

TECHNICAL ANNEX

UKRAINE, WESTERN BALKANS and EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

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

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2. FINANCIAL INFO

Indicative Allocation²: EUR 88 500 000 of which an indicative amount of EUR 10 500 000 for Education in Emergencies.

Programmatic Partnerships:

New Programmatic Partnerships could be funded under this HIP³.

Indicative breakdown per Actions as per Worldwide Decision (in euros)⁴:

Countries	Action (a) Human- induced crises and natural hazards	Action (b) Initial emergency response/small- scale/epidemic	Action (c) Disaster Preparedness	Actions (d) to (f) Transport / Complementary activities	TOTAL
Ukraine	75 000 000				75 000 000
Moldova	8 000 000				8 000 000
South Caucasus Region	4 000 000		1 500 000		5 500 000

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>

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

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)⁵.

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.

d) Field office costs

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

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 strategies.

Funding under this HIP may be used to finance actions implemented in the framework of multi-annual strategies, as and when provided for in the HIP.

- f) Regional and multi-country actions

Regional/multi-country actions can be supported under this HIP (and where relevant in conjunction with other 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.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE INFO

Ukraine Allocation round 1

- a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 75 000 000
- b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: All interventions as described in section 5.1 of the HIP.
- c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2024 - Actions will start from 01/01/2024.
- d) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more⁷ provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner⁸.

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 Maximum duration of an action is 48 months.

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)⁹.

- e) Potential partners¹⁰: All DG ECHO Partners
- f) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of ongoing actions¹¹
- g) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 29/02/2024

Moldova Allocation round 1

- a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 8 000 000
- b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: all interventions as described in section 5.1 of the HIP.
- c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2024 - Actions will start from 01/01/2024.
- d) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more⁷ provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner⁸. 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)⁹.
- e) Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners

⁸ 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))

⁹ Additional guidance may be issued by DG ECHO in this respect, as appropriate.

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

¹¹ Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL.

- f) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of on-going actions ¹¹
- g) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 29/02/2024

South Caucasus Allocation round 1

- a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 5 500 000
- h) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round / all interventions as described in section 5.1 of the HIP.
- b) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2024 - Actions will start from 01/01/2024.
- c) The initial duration for the Action may be up to 24 months or more⁷ provided that the added value of a multi-annual duration is demonstrated by the partner⁸. 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)⁹.
- d) Potential partners¹⁰: All DG ECHO Partners
- e) Information to be provided: Single Form or Modifications requests of on-going actions ¹¹
- f) Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: from 08/04/2024 onwards

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 be 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?¹²

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

No award will be made to NGO partner organisations which have not complied with their obligations concerning the submission of audited financial statements (i.e., which would not have submitted those in due time to the Commission without a proper justification) or 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 Measures¹³ issued under any Council Implementing Decision adopted in accordance with Article 6 of EU

¹² In accordance with the relevant section of the Single Form guidelines (section10)

Regulation 2020/2092 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget¹⁴ (“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 Hungary¹⁵.**

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 2021¹⁶, including those entities listed in Annex I to Hungarian Act IX of 2021¹⁷ 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.

In line with the DG ECHO guidance on **localisation**¹⁸, 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,

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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

¹⁵ OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94–109

¹⁶ Act IX of 2021 on public interest trust foundations with a public service mission (entry into force 01/01/2023).

¹⁷ Available (in Hungarian) at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-9-00-00>

¹⁸ 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.

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). Partners will be required to clearly indicate the budgetary share allocated to local actors in their ECHO funded actions.

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 impacts¹⁹. 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.

Transfer Modality: Modality choice should be informed by a needs-based response and risk analysis, incorporating joint and timely market analysis, operational and environmental analyses. The use of cash should systematically be considered, across the variety of response mechanisms (anticipatory action, rapid response mechanisms, emergency responses, crisis modifiers, and shock-responsive social protection) funded by DG ECHO. All cash interventions should comply with [DG ECHO's cash thematic policy](#), including the sector-specific considerations in Annexe 3 of that document. In addition, programmes above EUR10 million should comply with the large-scale cash guidance note.

DG ECHO promotes a common system and/or coordinated programming approaches to reduce fragmentation and avoid duplication and parallel ways of working. This includes better operational coordination, coordinated approaches to vulnerability-based targeting, data interoperability (which respects data protection requirements) to facilitate

deduplication and referrals, a common payment mechanism, a common feedback mechanism and a common results framework.

DG ECHO promotes, wherever appropriate, a single multipurpose cash (MPC) payment to meet recurrent basic needs, through a common payment mechanism, and timely referral pathways to meet specific multi-sectoral outcomes based on a solid analysis.

DG ECHO expects that the MEB and Transfer Values (TV) are defined under the coordination of the CWG for harmonised response. The value of cash assistance should be adequate to cover or contribute to emergency basic needs and should be complemented by other relevant sectoral interventions which cannot be met through cash, facilitated through multi-sectoral referral pathways. Cash assistance should be risk informed and targeted based on socio-economic vulnerability, and the protection concerns of individuals and groups.

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.

Partners will also be assessed on their ability to explore possible contributions to existing social safety nets and propose feasible entry points for linking humanitarian assistance and social protection at different levels (policy/governance, strategic/institutional level, program design, and implementation/delivery). In line with the nexus agenda, DG ECHO encourages approaches that contribute to the delivery of a needs-based, coherent, and coordinated assistance package from both humanitarian and development funding sources, whilst respecting humanitarian and protection principles.

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.

At the specific objective level:

- *Livelihood Coping Strategy: “% of HH without crisis and emergency Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS)”* - Target 80% using the WFP methodology outlined in its [Essential Needs Assessment guidance \(see p20\)](#).
- *Percentage of households who report being able to meet their basic needs as they define and prioritize them* measured using the standardized scale (all/most/half/some)

Given that large percentages of the MPC assistance is used to cover food needs, it is recommended to also use the Food Consumption Score (FCS) systematically.

At the result level, DG-ECHO recommends the use of:

- *“Percentage of households with total monthly expenditure which exceeds the MEB”*. -Target 80%.

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 CWG) should monitor markets

and define inflation and currency-related triggers; design programmes and budgets from the outset to anticipate inflation and depreciation; and adapt programmes and budgets based to maintain purchasing power and programme effectiveness. DG ECHO maintains its commitment to providing cash, even in contexts of high inflation, provided that programming can be adequately adapted, in line with the [Good Practice Review on cash in inflation/depreciation](#). Whenever duly justified, to cope with market price volatility, partners are encouraged to include contingencies to adapt the transfer value, increase coverage, and/or change to an alternative modality to preserve household purchasing power capacity. Irrespective of the modality, partners are expected to invest in robust due diligence processes and tracking capacity to minimise the risk of diversion.

DG ECHO systematically assess the cost-efficiency of different modalities, using the Total Cost to Transfer Ratio (TCTR), alongside the analysis of effectiveness.

DG ECHO will 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 coordination model and [CWG ToR](#).

In-kind assistance: Specific life-saving equipment, materials and Non-Food Items (NFI) may be distributed to the affected population and some public utilities and social institutions. In-kind distribution of such items is possible, particularly if markets are inaccessible or badly disrupted, or if this approach is more cost-effective, but it should be assessed against the advantages of providing greater choice to beneficiaries through cash grants. The selection of hardware, materials, equipment to be distributed should be informed by decisions on whether to support temporary or permanent facilities, system or dwellings and the extent of the most urgent repair and/or refurbishment needs. Consideration should be given to quality and safety, opportunities to strengthen local supply lines, markets and public administration where feasible. Distribution of NFI or other in-kind goods may be phased allowing adjustment for emerging needs, and to evaluate the usefulness of previously distributed items and of the modality itself. Market analysis through the Emerging Market Mapping Analysis (EMMA) or other tools should inform planning, with attention paid to the quality, volume or speed of supply, and the capacity of and impacts on local markets and prices. All material support requires post-distribution monitoring to verify the use of the materials provided and the sectorial outputs and outcomes achieved.

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 operations²⁰.

The minimum environmental requirements should be applied through a 'mainstreaming' approach with environmental impacts mitigated across sectors, projects and programmes

²⁰ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en

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.

Sector-Specific Priorities (for all countries)

Protection: 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 gender/age sensitive risk analysis, will be a pre-condition for selection. Partners should ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in proposed actions. For more information see the Thematic Policies Annex.
- 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.
- Partners must ensure that protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and child safeguarding policies and procedures established at institutional level are concretely translated at operational level.

Integrated programming should be prioritised as outlined in DG ECHO's technical policies.

Winterisation efforts must take into account the importance of an inter cluster approach in the winterisation response. The strategy calls for a strong commitment on coordination to ensure an integrated winterization response across all relevant sectors allowing affected populations address their cross-cutting needs and vulnerabilities associated with the winter season.

All responses/actions must be based on a sound **risk analysis** of the most vulnerable affected population.

Coordination is a key element for DG ECHO-funded intervention under this HIP. Partners should demonstrate coordination efforts that go beyond the simple participation to the cluster coordination system – i.e., strategic and operational coordination (in particular strengthening the inter-cluster coordination, ensuring synergies among interventions at field level and with other coordination structures). Partners should actively engage with the relevant local authorities and exchange views on issues of common interest with actors present in the field (e.g., EU, UN, etc.). In certain circumstances, coordination and deconfliction with military actors might be necessary. This should be done in a way that does not endanger humanitarian actors or the humanitarian space, and without prejudice to the mandate and responsibilities of the actor concerned. Whenever feasible, partners will be encouraged to use governmental agencies' capacity and or community-based organizations to deliver items.

Emphasis must be placed on **cost efficiency and effectiveness**, including reasonable overhead costs. Interventions should be informed by proper geo-thematic service mapping efforts which demonstrate how duplication of services and coverage will be avoided, while ensuring the largest possible reach to those most in need.

Partners are expected to ensure full compliance with **visibility and public communication** requirements and acknowledge the funding role of the EU/ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangement. Standard visibility is a contractual obligation for all DG ECHO-funded projects. Partners must ensure EU visibility through the prominent display of the EU emblem with accompanying text on project sites, relief items and equipment, as specified in Section 12.1.A of the Single Form, as well as structured and proactive communication throughout the project duration with broad dissemination (press releases, social media, webpages, blogs, photos etc.), as specified in Section 12.1.B of the Single Form. Partners must ensure EU visibility through the prominent display of the EU emblem with accompanying text on project sites, relief items and equipment, as specified in Section 12.1.A of the Single Form, as well as structured and proactive communication throughout the project duration with broad dissemination (press releases, social media, webpages, blogs, photos etc.), as specified in Section 12.1.B of the Single Form; However, partners with strong and ambitious communications ideas, aiming at reaching principally EU audiences, and with a demonstrated media/communications capacity are highly encouraged to apply for above-standard visibility. DG ECHO may provide additional funding should a partner wish to carry out such elaborate communication actions. Communication actions must always be designed to fit the target audiences, the key messages, the concrete project and the capacity of the partner. Relevant actions could include, for example, audio-visual productions, journalist-visits to project sites, poster campaigns, exhibitions or other types of events with an important outreach to the European public and media. A separate communications plan, costed, with an estimated audience reach and a timeline, must be discussed with ECHO's Regional Information Officer (RIO) and then be submitted and approved by DG ECHO's Communication Unit (ECHO.01) prior to the signing of the contract. The plan must be inserted as an annex in the Single Form (under point 9.2). Partners will normally maintain contact to the Communication Unit and/or the relevant Regional Information Officer in the course of the implementation of the plan. Above-standard visibility/communication is additional to standard visibility. Therefore, in all projects standard visibility, including on-site display of the DG ECHO visual identity will still need to be implemented based on the specifications in the Single Form.

Partnerships with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and national non-governmental organisations (NNGOs) have had and continue to play an indispensable role in responding to the humanitarian needs in the region. Most DG ECHO funds have and will be translated into services and assistance provided primarily by local actors. As such, DG ECHO will continue to require its partners to establish strategic partnerships with local CSOs and NNGOs. Since meaningful partnerships are built over time, continuation, or expansion of successful existing partnerships with national organisations will be privileged. Partnerships should strive to be in line with the **Principles of Partnership**. In accordance with the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement and pursuant to the EU Financial Regulation, indirect costs shall not exceed 7% of direct eligible cost of the Action.

Localisation: DG ECHO welcomes partnership with local actors; however, a few principles should be applied: 1/ Duty of care is properly ensured through the provision of appropriate training and PPE. 2/ Fair costs coverage including support and transport costs. 3/ Volunteer stipends to cover cost of living. 4/ Support with capacity building. 5/ Alignment on humanitarian principles and good practice (in particular, impartiality and neutrality, PSEA).

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

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

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

Specific requirements per country: UKRAINE

A. Food Security & Basic Needs/Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

As needs are multiple, food assistance shall be part of a basic need approach unless otherwise justified. Needs and future risks shall be identified through a combination of food security analysis and multi-disciplinary early warning systems (e.g., climate outlook, price trends, market functionality & access) to allow to prepare for and act early. Key elements of the Food Security & Basic Needs/Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) programme include:

- Actions shall use an integrated approach aiming at reducing prevalence of food insecurity. Targeted support to tackle severe levels of household food insecurity based on the main outcome indicators (Food Consumption Score (FCS), Coping Strategy Index (CSI)) should be provided under most suitable intervention modalities (e.g., cash, voucher, in-kind) through joint, impartial, evidence-based needs assessments and response analysis.
- Targeting shall be based on food security & socio-economical needs & vulnerabilities of households in close coordination with the Food Security & Livelihood Cluster (FSLC) and Cash Working Group (CWG).
- Actions shall contribute to the effort of linking humanitarian food assistance and/or MPCA to shock responsive social protection (SRSP). To this end, close support with and alignment/coordination with the ongoing multi-stakeholder 'Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) of the Government-led Perekhid Initiative', aiming at supporting this process, will be of the essence. Close coordination is needed with FSLC & CWG to contribute to the development of a comprehensive standardized and institutionalized referral pathways (including feedback loops) especially to livelihood, protection, nutrition and health services.
- Improved preparedness and emergency response capacity for shocks (based on learning and experience) feeding into the work of the FSLC & CWG on strengthening collective preparedness efforts.
- Improved interoperability between humanitarian actors to facilitate layering and referrals. FSLC and CWG members delivering food assistance & MPCA shall all de-duplicate beneficiaries list through the centralized CWG de-duplication system.
- A Crisis Modifier (CM) with clearly defined shocks and triggers.
- Contribution to and use of market monitoring data.

- To increase environmental mainstreaming, partners will be encouraged to do a NEAT+ assessment (<https://neatplus.org/>)

In the context of global high volatility of prices of food and basic commodities, needs and future risks should be identified through a combination of food security analysis and multi-disciplinary early warning systems (e.g., climate outlook, and global commercial, logistic and price trends) to allow preparedness to adapt the assistance and maintain cost-efficiency and effectiveness. The action shall reflect on the coordination mechanism with the FSLC and the CWG to adapt Transfer Value (TV) and frequency to the price of the food basket, including:

- i. Quality, breadth, frequency of multi-sectoral market analysis, and SOPs to share the analysis. Monitoring of official and parallel exchange rates and inflation and analysing the impact of inflation and depreciation on different modalities.
- ii. Develop triggers for adaptation of food assistance modality to inflation and exchange rate including changing the frequency and number of distributions. DG ECHO considers cash as the default modality for food assistance when proven efficient and effective based on a comprehensive analysis, informing on choice and triggers to adapt the modality according to contextual changes. Voucher modality could be considered if higher cost-efficiency and effectiveness are demonstrated compared to other modalities. When in-kind assistance is deemed necessary due to contingent situations, partners are expected to develop since the start of the Action appropriate triggers to switch to cash assistance.

Food assistance must be part of a basic needs approach. DG ECHO is committed to continuing to support unconditional and unrestricted multipurpose cash using a single delivery mechanism to cover both food and basic needs.

When operationally feasible and in accordance with the above considerations, DG ECHO and like-minded donors aim to consolidate a MPCA programme of sufficient scale to address basic needs (including food security and related multi-faceted needs) of the most vulnerable people. In order to increase coordination and impact, and increase coherence, DG ECHO encourages partners to:

- Consider MPCA in proposals (transfer value, duration, and frequency in line with CWG guidance).
- Explore opportunities of setting-up a large-scale cash consortium.

B. Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFIs) are crucial to provide security, personal safety, and protection from the weather, and prevent ill health and disease. Shelter support also plays an essential role in building resilience. The response strategy will primarily consider supporting the following objectives and related activities:

- ✓ **Objective 1 - Most vulnerable people affected by conflict (displaced, non-displaced, returnees) have access to adequate shelter and NFI assistance (in kind and/or cash).** Activities considered under this objective may include: shelter acute emergency support (ESK); emergency NFI support for households; NFI kits for reception centres (RC) and collective centres (CC); NFI kits for non-displaced population for bomb shelters; basic refurbishment of RC and CC (incl. technical

support); hosting families support and emergency winterization activities (see below).

- ✓ **Objective 2: Most vulnerable people affected by the conflict receive shelter support that contribute to their recovery.** Activities considered under this objective may include: light and medium repairs (incl. technical support); support to local authorities for assessment and repair of critical energy infrastructures. While heavy repairs of damaged houses and prefab-modules are not covered under this HIP, exceptions may be considered case by case depending on the extreme vulnerability of some beneficiaries (mostly protection cases).
- Coordination with the Shelter/NFI Cluster is expected to ensure complementarity of responses, such as promoting consistent data collection and analysis; ensuring a smooth continuum among immediate needs, and future planning for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction; ensuring complementarity with the ongoing/future GoU compensation schemes and consistency with relevant legislatives updates and standards. Linkages with other actors, and donors, particularly EU institutions & EU Member States, who may support recovery in the housing sector, are encouraged. Coordination with the Cash Working Group (CWG), particularly in the scope of cash assistance for emergency NFI support, winterization activities, rental support and utilities support should be considered. Equally, coordination with protection/HLP actors is crucial to ensure proper beneficiary targeting and (counter)referencing of vulnerable cases. Shelter winterization needs and capacities to respond to surge needs remain of particular concern. This is particularly the case for hard-to-reach, war-affected households with damaged or sub-standard dwellings, households unable to afford basic utilities, as well as poorly equipped and insulated collective/transit centres hosting IDPs. Only individual, household, and communal shelter winterization needs should be addressed under a shelter response. Other winterization needs (i.e. for health or education facilities, water systems) should be addressed under the corresponding sectors and responses.
- Winterization activities should align with the UA Shelter Cluster winterization recommendations for 2023-2024. Activities which may be considered under this HIP include the provision of core relief items (i.e. Household NFI winter clothing, heating appliances, solid fuel, boilers, invincibility kits), cash for utilities (in close coordination with CWG) and/or critical winterization repairs/improvements (refurbishment of collective centres - CC, critical insulation including sealing off kits, critical and limited repairs -non-WASH related- to damaged district heating infrastructure). Rental assistance for the most vulnerable cases may be considered as a last resort during the winter months.
- For any winterisation activity, DG ECHO will pay particularly attention to the beneficiary selection, timeliness and effectiveness of the proposed response and its ability to objectively achieve (and monitor) integrated ‘thermal comfort’ for intended beneficiaries.
- To strengthen environmental mainstreaming, partners will be encouraged to do a NEAT+ assessment (<https://neatplus.org/>)

C. Health

- All public health-related interventions should be addressed in a comprehensive methodology and in close coordination, complementarity and collaboration with relevant health and administrative authorities, the health cluster and related technical working groups (TWG) and sub-clusters. Importantly, entry and exit strategies need coherence while the health response must be adapted to every oblast due to their specific needs. Hence a sound analysis of the context and detailed knowledge is critical.
- DG ECHO Partners must demonstrate their technical capacity and actively engage in sub-national health cluster activities.
- DG ECHO will prioritise projects based on the following aspects:
 - **Integrated Primary Health Care (PHC)** services, with a link to protection, in remote and liberated areas and continued specific technical support for PHCs/ambulatories: chronic/infectious diseases; mental health; continuum of care for sexual reproductive (SRH), maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health; clinical management of gender-based violence (GBV); minor rehabilitation, and physical rehabilitation/trauma care. Supporting PHC facilities with medical material, eligible essential drugs, and equipment that they can function to deliver basic PHC services. DG ECHO expects support directly to PHC facilities/ambulatories while mobile clinic modalities only if clearly articulated.
 - **Comprehensive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).** Activities must be based on a solid assessment, should follow the IASC reference group on MHPSS and ensure a proper referral pathway in place between the different levels of care, specifically psychosocial support (PSS) and mental health. MHPSS activities using evidence-based interventions and services for mental health, and which follows the roadmap, and the All-Ukrainian Mental Health Program “How are you?” are supported. This includes mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) trainings. Only projects with professional and trained staff, capacity building, and essential country eligible psychotropics, and with sound monitoring and relevant outcome measures in place, will be considered. Coordination with the MHPSS, education and protection sub-cluster is essential and must be demonstrated.
 - **Rehabilitation and Trauma Care** interventions covering assistive devices and equipment, prosthesis in combination with training of multi-disciplinary teams and ensured follow up procedures at hospitals, PHC and community level, will be prioritised. Interventions must follow the rehabilitation pathway under the order of the Ministry of Health (MoH). Coordination with the Rehab and Trauma and protection sub-cluster is essential and must be demonstrated.

- **Coordination**/Health Cluster/Thematic Working Group activities ensuring effective and coherent service delivery modalities, training standard curricula and essential drug lists to be used in coordination with MoH.
- **Emergency Management System (EMS)** with potential support for strengthening the national emergency medical teams (EMT) in cooperation with the Emergency Service Department of MoH to respond to large scale health emergencies. DG ECHO will consider financing the emergency trainings and emergency supplies/equipment relevant in the context of Ukraine.
- **Capacity Building** activities require clear coordination, coherent training curricula and should be critical to the needs of the national health providers.

D. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- DG ECHO response strategy will consider actions aiming to support the operation, maintenance, and repair of critical communal WASH services where such services have been significantly disrupted as a direct consequence of the conflict. The focus should be on **mitigating existing WASH system failure risks while improving cost-efficiency where feasible**. The priority activities include emergency repair/rehabilitation of small to large communal water systems damaged during the war to regain access to safe water in sufficient quantity; provision of materials and equipment for repairs, operation, and maintenance of existing basic WASH services; and provision of critical equipment, spares and water treatment chemicals. Repair of (technical) water infrastructure to enable district heating systems to function could be eligible on a case-by-case basis but should be conceived as a winterization activity.
- WASH activities in support of other sectors (health/education/CCCM) should be conceived under the corresponding sector, rather than WASH.
- In areas where systems cannot be quickly repaired, water trucking and or bottled water distribution can be considered temporarily and as a last resort. Emergency Sanitation activities, including sewage and solid waste disposal/treatment may be considered in some critical areas; in-kind distribution of hygiene items may be considered, unless the equivalent items (quality and quantity-wise) are available locally; in which case cash should be used (in close coordination with the Cash Working Group – CWG); support to hygiene promotion activities will only be considered if needs are clearly demonstrated.
- An integrated programming approach, based on the linkages between WASH, Health, Shelter, CCCM and Protection is expected to ensure a coherent response. Partners are expected to report regularly and closely coordinate with the WASH Cluster to ensure responses focused on effectiveness and efficiency.
- A smooth continuum among immediate WASH needs, service delivery, and future planning should be promoted from the early stage of the actions. DG ECHO supports

and advocates for durable WASH solutions implemented in close coordination with local providers and authorities, including the re-introduction of reasonable tariffs and cost-recovery mechanisms ASAP, wherever feasible.

- To strengthen environmental mainstreaming, partners will be encouraged to do a NEAT+ assessment (<https://neatplus.org/>)

E. Protection

All protection proposals should include an analysis of the national response in the area of intervention: partners should demonstrate a solid knowledge of the existing response provided by authorities, as it remains crucial to define the role of humanitarian actors in the provision of protection assistance (coordination, support, substitution).

DG ECHO will prioritise projects based on the following aspects:

- **Protection monitoring:** the systematic collection and analysis of trends, risks, and gaps must take into consideration the following aspects:
 - Data collection should primarily engage affected communities (displaced, non-displaced and returnees). Feedback from Key Informants should not represent the main source of information but serves to complement the view of affected communities.
 - Data collection should include information about the national response and existing gaps, in order to design programmes that aim at strengthening national response, whenever feasible.
 - DG ECHO encourages collaboration between international and national non-governmental actors with already well-established presence in the areas of intervention.
 - Data should be analysed monthly. Analysis, including concrete programmatic and advocacy recommendations should be made available to DG ECHO and the wider humanitarian community.
 - Protection monitoring activities should always be complemented by direct assistance and effective referrals to relevant services/assistance.
- **Legal Protection** interventions should prioritise 1) identity documents lost/destroyed due to the ongoing conflict and 2) documents/processes required to access assistance, provided by both authorities and humanitarian actors. Legal assistance aimed at enhancing access to compensation schemes will only be considered when targeting individuals facing humanitarian barriers to access such schemes (e.g., people with mobility constraints). DG ECHO will also consider actions aimed at systematically assessing access constraints to legal procedures, including compensation schemes, in order to build solid advocacy messages to relevant stakeholders.

Legal analysis aimed at assessing the legal framework for humanitarian protection interventions (e.g. mandatory reporting law, legal guardianship) will also be considered for funding.

- **Child Protection** interventions should, whenever feasible, demonstrate strong linkages with education interventions. Schools, if/when reopened, represent a crucial entry point to reach vulnerable children in need of protection assistance.

Support to extremely vulnerable children, including children with disabilities and children in institutions, will be prioritized for funding, including evidence-based advocacy to enhance humanitarian actors' access to children in institutions (including those returning from abroad). DG ECHO will not support direct assistance to institutions, in line with the de-institutionalisation agenda, but will support direct humanitarian and protection assistance to those living in institutions. For such interventions, DG ECHO expect partners to closely coordinate with local authorities.

Family Tracing and reunification, especially cross-border, will only be considered when implemented by specialised/mandated agencies. Moreover, proposals including a component aimed at supporting/reintegrating forcibly displaced children in Ukraine will only be considered with partners that are able to demonstrate direct access to beneficiaries, an independent assessment of the needs in line with the Best Interest of the Child and a strong monitoring component that takes into account the direct feedback of children and their families (when relevant).

Actions supporting family based alternative care will also be considered when in line with international standards.

- **Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in emergency:** all SGBV interventions should ensure that needs of women, girls, boys and men are addressed, in line with DG ECHO Gender policy.

SGBV response actions should demonstrate internal organisational capacities to provide survivor-centred case management assistance. Proposals must demonstrate: 1) a clear strategy to enhance disclosure/help seeking behaviour, based on contextualised lessons learnt, 2) the availability of referral pathways (when not yet developed, in case of new locations for instance, partners are expected to do so at the onset of the action) as well as clear agreements for the safe and confidential referral of survivors, 3) proven capacity to provide MHPSS (directly or through referrals) at all levels of the IASC MHPSS pyramid, 4) Technical supervision of case workers and 5) capacity-building of project staff and referral agencies (when needed) to ensure coherence with GBV minimum standards.

Interventions including GBV risk mitigation component will also be considered for funding when corrective measures can be implemented within the timeframe of the action.

- **Protection case management**, when the entry point is the protection violation, rather than the vulnerability, will be prioritised. **Accompaniment and referrals** of vulnerable individuals, with a focus on the most vulnerable/excluded, should be based on a solid assessment on the most excluded categories among affected communities and should include a clear referral pathway and a clear definition of the assistance to be provided directly by the agency and assistance available through referrals based on localised referral pathways.
- Protection partners are encouraged to design clearly defined, time-bound and measurable **advocacy plans** based on the gaps and barriers identified during the response.

- **Coordination** will only be supported at hub level. Proposals including a coordination component should ensure that the result is designed around the outputs of coordination (e.g., development of strategies, capacity gaps analysis and capacity building plans, localized referral mechanisms etc).
- DG ECHO will prioritize protection interventions aimed at providing life-saving assistance to victims of violence, newly accessible populations as well as individuals who cannot/are not willing to flee (e.g., people living in institutions). DG ECHO will prioritize the direct provision of assistance when authorities are overwhelmed and therefore not able to cater for the needs of population: partners are expected to assess the existing capacities in the areas of intervention.
- **Multi-sectoral support to evacuees:** partners are encouraged to design flexible actions able to provide immediate lifesaving assistance to evacuees, especially at evacuation points. For instance, protection assistance to evacuees should include 1) information dissemination, with a focus on available assistance in the area, 2) support IDPs registration with national authorities, 3) identification of vulnerable cases and protection cases in need of further protection assistance and 4) MHPSS focusing on stabilizing persons in crisis and provide psychological first aid. Sectoral cash top-up will be considered for funding when clear guidelines are submitted and agreed upon with DG ECHO.

F. Mine action

DG ECHO will prioritise interventions aimed at preventing and mitigating the impact of explosive ordnance contamination through different pillars of humanitarian mine action: victims assistance, mine risk awareness/education, non-technical surveys and clearance. Interventions will have to demonstrate clear humanitarian impact and added value with targeting of beneficiaries and areas, solid coordination with national authorities and sectorial stakeholders, and have a clear integration with other humanitarian and recovery initiatives. Interventions comprehensively tackling immediate needs of survivors are encouraged.

G. Education in Emergencies (EiE)

- The proposed actions should prioritise access to face-to-face learning in a safe and protective school environment. Light rehabilitation of schools and learning spaces and provision of materials/supplies to students, and teachers will also be considered.
- Other forms of learning, such as in hard-to-reach areas, could be supported to increase access to education for all children. Psycho-social support and life-saving messages (mine risk education) to children and school staff will be considered. Accelerated education programmes, remedial classes and/or catch-up classes may also be supported if they are accredited and/or approved from appropriate educational authorities. Partners are strongly encouraged to develop actions integrating child protection activities into their EiE proposals.
- Activities should be aligned with the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) priorities, aimed at straightening the local capacities and coordinated with Education Cluster frameworks, as appropriate. Information systems, data/evidence for overall response planning, coordination may be supported, if justified.

H. Emergency livelihoods

- Partners are required to comply with the commonly agreed assistance packages and operational modalities (as defined by the Livelihoods Technical Working Group).
- DG ECHO may consider supporting the protection and restoration of livelihoods and/or food systems if prompted by emergency needs and meets humanitarian objectives within a defined timeframe. Specific considerations include:
 - Focus on emergency livelihood support at the household level or communal level. This may include agropastoral and off-farm livelihoods.
 - Defined timeframe to achieve self-sufficiency of beneficiaries to cover their humanitarian needs in a timeframe of 12 months and consideration for seasonality to guide the calendar of activities for effective and timely assistance.
 - A two-fold targeting framework balancing the present economic fragility and the potential self-reliance capacity of households who lost their productive assets including the revolving capital but have knowledge of the production process, familiarity with markets, and regulations, financial and operational resilience. It is encouraged to undertake household livelihood profiling to inform the modalities of support.
 - Informed approach. The choice of livelihoods and the modality shall be informed by: i) A comprehensive market analysis including the availability of technically sound equipment on the local market and access to post-sale assistance; ii) A risk analysis of the potential impact of markets' disruption; iii) A basic business plan with a timeframe to reach the self-reliance of the beneficiary; iv) A protection risk analysis including sociocultural acceptance and risk linked to the access to productive assets.
 - A monitoring framework measuring the recovered economic capacity of the household (agropastoral production, livelihood assets, income) compared with a pre-disaster reference level. In addition to KRI indicators, the following ad-hoc indicator shall be used:
 - *“Number/percentage of the target population that restore their livelihood and regain sustainable economic self-reliance <to....., from..... pre-disaster level> (monthly income)”*.
- DG ECHO prioritises a cash+ approach that combines cash transfers with productive assets, inputs, and/or technical training to enhance the livelihoods and productive capacities of targeted households. Soft conditionalities might be considered in case of subsequent instalments.
- Partners are strongly encouraged to include a detailed learning and documentation component, test different approaches (e.g., volume of assistance, beneficiaries' livelihood profiles, productive contexts, etc.), and document the impact of the intervention with an aim of future upscaling of successful approaches and transfer cases towards development operations.

H. Disaster Preparedness

- Mainstreamed Disaster Preparedness: Russia's war on Ukraine is significantly increasing the level of risk for local populations overall. Both natural, human induced,

technological, and industrial hazards are compounded by insecurity in many conflict-affected areas. It is therefore essential that humanitarian actors, alongside the relevant national actors, actively engage in contingency planning to adequately prepare for scenario such as large population movements, severe disruption of services, influx of trauma patients, outbreaks, etc. To foster Disaster Preparedness, DG ECHO will support anticipatory, flexible and rapid response mechanisms in Ukraine.

- In areas at risk (front line communities, newly liberated areas, IDP hosting areas), partners with a demonstrated expertise in rapid response are strongly encouraged to introduce Crisis Modifiers (CM) to be able to quickly mobilize resources from on-going actions and respond to any new emerging shocks occurring in their area of operations. CM should be triggered based on pre-agreed thresholds to provide initial lifesaving multisector response in the aftermath of a rapid onset crisis. Partners are invited to dedicate a specific result and budget to the CM, under the DRR/DP sector.
- If relevant, endorsed by the humanitarian leadership in country and designed in collaboration with national authorities, DG ECHO could support the set-up of a Rapid Response Mechanism to provide a timely initial lifesaving assistance to the affected populations in areas at risk. The mechanism should target newly displaced families in priority. The minimum response package provided should focus on the most pressing and lifesaving needs and cover at least one month of assistance. Partners should develop a detailed plan considering prepositioning of stocks, surge staff, triggers and sectors of intervention. Effective referral pathways for the continuation of the assistance should be in place and regularly monitored. Regular post-monitoring should inform the use, adequacy and efficacy of the assistance provided. The issues of scale, triggers and modality of assistance will be carefully considered to maximize cost-effectiveness.
- Both rapid and flexible mechanisms should be based on a multi-risk analysis, with the development of worst and most likely scenarios, and allow for an initial response to be activated within 72 hours.

I. Support to operations

Support to a solid and responsive logistics system, notably in terms of storage and transport (last mile delivery), in order to address the challenging environment for humanitarian staff and goods is needed. Support Services including the support of dedicated common services to facilitate access and provision of safety & security support to humanitarian agencies. Therefore, DG ECHO will consider supporting operations ensuring the security for humanitarian staff as well as an adequate logistic common services, including safe transport and storage of relief items, provided their cost efficiency and benefit in increasing safety, effectiveness and timeliness of the response is demonstrated.

J. Nexus

- DG ECHO's partners are encouraged to apply a nexus approach in the formulation, analysis and programming of the actions, to facilitate the transition to longer-term, predictable and adequate essential and social services. Without compromising

humanitarian principles, partners are expected to consider if it is appropriate to deliver humanitarian assistance complementing and/or aligning to functional national systems. Social services such as health, education and social care in the one hand, and the linkages of humanitarian cash transfers to national social assistance programmes are amongst the priorities.

- Partners are also expected to assess if it is possible to use the humanitarian response as a window of opportunity to trigger further investments by development actors, especially in the western geographical regions not affected by an active conflict. Thus, sharing best practices and enhancing the dialogue and advocacy with development donors, as a way of increasing shared responsibility among humanitarian and development actors for crisis affected population.

K. Programming in Non-Government-Controlled areas (NGCA)

- In line with humanitarian principles, DG ECHO could fund humanitarian activities addressing the most critical needs in the NGCA. Partners will have to identify viable mechanism of assistance delivery given the considerable risks (security, aid diversion, fraud, military appropriation, safety and security of staff in the given areas, etc.).
- Partners will have the possibility to ask for full or partial remote management if they comply with the assessment criteria explained in DG ECHO's note "Approach to remote management." <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/actions-implementation/remote-management>
- In addition, partners will have to:
 - Comply with the 7 questions raised in ECHO remote management note of 2015;
 - Fill accordingly chapters 9.2 – 9.3 – 10.1 – 10.6 in the Single Form;
 - Fill the questionnaire on remote management at proposal stage;
 - Submit quarterly reports during the implementation of the project;
 - Ask for a partial field visibility derogation in case necessary.

Specific requirements per country: Republic of Moldova

In Moldova, DG ECHO will prioritise actions addressing needs in areas with limited presence of humanitarian actors (including rural areas, unaccredited Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) or the Transnistria region).

A. Basic Needs

Since a proportion of the refugee population has the intention to stay in the Republic of Moldova in the medium term, DG ECHO will support provision of access to basic needs through the preferred modality of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). Priority will be given to actions that include:

- Provision of monthly MPCA to refugees and to Moldovan families hosting refugees staying in the Republic of Moldova to fulfil their basic needs. The

Transfer Value (TV) will need to be in line with the TV agreed between the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the Government of Moldova.

- The targeting of beneficiaries of MPCA is required since the onset of the action.
- Close coordination with the CWG is needed also to contribute to the development of comprehensive standardized and institutionalized referral pathways (including feedback loops) especially to livelihood, protection, nutrition and health services.
- Improved preparedness and emergency response capacity for shocks (based on learning and experience) feeding into the work of the CWG on strengthening collective preparedness efforts.
- Demonstrated contribution to improved interoperability between humanitarian actors to facilitate layering and referrals as well as deduplication of beneficiaries from cash assistance.
- A separate budget line factoring in inflation as a potential shock, based on market analysis and recommendations coming from CWG (i.e., where inflation is expected to be above 10% in the coming year, the definition of the contingency amount needs to be standardised based on actual inflation trends and outlook).
- Contribution to and use of market monitoring data.

DG ECHO encourages a shift from blanket emergency cash assistance to stricter vulnerability criteria, thereby reducing the total number of beneficiaries.

Actions shall contribute to the effort of linking humanitarian cash assistance to shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) with particular focus on promoting the transition of part of the refugee caseload (when and where appropriate) to the national SRSP.

DG ECHO might support technical assistance to social protection mechanisms to work towards the integration of refugees into the national SRSPs, or pilot projects for the integration of the refugee caseload in the SRSPs.

DG ECHO is committed to continue supporting unconditional & unrestricted cash transfers despite inflation of food and other key commodities based on comprehensive analysis informing the transfer modality and especially the strategy to adapt the modality according to contextual changes. Specific considerations include 1) quality, breadth, and frequency of multi-sectoral market analysis; and 2) analysis of impact of inflation on different modalities. DG ECHO and like-willing donors aim to consolidate a MPCA programme of sufficient scale to address basic needs (including food security and related multi-faceted needs) of the most vulnerable people.

B. Protection

DG ECHO protection strategy in Moldova will consist of two pillars: protection for people-on-the-move or recently arrived and protection for people living within local host communities. Priority will be given to:

- Protection monitoring at Border Crossing Points and Transit Points (BCPs/TPs) to systematically monitor in- and out-flows as well as to identify vulnerable individuals (e.g. unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities) in need of specialised support. In line with DG ECHO policy, protection monitoring should always be coupled with provision of assistance, either provided directly or through referrals/accompaniment.
- Protection monitoring of refugees living in local host communities, including their intentions. Provision of protection assistance, including MHPSS, case management and accompaniment to other service providers. Partners are expected to rely on already existing inter-agency referral mechanisms or, when not available, develop internal ones at locality level, to be annexed to the proposal. Legal Assistance will also be considered, especially in relation to identification and civil documentation of refugees.

C. Health

Ukrainian refugees with Temporary Protection have been granted access to the Moldovan healthcare system for emergency healthcare and a basic package of services. However, the provision of healthcare to this additional caseload, as well as the provision of non-emergency healthcare, puts a significant strain on the national healthcare system and available resources.

DG ECHO will support access to emergency and non-emergency healthcare for refugees and provide complementary sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and mental health services, where needed. Priority will be given to:

- Healthcare provision embedded into existing health facilities in areas where a high concentration of refugees has an important impact into the national health system.
- Emergency healthcare coverage provided in polyclinics or relevant hospitals and not covered under the national health insurance (CNAM). Vulnerability criteria need to be clearly articulated.
- Assistance for chronic health-related cases, which require continues health service provision in polyclinics, diagnostic centres or hospitals and are not covered under the national health insurance (CNAM). Vulnerability criteria need to be clearly articulated.
- Support to targeted national health care providers with the additional caseload through capacity-building, provision of medical supplies and equipment and support to coverage of medical care for refugees under the national health insurance system.

D. Food Assistance

A small percentage of vulnerable refugees coming from Ukraine still reside in refugee accommodation centres (RACs). DG ECHO will support the provision of food assistance in both accredited and unaccredited RACs.

E. Education in Emergencies

Ukrainian refugee children have been granted access to formal education in Moldova. At the same time, many connect online to follow the Ukrainian education system.

DG ECHO will support access to formal education for refugee children in line with the refugees' preferences, either by providing materials, supervision, support to online education for those who choose to continue online Ukrainian education at formal education centres, or by providing targeted assistance (e.g., language support) to those who choose to enrol into formal education in Moldova.

Education relevance and outcomes, including learning, if/as applicable, must be demonstrated.

Information on available education options, and alignment with Ministry of Education and Education Working Group frameworks, as appropriate, is to be ensured.

F. Disaster Preparedness and Rapid Responses

Considering the ongoing war in Ukraine and the constant flows of refugees and third-country nationals into Moldova, DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions should include cost-effective contingency planning measures that can be readily available and swiftly activated in case of sudden influx of refugees.

All humanitarian actions must be risk-informed. All projects submitted should therefore include a risk analysis, identifying the main threats for both the targeted populations and the action. Contingency measures should be embedded in the action to anticipate and mitigate the identified risks to the best possible extent.

DG ECHO will continue to support rapid and flexible response mechanisms in areas at risk. Partners with demonstrated rapid response capacities could consider including a Crisis Modifier (CM) in their project. Partners are requested to briefly describe the main threats and hazards being tackled, limiting those to sudden and acute shocks, while defining the thresholds and protocols that will frame the rapid response. A specific result should be dedicated to the CM under the DRR/DP sector. Alignment with other response mechanisms and sectoral recommendations is essential to foster the use of standard and harmonised practices. Service mapping and referral pathways should be put in place to ensure additional acute needs are covered when relevant while continuity of services via other mechanisms is encouraged. Coordination with other sector leads, local actors and authorities is key to ensure access, timely and effective responses.

G. Nexus

DG ECHO's partners should apply a nexus approach in the formulation, analysis and programming of the actions, to facilitate the transition to longer-term, predictable and adequate social services. Without compromising humanitarian principles, partners are expected to deliver humanitarian assistance complementing and/or aligning to functional national programmes and system.

Social services such as health, education and social care, and the linkages of humanitarian cash transfers to national social assistance programmes are amongst the priorities.

Partners are also expected to assess if the humanitarian response could be used to trigger further investments from development donors to contribute to the assistance of the refugees and host communities on the medium and long term. This should ultimately promote social cohesion in the country. Thus, DG ECHO encourages partners to share best practices and enhance their dialogue and advocacy with development donors.

Specific requirements in the South Caucasus Region

DG ECHO's priority interventions in the South Caucasus Region focus on the following:

A. Basic Needs/Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA)

Cash-based assistance for people inside Nagorno-Karabakh and those displaced to Armenia would be the best modality of support, provided such assistance is implemented in line with DG ECHO guidelines and policies. MPCA is primarily meant to cover food, shelter (small repairs of damaged property), WASH, basic needs and Non-Food Items (including winterization items, if needed). In case multipurpose cash or possibly vouchers as the second-best option would not be possible to implement in a timely manner, the assistance needed has to be provided in-kind. Within Nagorno-Karabakh, other modalities than cash assistance may be foreseen to support the most vulnerable conflict-affected population.

B. Health

Essential health services need to be ensured at the time when the health system has been disrupted by war. Assistance will cover primary and secondary health care facilities with essential rehabilitation/repair of health structures, provision of small medical equipment, supplies, medications, human resources surge capacity and ensuring uninterrupted access to water. Mental health support should also be considered, since the stress factor is believed to be very substantial among the population, which has lived under duress for decades.

Assistance enabling access to health care for displaced people (inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia) may be foreseen in cash or in-kind modality.

C. Protection

The hostilities and displacement have caused high levels of anxiety, psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder among the population – especially in locations that have suffered from shelling. Many conflict-affected people are living through a state of profound shock, which goes beyond the displacement itself. A large number of displaced and other affected people (e.g. women, children, the elderly) in Armenia may require targeted protection, including child protection and psycho-social support (PSS).

D. Disaster Preparedness

In 2024, DG ECHO will support and strengthen Disaster Preparedness (DP) in Armenia. The DPBL budget will allow for targeted DP programs to be funded for a minimum period

of 24 months. The priority risk to be considered under this specific envelope are related to conflict and escalation of violence and, to a lesser extent, shocks of natural origin.

Lessons learned for the recent events should inform priority DP investments to be supported by humanitarian actors. Identified gaps and shortcomings in emergency preparedness should be addressed in priority. Actions to be funded should have a strong focus on decentralised regions and local authorities; reinforcing their capacities to prepare and respond to sudden onset disasters. Partners should also consider the national DRM framework and anchor their DP actions as much as possible within existing or sustainable systems. Anticipatory and innovative actions in the field of shock response social protection, contingency planning, stock prepositioning, rapid assessment tools and capacities, development of nationally or locally lead emergency response plans and SoPs, are, among other actions, avenues to consider for DP actions in Armenia. Potential for replicability and scaling up of DP initiatives is essential to consider. Exit and hand-over strategies are to be well thought through from the start of the action.