

THEMATIC POLICIES ANNEX

GENERAL PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

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

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

- Identification of beneficiaries and needs through robust, comprehensive and systematic methods, conducted in a coordinated manner with other humanitarian partners, including local and national actors and affected communities.
- Maximising the impact of limited resources. This implies appropriate targeting, prioritising the beneficiaries with higher needs, and choosing the most effective and

¹ COM(2021) 110 final of 10.3.2021.

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

cost-efficient aid modalities.

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

EFFECTIVE COORDINATION is essential to ensure a more coherent and joined-up response, thus helping reach more people in need and quicker. As humanitarian needs continue outpacing available funding, reducing fragmentation leads to a more effective use of limited resources and stronger partnerships across and beyond the humanitarian system. This requires a concerted effort for people-centred, impartial joint assessments, enhanced integrated and multisector approaches, common targeting methods, response analysis and monitoring and evaluation. Partners are expected to demonstrate how they support effective humanitarian coordination through context-specific and flexible solutions and active engagement in country-level coordination structures and processes, Humanitarian Country Teams, clusters and inter-cluster coordination, technical working groups where relevant).

GRAND BARGAIN COMMITMENTS³: As a signatory of the Grand Bargain, DG ECHO encourages partners to develop proposals enabling the implementation of the commitments below:

- **Greater transparency:** Partners are expected to publish timely, transparent and harmonised data in a systematic manner. Partners should also ensure the quality of reporting to better capture results, enable learning and increase the efficiency of their support.
- **Reduced management costs and duplication:** Partners are strongly encouraged to reduce duplication and optimise management costs.
- **Needs assessments:** Partners are expected to explore and propose concrete ways of contributing to joint, impartial and people-centered needs assessments. Partners should adopt a context-specific approach to joint needs assessments, demonstrating how they contributed to the exercise via data collection, data sharing and joint analysis, and how assessments by local actors and affected communities contributed to the

³ [Grand Bargain Document \(agendaforhumanity.org\)](https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/)

process.

- **Multi-year funding arrangements:** Partners are expected to advance on the quality funding commitments of the Grand Bargain⁴. In this sense, in multi-year interventions (i.e. 24 months and longer), actions should be grounded in a longer-term strategy that includes contingencies and crisis modifiers for risks that may occur over the timeframe of the intervention. When managing multi-year funding projects, partners are expected to cascade the multi-year funding received to their implementing partners, including local and national actors, and to report on traceability data on multi-year and cascaded funding via FTS and/or IATI. Multi-year projects should be accompanied by robust visibility of donors' multi-year contributions throughout the whole project cycle.
- **Accountability to affected populations:** crisis-affected communities must be considered as partners in response and preparedness initiatives, not passive recipients of aid. Therefore, their voices need to be taken into account in all the decisions that affect them. Partners should regularly and systematically use beneficiary feedback mechanisms and apply course correction measures where appropriate in order to improve the quality of humanitarian response in all stages of the programming cycle.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

ALL-RISK INFORMED APPROACH

DG ECHO partners are expected to consistently apply a holistic and inclusive risk-informed programming approach: actions must be based on a comprehensive evidence-based, context specific and gender–age sensitive analysis. Such analysis looks at specific threats and hazards that populations are facing or are likely to face, avoiding generalisations. The analysis should also make use of science-based and internationally recognised models, such as the INFORM Risk index⁵. Risks should not only be analysed individually but their interacting and systemic nature must be also considered, notably in complex scenarios. Partners are expected to ensure that the all-risk analysis is a continuous process, with a view to generate updated contextual information that can inform decisions, such as adjustments and responsiveness across the entire programme cycle.

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

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

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

We expect from partners:

- *Safety, dignity and avoid doing harm* when describing the risk analysis, response analysis and logic of intervention;
- *Meaningful access* when describing the response analysis, beneficiaries' identification criteria, and logic of intervention;
- *Accountability* when describing the response analysis, beneficiaries' identification

⁴ [Grand Bargain Caucus on Quality Funding - Outcome Document - final - 11Jul22.pdf \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)

⁵ <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk>

criteria and logic of intervention, and;

- *Participation* when describing the response analysis, involvement of beneficiaries in the design of/and in the action, and logic of intervention.

For these elements to be comprehensively addressed they must be analysed and operationalised according to the different threats, vulnerabilities and barriers faced by different gender, age, disability and contextually relevant diversity groups and taking into account existing capacities and enablers⁶ of these groups to overcome the threats, vulnerabilities and barriers. Particular attention must be paid to ensure that issues of social exclusion and discrimination are not overlooked, and that the specific needs of groups most often affected by this – people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, and very marginalised social groups – are appropriately addressed in the design and targeting of interventions.

Furthermore, a protection mainstreaming KOI aims at ensuring that protection mainstreaming considerations are implemented and monitored at all stages and are operationalised as adaptations/corrective measures in programming. Partners are encouraged to use the indicator for all sectors covered by the programme.

Link to policies and guidance:

- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/resources-campaigns/policy-guidelines_en
- Protection Mainstreaming KOI Guidance: see the Protection e-learning course available through the EU Academy ECHO Community, via [DGEcho WebSite \(dgeocho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](https://dgeocho-partners-helpdesk.eu)

GENDER-AGE MAINSTREAMING (INCLUDING GENDER-AGE MARKER)

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

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

⁶ Enablers are external factors that help overcome barriers hindering persons' access and participation in society on equal basis with others.

the guidance provided in the Gender and Age Marker Toolkit.

Link to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid_en
- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf

See the Gender/Age Marker e-learning course available through the EU Academy ECHO Community, via [DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu).

DISABILITY INCLUSION

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

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

Link to policies and guidance:

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

Also please see the disability inclusion course available through the EU Academy ECHO Community, via [DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu)

PREPAREDNESS MAINSTREAMING (INCLUDING THE RESILIENCE MARKER)

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

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

DG ECHO's approach to preparedness is multi-hazard/threat - i.e. it addresses natural and biological hazards as well as human-induced threats such as conflict/violence. Furthermore, in view of the increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation, DG ECHO's approach also specifically accounts for these factors and their interaction with situations of conflict and fragility, to help at risk people and communities and systems to adapt and boost their resilience. Additionally, DG ECHO is increasingly placing an emphasis on Anticipatory Action as a means to reduce the impact of shocks on vulnerable people and their livelihoods.

Partners are expected to include preparedness and resilience-building activities in their actions, to the greatest extent possible, without compromising the humanitarian principles. Key elements are:

- Conduct an analysis of risks, hazards/threats, vulnerabilities and their causes;
- Adopt a needs-based approach that consistently integrates risk analysis, response capacities and crisis severity;
- Contribute to building local capacities through mainstreaming preparedness and risk reduction measures into DG ECHO's humanitarian actions, except in justified cases. These activities should strengthen, in a sustainable way, the in-country preparedness and response systems to act as locally and early as possible. To this end, partners are encouraged to strengthen national and local government capacities for preparedness and response alongside its community-based actions, to ensure linkages and simultaneous capacity-building at community and governmental level, whenever possible, whilst respecting the humanitarian principles. The objective is to increase the coping capacities and resilience of vulnerable people and communities at risk;
- Where feasible, design a humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) strategy (further details below);
- In specific cases, targeted preparedness interventions that strengthen response capacities and early warning systems in advance of a hazardous and/or threatening event will remain critical and should therefore be considered as specific actions⁷. It must be stressed that reliable early warning systems and the capacity to act in anticipation of a shock are preconditions for a successful Anticipatory Action.

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

The Resilience Marker⁸ also ensures a systematic attention to the environmental impact of humanitarian actions and inclusion of corresponding preparedness and resilience building measures in project proposals, implementation and assessment. Partners are expected to use the Marker for all projects.

Link to policies and guidance:

- [Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note:](#)
- See the e-learning on DG ECHO's Resilience Marker see the course available through the EU Academy ECHO Community, via [DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](#)

⁷ These actions are funded by the dedicated Disaster Preparedness Budget Line under a limited number of priorities for a five-year cycle. See Technical Annexes for the various regional HIPs for further information.

⁸ For more information on the DG ECHO Resilience Marker refer to Section 4 of the electronic Single Form (eSF) at www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/action-proposal/fill-in-the-single-form and to the Resilience Marker guidelines - https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_marker_guidance_en.pdf.

MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The gravity of environmental and climate-related challenges coupled with the dependency of affected populations on natural resources calls for a collective responsibility for humanitarian actors to reduce their programmes' environmental and carbon footprint. The greening of the humanitarian response, by introducing environmentally sustainable alternative ways of working, can directly contribute to the ambitions of the overall implementation of the European Green Deal.⁹

- Partners are expected to mitigate potential environmental impacts of an action by applying the cross-cutting minimum environmental requirements across interventions, as well as the sector-specific requirements for the relevant sector(s), as specified in DG ECHO's Environmental Guidance for humanitarian projects¹⁰.
- DG ECHO applies a mainstreaming approach, meaning that environmental impacts should be mitigated across sectors, projects and programmes and not implemented as stand-alone or parallel actions to the response activities. This means that every activity should be scrutinised and if needed, modified in order to become more environmentally sensitive, and to ensure alignment with DG ECHO's minimum environmental requirements.
- Some sectors might require more effort and research to transition, while, in other sectors, quite advanced greening strategies have been implemented already. The minimum environmental requirements reflect this accordingly. They are called "minimum" environmental requirements because DG ECHO expects these measures to be reflected in project proposals, in the applicable contexts, as a minimum, and are hence not meant to be exhaustive. They include comprehensive waste management, avoiding the depletion of natural resources and habitats, promoting sustainable methods of consumption and production, introducing clean cooking energy, and including environmental awareness in education curricula. In case of shelter and WASH sectors, projects should undergo an environmental screening.

Link to policies and guidance:

- See the courses, both virtual classroom and e-learning, on ECHO's minimum environmental requirements, available through the EU Academy ECHO Community, via academy.europa.eu/local/euacademy/pages/course/community-overview.php?title=dg-echo-humanitarian-aid-learning

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL ACTORS

Local and national actors have an indispensable role in responding to humanitarian needs. They are often the first responders to a crisis, playing a key role in delivering high-quality assistance to persons in need. DG ECHO's "Guidance on Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings" puts in place a policy framework aiming at incentivising a stronger and more visible role of local actors in humanitarian response. This is structured along five main pillars: a) recognising the value, resources, and skills of local/national actors, and supporting institutional capacities; b) establishing more equitable partnerships, c) ensuring the participation of local/national actors throughout the humanitarian response cycle, 4) strengthening the participation and leadership of local/national actors in

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en

humanitarian coordination, 5) facilitating access to localised financing models.

- 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.
- Recognising that capacity strengthening is a two-way process whereby the international actor also takes the opportunity to learn from local actors, DG ECHO encourages and will, when relevant, give priority to projects that include capacity-strengthening methodologies in which international and local actors learn from each other.
- 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.
- Partners are expected to provide an adequate share of overhead cost to their local implementing partners.
- Where appropriate, partners are expected to design proposals where the locally led action constitutes a central element and which are designed bottom up, and where the intermediary acts rather as a support to local partner structure (technical training, institutional support, peer learning) than a direct implementer.

Link to policies and guidance:

- [ECHO guidance on Promoting equitable partnerships with local responders in humanitarian settings](#)

DIGITALISATION, INNOVATION AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

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

- Partners should expand and scale up digital solutions that have been successfully rolled-out in their other actions.
- Consider use of sectoral best practice technology solutions, such as those recognised under the [European Prize for Humanitarian Innovation \(InnovAid\)](#).
- To work on interoperability of systems and data with other humanitarian organisations as part of a DG ECHO funded action¹¹.
- Programmes with a digital dimension should pay particular attention to data protection in the design and implementation, with a thorough risk assessment carried out and mitigation measures put in place, including data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) for all programmes involving the collection, storage or sharing of sensitive

¹¹ See for reference, the [Thematic Policy Document on Cash Transfers](#) and the [Donor Cash Forum Statement and Guiding Principles on Interoperability of Data Systems in Humanitarian Cash Programming](#), which set out DG ECHO's expectations for partners to incorporate work on interoperability as part of cash transfer proposals.

personal data¹².

- Innovative partnerships with the private sector that seek to promote technological innovation, technical skills and to leverage local networks are also encouraged as a means to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action, against a background of environmental sustainability.
- DG ECHO encourages partners to seek the increased involvement of private sector actors to support the financing of actions, to help access new technologies to address humanitarian challenges, and, where relevant, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Engagement of non-traditional actors in the financing or delivery of programming should be considered an asset and highlighted in the project proposal.

Link to policies and guidance:

- Support to digitalisation: DG ECHO [Digitalisation policy page](#), and [Policy Framework for Humanitarian Digitalisation](#)
- Interoperability of systems and data: Donor Cash Forum [Statement and Guiding Principles on Interoperability of Data Systems in Humanitarian Cash Programming](#)
- Data responsibility: [Guidance notes on data responsibility in humanitarian action](#) (OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data); IASC [Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action](#).
- Innovative finance: DG ECHO Pilot Initiative on Blended Finance for Humanitarian Aid: Lessons [Learned](#)

HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS (STRATEGIC SUPPLY CHAIN)

The supply chain accounts for 60-80% of humanitarian spending, from procurement to delivery in the field. It should be considered from a strategic perspective to maximise efficiency and effectiveness ultimately helping more people and saving more lives. There are many opportunities to do so – often humanitarian organisations set up parallel supply chains to respond in similar ways to the same needs without sufficient coordination, driving up prices and resulting in sub-optimal use of capacities. Better solutions and collaboration require longer term, strategic approaches, driven by the leadership, policy and prioritisation of an organisation.

Procurement represents around 65-75% of supply chain spending and should be a particular area of focus when considering how to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

As well as being cross-cutting, the humanitarian supply chain provides a concrete framework and tools into which many humanitarian priorities, such as greening and localisation can be incorporated, tracked, measured, and improved upon.

To take a more strategic approach to supply chain, identify areas for improvement, and facilitate joint working and better planning, data is essential. Digital solutions which can improve visibility and oversight of the supply chain, are strongly encouraged with a focus on interoperability of data to improve collaborative work before and during a response.

The supply chain should be also considered by partners from a strategic angle given the impact

¹² DG ECHO's [Single Form Guidelines](#), the [guidance note series on data responsibility](#) developed by the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data and [Thematic Policy Document on Cash Transfers](#) provide guidance on how to take into account data protection risks in a project proposal.

it has in many key topics in addition to efficiency of aid such as greening, localisation and digitalisation etc.. DG ECHO's vision is that practitioners work towards joint approaches such as joint procurement, common services and shared services where appropriate; logistics expertise is valued and developed at all levels of humanitarian organisations, including at management level; and that organisations share data and knowledge, and work together both on the ground and in HQ, in areas such as procurement.

- Partners should consider logistics throughout the entire project cycle, including at the project conceptualisation stage;
- Assess whether there are possibilities for joint approaches on supply chain with other humanitarian actors such as joint procurement, mutualisation of transport and/or warehouses, etc., and use these solutions where analysis shows that it is beneficial to do so;
- Analyse supply chain impact on greening, localisation, preparedness, and other key areas and take steps to integrate better practice;
- Ensure that supply chain expertise and strategic consideration is valued and developed at all levels, including at management level, and is mainstreamed throughout organisational thinking and activities;
- Work with other humanitarian actors to put the necessary tools, structures and knowledge in place to maximise collaboration and minimise duplication;
- Test new technologies, including digital technologies, to support delivery of aid and share information about supply chains, and work together as a community to ensure data interoperability and optimal use of data.

Link to policies and guidance:

- DG ECHO Humanitarian Logistics Policy: Operational Guidance for Partners (January 2022).¹³

HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

The objective of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) approach is to link urgent relief and longer-term solutions, to reduce needs and address the root causes of conflicts and crises, while upholding the humanitarian principles. DG ECHO contributes to longer-term strategies to build the capacity and resilience of vulnerable people and address underlying vulnerabilities.

Humanitarian partners have an important role in sharing expertise and knowledge with development actors in fragile and conflict contexts to trigger investments in people-centred services without doing harm, and in partnership with different actors. The appropriate nexus approach to be adopted differs by context, requiring thorough analysis and context-specific objectives. Partners are encouraged to provide an analysis of nexus opportunities such as partnerships/synergies with other programmes and actors, enhanced dialogue/advocacy opportunities, and coordination mechanisms. DG ECHO's Resilience Marker will contribute to a systematic assessment of project proposals in this regard (see above).¹⁴

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/humanitarian_logistics_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf

¹⁴ See section 'Risk-informed preparedness – including the Resilience Marker' above.

- Whenever feasible, partners are expected to apply a HDP nexus lens throughout the whole project cycle, in full respect of humanitarian principles. In practice, this should include:
 - sharing information and building evidence to strengthen analyses, preparedness and response;
 - participating in needs assessments (including post-crisis) to help the systematic integration of preparedness, risk and vulnerability concerns into development processes;
 - if appropriate, being actively involved in joint context and risk analyses with development and peace actors;
 - engaging in a ‘people-centred’ dialogue with a view to addressing risks and vulnerability, in order to decrease humanitarian needs over time;
 - pilot and advocate for approaches aimed at providing continuity of access to quality services by crisis-affected people (continuity of service) in different contexts, without doing harm;
 - ensuring a conflict-sensitive approach throughout the project cycle.
 - when appropriate, use and advocate for collective outcomes as a strategic tool to agree with development and peace actors on results that will be jointly achieved.
 - Foster innovative approaches to adapt to evolving contexts, such as supporting crisis modifiers as a tool for risk management.
- Without compromising the humanitarian principles, partners should consider if it is appropriate to link humanitarian assistance to existing national social protection systems, with a view to make them more inclusive and shock responsive. When possible, use the humanitarian response to trigger the development of humanitarian social safety nets.

Link to policies and guidance:

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

CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

The Commission promotes humanitarian civil-military coordination (UN-CMCoord) in emergencies. Coordination and **clear distinction between civilian and military actors** are necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

Dialogue between civilian/humanitarian and military actors is crucial, resulting in various forms of coordination. Internationally agreed guidelines facilitate this interaction, ensuring mutual understanding and respect of each other's mandate.

Partners are encouraged to:

- Reinforce their capacities on civil-military coordination, notably through training.
- Identify opportunities for exercising this coordination (e.g. logistics, communication).

Link to policies and guidance:

- o EU Concept on Effective Civil-Military Coordination in Support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5536-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

ASSISTANCE MODALITIES AND APPROACHES

BASIC NEEDS APPROACH (BNA)

DG ECHO prioritises an integrated cross-sectoral approach to the design of interventions that aims to meet or contribute to the basic needs¹⁵ of affected populations.

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

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

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

As part of the Basic Needs Approach (BNA), DG ECHO prioritises multipurpose cash (MPC) to meet basic needs, complemented by other modalities and timely referrals to meet specific sectoral outcomes.

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

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

CASH TRANSFERS

DG ECHO endeavours to promote the use of cash transfers, when appropriate, in the interest of the affected populations, of cost-efficiency and of effectiveness. This is in line with the EU's Grand Bargain commitment to deliver 35% of its humanitarian aid through cash transfers globally. When designed appropriately, cash transfers can confer choice and a sense of dignity, and empower people to tailor the assistance to meet their own priorities through transfers designed to meet multiple needs.

When cash is used to meet sector-specific objectives, DG ECHO expects a clear justification on the use of conditional cash transfers and/or of vouchers.

- Partners should operationalise the HDP nexus: as far as the context allows, DG ECHO-funded humanitarian cash should link, preferably at the outset, to a systems approach which strengthens local capacity and links to durable solutions. Partners will 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).
- Target the most vulnerable: DG ECHO supports cash assistance that targets the most vulnerable people based on needs alone. Targeting criteria for DG ECHO-funded cash assistance should include socio-economic vulnerability, and the protection concerns of individuals and groups.
- Adequate, equitable and timely: humanitarian cash assistance must be provided in a way that does not increase risks, and that upholds the safety, participation of and accountability to affected communities and individuals. It should be sufficient to cover or contribute to recurrent basic needs or other sector-specific needs and should be complemented by other relevant sectoral interventions. Transfers should seek to be timely and anticipatory where possible in order to meet needs with optimal efficiency and effectiveness. DG ECHO systematically assesses the cost-efficiency of different modalities, using the Total Cost to Transfer Ratio (TCTR), alongside the analysis of effectiveness.
- Provide value for money: better harmonisation of tools and approaches for cash assistance is a key driver of efficiency and effectiveness gains. DG ECHO therefore promotes a common programming approach. DG ECHO expects that the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and Transfer Values (TV) as well as frequency and duration of transfers are defined under the coordination of the Cash Working Group (CWG) for harmonised response.
- Accountable: DG ECHO prioritises cash programmes that put people at the centre, and that seek, share and act upon their feedback. DG ECHO cash programmes should also minimise financial risk, whilst safeguarding beneficiary data. In contexts of high inflation and currency depreciation, partners (under the leadership of Cash Working Groups) should monitor markets and define inflation and currency-related triggers; design and adapt programmes and budgets from the outset to anticipate inflation and depreciation.
- Measurable: The sectoral and multisectoral outcomes of cash programmes should be monitored in a consistent way, using the relevant DG ECHO KOIs and KRIs. Systematic monitoring of outputs, through participatory process monitoring, should allow for timely adaptation of programmes, including responding to changes in

inflation and the depreciation of currencies, as well as to potential risks that might arise. In line with the principle of segregation of duties DG ECHO encourages partners to establish third-party arrangements for monitoring and evaluation (MEAL) activities.

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

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

Links to policies and guidance:

- [DG ECHO thematic policy on cash transfers](#) (March 2022)
- Note To Echo Partners Implementing Humanitarian Aid Actions In Countries Where The Use Of Money Transfer Agents Is Needed (2023) <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/download/referencedocumentfile/293>

SPECIFIC SECTOR POLICIES

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

FOOD ASSISTANCE

The main objective of the EU's humanitarian food assistance (HFA) is to save and preserve life, and to increase resilience for populations facing food crises, or recovering from them. It intends to ensure the availability of, access to, and consumption of safe and nutritious food for the hungriest and most vulnerable people in anticipation of, during and in the aftermath of humanitarian crises. HFA also aims to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of a crisis-affected population, to prevent or reverse negative coping mechanisms that could engender harmful consequences for their livelihood base, their food-security and nutritional status.

- All humanitarian food assistance interventions should be preceded by a detailed needs assessment / causal analysis and designed accordingly.
- Food assistance should be targeted where it is more urgently needed. Targeting should be based on the needs of beneficiaries and can be done through to a variety of methodologies, according to the context. A balance needs to be struck between speed, ease and practicality on one side, and effectiveness in reducing inclusion and exclusion errors on the other, with targeting criteria that are optimally sensitive, specific, and feasible. The partners should involve beneficiary communities in identifying the criteria by which food assistance can be most effectively targeted, wherever possible.
- Partners are expected to design responses to tackle acute food insecurity through the apt utilization of a diverse array of activities and resources, tailored to the unique

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

characteristics of each context.

- Nutritional perspectives should be incorporated into HFA needs assessments and responses, paying particular attention to nutritional needs of specific groups.
- Whenever possible, interventions should consider the possibility to take action in anticipation of foreseeable shocks, to reduce their potential impact. This can be done through the inclusion of flexible crisis modifiers allowing anticipatory actions.
- Emergency livelihood activities should be considered as a component of the response when they are prompted by emergency needs, meet humanitarian objectives, and support strategies for self-reliance and livelihood protection for the most vulnerable. The choice of the most appropriate intervention and transfer instrument (e.g. cash based or in-kind) must be context-specific and evidence-based, and be regularly reviewed. DG ECHO prioritises multipurpose cash (MPC) to meet basic needs. When food aid is deemed to be the most appropriate tool, local purchase or, secondarily, regional food purchases, are favoured.
- Result-oriented monitoring, evaluation and reporting exercises will be analysed by the Commission and its partners, alongside more qualitative narrative reporting, not only to appraise the performance and outcome of a given intervention, but also to learn lessons which will be fed into the design, programming decisions and implementation of future operations.
- Interventions should be coordinated with other humanitarian actors, and complementary with relevant development programmes. Participation in nexus platforms and joint assessments related to food security is strongly encouraged.

Links to policies and guidance:

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

NUTRITION

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

Specifically, in emergency situations Commission interventions strives to:

- Reduce levels of high-risk moderate and severe acute undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies, to below-emergency rates, through timely, efficient and effective humanitarian response;
- Prevent significant and life-threatening deterioration of nutritional status by ensuring access by crisis-affected populations to adequate, safe and nutritious food, through food and non-food responses depending on the context;
- Reduce the specific vulnerability of infants and young children in crises through the promotion of appropriate childcare, integration into the national or local health-systems, with special emphasis on infant and young child feeding practices;
- Reduce specific vulnerability of pregnant and lactating women in crises through

appropriate support of maternal nutrition;

- Address the threats to the nutritional status of people affected by crises from an inadequate public health environment, by securing access to appropriate health care, safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene inputs;
- Promote the implementation of the new WHO guidelines on wasting and assist the community level in all aspects allowing it to implement it in a satisfactory manner.

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

Nutrition interventions need to:

- Treat high-risk moderate and acute malnutrition based on needs assessment of the target population and at individual level.
- Respond to the needs of the individuals most vulnerable to undernutrition - pregnant and lactating women, children under 5; elderly and chronically ill.
- In acute emergencies, priority should be given to severe acute malnutrition, which is associated with a higher risk of mortality and morbidity.
- Use methods and tools which have demonstrated their efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- Respond to well-defined humanitarian risks as well as immediate emergency needs.
- Promote a multi-sector and whenever possible a multi-partner approach, which is essential to tackle the causes of undernutrition.
- Promote the implementation of the 2023 WHO Guidance on wasting and an enabling environment at national, regional and community level.
- Strengthen the community level and the integration of nutrition into the primary healthcare in order to ensure the sustainability of the action.
- Set up or use a trustworthy and interoperable tracking systems for the aid (nutrition supplements, food, medicines etc.) allowing for an effective follow-up of stocks and the deliveries. Promote a joint humanitarian and development approach to help build resilience.

Links to policies and guidance:

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

HEALTH

The main objective of the EU's humanitarian assistance in the field of health is to limit excess preventable mortality, reduce morbidity and permanent disability, as well as to prevent and alleviate suffering during humanitarian crises.

Often the rapid onset of violence and emergencies, the deterioration of pre-existing

humanitarian crises, the effects of climate change, forced displacement and epidemic outbreaks add another layer of complexity to the already fragile health systems, resulting in a difficult access to basic healthcare for vulnerable populations. Such long-standing gaps in public health have highlighted the need to advance more on preparedness, prevention and response to health emergencies, including pandemics, as well as to ensure continuity of care through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach and local capacity building efforts.

According to the DG ECHO Health Policy Guidelines, the importance of incorporating a people-centred and cross-sectoral approach in addressing health needs should consider the most efficient horizontal deliver of quality health assistance, in respect of human dignity.

- Partners should conduct a quantitative health needs assessment as soon as possible and repeated periodically to adapt to any changes in the scale and nature of the crisis; the health assessment should not only guide health/medical assistance but help guide the multi-sectoral assistance (e.g. nutrition, WASH, protection, gender).
- Health and multi-sectoral interventions that are contributing to overall health by tackling the (social, economic, environmental...) determinants of health should be based on scientific evidence of their effectiveness, in order to be as timely and impactful as possible.
- Quality health assistance should be accessible to those most in need, including the last-mile delivery of care (e.g. vaccination), as well as mental health and psychosocial support, and sexual and reproductive healthcare. Factors such as feasibility, access, costs, reduction of barriers should be taken into account for the choice and proper delivery of interventions, as well as sustainable exit strategies at the end of the project implementation.
- Support to establishing and/or strengthening a disrupted health system are pertinent actions, with the aim of integrating healthcare provision horizontally into existing structures and mechanisms. The establishment of parallel or vertical healthcare provision is to be avoided generally, but possible depending on circumstances specific to the disease outbreak, emergency or crisis in question.
- Quality health services, adapted to the specific needs of a crisis situation, must be accessible to all crisis-affected individuals and segments of population without discrimination due to age, gender, sex, ethnicity etc. Access to health care is a public good and universal human right. All obstacles to accessibility (such as geographic, economic, gender-based and socio-cultural) should be addressed to the extent possible/feasible, in cooperation with other actors and local authorities.
- Health services should comply with recognised international quality standards such as those endorsed and promoted by WHO, the Global Health Cluster, IASC Reference Group, the Sphere Project, or equivalent norms, including standards on quality assurance of medical products.
- All necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian and health personnel, vehicles and infrastructure need to be implemented, in line with IHL.
- Considering that the risk and frequency of disease outbreaks is higher in humanitarian settings, early warning and response systems should be assessed for performance and supported.

Links to policies and guidance:

https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/health_en

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

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

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

Links to policies and guidance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/WASH_policy_doc_en.pdf
- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/disaster-preparedness_en
- <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/elearning-greening-humanitarian-aid#/>

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

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

- S&S needs assessment and response analysis should describe and consider the needs of the affected population including its physical needs (i.e. climate/environmental exposure, injuries, settlement conditions), as well as psychological, protection or specific vulnerabilities related needs. Information provided typically include the main S&S damages/gaps and their causes, prevalent local/imported S&S typologies, main S&S response actors and related coverage, risk and vulnerability analysis of existing shelter practice/stock, analysis of S&S constraints/opportunities (i.e. subsidies/co-funding, skills, markets, supply chain, timelines).
- S&S actions should address people's needs holistically, rather than simply aim to deliver a product, NFI or cash. As such, S&S responses should consider a suitable combination of specific individual, collective and/or host S&S solutions, to be delivered through a range of implementation modalities including technical support (planning and settlement expertise), financial support (individual/Household (HH) level cash), material support (shelter items and construction materials) and contracted works and /or product.
- S&S intervention strategies must always be settlement-based and people-centered, context-specific, displacement-sensitive, environmentally friendly and risk-informed, aiming to build and settle back safer, where relevant.
- S&S solutions/activities should promote durability with credible exit/nexus strategies, particularly in regions facing protracted humanitarian crises.
- Actions aiming to achieve S&S outcomes/outputs should include a stand-alone S&S result(s) and be measured against ECHO's S&S KOI/KRI. Expected S&S outputs should be supported by proper documentation and monitoring of required inputs, in terms of material/equipment (i.e. designs, kits contents/specifications, materials, bills of quantities) and human resources. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) alone is usually insufficient monitoring tool to assert the achievement of S&S outcomes. This also applies to the mobilization of pre-positioned EHRC S&S kits/items.
- Interventions should focus primarily on enabling and assisting household self-recovery and support community coping mechanisms (partners can provide support but they must avoid anything best undertaken by crisis affected populations themselves); S&S recovery is a continuous process, rather than a set of isolated and finite actions.

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

Links to policies and guidance:

- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/shelter_and_settlement_guidelines.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/shelter_and_settlement_guidelines.pdf
- https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/disaster-preparedness_en

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

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

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

- EiE actions should focus on children and adolescents (up to eighteen years) most in need, based on a strong needs and risk analysis.
- In line with DG ECHO policy framework, actions should focus EiE support on the levels of education that are covered by states' commitments to free and compulsory basic education - usually primary, lower and upper secondary levels of education.
- Priority will be given to funding projects which target at least 50 % girls, unless there is a context-based justification for different targeting.
- Projects should have a duration of at least two years and cover full academic year(s), unless there is a needs- or context-based justification for a shorter duration.
- All EiE actions are expected to be designed and implemented with due regard to the INEE (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies) and IASC Minimum Standards¹⁸ to the principles of conflict sensitive education.
- For cash in education projects, an exit strategy must be foreseen, and the cash transfers need to be accompanied by proactive measures to ensure sustainability and referral of

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

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

beneficiary families to livelihood solutions.

- EiE responses may include non-formal and formal education to prevent and reduce disruptions in education, to develop learners’ skills and competences, to address learning gaps and losses, to provide for psychosocial support, well-being and protection from violence (for teachers and students), and allow certification, accreditation, and recognition, and to support authorities to be better prepared to resume education services during or after a crisis.
- EiE actions should promote an integrated approach with relevant sectors to ensure holistic responses to children’s needs (whole child approach) while also leading to explicit education outcomes. Child protection must be considered as a core component of the EiE response, and all actions must ensure that child safeguarding mechanisms are in place.
- EiE actions should promote child and community participation, innovative solutions to improve enrolment and retention, and alignment across the HDP nexus.
- EiE actions should support and promote proactive and rapid response mechanisms¹⁹, including by humanitarian organisations and relevant authorities, to reach children during emergencies and crises and aim to return them to learning within three months.
- In conflict-affected contexts, advocate for the end to attacks on education and support initiatives and projects that seek to protect education from attack and provide safe learning spaces with psychosocial support for children.

Links to policies and guidance:

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

PROTECTION

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

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

- The design and targeting of all interventions should be based on a comprehensive risk analysis. The analysis should bring out external and internal threats, including freedom of movement restrictions, as well as the coping strategies adopted to counteract these threats. It should take into account the protection concerns of individuals and groups based on:
 - the risk of exposure to harm, exploitation, harassment, deprivation and abuse, in relation to identified threats;
 - the inability to meet basic needs;

¹⁹ <https://www.educationcluster.net/node/2/strengthening-rapid-education-response-toolkit>

- limited access to basic services and livelihood or opportunities to generate income;
 - the ability of the person or population to cope with the consequences of this harm; and
 - due consideration for individuals with specific needs.
- Legal aid may be supported, this includes information, legal advice/counselling, representation, informal dispute resolution and other forms of legal assistance. Protection of individuals may include protection case management to non- child protection and SGBV cases, support to tracing and family reunification and support to persons in detention. Finally, actions to enhance protection systems and capacities such as protection monitoring, information management and capacity building can also be supported.
 - SGBV prevention and response interventions should be built upon solid knowledge of the context of intervention. As part of the comprehensive risk analysis, all humanitarian interventions funded by DG ECHO must take into consideration any risk of sexual and gender-based violence and should develop and implement appropriate strategies to actively prevent such risks. Respect of ethical and safety considerations regarding the collection, storage and sharing of data must be demonstrated. Partners are expected to prioritise the establishment of quality, comprehensive and safe SGBV response services accessible to all from the onset of emergencies, ensuring that survivors' wishes, safety and dignity remain at the centre of the response.
 - Child protection interventions will be supported both as standalone programmes, as well as integrated into other sectors. Individual case management and the provision of specialised services such as family tracing and reunification (FTR) for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), alternative care and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) might be supported. Additionally, support to programmes focusing on children in armed conflict might be considered, in line with the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict. All child protection activities should be grounded in a thorough risk analysis and compliant with international guidance (e.g. Child Protection Minimum Standards²⁰).
 - Humanitarian Mine Action interventions such as non-technical surveys, marking and clearance (when feasible) might be supported with a view to ensuring access to life-saving and basic services, and particularly when longer-term development and recovery funding is not available. Explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance may also be supported. Any victim assistance should be fully aligned to internally agreed upon standards for victim assistance and implemented in an integrated manner (e.g. with health, education in emergencies, and livelihoods).
 - Partners should consider the need for housing, land and property (HLP) interventions with a particular focus on ensuring security of tenure and prevention of forced evictions in displacement situations or to prevent forced displacement when forced evictions are used as a deliberate tool. HLP restitutions for durable solutions may also be supported. HLP interventions should always be implemented in an integrated approach with the S&S sector and when relevant the livelihoods interventions.
 - Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) should be considered an integral

²⁰ Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action. Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) (2012).

part of the protection interventions, implemented with strong linkages to the other sectoral areas, particularly Health. Protection actions should contribute to improving and making access to MHPSS services more equitable to all population groups, aiming at meeting the needs of at-risk groups and positively impact on the well-being of affected individuals, families and communities.

- In order to address protection issues fully, it is also necessary to consider the relevance and feasibility of advocacy interventions aimed at stopping the violations by perpetrators and/or convincing the duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibilities. Opportunities for more effective advocacy should also be sought in the framework of the HDP nexus approach.
- The use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as a stand-alone intervention does not constitute Cash for Protection (C4P) and the provision of cash alone without other protection specialised services should not be pursued or defined as a protection activity. The selection of C4P recipients should be based on an individual protection assessment. Categorical targeting is not considered appropriate, and an individual assessment of the specific risk(s), vulnerabilities and capacities should be ensured. When multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) actors are available in the area of intervention, coordination should be ensured and a referral system should be established so economic drivers can be addressed complementarily to protection risks.
- The use of categorical targeting in preventive interventions requires further research to determine whether it constitutes a relevant approach to prevent or mitigate protection risks.

Link to policies and guidance:

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

OTHER ISSUES

DG ECHO VISIBILITY

Partners shall ensure full compliance with visibility requirements and acknowledge the funding role of and partnership with the EU, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.²¹

Partners are obliged to fulfil their contractual obligation regarding visibility through:

- visibility in the field, including prominent display of the EU humanitarian aid visual identity on EU-funded relief items and equipment. Only when justified by the nature of the action (e.g. partners who do not provide any relief items), or when the communication, dissemination or visibility obligations would harm the safety and security of the people involved in the action, DG ECHO allows the partners to forego visibility activities in the field related to the implementation of the action. To this end, partners must provide the justification for non-implementing such activities; in case a derogation for security reasons is granted, the partner is required to propose alternative arrangements for communicating the funding of the EU.
- structured and proactive communication geared towards the EU audiences at different stages of the project with broad dissemination (press releases, social media, webpages, blogs, media interviews or articles about the project) with clear reference to the EU support received.

For these standard visibility activities partners can allocate a budget of up to 1% of the ECHO funding, with no ceiling.

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

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

Further explanation of visibility requirements and reporting as well as best practices and examples can be consulted on the dedicated DG ECHO visibility page.²²

²¹ The full text of relevant documents, such as the Model Grant Agreement and the Single Form, will be available at a later stage.

²² <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/reference-documents-visibility>