

## TECHNICAL ANNEX

### IRAQ

#### 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).

#### 1. CONTACTS

Operational Unit in charge	DG ECHO <sup>1</sup> /C4
Contact persons at HQ	Jacopo Lombardi, Jacopo.Lombardi@ec.europa.eu,
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#### 2. FINANCIAL INFO

Indicative Allocation<sup>2</sup>: EUR 23.040.600 of which an indicative amount of EUR 3.500.000 for Education in Emergencies.

##### **Programmatic Partnerships:**

New Programmatic Partnerships could be funded under this HIP<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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>

Indicative breakdown per Actions as per Worldwide Decision (in euros)<sup>4</sup>:

Country	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
IRAQ	20.000.000		3.040.600		23.040.600

### 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)<sup>5</sup>.

#### 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

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

<sup>5</sup> Single form guidelines: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/action-proposal/fill-in-the-single-form>

to be agreed by the Commission (DG ECHO) in accordance with Annex 5 to the Grant Agreement.

d) Field office costs

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

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

and

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

e) Actions embedded in multi-annual Programmatic Partnerships<sup>6</sup>

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 (non-Programmatic Partnerships )

Regional/multi-country actions can be supported under this HIP (and where relevant in conjunction with other HIPs<sup>7</sup>), 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 actions<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See the dedicated [guidance](#) on Programmatic Partnerships.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> For more information - See the factsheet on EU Humanitarian Aid Multi-Year Funding available on the DG ECHO Website ([DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](#)) 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

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.

#### **4. ADMINISTRATIVE INFO**

##### **ALLOCATION ROUND 1**

- a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 23.040.600.
- b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round *if it does not cover all the funding*.
- c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2024<sup>9</sup>
- d) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more<sup>10</sup> provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner<sup>11</sup>. 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

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definitions: [Multi-year and flexible funding - Definitions Guidance Summary - Narrative Section January 2020.pdf](#) ([interagencystandingcommittee.org](http://interagencystandingcommittee.org))

<sup>9</sup> 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

<sup>10</sup> Maximum duration of an action is 48 months.

<sup>11</sup> 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))

multi-annual strategies provided for by the HIP (see point e) of section 2 above)<sup>12</sup>.

- e) Potential partners<sup>13</sup>: All DG ECHO Partners
- f) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of on-going actions<sup>14</sup>
- g) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: 21/12/2023

### **3.1. Operational requirements:**

#### *3.1.1. 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

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<sup>12</sup> Additional guidance may be issued by DG ECHO in this respect, as appropriate.

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise specified potential NGO partners refer to certified partner organisations.

<sup>14</sup> Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

(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?<sup>15</sup>

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.

In case of a Programmatic Partnership, the proposed action shall be assessed under the same criteria as listed above. However, a Programmatic Partnership proposal must also demonstrate a clear added value (e.g. efficiency gains; longer term outcomes, scaling up of innovative approaches; contribution to a specific policy; etc.). See dedicated guidance to partners for more details.

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 Measures<sup>16</sup> 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 budget<sup>17</sup> (“Conditionality Decision”).

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<sup>15</sup> In accordance with the relevant section of the Single Form guidelines (section10)

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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

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 Hungary<sup>18</sup>.**

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 2021<sup>19</sup>, including those entities listed in Annex I to Hungarian Act IX of 2021<sup>20</sup> and other affiliated entities maintained by them (“Concerned Entities”). The Commission will further notify when the above-mentioned Conditionality Measures are lifted.

### *3.1.2. 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.

In line with the DG ECHO guidance on localisation<sup>21</sup>, 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 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 (technical training, institutional support, peer learning).

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.

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<sup>18</sup> OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94–109

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

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

<sup>21</sup> 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.

The majority of organisations' environmental footprint comes from their logistics/supply chains, and as such these offer an opportunity to minimise environmental impacts<sup>22</sup>. 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.

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



***[for cash activities - to be inserted in the below specific operational guidelines when referring to cash activities]***

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 policy, 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 targeting criteria, single or interoperable beneficiary registries, 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.

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 operations<sup>23</sup>.

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.

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<sup>23</sup> [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en)

### **Sector-Specific Priorities**

As the humanitarian crisis has become protracted and the focus has shifted towards durable solutions within a stabilization and development framework, the DG ECHO intervention strategy has evolved towards a) protection at the centre of the response (including Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA, as described below), b) Education in Emergencies (EiE) and c) Disaster Preparedness (DP).

#### **Protection/Identity and Civil Documentation**

The DG ECHO intervention strategy will target i) people in protracted displacement facing specific protection risks and barriers to achieving a durable solution due to their specific profile, ii) IDPs facing severe challenges in accessing civil documentation and hence access to public services, social protection and durable solutions, and iii) persons detained or at risk of detention in relation to the IS conflict.

While the number of displacement-affected Iraqis missing documentation has reduced as a result of concerted interventions by a range of actors, the complexity of residual caseloads as well as significant bureaucratic and administrative barriers continue to pose challenges that require both the continuation of targeted assistance (i.e., legal counselling, representation and accompaniment) as well as concerted advocacy at the highest levels. This is particularly true for populations with perceived affiliation, for whom the process of securing documentation has only become more challenging in recent years. Lack of identity and civil documentation results in a range of protection risks, such as deprivation of freedom of movement, arbitrary arrest and detention, and the exclusion of access to public services and social protection schemes.

DG ECHO will prioritise interventions aiming at enhancing access to identity and civil documentation to complex cases who face severe barriers (security, administrative and bureaucratic barriers) to obtaining identity and civil documentation without the support of humanitarian actors through:

- **Legal Assistance**: Static and mobile provision of individual legal counselling and legal assistance, support and accompaniment throughout the administrative process and representation with relevant authorities (i.e., legal case management). This also includes coordinated support to authorities to counter bureaucratic inaccessibility of the current system (e.g., mobile missions or establishment of temporary offices). All proposals focusing on legal assistance should also include a component aimed at monitoring the impact of documentation on vulnerable individuals/HH, especially in terms of freedom of movement, access to public services, access to livelihood opportunities, achievement of durable solutions etc. Partners are also expected to set up functioning referral mechanisms to ensure vulnerable individuals identified through legal interventions have access to a broader range of services.
- **Advocacy**: Evidence-based advocacy -through the Protection Platform- at local and national level with relevant authorities to remove bureaucratic, administrative, legal and political barriers to renew or issue the necessary identity and civil documentation, and integrate this caseload into state public services.

- Coordination: Support strategic and operational coordination amongst active protection partners to harmonise protection interventions, a common understanding of the priority issues and way forward, and to ensure consolidated high-level protection and rights-based advocacy.

### **General protection**

Considering the high vulnerability of specific residual caseloads of IDPs and the protection threats they are exposed to, DG ECHO will also consider a wider package of protection services for well-justified groups of IDPs. Priority will be given to groups with specific vulnerabilities, including, but not limited to, survivors of violence, survivors of persecution of minority groups, people targeted and/or excluded due to their real or perceived affiliation with Islamic State, or people at risk of eviction and secondary displacement due to their status as IDPs through:

- Protection Monitoring: The systematic collection and analysis of information to identify protection trends for populations of concern with the purpose of informing effective response as well as building evidence-based advocacy at different levels, i.e., strategic and operational. Protection monitoring activities should always be complemented by the direct or indirect provision of assistance to beneficiaries, most notably the provision of information on existing services and effective referrals for cases in need of specialised services.
- Delivery of Protection Assistance: Support to identified protection cases through a comprehensive package of protection services as needed, including case management, MHPSS, legal assistance and, when appropriate, cash for protection. In line with DG ECHO Cash Policy (annex 3, enhancing sectoral outcomes through cash and voucher assistance), the provision of cash to achieve protection outcomes will be considered only when 1) the causal link between cash transfers and protection outcomes is clearly outlined; 2) cash is part of a broader protection response (accompaniment, legal assistance and case management).
- Advocacy: Evidence based advocacy at local and national level with relevant authorities on a range of protection issues, including, but not limited to, evictions, durable solutions (return, local integration and relocation) and compensation schemes.
- People in Detention/At Risk of Detention: Protection, family tracing and legal assistance for people in detention or at risk of detention due to the latest IS conflict. Detention activities will only be supported for partners with demonstrated institutional capacity, mandated access to detention facilities and prisons, and able to provide meaningful protection activities.

### **Basic Needs Approach to complement Protection/Identity and Civil Documentation**

- Supporting IDPs to obtain identity and civil documentation aims to bring them to a position where they are able to claim their rights as Iraqi citizens. DG ECHO will consider temporary cash assistance in the form of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) for IDPs while they are being assisted by protection partners to obtain

their identity and civil documentation. As protection/identity and civil documentation remains the entry point, a referral mechanism between protection actors and MPCA actors needs to be established.

- Targeting for MPCA: Only a subset of identity and civil documentation beneficiaries will also be benefiting from accompanying MPCA. They will need to fulfil additional MPCA inclusion criteria based on their socioeconomic vulnerability e.g., IDPs who are currently not benefiting from existing social protection mechanisms due to their lack of civil documentation but who would otherwise fulfil the criteria to be included.
- Referral Mechanism: Once protection actors have identified beneficiaries to be assisted with identity and civil documentation and assessed they also fulfil the additional socioeconomic criteria to be included in the MPCA component, the protection actor can refer cases to the MPCA actor, either within the same organization from protection team to MPCA team, or between organizations. The protection and MPCA actors will need to establish a referral mechanism with related SOPs, to ensure smooth referral from one program to another and have a common approach on regularity of referrals to take in new MPCA beneficiaries and remove beneficiaries once their civil documentation process is completed.
- Transfer Value and Duration: Since the MPCA component is to assist IDPs who lack civil documentation on a temporary basis, the transfer value will need to be in line with the guidance from the Iraq Cash Forum (ICF) and existing social protection mechanisms. The transfer value can be adjusted on an individual basis depending on the household size and whether beneficiaries have access to PDS and/or other social protection mechanisms as outlined by the ICF. The duration of the MPCA component should be limited to the period protection actors are assisting beneficiaries through the documentation process plus a one-month grace period to get registered with PDS or other social protection mechanism of needed.
- Advocacy: In addition to individual assistance for IDPs to obtain identity and civil documentation and regain access to government services and social protection mechanisms, work will need to be done both for individual cases and at system's level. DG ECHO will support advocacy efforts with relevant government counterparts on inclusion of the most vulnerable humanitarian caseload into specific government social protection schemes (PDS, MoLSA).

#### **NEXUS on Social Protection:**

- While DG ECHO is not directly involved in the reform of Iraq's social protection mechanisms, digitalization and reform of existing social protection schemes is ongoing. Although the process is lengthy, steps are being made towards developing a more professionalized, shock-responsive and well-targeted social protection architecture. DG ECHO partners working with an individual caseload will support beneficiaries to apply to get registered into existing public services and/or social protection schemes.

**Education in Emergencies:**

While the GoI/MoE has taken over responsibility for the delivery of formal education services in most locations, for multiple reasons crisis-affected children still face various challenges to access quality education. This particularly affects those children living in marginalized communities in informal settlements, those who have missed out on too many years of schooling and, despite government directives, children without the required identity and civil documentation. To promote access to quality education for children in protracted displacement, DG ECHO will continue to support EIE, with focus on camps and informal settlements.

Targeting and Locations: DG ECHO will give priority to those locations where there are a high number of children in protracted displacement who, without support from humanitarian actors, would not be able to enjoy the right to education. Partners must include a list of educational facilities (formal or non-formal) and their locations. In order to justify the school selection, partners must demonstrate a clear gap in education services through an evidence-based catchment-area profile, needs analysis, resource mapping and gap analysis.

Education Services: Considering the transition and the role GoI/MoE plays in service delivery to its citizens, DG ECHO will consider non-formal education services targeting children in protracted displacement who would otherwise not have access to education services, or children at risk of drop-out, as well as support to formal education services based on an evidence-based gap analysis. EiE services should integrate child protection activities, including PSS, life skills, positive parenting, etc.

According to DG ECHO Disaster Preparedness in education can be framed through three pillars: 1) Safe School Environment; 2) School Safety and Disaster Management; 3) DRR in Teaching and Learning. Together these pillars help to ensure schools are physically safe for students and personnel, plans are established for education continuity in the face of disaster, and the safety and resilience of communities is enhanced.

**Disaster preparedness**

According to INFORM Climate Change Risk Index mid-2022, Iraq is the 13<sup>th</sup> most at risk country in the world. Over recent years, Iraq has experienced rising summer temperatures, increased water shortages, recurrent periods of drought and a reduction in food production capacity. Water scarcity due to prolonged drought and underperforming water management systems has become a very acute problem with serious consequences in terms of health and livelihoods opportunities.

In addition, according to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative ranking, Iraq readiness is ranked low, in position 154 out of 185 countries. Rural communities located in high-risk areas relying on agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing for their livelihoods are especially affected. By mid-2023, more than 83,000 people were reportedly living in displacement due to climate and environment-related reasons. In order to better prepare

vulnerable communities to mitigate and recover from climate induced shocks, DG ECHO will support specific projects with a focus on Disaster Preparedness.

While the priority will be given to climate-adaptation and resilience against climate-induced displacement, DP proposals may also consider an integrated crisis modifier/rapid response mechanism in case sudden shocks would occur (see below section).

Targeting and Locations: The southern delta region of Iraq is particularly affected by the decrease in water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as this region has generally low rainfall and heavily relies for its water supply and irrigated agriculture on the river system. Nonetheless the entire country could benefit from actions aimed at strengthening the ability of national and local preparedness systems to respond to crisis earlier and better. The partners will have to demonstrate a solid situational analysis and needs assessment justifying the selection of the pilot locations.

Climate Adaptation: DG ECHO will focus its disaster preparedness/resilience on an integrated approach to improving water infrastructure and water resource management, including through nature-based solutions, as well as climate-resilient agriculture and livestock-raising techniques at community level. Research, monitoring, dissemination and advocacy on climate displacement trends and adaptation can also be supported. While the priority will be given to climate adaptation and resilience against climate-induced displacement, Disaster Preparedness proposals should also consider an integrated crisis modifier/rapid response mechanism in case climate-induced displacement does occur.

DG ECHO promotes targeted preparedness actions as a specific way of strengthening preparedness for response and early action, ‘targeted preparedness’ actions are based on a comprehensive risk assessment.

## **STRENGTHENING EARLY RESPONSE CAPACITY**

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

Emergency/Rapid Response Mechanisms (ERMs/RRMs) are stand-alone actions pooling capacities of different partners for improved and more coordinated preparedness and early response, guided by early warning and contingency plans. ERMs/RRMs are designed to provide initial lifesaving multipurpose assistance when other response mechanisms are not yet in place. ERMs/RRMs are mostly used for rapid 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 to mobilise resources from ongoing actions and swiftly respond to and/or act in advance of any new emerging shocks occurring and/or forecasted in the area of their operations (a crisis within a crisis). Flexibility measures can be triggered to provide initial lifesaving multipurpose response in the aftermath of a rapid onset crisis, as well as to act in advance of an imminent shock; the three main scenarios are: i) to fill the time gap while waiting for additional resources; ii) to respond to small scale humanitarian needs which would otherwise remain unattended;

iii) to provide assistance in advance of an imminent shock to prevent or reduce its acute humanitarian impact, according to a pre-agreed plan with defined triggers and actions.

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

ERM/RRM and flexibility measures are complementary and do not exclude each-other; flexibility measures enable to act in advance and to bridge the time gap between the shock and the time needed to mobilize ad-hoc resources through the ERM/RRM or additional funding. Timeliness of response is a key element for effectiveness of both flexibility measures and ERM/RRM. Partners should adopt indicators to measure the 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.