

Comprehensive evaluation of the European Commission's humanitarian aid, 2012-2016

Consultation strategy

A1.1 Introduction and context

The Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) has appointed ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its humanitarian actions during the period 2012-2016. The overall objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

- To assess the relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability/connectedness of ECHO's humanitarian aid interventions;
- To reflect upon future approaches to ECHO's humanitarian actions while taking account of lessons learned from past experiences, recent global developments, such as the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the Grand Bargain (GB) and the evolving humanitarian aid architecture (e.g. emergence of new actors, new technologies, shift away from a focus on in-kind assistance towards greater reliance on markets and market-based programming etc.).

In line with the Better Regulation Toolkit¹ and the Better Regulation Guidelines², a formal, continuous and wide ranging stakeholder consultation is envisaged to support this evaluation. This document details the proposed consultation strategy for this evaluation. Specifically, it sets out the objectives and scope of the consultation; maps key stakeholders; and outlines the methods and tools that will be used to reach out to the different groups of stakeholders and collect their feedback.

The consultation strategy is designed to be:

- *Comprehensive and inclusive*- giving all stakeholders the opportunity to express their views, while making a special effort to consult those who are most affected by ECHO's interventions and whose voices are not always heard. An open public consultation would therefore, be complemented with more targeted consultations with specific stakeholder groups;
- *Balanced* - ensuring that the coverage of specific stakeholders within a particular group is balanced and the evaluation is not defaulting to the 'usual suspects';
- *Timely* – organising and sequencing the consultation activities in a manner that they provide timely inputs to the evaluation process;
- *Tailored* – developing tailored, proportionate and focussed consultation tools for the different stakeholder groups reflecting their varying levels of familiarity with ECHO's humanitarian actions and the wider humanitarian context.

A1.2 Objectives and scope of stakeholder consultations

The objective of the stakeholder consultation process is to collect information, ideas, opinions and insights from a wide range of stakeholders to feed into the evaluation process.

The stakeholder consultations will cover the following topics:

- The **relevance** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities to evolving humanitarian needs and context;

¹ European Commission. (2015). Better Regulation Toolbox. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smartregulation/guidelines/toc_tool_en.htm

² European Commission. (2015). Better Regulation Guidelines (SWD(2015) 111 final). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd_br_guidelines_en.pdf

- The **coherence** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities (both in terms of design and implementation) with globally accepted humanitarian principles and standards as well as the activities of other actors at EU, Member State and international level;
- The **EU added value** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities compared to activities implemented by other humanitarian actors (including bilateral humanitarian aid provided by EU Member States);
- The **effectiveness** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities in achieving or contributing to ECHO's overarching objectives;
- The **efficiency** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities;
- The **sustainability** of ECHO's humanitarian aid activities and the extent to which they were successful in linking relief, rehabilitation and development; and
- The implications of the changing humanitarian aid context and landscape for ECHO's humanitarian aid actions and operational framework, as well as its role in the global humanitarian system.
- As indicated previously, the topics and consultation tools will be tailored for each stakeholder group according to their roles – see section A1.3 below.

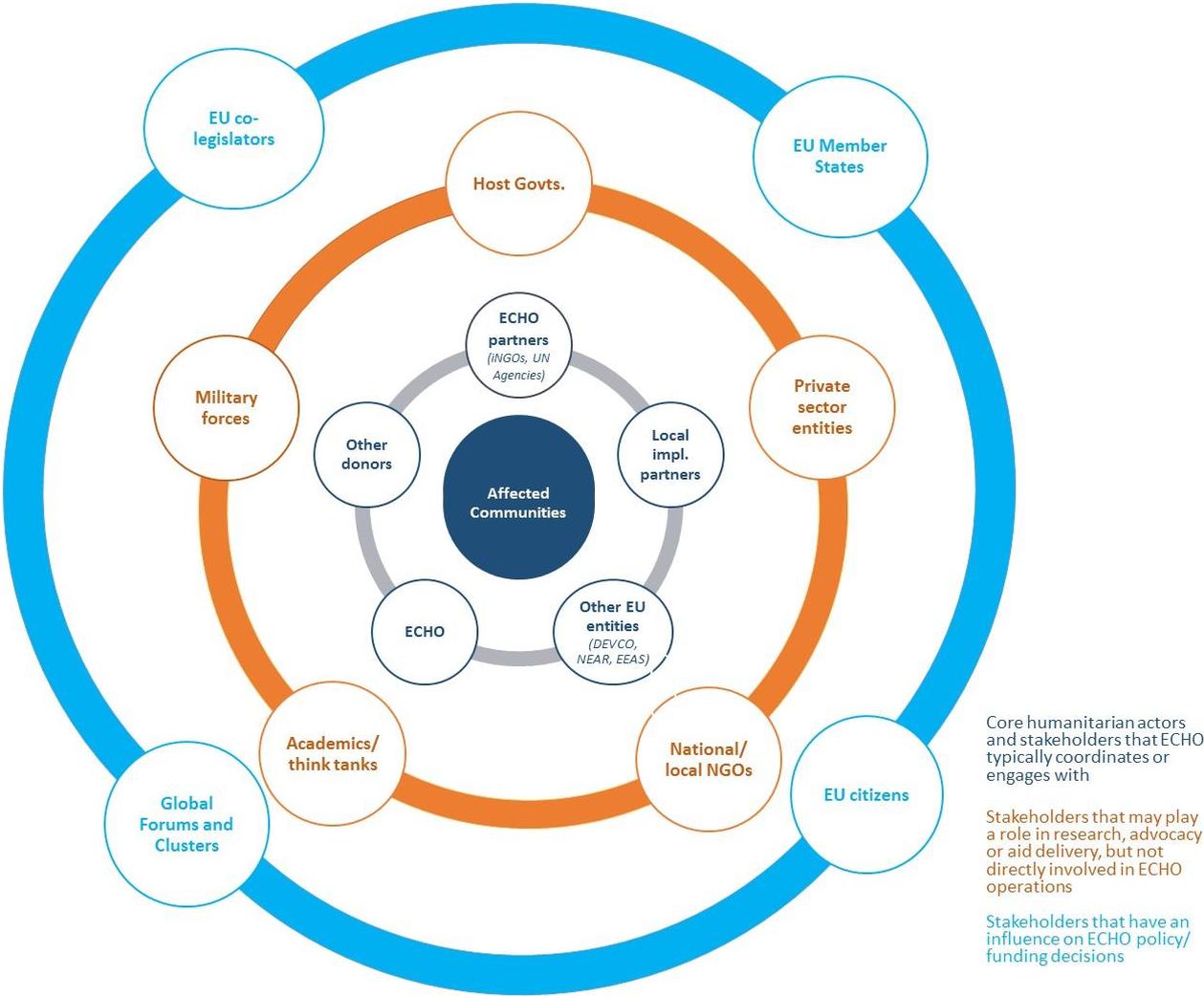
A1.3 Stakeholder mapping

The figure below provides an overview of all relevant stakeholder groups, identified through independent desk research and exchanges with ECHO. As illustrated in Figure A1.1, beneficiaries or communities affected by humanitarian crises are at the centre of ECHO's actions. Other relevant stakeholders can broadly be categorised as follows:

- Core humanitarian actors and stakeholders that ECHO typically coordinates or engages with, at an operational level, in the delivery of its humanitarian aid;
- Stakeholders that may play a role in research, advocacy or aid delivery, but are not directly involved in ECHO operations. Some of these groups may be involved in the delivery of ECHO funded actions as local implementation partners in which case they would fall under the first category of stakeholders;
- Stakeholders that have an influence on ECHO policy choices and/or funding decisions.

Each of the above categories of stakeholders is described in the text that follows.

Figure A1.1 ECHO’s humanitarian aid actions – stakeholder mapping



Source: ICF based on Alnap, 2015. *The State of the Humanitarian System*. Available at: <http://www.alnap.org/resource/21036.aspx> [3 May 2017].

A1.3.2 Core humanitarian actors and stakeholders

This stakeholder category include the following groups:

- **ECHO staff:** ECHO staff are a main stakeholder group as they develop, implement and monitor ECHO policies and associated interventions. The consultation will include relevant staff at HQ and field level. At HQ level, the consultation will target officials responsible for policy development and annual strategic planning, as well as geographic teams. The latter are responsible for informing regional/ country level priorities and response based on needs assessment, the development of specific HIPs, and the selection and monitoring of ECHO funded actions. Officers responsible for horizontal activities such as advocacy, protection mainstreaming, gender-age marker etc. will also be consulted. Finally, we will consult ECHO field staff. The field officers are responsible for monitoring the humanitarian situation on the ground; providing technical advice to HQ on needs assessment, assessment of single forms, monitoring of projects and lessons learned at the end of each project; contributing to policy development; representing ECHO in relevant humanitarian aid clusters/forums; and advocating with relevant stakeholders at local/regional/global level.

- **Other relevant EU entities:** these include (a) DG DEVCO - responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world; (b) DG NEAR – responsible, inter alia, for implementing assistance actions in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood; (c) EU delegations (EEAS) - the 139 Delegations play a vital role in representing the EU and its citizens around the globe and building networks and partnerships. These services will be consulted to determine the extent to which there is a joined up approach in the planning and delivery of the EU's humanitarian and development aid.
- **Other donors:** this group includes other humanitarian donors and development actors such as (a) multilateral donors (e.g. the World Bank); (b) regional intergovernmental organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) etc.; and (c) bilateral donors (e.g. USAID, DFID, JICA, NORAD etc.). This group of stakeholders will be consulted to determine coordination on the ground, the link between humanitarian and development funding, and the added value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding and actions.
- **ECHO partners:** ECHO delivers its humanitarian aid through humanitarian organisations with which DG ECHO enters into a partnership. A distinction is made between the following four groups:
 - United Nations relief agencies: appointed through financial and administrative framework agreement (FAFA)³;
 - Members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement;
 - International Organisations (IOs)⁴; and
 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)⁵.

These partners will be consulted to collect their views on ECHO's approach to humanitarian aid funding, partners' approach to needs assessment and selection of local implementation partners, lessons learned from past experience, success factors, gaps and areas for improvement, and the implications of new developments in the humanitarian space.

- **Local implementation partners:** ECHO partners may entrust the delivery of certain activities /parts of ECHO funded actions on a non-profit basis to one or several implementing partners, especially where local support and cooperation is deemed necessary for the successful implementation of an ECHO funded action. As such, local implementation partners are not directly funded by ECHO, but can nevertheless play an important role in the implementation of ECHO funded actions. They will be consulted through an online survey aiming to collect evidence on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, EU added value and sustainability of the projects funded under ECHO humanitarian aid activities.

A1.3.3 Stakeholders not directly involved in ECHO operations

- **Host governments/ authorities in affected countries:** host government agencies are important stakeholders in the humanitarian system, but their involvement may vary greatly, depending on their capacity to play a leading, coordinating and/or a supporting role in the delivery of aid and, more importantly in conflicts, their willingness and ability to play a role, as they could in the most extreme cases be the *de facto* 'cause' of the crisis. There has been growing emphasis within the global humanitarian system on the need to increase engagement with host governments to make aid more effective. ECHO does not fund State actors, but supports capacity building and coordinates delivery of its aid with them. National authorities/ agencies can also be implementing partners in ECHO funded actions. Under this category, we will consult select host government authorities who were not involved in the delivery of ECHO funded actions as implementing partners. The consultation will focus on aspects such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness and added value of ECHO's humanitarian actions from their perspectives. The consultations will also

³ http://eu-unfafa.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/reference_documents/fafa/start

⁴ http://eu-iofpa.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/reference_documents/start

⁵ http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/partnership/fpa_ngo_and_annexes/start

collect information on the current/ expected humanitarian needs of the countries concerned, the challenges of delivering humanitarian aid and the potential for improving ECHO's response.

- **Military forces and private sector entities** often play critical roles in humanitarian response as well. In some emergencies they may work parallel to, or in coordination with, the actors of the humanitarian system, but humanitarian action is not their core function. Their participation is usually determined by factors such as the geographic location of the crisis, their expertise etc. and they generally have different approaches and goals⁶. A significant development in recent years has been that the private sector is getting increasingly engaged in humanitarian contexts in ways that go beyond traditional forms of cooperation such as procurement or philanthropy. For example, the growing role of MasterCard in facilitating secure and efficient payments to displaced persons in Turkey, Lebanon or Greece; Google's person finder system developed by Google volunteer engineers in response to the Haiti earthquake; a coalition of more than 48 companies came together as the Ebola Private Sector Mobilisation Group⁷ donating funding, personnel, equipment, building infrastructure, as well as providing expertise in construction, logistics, and distribution services. Consultation with these stakeholder groups, will seek to explore how ECHO could engage with them while retaining its independent character.
- **Academics, think tanks and Civil Society Organisations:** these organisations play an important role in undertaking complementary functions such as research and advocacy. Moreover, such organisations also often play a critical role in scrutinising or informing humanitarian responses and holding the various actors to account. Depending on their area of interest and expertise, specific stakeholders within this group will be consulted to collect their views on topics such as "what works" and latest developments in humanitarian aid delivery, trends with respect to market-based programming or private sector involvement in humanitarian aid etc.

A1.3.4 Stakeholders that have an influence on ECHO policy/ funding decisions

- **EU co-legislators:** the European Council together with the European Parliament have a final say on ECHO's policy and funding for humanitarian aid. Representatives of the two institutions will be consulted to get their views on what they see as priorities for EU action going forward.
- **EU Member States:** aside from providing humanitarian aid on a bilateral basis (mainly to countries that are of political or strategic interest to a particular Member State), Member States contribute to the EU budget and thus, have a stake in ECHO's humanitarian action. It would therefore, be important to consult Member States on the added value of ECHO support over and above the humanitarian aid that they might be providing.
- **EU citizens:** their interest in ECHO's humanitarian action stems from a general concern to see that the use of tax payers' money reflects their priorities and represents value for money, to have stability in neighbouring countries as well as countries which might be a source of refugee inflows), and to have good relationships with the rest of the world. While EU citizens may not be familiar with the detailed or specific aspects of ECHO's interventions, it is nevertheless important to explore their perceptions and understand what issues are important to them with respect to ECHO's humanitarian actions.
- **Global forums and clusters:** finally, there are several global humanitarian clusters and forums that play a key role in advocacy, capacity building, coordination, standard setting and knowledge sharing. Not only is ECHO's approach to humanitarian intervention influenced by the work of these forums and clusters, but ECHO also plays a key role in influencing global policies and practice. Consultations with these stakeholders will, *inter alia*, seek to collect their views on the role, influence and added value of ECHO in the global humanitarian system.

Table A1.1 maps the above stakeholder groups against the following criteria:

- **Interest:** indicates the degree of interest or concern a stakeholder has in ECHO's humanitarian actions;

⁶ ALNAP (2015) The State of the Humanitarian System. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI

⁷ <https://www.epsmg.com/>

- **Influence:** indicates how much influence the stakeholder directly exercises over ECHO's policy and funding, and to what degree they can help achieve, or block, the desired change;
- **Impact:** to what degree they are likely to be affected by ECHO's interventions;
- **Awareness:** indicates the extent to which they might be aware and informed of ECHO's interventions;
- **Accessibility:** indicates the extent to which the stakeholder would be accessible for the evaluation.

This mapping informs our choice of consultation methods and tools that would be used for each stakeholder group (see section A1.4).

Table A1.1 Mapping of stakeholders' interest, influence, impact, awareness and accessibility

Category	Stakeholder group	Interest	Influence	Impact	Awareness	Accessibility	Overall stake
Core humanitarian actors and stakeholders	Beneficiaries/ affected communities	High	Medium	High	High	Low	High
	ECHO	High	High	Low	High	High	High
	Other EU entities	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Other donors	Medium to high	Low	Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Low
	ECHO partners	High	Low	Medium	High	High	High
	Local implementing partners	High	None	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Stakeholders not directly involved in ECHO operations	Host governments	High	None- ECHO is independent	None	Low to Medium depending on country context	Low to Medium depending on country context	Low to Medium
	Academics/ think tanks/ CSOs	Low	None	None	Low	Low	Low
	National/ local NGOs	Low	None	None	Low	Low	Low
	Private sector entities	Low	None	None	Low	Low	Low
	Military forces	Low	None	None	Low	Low	Low
Stakeholders that have an influence on ECHO policy/ funding decisions	European Council	High	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	European Parliament	High	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	EU Member States	Medium to High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium to High
	EU Citizens	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	Global forums and clusters	High	High – through policy, principles and standard setting	Low	Medium	High	High

A1.4 Methods and tools

A range of methods and tools will be used to ensure a comprehensive and well-balanced consultation process. Table A1.2 provides an overview of the methods that will be used to consult with each stakeholder group. The choice of specific methods and tools is based on a consideration of the following factors: the size and diversity of the stakeholder group, the nature of information we expect to collect from them and the parameters mapped in Table A1.1. Each consultation method is briefly summarised in the sub-sections that follow.

Table A1.2 Overview of methods that will be used to consult with the different stakeholders group

	Online surveys	Semi-structured interviews	OPC	Fieldwork workshop	Fieldwork interviews, focus groups	Roundtable
Affected communities		✓ (via Reps)			✓	
ECHO staff– HQ		✓				✓
ECHO staff - Field	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Other EU entities		✓		✓	✓	✓
Other donors		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ECHO partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local implementation partners	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Host governments			✓		✓	
National/ local NGOs			✓		✓	
Academics and think tanks			✓		✓	✓
Private sector		✓	✓			✓
Military forces		✓			✓	
European Parliament		✓				
European Council		✓				
Member States		✓				✓
EU citizens			✓			
Global forums and clusters		✓				

A1.4.1 Online surveys

Online surveys are particularly suited to collecting standardised data from a large number of geographically spread population. They generate structured, homogenous and generalisable information provided that the achieved sample is representative of the underlying population. We plan to reach out to the following stakeholder groups via online surveys.

Table 1.1 Overview of online surveys

Target group	Population size	Coverage	Approach to sampling	Languages
ECHO staff - Field	164 ⁸	Census	Not applicable	EN, FR
ECHO partners	222	Census	Not applicable	EN, FR
Local implementing partners	Unknown	Sample based	Snowballing technique – ECHO partners would be asked to identify up to 10 local implementing partners they regularly work with	EN, ES, FR

Although a downside of online surveys is that researchers have no control over respondent selection, we expect the response rates to be reasonably high given the high stake that the above stakeholder groups have in ECHO's humanitarian aid actions.

Structured questionnaires will be used to collect data from each stakeholder group. The questionnaire will primarily be composed of multiple choice questions, but would include a limited number of open questions to allow respondents to explain their answers. The surveys will be designed using a professional online survey software tool (surveygizmo⁹).

A1.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are particularly suited for exploring specific issues in-depth including the reasoning behind interviewees' opinions. We plan to conduct 120-140 semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholder groups as indicated in the table below.

Table 1.2 Scope of the interview programme

Stakeholder group	Target number	Selection criteria
ECHO staff - HQ	~30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Officials responsible for policy development and annual strategic planning ▪ Officials responsible for horizontal activities such as advocacy, protection mainstreaming, gender-age marker etc. ▪ Thematic/ sectoral policy leads ▪ Geographic teams – ensuring regional coverage and selection of top 10 recipients of ECHO humanitarian aid funding as well countries selected for fieldwork (DRC, Tanzania, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Mauritania)
ECHO staff - Field	20-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global thematic coordinators / experts in shelter, protection, WASH, food assistance ▪ Field staff based in countries selected for fieldwork (DRC, Tanzania, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Mauritania) ▪ Field staff based in countries where there have been particular successes in areas such as LRRD, advocacy or challenges in delivery (to be identified on basis of responses to online survey and recommendations of HQ

⁸ The survey would be targeted to Programme Officers and Technical Assistants (except for administrative TA staff and short term TA staff)

⁹ <https://www.surveymzmo.com/>

Stakeholder group	Target number	Selection criteria
		staff)
Other EU entities	~ 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DEVCO – geographic teams of top 5 recipients of ECHO humanitarian aid funding ▪ NEAR – geographic teams of the main neighbourhood countries receiving ECHO humanitarian aid funding ▪ EU DELs – based in countries selected for fieldwork
Other donors	15-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multilateral development actors: World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank ▪ Main bilateral donors (EU as well as non-EU): DFID, DANIDA, USAID/BPRM/FFP, SIDA, CIDA, JICA, German cooperation, SDC (Suisse), Norway ▪ Regional intergovernmental organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
ECHO partners	10-15	<p>A purposeful sample representing different types of partners (size, organisation type, country, -area of expertise)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN Agencies: UN OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR ▪ International organisations: IOM ▪ ICRC <p>iNGOs: Oxfam –UK (global poverty), Norwegian Refugee Council-NO, World Vision – UK (children), HelpAge International-UK, Médecins Sans Frontières – FR (medical), Association Federation Handicap International – FR, People in Need – CZ, Comunita' Impegno Servizio Volontario – IT, Polish Humanitarian Action Foundation – PL, Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento (Cooperation and Development) - PT, Ayuda en Accion-ES, ZOA-NL, Help-DE, Mission East - DK</p>
Private sector	~10	Prominent private sector actors involved in the delivery of humanitarian aid. These will be identified through desk research, Humanitarian Private Sector Partnership Platform (HPPP) of East Africa, Connecting Business Initiative and partner survey
Military forces representatives	~5	Our aim would be to cover different emergency contexts (rapid onset, slow onset, protracted crisis) in different regions. ECHO military liaison officer would be used as an entry point for contact
European Parliament	3-5	Members of DEVE Committee
European Council	3-5	Members of the following committees: COHAFA, Political and Security committee, African Council Working Group on Africa (COAFR), Committee Asia – COASI
EU Member States	Not applicable	It is expected that the different roles of Member State would be covered as follows: As donors – via selection of EU bilateral donors Political aspects – via interviews with select members of the European Council
Beneficiary representatives	~5	VOICE network Beneficiary representatives at local level in select countries

Interviews will be conducted by experienced researchers using a standardised, but flexible interview guide setting out the broad lines of enquiry for each stakeholder group. ICF uses the NVivo tool¹⁰ to organise and analyse content from interviews.

¹⁰ <http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-product>

A1.4.3 Open Public Consultation (OPC)

An OPC would be organised to gather information and opinions from a wide spectrum of stakeholders on the effectiveness and added value of ECHO's interventions during 2012-2014 as well as future perspectives. The OPC would provide an opportunity to 'open up' the data collection exercise to all interested stakeholders and enable them to input into the evaluation.

The OPC will consist of two structured questionnaires targeting humanitarian experts/practitioners and others. In addition, respondents would also be given the opportunity to submit written responses or position papers. The consultation would be hosted on *Your voice in Europe* and remain open for a minimum period of 12 weeks.

A1.4.4 Fieldwork - interviews, focus groups etc.

In the countries selected for fieldwork (DRC, Tanzania, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Mauritania) a series of semi-structured, face to face interviews will be organised with the following stakeholder groups:

- ECHO field staff;
- Representatives of the EU delegation;
- Key ECHO partners;
- Local implementation partners;
- Host government officials;
- Other donors and humanitarian actors;
- Academics and think tanks;
- Military representatives;
- National/ local NGOs.

The specific stakeholders will be identified through independent desk research and suggestions from ECHO staff and partners. Additionally, a range of participatory approaches (focus groups, consultations, stories of most significant change) would be applied to engage directly with affected communities.

A1.4.5 Fieldwork – stakeholder workshops

Towards the end of the fieldwork, a half-day workshop will be organised with representatives of key stakeholders in each country (ECHO field, EU-DEL, other donors, ECHO partners, Local implementation partners). The selection and participation of stakeholders at the workshops would to a large extent be driven by logistical constraints (local presence in the city or ease of accessibility to the area where the workshop is organised, availability to participate in the workshop) on The purpose of these workshops would be to fill any gaps in our understanding / evidence base and to reflect upon the evaluation teams' findings from the fieldwork.

A1.4.6 Roundtable

Finally, our consultation strategy envisages a humanitarian roundtable with key stakeholders to discuss and debate ECHO's future role in the global humanitarian system and its approach to humanitarian aid in light of the evaluation findings. A diverse and balanced participation from ECHO, EU entities, academics/ think tanks/ NGOs, private sector representatives, donors, partners and Member States will be ensured.

Briefing documents including the agenda, speaker biographies and factsheets will be disseminated in advance to the participants. As a follow-up to the roundtable, the ICF Team will publish a roundtable report on the dedicated consultation webpage. This report will include summaries of the presentations, an overview of the stakeholder contributions to the

discussions and questions raised and a participant list. The PowerPoint presentations provided by the speakers will also be uploaded on to the dedicated webpage.