate operational capacity to ensure presence and implementation capacity on the ground. This includes proven and adequate security measures in place for all the staff operating at field level, including local partners.

Strong participation in the relevant clusters and information sharing are paramount to ensure effective complementarities and contribute to improved coordination. Digital solutions to enhance beneficiary data management and maximise opportunities for interagency inter-sectoral referrals should be considered.

Where required operationally, cross-border assistance and costs related to it, can be approved.

UGANDA

For 2024, operational guidance for Uganda is structured around two main priorities:

1. Refugees and/or asylum seekers most vulnerable and host populations in similar severe conditions.

DG ECHO-supported interventions for refugees will increasingly adopt a severity and vulnerability lens, with a priority for refugee settlements and districts receiving new arrivals. This could also include transit districts and/or secondary cities in which humanitarian protection needs are critical. Actions should apply a basic needs approach with well targeted multi-layered assistance and effective and clear referral pathways. The provision of multi-sectoral cash (MPC) assistance must rely on a sound targeting mechanisms coordinated with vulnerability prioritisation mechanisms in the food assistance sector as well as robust referral pathways between other sectors and actors. Cash assistance as a modality will continue to be privileged. Cost effectiveness will have to be further reinforced and progresses will have to be demonstrated.

Partners must ensure coordination and compliance in reporting DG ECHO funding against the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). Partners are expected to actively promote the usage of the inter-agency Feedback Referral and Resolution Mechanisms (FRRM) managed by

UNHCR. Strategic coordination platforms may be supported, provided strategic policy influence can be demonstrated.

For assistance and protection in refugee settlements and hosting districts, DG ECHO will prioritise:

- Actions that ensure access to basic services for the most vulnerable refugees and host population, including health, nutrition, food, education in emergencies and protection. Actions should emphasise the quality of basic services to ensure effectiveness of assistance and protection delivered.
- Protection actions must be based on solid contextual protection risk analyses with responses designed to effectively respond to context dependent protection risk. Child protection, GBV and MHPS, including prevention of suicide, should take priority, while actions should continue to contribute to safe and protective asylum; including reception conditions, registration and legal documentation ensuring legal protection of refugees and asylum seekers. A blanket approach of ‘one-size-fits-all’ to protection will no longer be supported. Most critical and life-saving protection risks should be better targeted and prioritised.
- Health: DG ECHO will continue to support the provision of primary healthcare services and reinforce the epidemic preparedness and response in coordination with Disaster Preparedness interventions. Service delivery must be compliant with the basic health services package as described in the health sector integrated refugee response plan of the Ministry of Health. Investment in physical infrastructure will no longer be supported in the health sector unless justified by life-saving needs or to enable an exit strategy.
- Education in Emergencies interventions in Uganda must first and foremost ensure resumption of learning after humanitarian shocks, such as new influxes/arrivals, out-of-school children and those at imminent risk of dropping out. Actions must contribute to safe and inclusive access to quality formal and non-formal primary and secondary education for refugee as well as especially vulnerable host community children. Non-formal education, in form of appropriate AEP or bridging programmes (for children from non-English speaking countries), may be prioritised, but should not replace mainstream education. The goal is to integrate (graduate) children into formal education. Integration of child protection based on specific protection risks analysis is mandatory, including psychosocial support to learners and teachers. Financial barriers, though cash-for-education, should be duly addressed and linked to education outcomes. Proposed actions must align to the Government’s Education Response Plan II. For EiE, the geographical focus will be on the West Nile sub-region. DG ECHO encourages partners to develop actions promoting synergies with development donors, including for education infrastructure.

DG ECHO will support interventions that integrate sustainable approach and exit strategy in the action where feasible. In the health and education sectors, actions that demonstrate specific strategies for transition to Government management or other nexus programmes will be prioritised. Transition or nexus related indicators are recommended where feasible. Actions that support, develop and maximise localisation of the response as well as, where relevant, linkages with livelihood opportunities to promote self-reliance will be prioritised. All actions with components of transition, localisation or self-reliance (graduation) should include the indicators developed through the CRRF to ease reporting.

In terms of environmental resilience innovative approaches which tackle chronic issues (deforestation, use of unsustainable cooking practices), promote partnerships with the

private sector and development actors and link environmentally focused projects to sustainable sources of income should be considered as well as incorporating innovative financial mechanisms (e.g., carbon credit markets) into the humanitarian response. All these mechanisms can increase access to livelihoods while at the same time support the restoration efforts, which are already being implemented in the settlements.

2. Ugandan populations experiencing the most severe disasters where targeted Disaster Preparedness (DP) action is appropriate and effective.

In addition to the above indicated DP priorities specified in 4.1.2.1, for Uganda DG ECHO interventions will continue to apply multi-hazard approach, while prioritising high risks areas with potential important humanitarian needs related to flash-floods, landslides, drought and epidemics with timely linkage between early warning and early response. Actions should be aligned to the Government's National Disaster Risk Management Plan.

DP assistance in most high-risk areas will prioritise:

- Tangible preparedness activities directly benefiting communities most at risk. This may include effective early warning systems linked with corresponding life-saving and/or mitigative activities. Anticipatory action (early action) will also be privileged and where relevant linkages between rural, semi-urban and urban preparedness will have to be duly considered.
- Targeted capacity building activities for local authorities may be considered on an ad hoc basis where specific capacity building needs can be identified and where outcomes of capacity building are well-defined and specified, as part of a system wide approach. Capacity building for local actors including NGOs and civil society to enhance their rapid/early response activity is encouraged.
- DP under HIP 2024 will mainly focus on Mount Elgon sub-region, and at national level where relevant and added value demonstrated.
- Through the ongoing programmatic partnership, DG ECHO will also continue to support environmental resilience.