



# **Comprehensive evaluation of the European Union humanitarian aid, 2012-2016**

Final report

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# **Comprehensive evaluation of the European Union humanitarian aid, 2012-2016**

Final report

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## **List of abbreviations**

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AFD	Agence Francaise de Développement
AGIR	Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative
AGL	African Great Lakes
BNPB	National Board for Disaster Management
CAR	Central African Republic
CBT	Cash Based Transfer
COHAFA	Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAC	Development Aid Committee
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DEVCO	DG for International Cooperation and Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DG	Directorate General
DG CLIMA	Directorate General for Climate Action
DG ECHO	Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG HOME	Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs
DIPECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAR	Emergency Aid Reserve
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECHO	DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDF	European Development Fund
EDG	Emergency Directors Group
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMC	European Medical Corps
EN	Eastern Neighbourhood
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ERC	Enhanced Response Capacity
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre

ESOP	Emergency Support Operational Priorities
EU	European Union
EUAV	EU Aid Volunteers
EUTF	EU Trust Fund
ExAR	External Assigned Revenues
FAFA	Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCA	Forgotten Crisis Assessment
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
FSL	Food security and livelihoods
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GB	Grand Bargain
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GGOPHA	General Guidelines on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GSC	Global Shelter Cluster
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Committee
HAR	Humanitarian Aid Regulation
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HQ	Headquarter
IAF	Integrated Assessment Framework
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICRC / CICR	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INSO	International NGO Safety Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee



JC	Judgement Criteria
JHDF	Joint Humanitarian Development Framework
KOI	Key Outcomes Indicator
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
KRI	Key Results Indicator
LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean
LMMS	Last Mile Mobile Solutions
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MCCR	Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies'
ME	Middle East
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MIC	Monitoring and Information Centre
MONUSCO	UN Peacekeeping for DRC - Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo
MPCT	Multi-purpose Cash Transfer
NEAR	DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODSG	OCHA Donor Support Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OPC	Open Public Consultation
PROACT	Pro-Resilient Action
QSG	Quality Support Group
S&S	Shelter and Settlement
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
SHARE	Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TA	Technical Assistant
TCTR	Total cost transfer ratio
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN-CMCoord	Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the

Pacific

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UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

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## **Terminology used in the report**

The humanitarian aid activities which are subject to this evaluation fall under the EU humanitarian aid policy, as stipulated in Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU). Given the different funding sources to finance the activities in questions (e.g. EU budget with the possibility for top-ups from the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR), redeployments in Heading 4, the European Development Fund (EDF), External Assigned Revenue from Member States – see full description in 0), this evaluation refers to “**EU humanitarian aid**” activities for “all activities implemented by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in the field of humanitarian aid including both the EU humanitarian aid funded actions and the policy and implementation frameworks put in place to frame these activities”.

The main terms used in this report are therefore as defined below:

- **EU humanitarian aid funding:** budget allocated by the EU to humanitarian aid activities or interventions (including the EU humanitarian aid instrument and all the top-ups sources unless specified differently);
- **EU humanitarian aid objectives:** objectives of the EU humanitarian aid activities as defined in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid;
- **EU humanitarian aid funded actions (also referred to as EU funded actions):** humanitarian aid activities funded by the EU and implemented by DG ECHO’s framework partners in the field;
- **DG ECHO:** entity in charge of managing and implementing the EU humanitarian aid funding. DG ECHO also covers other tasks which are out of scope of this evaluation (i.e. Union Civil Protection Mechanism and EU Aid Volunteer Programme);
- **DG ECHO Headquarter (HQ):** part of DG ECHO located in Brussels; and
- **DG ECHO field network:** part of DG ECHO located in the field.

## **Abstract**

This evaluation provides an independent comprehensive evaluation of the European Union humanitarian aid during the period 2012-2016. The evaluation concludes that the Commission-funded humanitarian actions were overall need-based and implemented in line with humanitarian principles. The actions made an important contribution to the core objectives to save lives, reduce morbidity and suffering as well as improve dignity of life of population affected by disasters. In addition, as regards the EU role in the wider humanitarian aid system, the evaluation concludes that the Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) played a strong role in furthering quality of aid through promotion of best practice in sectoral policies, introducing innovation and promoting other international initiatives, such as the Grand Bargain and the Transformative Agenda. EU added value was found in particular with regard to the Commission’s use of a global field network, the focus on forgotten crises and the politically independent and principled approach, although the evaluation also identified some changes in the perception of the latter as a result of poor communication about funding choices in particular associated with the Syria crisis.

The evaluation provides recommendations to support future improvements in areas of (1) communication, (2) implementation of multi-annual strategy, programming and funding (where applicable), (3) partnership approach, (4) sustainability, and (5) management and monitoring systems.

## **Executive summary**

### **I. Objectives and scope of the evaluation**

The overall objectives of the comprehensive evaluation of the European Union (EU) humanitarian aid, 2012-2016 were to:

- Assess the EU humanitarian aid actions, implemented by the EU via its Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) during the period 2012-2016, analysing how well the EU has exercised its role as a donor and the results achieved in different crisis contexts during the above-mentioned period. This includes both the policy and implementation frameworks put in place by DG ECHO for humanitarian aid, as well as the delivery of this aid. This comprehensive, external and independent evaluation follows the evaluation provisions of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR) and of the Financial Regulation in relation to economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and
- Provide inputs for future improvements of actions and approaches in this field on the basis of lessons learned from past experiences and in view of recent global developments (e.g., the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Grand Bargain (GB), recent European Court of Auditors (ECA) reports on aid delivery by the EU and challenges to humanitarian aid delivery).

The scope of the evaluation covered all humanitarian aid actions funded by the EU via DG ECHO. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the EU Aid Volunteers (EUAV) initiative were out of scope of this evaluation but were considered under the coherence assessment. The new Regulation on the provision of emergency support within the EU<sup>1</sup> was also out of the scope of this evaluation.

### **II. Methodological approach and validity of the evaluation results**

Four complementary evaluation approaches were used to inform this comprehensive evaluation:

- One **meta-evaluation**, which consisted in a meta-synthesis of the 27 evaluations completed by DG ECHO during the evaluation period;
- Five **rapid evaluations** of dedicated themes and sectors selected based on: (1) financial / strategic importance of the sector or theme; and (2) the need to address gaps in evidence base. This resulted in the selection of the three sectors (i.e. Food security and livelihoods (FSL), Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and Shelter and settlements) and two themes (i.e. Advocacy and Protection);
- A **retrospective evaluation**, which provided the answers to the evaluation questions identified by DG ECHO in the Terms of Reference (ToR). It was based on the detailed evaluation framework developed for this evaluation and informed by the meta-evaluation, rapid evaluations and all research tools put in place during the evaluation; and
- A **prospective evaluation**, which considered the implications of the changing context and landscape of humanitarian aid delivery for DG ECHO's activities.

The evaluation approaches were informed by a series of research tools specifically developed and tailored for the purpose of this evaluation to capture views and input of all the relevant stakeholders for the EU humanitarian aid activities. The research tools included:

- A large literature review;
- The mapping of 183 EU funded humanitarian aid actions;
- 73 semi-structured interviews conducted at different stages of the evaluation and involving one to four interviewees per interviewing session;
- Three field missions to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Myanmar and Mauritania. The missions included interviews, focus groups, and project visits in each of the visited country;

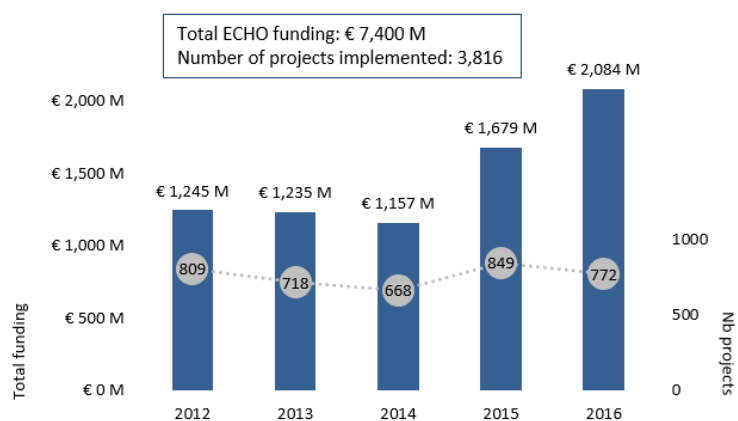
- Three online surveys targeting: DG ECHO field staff, DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners;
- An Open Public Consultation (OPC) on the Commission’s website from July to November 2017; and
- A validation workshop organised with a representative sample of DG ECHO’s key stakeholder groups.

The complementary evaluation approaches and research tools were used to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected and to provide the basis for cross-verification, corroboration and triangulation of the evaluation results. The vested interests of different stakeholder groups were taken into account to address potential bias and to ensure objectivity.

### III. Context and EU intervention

Over the evaluation period, the EU funded 3,816 individual actions via DG ECHO with a total value of EUR 7,400 million. As per Figure 1 below, the highest amount of aid was allocated in 2016 (EUR 2,084 million) and the lowest in 2014 (EUR 1,157million). The average funding per action was the highest in 2016 (EUR 2.7 million) while the lowest in 2012 (EUR 1.5 million). In 2016, the average value was influenced by the Multi-purpose Cash Transfer (MPCT) action “Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey”, worth EUR 338 million.

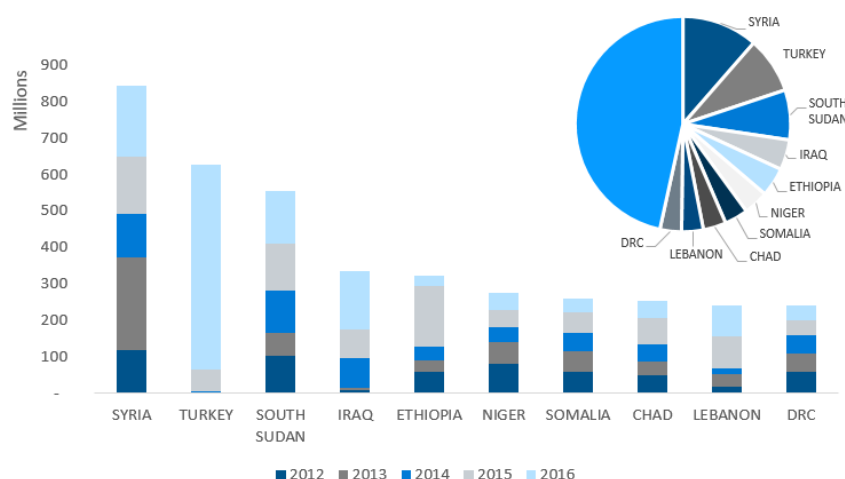
Figure 1. Total value and number of EU humanitarian aid funded actions in 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

The EU funded humanitarian aid actions in 110 countries during the evaluation period but 53.3% of the total funding was allocated to the top ten beneficiary countries (Figure 2). The top three being Syria (EUR 844 million or 11.4% of the total funding), Turkey (EUR 625 million or 8.4%) and South Sudan (EUR 554 million or 7.5%).

Figure 2. Evolution of funding to the top ten countries, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

The highest increase of funding in absolute figures was observed in the Middle East (from 2014 onwards), while funding kept decreasing in regions of Central and South America, Caribbean and South Asia and Pacific.

In absolute numbers, health has been the only sector where EU humanitarian aid funding has been continuously increasing over the entire evaluation period. Although the budget for FSL decreased in 2016, it remained the most funded sector across the evaluation period. In 2016 the newly introduced MPCT budget line received the second highest amount (EUR 343 million) followed by health (EUR 260 million) and protection (EUR 248 million).

The humanitarian implementation plans (HIPs), issued by DG ECHO on an annual basis to define the expected humanitarian response in a specific region or country, provide a breakdown of funding by objective. Over the evaluation period, the majority of the funding was allocated to emergencies responding to the objective 1 "Man Made crisis" varying between 68% and 90% of funding depending on the year. The funding allocated to emergencies responding to the objective 2 "Natural Disasters" varied between 8% and 29%. European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department's Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) attracted 2-3% of allocations.

#### **IV. Main findings of the retrospective evaluation**

The evaluation was based on 16 evaluation questions from the Terms of Reference and complemented by three new evaluation questions identified by the evaluation team. These questions were organised around the five main evaluation criteria presented in the Better Regulation guidelines<sup>2</sup> complemented by a criteria focusing on the sustainability of the EU humanitarian aid intervention. The findings linked to each of these criteria are presented below.

Overall, overwhelmingly, evidence points at the EU's very strong performance. It is considered to be a principled, needs-based donor with some unique features, such as its approach to partnerships, its field network and its role in shaping the humanitarian system. Consultations at all levels showed that stakeholders want DG ECHO very much to continue most of what it has been doing to date, while noting some areas for improvement and necessary changes to reflect contextual and other relevant developments which are affecting humanitarian aid delivery.

##### **i. Relevance**

###### ***Extent to which the allocations of the EU humanitarian aid budget were in line with needs and EU humanitarian aid objectives***

The allocations of the EU humanitarian aid budget were driven by a comprehensive needs assessments framework organised at three levels (from local needs assessments in each geographical area covered, to national and regional needs assessments informing the HIPs, and the global needs assessment as articulated in the annual strategic documents). The evaluation concluded that the budget allocations were based on the needs during the evaluation period, however, choices had to be made as DG ECHO's funding was and will always be insufficient to cover the growing humanitarian needs globally.

Changes in the funding over the period to the different geographies were overall justified but could have been better communicated both internally and externally to DG ECHO's stakeholders, including framework partners and other donors. Funding to sectors was overall appropriate but not always consistent. Sometimes a more strategic 'longer term' funding approach would have been required, also to ensure some level of 'predictability' to framework partners. Overall, the EU humanitarian aid budget after being topped up with different reinforcements, was considered as commensurate to the EU objectives and expected results insofar as it allowed the EU to respond to the most pressing humanitarian needs in an effective and efficient manner. DG ECHO managed to maximise the impact that could be achieved with the resources available.

The EU made clear strategic choices in terms of funding specific regions during the evaluation period, with an increasing focus on the Middle East and North Africa and the European Neighbourhood (i.e. linked to the consequences of the Syrian crisis), leaving some regions with continuous needs with lower funding. This was particularly the case at the end of the

evaluation period. While these choices were informed by needs assessments at different levels, they also reflect the choices that had to be made given the resources available. The choices triggered strong reactions among DG ECHO's key stakeholders reflecting the need to better communicate the associated rationale.

***Extent to which appropriate, comprehensive and context-adapted strategies were in place for addressing regional humanitarian needs and different challenges, including medium and longer-term objectives***

The EU humanitarian aid response was overall comprehensive, appropriate and timely given the identified needs and operational contexts. However, these characteristics were not systematically met across the geographical and sectoral contexts leaving room for further improvements in the future.

Medium to long-term objectives were increasingly taken into account during the evaluation period but this could be further improved to support the link between humanitarian aid, as a rapid response measure in crisis situations and more medium and long-term development action. This complex link is referred to as the humanitarian-development nexus. The evaluation found that DG ECHO adapted its strategies to local contexts and evolving needs, also by putting emphasis on certain sectors and themes. The move from national HIPs towards regional HIPs was considered as appropriate but scope for improvement of this new regional approach was identified, notably in terms of execution and suitability for regions with largely different national contexts. These improvements would maximise the benefits of a multi-country approach. The strategies put in place by DG ECHO for addressing regional needs were appropriate, comprehensive and context-adapted.

***Appropriateness of DG ECHO partnerships***

DG ECHO selected appropriate partners given the humanitarian needs, partners' expertise and capacity, the pool of available partners to work with and the local context. There has been an increased concentration of funding to larger-scale projects via UN agencies (in 2016 more than 50% of EU funding), in part explained by requirements of the crisis in Syria. Around 20% of the framework partners did not implement any EU funded actions during the evaluation period, including 44 INGOs. DG ECHO should assess functioning of partnerships regularly and seek to involve 'new' partners where this is possible.

The evaluation also concluded that the involvement of local partners in the implementation of humanitarian aid activities, which is dependent on the operational context, can have positive consequences, notably on the interventions' effectiveness and sustainability. There is scope for increasing the involvement of local implementing partners within EU funded actions (even though 73% of the surveyed framework partners claimed to make use of local partners, the nature and extent of this involvement significantly vary across projects). The evaluation also identified several opportunities to ensure that this happens on a more systematic basis, where appropriate and feasible.

***Extent to which DG ECHO field network added value in terms of effectiveness and efficiency***

DG ECHO's field network made a strong contribution to the effectiveness of the EU funded humanitarian aid actions, including contributions to the needs assessments at the HIP level and thus making the regional, local and sectoral DG ECHO strategies more relevant.

The field network provided overall high-quality support with some capacity constraints and other challenges. The field network is considered a unique feature by stakeholders making DG ECHO more effective and efficient. The current configuration allows DG ECHO to respond rapidly as crisis situations develop and new needs emerge. DG ECHO's architecture is fit for purpose but some improvements would also make it 'future proof' (e.g. by closing gaps in technical expertise).

***Extent to which the EU humanitarian aid objectives are still relevant to the global humanitarian needs and context***

The EU humanitarian aid objectives are very relevant as they have been addressing the continuing global humanitarian needs. The objectives are overall future proof and in line with

the humanitarian principles. DG ECHO could put more emphasis on its strategic directions, for example to provide support to the EU neighbourhood, and acknowledge the increasing number of complex crises requiring appropriately calibrated support. Linked to this, the longer-term aspect of EU interventions could also be further stressed.

## **ii. Coherence**

### ***Coherence with the humanitarian principles***

Overall, the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence were consistently reflected in DG ECHO's policies and strategies and in the vast majority of EU funded actions. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid provided clear definitions of the humanitarian principles and DG ECHO's policies, strategies and implementation framework provided clarity on how to implement them. There was however no guidance on approaches to be taken in case of challenges to respecting the principles or 'tensions' between them (e.g. engagement with national and local authorities versus the principles of independence and neutrality or respect of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence versus humanity and humanitarian access in man-made and complex emergencies). This is despite the fact that all donors, including the EU and its framework partners, sometimes struggle to strike a balance between ensuring compliance with the principles and avoiding negative impacts on the ground especially in complex crises. There would be scope for DG ECHO to provide guidance on 'rules of engagement' or consult with its framework partners on how to deal with possible 'dilemmas', integrating this also in its wider strategy for advocacy of a principled approach.

### ***Internal coherence***

EU funded actions were internally coherent: There was a high level of coherence between EU funded actions in different countries and regions, which was mainly guaranteed by the 'portfolio approach' of DG ECHO, applied in the project selection process and based on the local knowledge of the DG ECHO field staff. Based on this approach, projects were not only assessed individually but also considered together as part of a portfolio of projects aiming to tackle a particular crisis or answer a series of identified needs at country or regional level. The complementarity between different actions to be funded is therefore clearly assessed when and where relevant. Over the evaluation period, DG ECHO also ensured coherence by pushing for example for more multi-sectoral and integrated projects (i.e. projects with activities in one sector helping to achieve outcomes in at least one other sector) (with varied success). Improvements remain however possible for example also in terms of coherence across the years.

Coherence with other DG ECHO's responsibilities: There is a clear legal and conceptual framework to ensure the coherence between the EU humanitarian aid and civil protection activities and synergies improved during the evaluation period but more can be done to systematically improve their complementarity and coherence in the field (e.g. in terms of early engagement with DG ECHO field staff and specialised Desk Officers).

Coherence with other EU external financing:

- There has been some, albeit limited, coordination between DG ECHO and DEVCO at field and headquarter (HQ) level in the evaluation period. More specifically, DG ECHO has attempted to engage with DEVCO through policy and advocacy work at the HQ level and coordination has been increasingly happening over the years due mainly to the growing importance placed on LRRD and resilience. The piloting of the humanitarian-development nexus in different contexts should further improve the coherence between DG ECHO and DEVCO activities but this still needs to be operationalised. The EU Trust Funds (EUTF) also constitute an interesting approach, which could allow for better linkages between humanitarian and development activities. Due to the limited use of the EUTF in humanitarian contexts during the evaluation period the evidence collected during the evaluation does not allow to assess the extent to which DG ECHO contribution to the Trust Funds is pertinent and coherent with other actions financed as part of the EUTF.
- Coping with the consequences of population movements has historically been one of the key objectives of the EU humanitarian aid interventions with limited interactions with other policy areas. Given the changing nature of displacement crises and the context of



the evaluation period, the Commission developed a new Joint Communication on Forced Displacement and Development<sup>3</sup> clearly stressing the need to develop a coherent approach involving all the relevant actors. It however needs to be rapidly operationalised in order to actively engage in recent initiatives such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the EUTFs.

- There is a relatively strong policy framework for the integration of climate change adaptation into DG ECHO's humanitarian aid interventions, especially in disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, but this is not done systematically and scope for improvement was identified.

### **External coherence**

Coherence with the EU Member States: There are coordination structures and mechanisms in place to promote the coherence between the EU and the Member States humanitarian aid policies and activities. There is however scope to use these structures more effectively and further improve cooperation in terms of global resource allocation and practical actions at field level.

Coherence with other donors: During the evaluation period DG ECHO strengthened cooperation with other donors and was active at different levels and forums to promote complementarity and coherence between them. No major obstacles preventing coordination between DG ECHO and Development Aid Committee (DAC) donors were identified, although there is still scope for improvement. DG ECHO should continue its engagement with non-DAC donors at the policy level and analyse how to expand these efforts at the field level.

Coherence with the IASC coordination structures: DG ECHO improved its strengthened its role vis-à-vis the humanitarian coordination structures at policy and field level during the evaluation period. DG ECHO also encouraged the framework partners to take part in relevant national and local clusters (e.g. via funding and reference to specific clusters in DG ECHO's thematic guidance).

Coherence with UN OCHA and other UN agencies: During the evaluation period DG ECHO clarified its objectives in terms of contribution to the humanitarian coordination structures and relations with UN OCHA and other UN agencies. DG ECHO should therefore continue its effort to reinforce its relationship with the UN agencies and where needed challenge them in cooperation with its key partners.

Coherence with beneficiary countries: DG ECHO is cautious in its level of cooperation with national and local authorities, given the need to maintain the humanitarian principles, but within these boundaries DG ECHO should recognise the need to develop context-specific approaches towards involving national and local authorities whenever possible.

### **iii. Effectiveness**

The EU pursues two sets of humanitarian objectives. Firstly, the EU core objectives are to reduce mortality, reduce suffering and morbidity and ensure the dignity of life of affected populations. These objectives are realised through (1) providing immediate / short term emergency response in the form of life- saving assistance, protection and / or crucial basic services to populations affected by crisis; and (2) building resilience over the medium to long-term, ensuring stability and creating a nexus to development, and reduced dependence on further (external) aid.

At a system level, the EU also had a strategic objective to influence the global humanitarian system and the delivery of humanitarian aid by others to make its results more effective. This has been undertaken through several channels during the evaluation period: (1) the EU leading/supporting role in key initiatives (e.g. Transformative Agenda, WHS, GB); (2) the EU leading/supporting role in key policies (e.g. Education in Emergencies, cash based assistance, protection); and (3) advocacy at the different levels.

While the evaluation found good qualitative evidence to enable the assessment of effectiveness, quantitative evidence, in the form of indicators on outputs, results, outcomes and impacts, was scarce. DG ECHO has a good and robust monitoring and evaluation framework in place at project level, which allows a good follow-up on projects. The collected

data are however not sufficiently analysed and aggregated preventing the systematic identification of good practices in terms of effectiveness. Whilst DG ECHO recently established a new monitoring and evaluation framework at the organisational level, there is no framework to monitor and assess the effectiveness of specific HIPs. This prevents the systematic assessment of DG ECHO's achievements in a particular region or in a specific sector.

### ***Effectiveness of EU funded actions***

In spite of the lack of aggregated quantitative information, the ample qualitative evidence available shows that EU funded actions were indeed effective and positively contributed to saving lives, reducing morbidity and suffering as well as improving dignity of life of populations affected by disasters.

The scale of funding dedicated to humanitarian aid actions allowed the EU to have a real impact on the ground, addressing the needs of a significant number of beneficiaries in a large number of geographies. In regions where the EU only allocated limited funding compared to its overall envelope, the evaluation showed that it was also able to have a positive impact on the ground by selecting projects with high leverage or multiplier effect potential.

The key success factors contributing to DG ECHO's effectiveness identified were:

- DG ECHO's strong project selection process which resulted in projects of high quality which could make a difference on the ground;
- Strong technical assistance capabilities provided by DG ECHO field network;
- The overall timeliness of the EU interventions, which ensured that beneficiaries received instant relief and a further worsening of the situation was prevented. The timeliness of the EU response beyond primary emergencies was considered as sometimes lagging behind; and
- EU support to the use of specific modalities and practices which improved the effectiveness of the EU funded actions (e.g. cash-based assistance, involving local communities in needs assessments, gender marker, etc.).

Factors inhibiting the effectiveness of EU funded actions included:

- Fixed and relatively short duration of the EU humanitarian aid funding cycle;
- Lack of a comprehensive strategy taking the root causes of crises into account, especially in the case of complex protracted crisis;
- Unanticipated budget variations limiting the predictability of the aid provided by the EU and impacting negatively on the strategies followed by framework partners;
- Lack of coordination between different EU and non-EU funding streams; and
- Lack of, or limited, technical expertise and capacity among framework partners, particularly in the shelter and settlements and health sectors.

### ***Effectiveness of DG ECHO's advocacy, coordination and policy activities***

In the evaluation period, DG ECHO implemented a number of internal reforms and other internal initiatives to strengthen the impact and effectiveness of its humanitarian aid delivery. These included, for example: (1) the continuous adjustments to the EU global needs assessment process (e.g. INFORM and the IAF) and needs assessments at the level of funded actions; (2) the move towards regional versus country-specific HIPs; (3) continuous development of sectoral guidelines; (4) the strengthening of the field network; and (5) increased engagement with other donors to undertake joint activities.

Overall, these developments have been useful and appropriate to their intended aims, and positively received by DG ECHO's stakeholders. Some challenges were however also encountered, for example, the perception of stakeholders that DG ECHO's global funding allocations were not exclusively needs based (although, as mentioned earlier, the evaluation found that budget allocations were based on needs), the varying quality of local needs assessments and some regional HIPs lacking a cohesive strategic approach.

DG ECHO's sectoral and thematic policies and guidelines reflected an appropriate approach in the sectors concerned. They were developed in line with international standards and in close consultation with relevant partners. The choice of DG ECHO's policies and guidelines was overall in line with the needs identified, however, evidence on their actual use was mixed. In

some areas, DG ECHO could opt to rather 'adopt' the policies and guidelines prepared by other donors or implementing agencies, and possibly provide a 'DG ECHO addendum' to stress certain aspects, rather than developing its own guidelines.

At system level, the EU pursued its advocacy and policy objectives through several channels:

- DG ECHO's leading/supporting role in key initiatives (e.g. Transformative Agenda, WHS, GB);
- DG ECHO's leading/supporting role in key policies (e.g. Education in Emergencies, cash based assistance, protection); and
- Advocacy at different levels.

There have been several concrete success stories of how DG ECHO leadership role in the global system has resulted in the development of more effective humanitarian aid approaches. For example, DG ECHO's insistence on multi-purpose cash has changed the delivery of humanitarian aid in certain contexts and sectors. In other cases, DG ECHO's focus on specific sectors and themes drew attention and funding to these sectors (e.g. the EU attention to education in emergencies led to a demonstration effect and encouraged other donors to support this sector; and the mainstreaming of the protection agenda into the delivery of the humanitarian aid).

DG ECHO's advocacy efforts were largely effective during the evaluation period, including advocating the upholding of the key humanitarian principles, lobbying for more and better spent donor resources, drawing attention to new, changing and emerging issues and the changing nature of humanitarian crises (e.g. Sudan or Syria). Advocacy activities in the field have been individualised, flexible and responsive, reflecting the experience of DG ECHO field staff. On the negative side, they were not always fully joined up. Hence, a more strategic approach with clear priorities and actions would be beneficial.

#### ***Visibility of EU funded actions***

Framework partners overall adhered to the visibility requirements, but visibility activities going beyond the minimum requirements were more successful in raising the EU and DG ECHO's profile. Some obstacles limiting the effectiveness of visibility activities included a lack of capacity to develop communication activities amongst the framework partners.

The awareness of the EU activities inside the EU has increased between 2012 and 2016 (from 68% to 71%) and remains high despite a drop in awareness between 2015 and 2016 (from 76% to 71%). DG ECHO is funding activities to raise awareness about its activities within the EU through a dedicated HIP. Qualitative evidence suggests that the level of awareness of EU activities outside the EU is medium to high.

#### **iv. Efficiency**

##### ***Cost-effectiveness of the EU as a donor***

DG ECHO has no formal process in place to weigh the costs and benefits and value for money of its strategic portfolio choices ex-ante (e.g. in terms of types of partners, sectors, transfer modalities, consortium approaches, focus on DRR or linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)). DG ECHO however commissioned different studies in recent years illustrating its strategic thinking about portfolio choices. DG ECHO notably published a study on funding flows to have clearer view of costs throughout the delivery chain as well as a dedicated evaluation with regard to the use of different transfer modalities.

There is evidence of DG ECHO adopting and promoting innovations and best practices driving cost-effectiveness. On the specific topic of cash transfers for instance, the EU is largely recognised as a key donor which led the way to the 'normalisation' of the use of cash transfers. Cash and vouchers taken together were already at 27% of the EU funding in 2015 while as a benchmark, it was estimated to make up 8% of total assistance globally<sup>4</sup>. There is also evidence of DG ECHO accepting a degree of risk in its activities with a view to increase their cost-effectiveness. DG ECHO provided seed funding for new initiatives aimed at increased cost-effectiveness (e.g. in the WASH sector, for the use of solar energy for sustainable water pumping). More should however be done around the scaling up of successful ideas.

In some areas, however, notably in relation to the localisation agenda and multi-annual funding, DG ECHO shows an 'implementation deficit', i.e. a lack of change or follow-up despite the existence of evidence pointing at the efficiency of these types of approaches under certain circumstances.

The traceability of EU (and other donors') funding throughout the delivery chain would also require further improvement. For example, calculating the share of funding which goes directly to the end beneficiaries or to local implementing partners is not straightforward. Hence, it would be important for DG ECHO to upgrade its internal monitoring and financial tracking system, in coordination with other donors.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the EU as a donor depends largely on its ability to mobilise funding swiftly as humanitarian needs arise. At the beginning of the year, DG ECHO is generally under-budgeted but several sources to top-up the budget throughout the year exist, allowing to cover emerging needs. The top-up process nevertheless appears to be sub-optimal, as repeated top-ups are burdensome and hinder efficiency.

### **Cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions**

Humanitarian actions funded by the EU are overall seen as being cost-effective but the assessment is mainly based on qualitative indicators and stakeholder views. There have been attempts by DG ECHO to provide quantitative evidence, for example, by calculating the share of assistance which reached the final beneficiary but only on rather small samples and benchmarks for comparison with other donors are lacking. This effort needs to be further supported and made systematic.

There is evidence of cost-effectiveness being taken into account throughout the project cycle (e.g. budget submitted by the partners being closely analysed, promoting cost-effective solutions towards partners). Considerations are however not typically based on quantitative indicators (e.g. only a low share of projects refer to cost-per-beneficiary or cost-per-result). There would be scope for DG ECHO to follow a more pre-defined approach to the analysis of cost-effectiveness, e.g. produce a detailed checklist to be used as part of the appraisal process and while monitoring projects, this is partly answered by the FicheOp guidelines published by DG ECHO in 2016. Embedding cost-effectiveness into DG ECHO's project cycle should not come at the expense of flexibility and due consideration should be given to the many factors that influence cost-effectiveness, such as the type of crisis, the geography, access and security matters, the cost of living in the country, the presence of implementing partners, the need to recruit international staff, the level of innovation of the project, etc. The fact that DG ECHO is willing to accept variations of costs across projects when duly justified by the context is currently much appreciated by the framework partners.

Overall, it seems that the main factors influencing cost-effectiveness are well understood as similar lists of factors are identified across different sources of information. Despite being well known, enabling factors are however not always implemented and/or applicable depending on the context (e.g. cash, multi-annual programming and funding, localisation). Furthermore, some obstacles impeding cost-effectiveness are external factors, making it harder for DG ECHO to address them (e.g. compartmentalisation of protection actors, rigid national laws limiting the scope of actions for framework partners).

Another area for improvement would be the reporting requirements. A positive aspect is that DG ECHO has a Single Form with the same template being used throughout the project cycle. However, reporting requirements are still considered as complex and not harmonised with those of other donors, thereby impeding their efficiency.

## **v. Sustainability**

In the context of DG ECHO's work, sustainability is not clearly defined and is applied differently to the various aspects of DG ECHO's programming including sustainability of (1) the funding, (2) the activities implemented, (3) the immediate outcomes or (4) the impacts of EU funded actions. To enhance sustainability, DG ECHO has for example promoted the concept of resilience and introduced a resilience marker in 2014. In addition, the concept of LRRD has been on the agenda for decades and has evolved over time. In the latest development, DEVCO

and DG ECHO are working together towards the implementation of humanitarian-development nexus in 14 pilot countries.

DG ECHO was partially successful at implementing sustainable interventions, although only limited evidence of continuation of activities and sustainability of outcomes after the end of DG ECHO funding was identified. While some types of interventions are by nature 'more sustainable' (e.g. demining or activities funding documentation for refugees and IDPs), others do not have sustainability as an objective per se (e.g. food distribution).

Measures to further increase sustainability have been identified by DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners and include:

- Clearly consider and develop a sustainability/resilience strategy at the proposal stage;
- Promote more coordination between humanitarian relief and development;
- Increase the role of local partners and encourage participation of local organisations to improve local response over time;
- Involve beneficiaries and local communities effectively in the design and delivery of humanitarian aid;
- Provide multi-annual funding and longer-term planning; and,
- Ensure high levels of ownership and commitment of local and/or national authorities.

The evaluation also identified a number of conditions that should ideally be in place for sustainability to happen and therefore a number of related difficulties hindering the development of a consistent approach to sustainability. Some of these elements are context specific and in most cases, out of DG ECHO's control, such as the legal framework or political landscape while other challenges relate to DG ECHO's mandate (i.e. emergency) and modus operandi and include:

- The absence of formal definition of what sustainability entails and how it should be addressed in the context of EU funded actions;
- DG ECHO relatively fixed annual programming and funding cycle;
- The limited strategic focus from DG ECHO on elements such as livelihood activities, disaster preparedness and DRR; and,
- The limited focus on ensuring that framework partners engage with local partners.

Lastly, over the evaluation period, DG ECHO has placed a greater emphasis on promoting LRRD approaches and defining exit strategies. However, DG ECHO encountered difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach to LRRD across its funded regions and sectors. While in theory the concept seems understood, its implementation remains challenging. There is limited evidence on complementary approaches and handovers between DG ECHO and DEVCO or with other development actors over the evaluation period. DG ECHO does not have a specific operational framework or guidelines in place on how to implement LRRD and transition / exit strategies. In addition, the lack of cooperation between DG ECHO and development actors is partially driven by the differences between the goals and objectives, mandate, programming cycle, basic principles, approach, and mechanism of the two types of donors. Lastly, some challenges are also inherent to specific sectors, contexts and types of crisis.

## **vi. EU added value**

### ***EU funded actions had a clear added value on the ground***

This added value was primarily ensured through:

- The scale of EU funding, the EU was the second largest donor worldwide during the evaluation period, representing 9% of the global humanitarian aid. This translated into tangible results in the field contributing to saving lives;
- The EU focus on forgotten crises, as in the 2012-2016 period 16% of EU funding was allocated to forgotten crises (natural or man-made crises) compared to 12% for all the remaining donors;
- The EU filled the gaps in the global humanitarian aid by addressing needs in areas which were difficult to access and providing a rapid response to several new crises (e.g. Syria, Sudan, Burundian crisis); and

- The EU funded sectors and themes that were underfunded by other donors (e.g. protection sector, education in emergencies).

### **The EU added value at the system level**

The EU global leadership at the system level led to strong operational added value. By supporting operational improvements, the EU made the delivery of humanitarian aid more cost-effective (e.g. through cash-based assistance, involvement of local communities, evidence based needs assessments). The EU is recognised by all as a 'reference donor' pushing for a principled and needs based approach. Finally, the EU also contributed to the coordination of the humanitarian landscape.

### **The EU added value for the Member States**

In the field of humanitarian aid, the EU has a clear added value for the Member States. This is ensured through different channels including:

- DG ECHO performed well the role of humanitarian coordination and information sharing with the Member States at the HQ level, although potential for improvements has been identified (e.g. more coordination in term of funding allocation). This was ensured through DG ECHO's access to first-hand information and expertise via its field network;
- DG ECHO was a very strong and reliable donor and some Member States did not hesitate to use some of DG ECHO's processes (e.g. Single Form), paving the way for even more process coordination;
- The mechanism of External Assigned Revenue (ExAR), which are financial contributions from Member States and/or third countries, including their public agencies, entities or natural persons, to certain external aid projects or programmes financed by the EU budget and managed by the European Commission, also worked effectively during the evaluation period and has a good potential but so far Member States have shown limited willingness to take part; and
- Member States can benefit from DG ECHO strong operational knowledge and technical expertise at both HQ and field level.

## **V. Main findings of the prospective evaluation**

### **i. Taking forward the EU commitments for the World Humanitarian Summit**

The EU is committed to strong progress on each of the seven core commitment areas put forward following the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). To this end, 100 EU individual commitments were elaborated, outlining future actions. Overall, evidence showed that the EU is progressing on all the WHS commitments and humanitarian actors are overall pleased with recently-implemented activities going in this direction. This was also reflected by the results of the OPC, where the majority of the survey respondents held the view that DG ECHO is largely contributing to progress on EU humanitarian commitments.

### **ii. Delivering the Grand Bargain (GB)**

Overall, evidence showed that DG ECHO is progressing on all work streams of the GB but that more efforts should be invested in particular with regard to improving transparency, implementing the localisation agenda and reducing duplication and management costs. The OPC showed that almost two-thirds of the survey respondents were in full agreement that DG ECHO should lead by example in implementing the GB. The majority of the survey respondents were also in full agreement that DG ECHO should launch pilot initiatives relating to the implementation of the work streams (58%) and that it should use its leverage as one of the biggest humanitarian donors to encourage its counterparts to implement the Bargain (52%). Finally, the OPC results also showed that DG ECHO should further foster dialogue with co-conveners to ensure greater synergy among the work streams and that implementation should aim to foster complementarities between the global, national, and local level.

### **iii. Future challenges and opportunities for DG ECHO to deliver effectively humanitarian interventions**

- The changing nature of humanitarian interventions: The scale and frequency of crises that demand international humanitarian response is increasing. The rapid and unsustainable urbanisation, resource scarcities and protracted armed conflicts are only some of the challenges that humanitarian actors face. DG ECHO will therefore have to increasingly take these challenges into account when designing and planning its humanitarian interventions in order to maintain their relevance and effectiveness.
- Emergence of new donors: As the distribution of global power shifts towards a more multipolar world, new donors are becoming more visible players on the humanitarian global stage. Evidence shows that these emerging donors bring added value to the humanitarian system, for example by filling funding gaps, paying special attention to the basics of relief including food provisioning and large-scale disaster response (benefitting from their own experiences with poverty and humanitarian crises), influencing national authorities especially in countries where humanitarian access is severely restricted, etc. In the near future, it is expected that two developments will further accentuate the importance of emerging donors in the next future: the declining level of humanitarian funding from big donor countries like the US; and 2) the impact of Brexit on the EU humanitarian aid budget. The EU should continue its engagement with new donors at policy level and work to further engagement at field level.
- Involvement of the private sector: The further involvement of the private sector in humanitarian aid interventions can certainly strengthen response through an injection of disruptive thinking, including business insight and innovation. But coordination is needed to avoid competition, less effective or less principled responses, with more gaps, more duplication, and less learning. This is why DG ECHO will need to further advance its internal discussions on how to best coordinate and take this partnership forward (evidence gathered showed that a reflection is currently already in place). Overall, DG ECHO will need to further assess how humanitarian actions should capitalise on the experience and assets of the private sector, which sectors and interventions could benefit from a strengthened partnership. The assessment should explore possible ways to encourage businesses to provide their relevant skills and capacity for delivering life-saving assistance in the context of EU-funded interventions.

### **iv. Implications of the ECA audit report on the African Great Lakes region for the EU humanitarian aid activities**

Following the publication of the ECA audit report on the African Great Lakes region, DG ECHO set up a Working Group to identify the necessary actions to apply all across EU humanitarian activities to (1) increase transparency in the funding selection procedure; (2) pay further attention to the cost efficiency of the actions; (3) improve monitoring during their implementation; (4) better document the assessment of results achieved; and (5) draw conclusions and lessons learnt on the implementation of HIPs.

Overall, DG ECHO appears to have progressed significantly on the recommendations, mostly by introducing improvements to procedures, guidelines and templates. However, several of the issues identified at the time by the ECA have again come up in this comprehensive evaluation, including in particular the need to look closer at project costs; the lack of reporting on HIPs and the need to improve LRRD. As highlighted in this evaluation, more efforts will be required to ensure that these can be successfully implemented.

In addition, aside from the practical challenges associated with the concrete implementation of the ECA recommendations, DG ECHO is also facing a more conceptual challenge linked to the dichotomy between some of the ECA recommendations calling for more rigorous and in some areas detailed reporting and GB work stream number 9 calling for a simplification of reporting requirements. As the latter also calls for the harmonisation of requirements across donors, the "obvious" way forward as presented above is for DG ECHO to closely work with other donors and partners on this agenda in order to define strategic objectives and outcomes that can be reported against.

## VI. Recommendations

The five strategic recommendations identified based on the findings of this comprehensive evaluation target areas where the EU is suggested to introduce improvements in its approach to humanitarian aid and the associated activities. The evaluation has sought to identify the most important improvements that DG ECHO should considering pursuing.

### 1. DG ECHO should implement a multi-annual strategy and, where possible, multi-annual programming and funding

As part of the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), there would be benefit in DG ECHO developing a multi-annual strategy presenting its overall vision and planned policy and practical approach towards the delivery of EU humanitarian aid. At the basis of the strategy there should be a clear Theory of Change which presents the logic of intervention for both the core functions and the policy and advocacy role of the DG. The strategy would be accompanied by a multi-annual programme, setting out the key priorities, by region and by sector, of both the multi-annual and annual cycles, as well as a more concrete work programme. The strategy should also highlight links to other strategies (e.g. development, resilience, etc.) and those involved in their implementation.

### 2. DG ECHO should review its partnership approach both towards large and middle-sized framework partners and towards local implementing partners

#### ***Engagement with large framework partners***

The evaluation has shown that most of DG ECHO's funding is allocated to a relatively limited number of framework partners. Yet, with each of these partners, DG ECHO signs multiple agreements under each HIP, which also implies annually the preparation and processing of multiple proposals and reports, as well as having multiple payment procedures. These procedures create an important administrative burden on both DG ECHO's and the framework partners' staff. There may therefore be scope for DG ECHO, to move towards a system of 'trusted' or 'strategic' partners, to reduce not only the administrative burden on both DG ECHO and the respective framework partners, but also to allow for a more linked-up, coherent approach, especially if this is accompanied by a move towards multi-annual programming and funding.

#### ***Engagement with other framework partners***

The evaluation also showed, on the other hand, that DG ECHO will continue to need its diverse pool of framework partners, including those which are relatively small / medium sized, given their specific geographic presence and/or sectoral or thematic expertise. However, given that a proportion of framework partners do not receive a contract, DG ECHO may consider **adapting its partner selection and activation process** to its multi-annual strategy and programming, to ensure that nearly all framework partners can be activated at least once during the programming period.

#### ***Increasing the involvement of local partners***

In parallel the evaluation also showed a need to further increase the involvement of local partners in DG ECHO funded actions in line with the localisation agenda. DG ECHO should emphasise the strong link to sustainability as part of this change.



### **3. DG ECHO should reinforce its approach towards sustainability through resilience and cooperation**

Although humanitarian interventions are not always sustainable due to their nature (i.e. short term) and core mandate (i.e. saving life), the wider context and longer-term goals should also be considered when developing humanitarian interventions, in line with the contiguum approach.

DG ECHO has a clear core mandate to: save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises. This suggests that DG ECHO's presence is most crucial in certain contexts and situations. Where feasible, therefore, DG ECHO should withdraw from contexts where these core areas of its mandate no longer require funding, or where they require less and less. This should be accompanied by a clear strategy. This strategy should include a defined approach towards sustainability through resilience and LRRD strategies, including a work plan, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, key actions and available funding.

Resilience and LRRD are already embedded in EU interventions, but these should be clearly linked to DG ECHO's sustainability approach and communicated as such. In addition, such strategies should be further strengthened and adopted systematically in EU funded actions where the context allows, for example through the development of guidelines, specific checks in project proposals, setting aside a share of the budget to relevant activities.

### **4. The EU should communicate more pro-actively and explicitly the constraints associated with strategic programming and funding decisions towards its staff, including the field network, but also its framework partners and other external stakeholders**

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the EU needs assessment process and resulting budgetary and programming decisions are of high quality, robust and participatory, reflecting several improvements to the methodology and the needs assessment process implemented in recent years – some of which are still ongoing.

However, to address the perception that its funding decisions are politicised and increase the understanding of the funding choices that have to be made given the resources available for humanitarian aid, the EU should communicate more explicitly and strongly the constraints associated with strategic programming and budgetary decisions, using the following messages:

- The EU funding alone will never be enough to address all the humanitarian needs identified by the field network and perceived by the framework partners around the various humanitarian crises around the world;
- The EU is already a leading humanitarian aid donor and makes the process of its decision-making transparent by publishing the underlying information in the public domain (however, there would be benefit in presenting this in a clearer manner than how it is presented on today);
- The mere activity of determining which regions and countries should have priority in terms of EU funding over others, in situations where the needs levels are the same / similar, is by its nature a policy decision even though fully needs based.

**5. DG ECHO should adapt its management and monitoring systems to make them more suitable to analyse the effectiveness and value for money of its actions**

This would respond to various calls to increasingly and better use of existing data to drive effectiveness and value for money in the humanitarian system as a whole (GB), in the EU in general (Better Regulation guidelines) and within DG ECHO. A lot of information is already readily available from DG ECHO, but gaps have been identified (1) in how DG ECHO could use these data to inform its choices and activities; and (2) in DG ECHO's effectiveness assessment framework. However, any adaptations made should also take account of the simplification agenda as well as the GB commitments around greater transparency and the harmonisation of reporting requirements.

## **1 Introduction**

This is the final report prepared for the *Comprehensive evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian aid, 2012-2016*. The evaluation was launched by the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in October 2016. The work is being undertaken by ICF with inputs from experts in the fields of humanitarian assistance and evaluation.

### **1.1 Objectives and scope of the evaluation**

The overall objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the European Union (EU) humanitarian aid actions, implemented by the European Commission (referred to as the Commission in the rest of the document) via DG ECHO during the period 2012-2016, i.e. how well it has exercised its role as a donor and the results achieved in different crisis contexts during the above-mentioned period. This includes both the policy and implementation frameworks put in place by DG ECHO for humanitarian aid, as well as delivery of this aid. As stated in the Terms of Reference the purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive, external, and independent evaluation using as basis the evaluation provisions of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR) and of the Financial Regulation in relation to economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and
- Provide inputs for future improvements of actions and approaches in this field on the basis of lessons learned from past experiences and in view of recent global developments. The key developments to take into account include the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Grand Bargain (GB), recent reports on aid delivery by the EU, such as the recommendations by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) concerning the Great Lakes region and recent challenges to humanitarian aid delivery, such as the multiplication of protracted and complex crises and the occurrence of humanitarian crises in middle class countries.

The scope of the evaluation covers all humanitarian aid actions funded by the EU via DG ECHO. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the EU Aid Volunteers (EUAV) initiative are out of scope of this evaluation but are considered under the coherence section of the report. The new Regulation on the provision of emergency support within the EU<sup>5</sup> is also out of the scope of this evaluation.

### **1.2 The intervention logic for the EU humanitarian aid activities**

#### **1.2.1 Our approach to intervention logic**

A well-developed intervention logic and theory of change is a precondition for undertaking a sound theory-based evaluation. In the framework of ex-post evaluations, intervention logic and theory of change are used to:

- Provide the conceptual framework for the evaluation and make sure there is a common understanding of this framework;
- Verify that the original theory of change (if one existed) did occur based on the available evidence;
- Test the ex-ante causal hypothesis (if they were formulated);
- Identify whether factors which were not identified ex-ante had an impact on how the intervention played out and had an impact; and
- Assess the effectiveness of the intervention as it allows to clearly map out the objectives of an intervention and its eventual impacts.

This being said it should also be noted that while intervention logics are useful tools they are by nature simplistic and linear and in some ways not suited to the complexity of humanitarian aid interventions, especially if these are considered in their entirety as is the case with this comprehensive evaluation.

Based on the breadth of the humanitarian aid activities to be evaluated and following discussions with the Steering Group of this evaluation, the evaluation team developed two theories of change, distinguishing between the following two broad functions of the EU as a donor, namely (1) responding to humanitarian needs; and (2) undertaking advocacy, coordination and policy development. These are high level theories aimed at capturing the essence of what the EU is seeking to achieve and how; rather than the detail. Specific intervention logics have also been developed for the sectors and themes covered by rapid evaluations – see separated 0 for the detailed rapid evaluations.

In line with John Mayne's approach<sup>6</sup>, the theories of change presented in section 1.2.2 below focus on changes that can be expected to occur over time as a consequence of the EU's actions; there is no artificial labelling of "outputs", "results", "outcomes" and "impacts".

The theories of change explicitly show:

- The assumptions and risks underlying the causal linkages; and
- The external factors that could influence the nature and scale of changes occurring.

### 1.2.2 Theory of change

The two theories of change presented in respectively sections 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2 below show the two key aspects of DG ECHO's mandate, namely:

1. **Responding to humanitarian needs** – which comprises two elements: (a) providing immediate / short term emergency response in the form of life- saving assistance, protection and / or crucial basic services to populations affected by crisis; (b) building resilience over the medium to long-term, ensuring stability and creating a nexus to development reduced dependence on further (external) aid.
2. **Undertaking advocacy, coordination and policy development** – which covers actions aimed at influencing and shaping the global humanitarian system and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid.

Each of these is further discussed below.

#### 1.2.2.1 Responding to humanitarian needs

##### Summary of the theory of change

The first theory of change, presented in 1.2.1 below, covers DG ECHO's 'core' functions. These are driven by Article 214 of the TFEU and the objectives of the EU humanitarian aid policies as set out in Article 2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR)<sup>7</sup>. These original objectives focus on: (1) the provision of assistance and relief; (2) ensuring the accessibility of the aid provided, also to those affected by longer-lasting crises; (3) the management of the consequences of population movements; and (4) the protection of affected communities.

The HAR also states that long-term objectives should be taken into account where possible. In this sense, humanitarian aid objectives also cover the provision of short term rehabilitation and reconstruction work and preparedness actions. This sets the first steps towards the resilience and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) objectives which were introduced by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid<sup>8</sup> (referred to as 'the Consensus' in the rest of the document), by helping countries and communities recover and withstand future stresses and shocks and addressing root causes of humanitarian crises<sup>9</sup>.

The two different elements in the first theory of change, i.e. the immediate / short-term emergency response and the medium to long-term resilience building actions are expected to give rise to different types of change. The immediate and short-term emergency support consists of actions to save lives, to provide crucial basic services and to protect the affected populations, in particular the most vulnerable ones. These actions will help to improve the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of those affected by a disaster, which in turn will help to reduce mortality, suffering and morbidity and improve dignity of life. The vulnerability of the population is also reduced.

The medium to longer term support provided by the EU consists of the provision of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience actions, as well as advocacy, awareness-raising and

capacity building, which are expected to increase the capacity, skills and knowledge of beneficiaries and the wider community, as well as bring concrete socio-economic improvements, aimed at achieving both systemic and behavioural change which can ultimately be expected to help reduce mortality, suffering and morbidity and improve dignity of life.

Some key assumptions around this theory of change for both the short and longer term functions were that the EU would be able to target its aid timely and effectively, based on needs assessments and coordination with other donors and implementing agencies. This assumption is linked to the second theory of change discussed below which focuses on the internal and external efforts made by DG ECHO to improve the effectiveness of aid and of the global humanitarian system.

It is assumed that the right partners are available on the ground and that there is access to local communities which are receptive to the funded actions. In particular, for the medium-to longer term support, it is assumed that some nexus to development actions can be established and that receptive government structures are in place in host countries which respect international humanitarian law (IHL). Factors which put at risk the achievement of the wider objectives relate to a lack of humanitarian access, security concerns, a worsening of the crisis and delays in the implementation of EU funded actions.

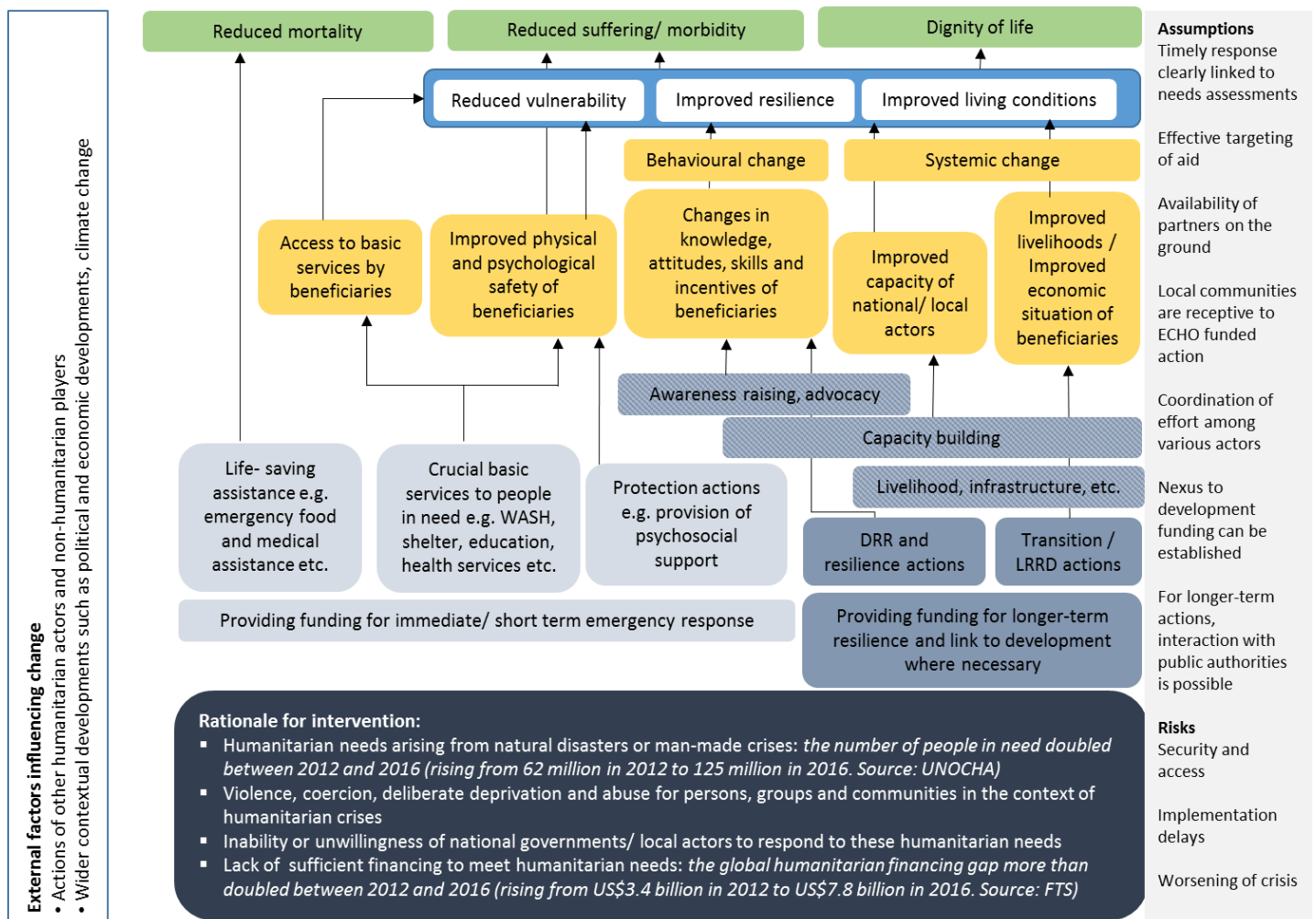
Another factor influencing the EU humanitarian aid funding allocation is the extent to which a crisis is covered by other donors. The Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) carried out by DG ECHO identifies serious humanitarian crisis situations where the affected populations receive little or no international aid. These crises are characterised by low media coverage, a lack of donor interest (as measured through aid per capita) and a weak political commitment to solve the crisis, resulting in an insufficient presence of humanitarian actors.

### **Hypotheses of the evaluation with regard to the first theory of change**

At the onset of the evaluation it was assumed that, due to both internal and external actions, a degree of 'shift' would be identified during the evaluation 2012-2016 period from shorter to longer term actions, both in terms of 'political' focus and budget allocations. The external factors driving the shift would include the growing number of protracted crises which require transition planning, and the growing awareness that crises will keep happening, notably due to the impact of climate change, unless local communities are better prepared to deal with them and more resilient. The internal factors would relate to commitments to global political developments around for example LRRD but also to the greater emphasis on improving the effectiveness of aid overall, most recently through the GB commitments. However, on the other hand, the sheer size and impact of Syria crisis could in part offset this given that most funding would be required for response actions.

It was also expected that there would be increased allocations to forgotten crises throughout the evaluation period, mostly driven by their growing number, as well as the EU disengaging from some regions either because crises were resolved or because they have moved at least partly to a development stage, to instead focus on countries / regions with higher needs. It was also expected that the Syria crisis would have had a big impact on funding allocations, due to its large scale and complex nature.

Figure 3. Theory of change: The EU's response to humanitarian needs



Source: ICF, 2017.

### 1.2.2.2 Undertaking advocacy, coordination and policy development

#### Summary of the theory of change

The second theory of change, presented in Figure 4 below, concerns the EU's role in influencing and shaping the global humanitarian system and improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid.

This role is in part born out of 'necessity', as set out in the rationale below, given for example the increased breaches of IHL and other relevant international laws, a lack of a joined up approach between humanitarian actors and relevant non-humanitarian actors and the growing complexity and scale of humanitarian needs<sup>10</sup>, as well as the changing nature of emergencies<sup>11</sup>. It also illustrates DG ECHO's political positioning, following its earlier establishment as a Directorate General, the appointment of a Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection and the subsequent introduction of Article 214 in the TFEU, as well as DG ECHO's desire, or perhaps realisation of the need, to play a bigger role in steering and making contributions to global humanitarian policy development and practices.

The second theory of change is based on some key policy developments kick-started with the December 2012 consultation "The Union's humanitarian aid: Fit for purpose?", the joint work on the Transformative Agenda, the evaluation of the Consensus in 2014 and the EU active participation in international forums on humanitarian aid such as the WHS and the GB.

This theory of change consists of two different elements, the first one reflecting DG ECHO's 'internal' efforts to in particular increase the impact of the humanitarian aid it delivers and the second one reflecting DG ECHO's external actions to impact on the global humanitarian system and the delivery of humanitarian aid by others.

To achieve these two main objectives, DG ECHO introduced some internal reorganisations (e.g. into differently structured Directorates) and actively worked to better understand, through research, monitoring, feedback loops, lessons learned reviews, etc., what works best both for the internal and external efforts.

Specific *internal* actions taken on the basis of the above include in particular, during the evaluation period, continuous adjustments to DG ECHO's needs assessment process (e.g. INFORM and the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF)) which informed budget allocations and in 2015 a move towards regional versus country-specific Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs), underpinned by staff training, consultation with partners and other stakeholders as well as awareness raising and capacity building of partners (e.g. in the area of protection). These actions are expected to help make internal staff better equipped to manage the change and ensure the involvement of external stakeholders to support this process too, resulting in improvements to programming, partner and project selection and field capacity. They also contribute to the development of joint strategies and other initiatives with non-DG ECHO stakeholders, for example with UK Department for International Development (DFID) on the Sahel Strategy, with DG for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) for the Joint Development Strategies, with several parts of the EU in the EU Trust Funds (EUTFs) and with Member States as part of External Assigned Revenues (ExAR).

Together the actions and the changes they bring about are expected to result in DG ECHO partners which are more effective and relevant on the ground and a better coordination of actions on behalf of Member States or with them, as well as better coordination with other donors, UN agencies, the UCPM, etc. It would also in the longer term contribute to a further strengthened needs-based approach to aid delivery, enhanced coherence of aid and better links to other EU policies, ultimately resulting in more effective humanitarian aid.

Specific *external* actions taken include DG ECHO's engagement with other stakeholders in the humanitarian space, by leading on / participating in relevant events, as well as preparing initiatives or supporting those initiated by others and undertaking advocacy at different levels, from beneficiary countries to international forums. Like the internal actions, these result in DG ECHO engaging in joint actions with other stakeholders, but also in DG ECHO producing specific policies and guidance (e.g. on cash, on protection mainstreaming) and making commitments to wider international initiatives such as the WHS and the GB. In turn, these should allow for some tangible changes in terms of improvements to key themes such as DRR, LRRD, more effective DG ECHO partners and, also importantly, uptake of the recommended practices by other donors and implementing agencies.

This would contribute to creating a better aid continuum and enhanced policy leadership by DG ECHO, ultimately both benefiting the effectiveness of humanitarian aid actions in general and increased impact on the global humanitarian system.

Some key assumptions around this theory of change were that DG ECHO would have the capacity and ability, in terms of staff 'ownership', resources, skills and competences to implement both the internal changes as well as fully commit to the external changes. DG ECHO would also need to be perceived as 'policy leader' in the humanitarian sector, 'lead by example' especially on issues it wants to put on the agenda to ensure wider buy-in and remain consistent and clear in its ambitions. Factors which put at risk the achievement of the wider objectives relate to possible political and contextual changes which could affect the direction taken, cooperation and coordination issues, an overall lack of capacity or incentives to implement change at all levels and low engagement of external stakeholders.

### **Hypotheses of the evaluation for the second theory of change**

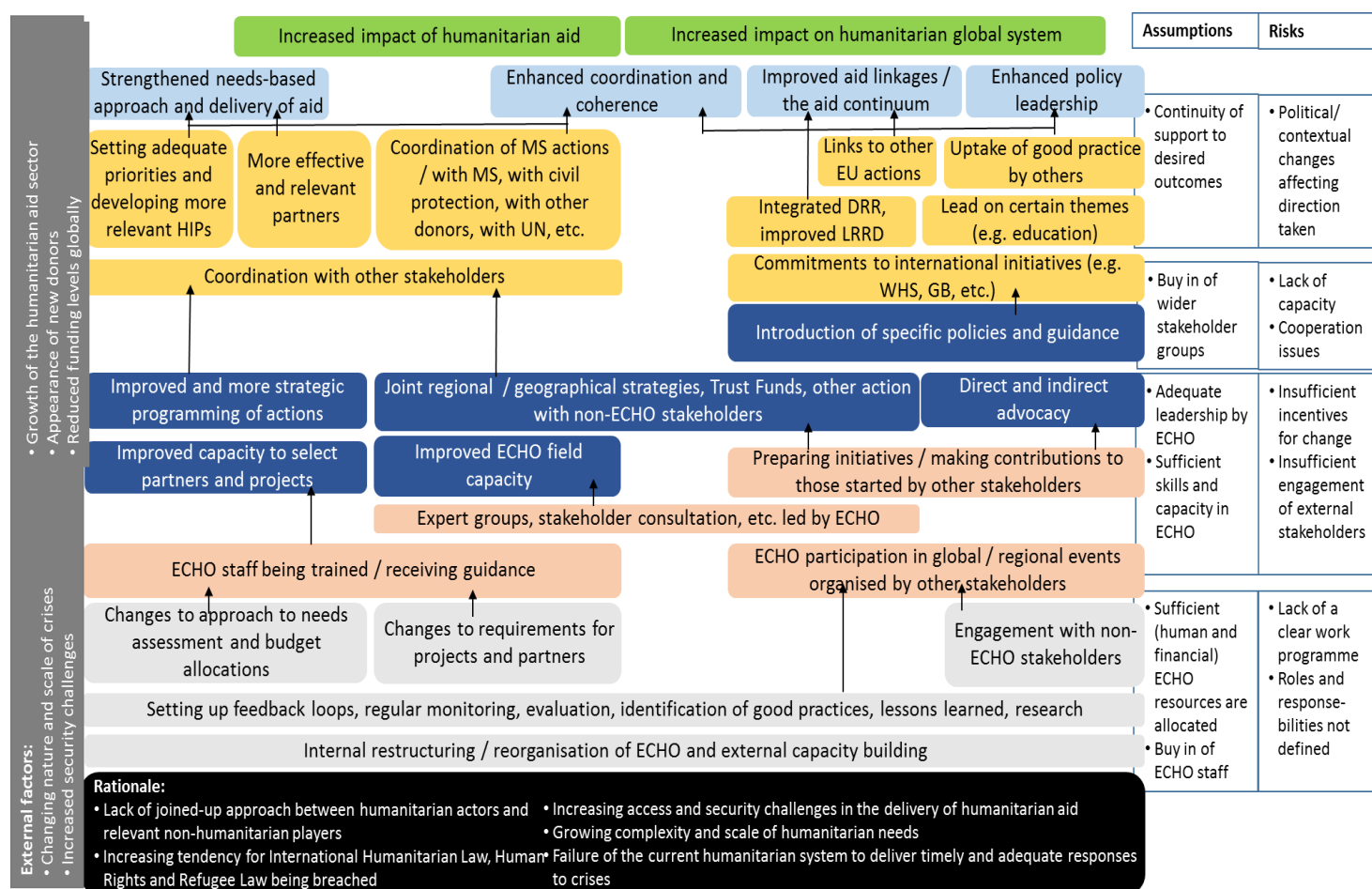
At the onset of the evaluation, it was expected that DG ECHO would have invested resources, at various intervals during the period under review, into data collection and analysis of what worked and what could be improved, in terms of internal organisation, funding practices and implementation of aid, in order to have an evidence-base upon which change could be developed, designed and applied in practice.

It was further expected that there would have been a consistent push by DG ECHO to both realise the internal changes and to engage in the external actions. This would have started with a degree of 'internal' awareness raising and capacity building to ensure that the full staff

base would be on board, both at HQ and field levels, and have the ability to become drivers of change. This would not only include mastering the internal changes but also gain expertise in the policies and practices that DG ECHO wishes to promote beyond its own funded actions.

DG ECHO would also be expected to invest efforts in engaging with a wide range of external actors, including UN agencies, Red Cross and other International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGOs), Member States, third-country donors, but also with those within the European institutions including in particular DEVCO and the European External Action Service (EEAS), but potentially also with others including the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), the Directorate General for Climate Action (CLIMA), etc. Here too substantial inputs would be required in terms of awareness raising, advocacy and ongoing dialogue.

Figure 4. Theory of change: DG ECHO's internal operations and its role in advocacy, coordination and policy development



Source: ICF, 2017.

### 1.3 Methodological approach and validity of the evaluation results

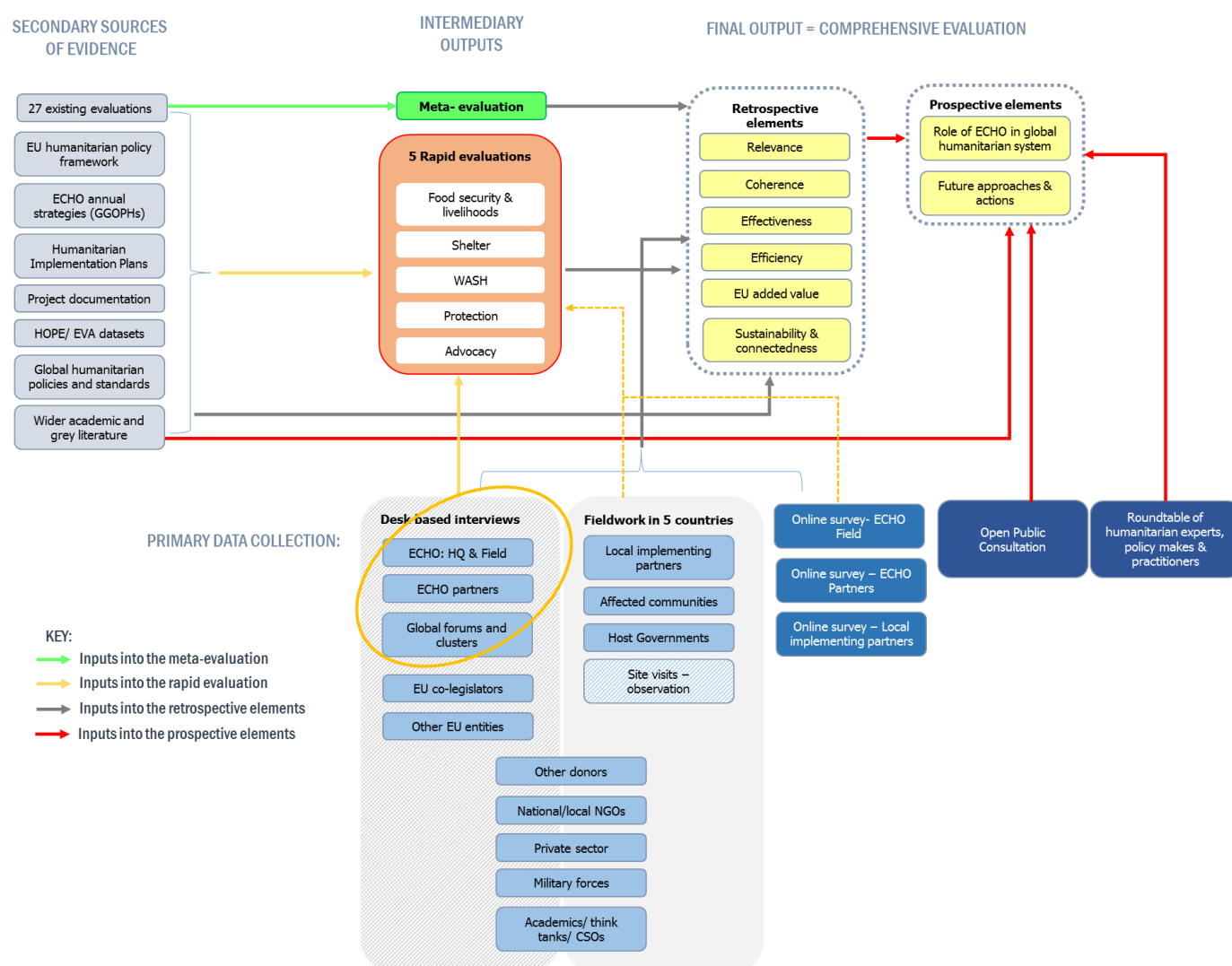
The overall approach developed for this comprehensive evaluation is illustrated in Figure 5 below. It illustrates how the different evaluation approaches link to each other and which research tools and sources of information were used to inform each of these approaches. Complementary research methods were used to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected and to provide the basis for cross-verification, corroboration and triangulation of the evaluation results. The vested interests of different stakeholder groups were taken into account to address potential bias and to ensure objectivity.

Overall, based on the review of the methods and tools presented below, it is considered that the evaluation results are valid, as in the vast majority of cases, they are confirmed by multiple sources of evidence. However, as with any evaluation, there were limitations to the methodologies and research tools applied. This section provides an overview of the different



evaluation approaches and research tools together with an assessment of their limitations and strength and the measures put in place to mitigate these and ensure the validity of the evaluation results.

Figure 5. Overview of linkages between the evaluation questions, the types of evaluations, the research tools and the stakeholder groups consulted during the evaluation



Source: ICF, 2017.

### 1.3.1 Four evaluation approaches for one comprehensive evaluation

As illustrated in Figure 5 above, the methodology put in place for this comprehensive evaluation combines three different clusters evaluation approaches:

- One **meta-evaluation**, which consisted in a meta-synthesis of the 27 evaluations completed by DG ECHO during the evaluation period. This meta-synthesis implied the following steps: review of the existing evaluations; development of a preliminary synthesis of the findings of existing evaluations; exploration of the relationships in the data both within and between the different evaluation studies; and assessment of the robustness of the synthesis. This last step consisted of an assessment of the overall completeness and applicability of the evidence; the quality of the evidence; and potential biases in the synthesis processes. These different assessments were also informed by DG ECHO’s Evaluation Steering Group, which reviewed the preliminary results of the meta-evaluation. The meta-evaluation was one of the key sources of information to inform the retrospective and prospective parts of the comprehensive evaluation. The limitations of the meta-evaluation and the measures put in place to mitigate them are presented in Table 1 below. The full meta-evaluation is presented in details in the separated 0.

- Five **rapid evaluations** of dedicated themes and sectors. Rapid evaluations are not a full-scale evaluation as they are shorter and more focussed than a full-scale evaluation, but more systematic and rigorous than ad-hoc data collection and analysis. The selection of themes and sectors was agreed with the DG ECHO Evaluation Steering Group and based on two main considerations: (1) financial / strategic importance of the sector or theme; and (2) addressing gaps in evidence base. A detailed mapping of existing evaluations against the EU humanitarian aid funding by sector and country was carried out to support this exercise. This resulted in the selection of the three sectors (i.e. Food security and livelihoods, Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and Shelter and settlements) and two themes (i.e. Advocacy and Protection). For each rapid evaluation a dedicated conceptual framework was developed including an intervention logic and simplified evaluation framework. The five rapid evaluations were based on the following research tools: project mapping; dedicated desk-based review; dedicated round of interview with key stakeholders (five to seven per rapid evaluation); four field reports; three surveys. They are included in the separated 0 of this report.
- A **retrospective evaluation**, which consists in the answer to the evaluation questions identified by DG ECHO in the terms of reference. It is based on the detailed evaluation framework developed for this evaluation and informed by the meta-evaluation, rapid evaluation and all research tools put in place during the evaluation including a dedicated cost-effectiveness assessment framework briefly presented in Box 1 below and presented in details in 0. An Open Public Consultation (OPC) was also completed as part of this evaluation. The process put in place to develop this retrospective evaluation included the synthesis, analysis and triangulation of the evaluation evidence gathered during the study. The final results of the retrospective evaluation are presented in section 3 of this report.

#### **Box 1. Cost effectiveness assessment framework**

The cost-effectiveness assessment framework started from the following evaluation question: To what extent did DG ECHO achieve cost-effectiveness in its response? In line with ADE guidance, the framework assesses the following two dimensions: (1) cost-effectiveness of DG ECHO itself; and (2) cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions. This framework closely follows the ADE guidance but some improvements were also brought to the guidance. Specifically, decision rules were added for each indicator to make the process of drawing evaluative judgement clear, transparent and as objective as possible.

- A **prospective evaluation**, which considers the implications of the changing context and landscape of humanitarian aid delivery for DG ECHO's activities, taking into account key developments at global and EU level (such as the WHS, the Grand Bargain) as well as the evolution in DG ECHO's own policy and operational framework. The objective of the prospective evaluation was double, i.e.: provide input to improve DG ECHO's future actions on the basis of recent global developments; and provide input to any further reflections on possible improvements to the EU's humanitarian aid activities. The prospective evaluation was informed by the scoping interviews completed at the beginning of the evaluation and the third round of interviews completed at the end of the evaluation to reflect on the identified trends; dedicated desk research; and the results of the retrospective evaluation.

Table 1. Limitations to evaluation approaches applied

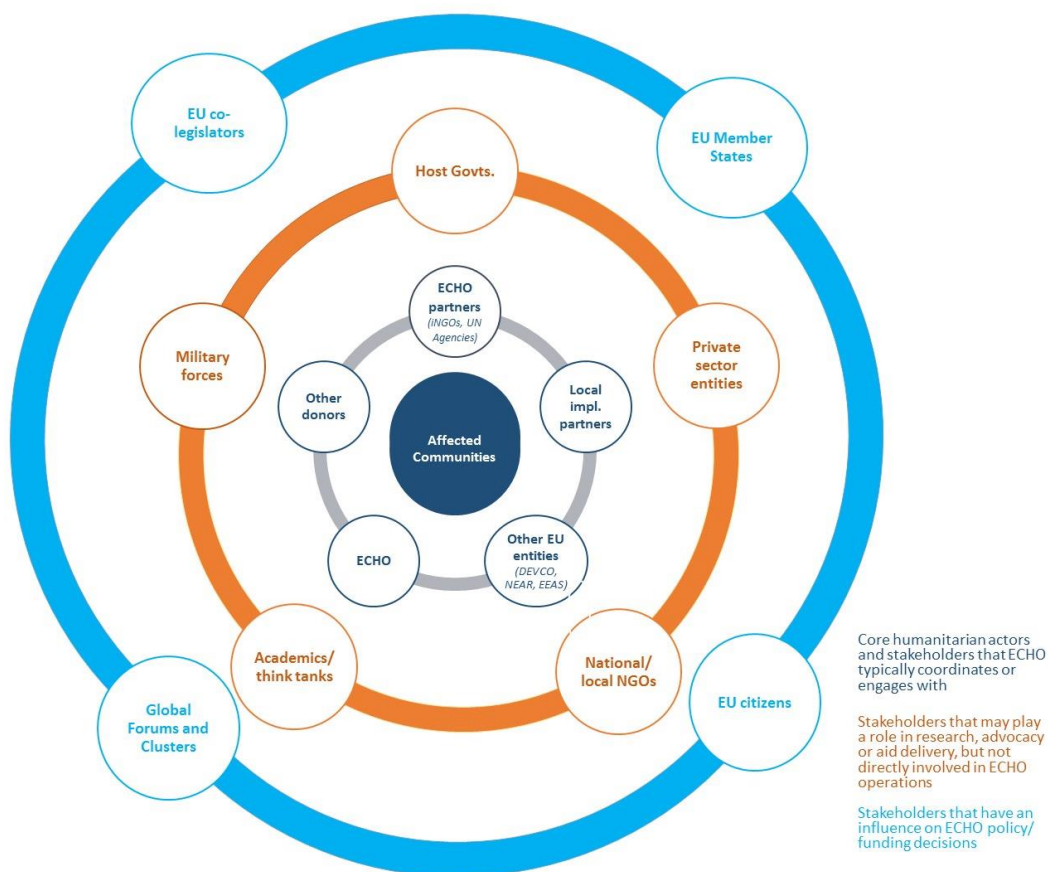
Approach	Limitations	Measures put in place to mitigate the limitations
Meta-evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation questions and indicators to be answered by this evaluation were not equally covered by the existing evaluations leading to gaps in information.</li> <li>It was generally challenging to provide an assessment of trends / progress made in certain areas during the evaluation period as mixed and sometimes conflicting views were reported in evaluations covering similar periods.</li> <li>It was challenging to link successful outcomes to particular sectors or geographies, as patterns / trends could not be identified. The review rather identified a number of general factors improving/hindering successful approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information gaps identified by the meta-evaluation informed the design of the different research tools used during this evaluation.</li> <li>The meta-evaluation was used as one information source among several others informing the answers to the evaluation questions. The elements of answers identified in the meta-evaluation were triangulated with these other sources in order to identify patterns / trends.</li> </ul>
Rapid evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rapid evaluations are not full-scale evaluation and are based on a limited evidence base, putting limitations on their level of details and complexity.</li> <li>The rapid evaluations only cover a sample of the evaluation questions and were based on a dedicated but lighter version of the evaluation framework, implying that they don't provide an equal level of information about all the evaluation questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of the five rapid evaluations, four benefited from a detailed review from DG ECHO's experts in the subject matter. This review was mainly used to ensure that the evaluation team had not missed any important development or relevant issue.</li> </ul>
Retrospective evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The large scope of the evaluation and its strategic nature makes it difficult to fit all relevant information in a section not exceeding 80 pages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation has to be read in conjunction with its objectives and scope in order to understand its structure and content.</li> <li>The Annexes to the report provide all the details supporting the findings presented in section 3.</li> </ul>
Prospective evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vast number of EU commitments to address the WHS created challenges in summarizing the EU overall efforts in this area.</li> <li>Lack of information on progress made in achieving some of the WHS and GB commitments, as some documentation is not publicly available.</li> <li>The proliferation of sources and reports on the changing nature of humanitarian interventions created some challenges in summarising the main issues at stake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis is structured by main core commitment areas instead of individual commitments.</li> <li>Commission, interviewees and experts mitigated gaps in this area.</li> <li>The study team focussed the analysis on the challenges and issues, which might be relevant to DG ECHO and its mandate</li> </ul>

### 1.3.2 Research tools used to inform the different evaluation approaches

The evaluation approaches presented above were informed by a series of research tools specifically developed and tailored for the purpose of this evaluation. The objective of these research tools was to capture the views and input of a series of stakeholders relevant for the EU humanitarian aid activities. They were informed by a detailed consultation strategy covering the main groups of stakeholders presented in Figure 6. As illustrated, beneficiaries or communities affected by humanitarian crises are at the centre of the EU's actions. Other relevant stakeholders can broadly be categorised as follows:

- Core humanitarian actors and stakeholders that DG 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 DG ECHO operations. Some of these groups may be involved in the delivery of EU funded actions as local implementing partners in which case they would fall under the first category of stakeholders;
- Stakeholders that have an influence on DG ECHO policy choices and/or funding decisions.

Figure 6. EU'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>.

A range of methods and tools were used to ensure a comprehensive and well-balanced consultation process. Table 2 provides an overview of the methods that were used to consult each stakeholder group. The choice of specific methods and tools was based on the following factors: the size and diversity of the stakeholder group, the nature of information we expected to collect from each group and the expected interest, influence, impact, awareness and accessibility of each stakeholder group.

Table 2. Overview of research tool used to collect primary data from different stakeholders' groups

	Online surveys	Semi-structured interviews	Open Public Consultation (OPC)	Fieldwork interviews, focus groups	Validation workshop
Affected communities				✓	
DG ECHO staff– HQ		✓			✓
DG ECHO staff – Field	✓	✓		✓	
Other EU entities		✓		✓	
Other donors		✓	✓	✓	
DG ECHO framework partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local implementing partners	✓		✓	✓	
Host governments			✓	✓	
Academics and think tanks		✓	✓		✓
Private sector			✓		
Military forces				✓	
European Parliament		✓*			
European Council		✓			
Member States		✓			✓
EU citizens			✓		
Global forums and clusters		✓			

Note: \* The evaluation team reached out to different members of the European Parliament but none of them accepted to discuss this evaluation.

In addition to these primary data collection tools the evaluation team also relied on more classic secondary data collection tools including:

- **Literature review:** a large sample of literature was reviewed and analysed to inform this evaluation including policy documents identified through desk research or communicated by DG ECHO, DG ECHO annual General Guidelines on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid (GGOPHA), a sample of HIPs, global humanitarian aid policies and standards, relevant publications from a range of academic and civil society authors. Relevant qualitative and quantitative information was extracted and used in the analysis.
- **Project mapping:** a sample of 183 funded actions were selected and mapped to inform all the evaluation criteria. The mapping was based on the FicheOp and Single Form associated with the each funded action.
- **Data analysis:** A series of databases were analysed to inform the answers to different evaluation questions. The main databases were: the EVA database managed by DG ECHO and the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database managed by UNOCHA. 0 provides more details about how these databases were used to inform the evaluation.

Table 3. Overview of the research tools and the strength of the evidence collected

Research tools	Description	Strength of the collected evidence
<b>Secondary data collection tools</b>		
Literature review	Review of a large sample of secondary sources	<b>Strong quality.</b> The literature was mainly identified through a 'snowball' search, based on the DG ECHO website, internet searches, recommendations by the experts involved in the study and stakeholders interviewed. The large scope of the evaluation and the extensive literature available prevented the evaluation team to identify all the relevant literature but the evaluation team is nevertheless confident to have captured the most relevant documents.
Project mapping	183 projects mapped based on a sampling including	<b>Medium to strong quality.</b> This is mainly due to the difficulty to extract data from the Fiche Op and Single Form in a structured way given the nature of these documents (i.e. relatively long documents with detailed description, data not always recorded systematically and in the same location within the document by different framework partners). A detailed hand book was developed by the evaluation team to ensure consistency of analysis among the research team.
<b>Primary data collection tools</b>		
Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DG ECHO HQ staff: 27</li> <li>• DG ECHO field staff: 8</li> <li>• Other EU entities: 5</li> <li>• DG ECHO framework partners: 18</li> <li>• Member States: 5</li> <li>• Academics: 2</li> <li>• Global forums and clusters: 8</li> </ul>	<b>Strong quality.</b> 73 semi-structured interviews were completed involving one to four interviewees per interviewing session. The interviews were organised in three rounds reflecting the stages of the evaluation and the data needed at each stage (i.e. scoping interviews with DG ECHO HQ staff and a few other DGs to identify the key issues to be tackled during the evaluation; interviews with sectoral experts to inform the rapid evaluations; a third round of interviews organised at the end of the evaluation to validate the emerging findings, discuss the prospective evaluation and fill in potential data gaps). 0 presents the detailed list of interviewed stakeholders.
Field missions <i>Interviews, focus groups, project visits</i>	Three field missions covering four countries were conducted during the evaluation (DRC, Tanzania, Myanmar and Mauritania). 0 provides the field reports associated with these missions. They include a detailed overview of the approach adopted to conduct the field missions and the stakeholders interviewed.	<b>Strong quality.</b> The field missions lasted two to three weeks and allowed the evaluation team to meet with a large number of stakeholders including end beneficiaries and local implementing partners. Representatives from the host governments were only consulted to a limited extent given the context of the visited countries, they were only consulted in Tanzania and Mauritania. The main limitation to the field work was the tense security context in some of the visited countries (notably DRC and Myanmar), which limited the scope of the visit. But this was well taken into account and did not jeopardise the strong quality of the evidence collected.
Survey of DG ECHO field staff	130 responses on a sample of 225 (58% response rate)	<b>Strong quality.</b> Representative sample of respondents composed of both experienced and new staff and well spread geographically with over representation of countries hosting a regional office (i.e. Kenya, Jordan, Turkey and Senegal). The profile of the respondents to the survey is presented in 0.

Research tools	Description	Strength of the collected evidence
Survey of framework partners	361 responses on a sample of 900 (40% response rate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Strong quality.</b> Representative sample of respondents from 88 different organisations (some overrepresentation: Oxfam, CARE, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Save the Children). Good geographical spread with 80 different countries represented (36% based in Europe, 64% based in the third countries). High level of experience with EU funded actions with 83% of respondents involved in more than one project during the evaluation period. Covers all sectors of interventions covered by DG ECHO. The profile of the respondents to the survey is presented in 0.</li> </ul>
Survey of implementing partners	103 responses on a sample of 450 (23% response rate)	<b>Medium to Strong quality.</b> A good sample representing 74 different local implementing partners (overrepresentation: CARE network, Islamic Relief, Red Cross national organisations). Good geographical spread covering 49 countries but strong overrepresentation of Pakistan (12%), Ethiopia (8%), Nepal (7%) and Sudan (7%). Good level of experience with EU funded actions with 63% of respondents involved in more than one project during the evaluation period. Covers all the sectors of interventions covered by DG ECHO. The profile of the respondents to the survey is presented in 0.
OPC	The OPC was open from July to November 2017 (14 weeks in total) and gathered 38 responses (30 responses from organisations and 8 responses from individuals).	<b>Medium to strong quality.</b> The OPC allowed to collect additional feedback on the EU humanitarian aid in a structured format but also in the form of position papers. The limited number of response however did not allow us to perform advanced analysis of the responses, e.g. in terms of geographical or sectoral patterns.
Validation workshop	The validation workshop was organised on 14 December 2017 and gathered a group of 18 stakeholders representing the framework partners (including INGOs, UN agencies and ICRC representatives), the EU Member States, DG ECHO and external experts.	<b>Strong quality.</b> The sample of stakeholders who took part to the validation workshop was representative of DG ECHO's main stakeholders groups (i.e. 3 ECHO staff, 10 framework partners (4 UN, 2 ICRC, 4 INGOs, 1 academic, 2 EU Member States and 2 networks of NGOs – the full list of participating organisations is provided in 0) and the set-up of the workshop allowed the evaluation team to collect very good feedback on the key findings of the evaluation. The workshop also allowed to have a detailed discussion on the five recommendations stemming out of the evaluation and test their relevance, feasibility, practical implementation and desirability. This was a key source of information to revise the draft recommendations.

## 1.4 The structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a snapshot of the EU's humanitarian aid activities during the evaluation period;
- Section 3 presents the evaluation findings to all the evaluation questions in the following order: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and added value. For each evaluation question, a short table summarising the judgement criteria, the indicators and our key conclusions is included;
- Section 4 presents the results of the prospective evaluation in the form of a 'think piece';
- Section 5 presents the five strategic recommendations stemming out of this evaluation together with a series of recommendations to operationalise them.

## 2 Snapshot of EU's humanitarian aid activities during the evaluation period

This section provides an overview of the EU humanitarian aid funded actions, over the period 2012-2016.

### 2.1 Total humanitarian aid funding 2012-2016

Over the evaluation period, the EU funded 3,816 individual actions via DG ECHO with a total value of EUR 7,400 million. The box below clarifies the source of information which has been used in this instance and the other sources used elsewhere in the report to look at EU Humanitarian aid.

#### Box 2. EU humanitarian aid from different angles

The evaluation team used different sources of data on EU humanitarian aid funding to serve different purposes and analysis. A clear reference to the exact source is provided in all cases.

The main source used in the evaluation is the **EVA database** extracted by DG ECHO from HOPE. It shows **contracted** amounts (i.e. amounts of contracts which have been signed by the framework partners). The main reason to use EVA is that it allows to do a granular analysis of the data, e.g. by sector.

In some cases, the evaluation presents **committed** amounts as per DG ECHO **budgetary data** (i.e. amounts available to DG ECHO as per Budget Execution summaries or Excel files directly provided by DG ECHO). The main advantage of this source of information is that it allows for an analysis of the source of funding and for making a distinction between different lines of the EU Budget (e.g. initial budget, reinforcements from the EAR, Heading 4 redeployments, reinforcements from the EDF) from other sources (e.g. external assigned revenues).

The third source of information used in the evaluation concerns the **allocated** amounts as per the **HIPs** documents (i.e. amounts allocated to specific HIPs). This has been used to analyse DG ECHO funding by objective (see e.g. Figure 16 and Figure 17) or to have a first indication of 2017 trend as 2017 data on contracted amounts is not yet available.

The evaluation team also used data extracted from the FTS database to put the EU humanitarian aid funding in perspectives of the global humanitarian aid funding. The limitation associated with the use of the FTS data are detailed in 0.

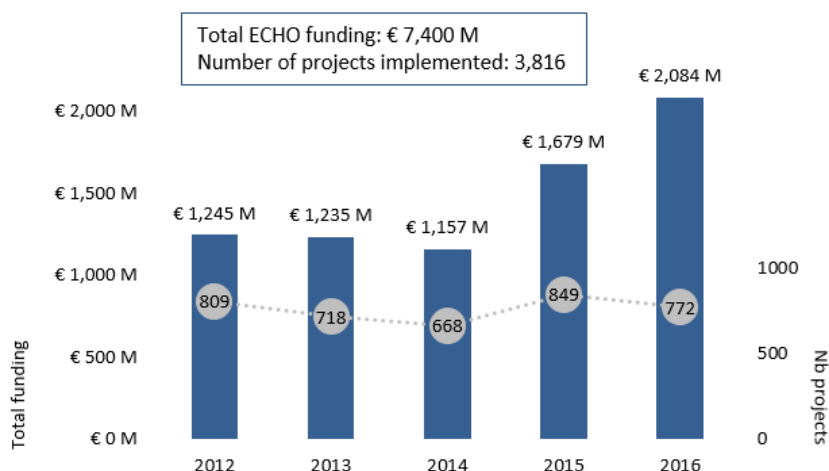
In general, committed amounts (if all sources are taken into account) are equal or superior to allocated amounts, themselves equal or superior to contracted amounts. Provided that sufficient time lag has elapsed for all amounts to be contracted and provided that the budget is implemented in full (all resources are contracted), the three indicators will have similar values.

As per Figure 7 below, the highest amount of aid was allocated in 2016 (EUR 2,084 million) while the lowest was in 2014 (EUR 1,157million). In 2016, DG ECHO signed fewer grants but



on average with a higher value – in fact 2016 was the year with the highest average funding per action (EUR 2.7 million) while 2012 had the lowest average of funding per action (EUR 1.5 million). In 2016, the average value was influenced by the Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer (MPCT) action “Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey”, worth EUR 338 million.

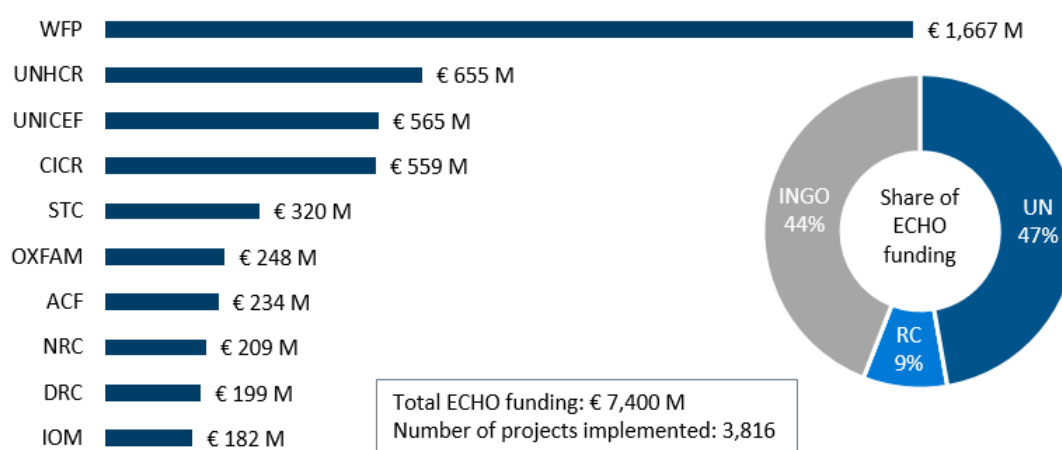
Figure 7. Total value and number of EU humanitarian aid funded actions in 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

In terms of partners, UN agencies received 47% of the total EUR 7,400 million funding over the evaluation period, 44% were received by INGOs and 9% by the Red Cross Family<sup>12</sup>. Individually, World Food Programme (WFP) received by far the highest amount of the funding (EUR 1,667 million or 22.5% of the total funding), followed by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (EUR 655 million or 9%), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (EUR 565 million or 7.6%), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (EUR 559 million or 7.5%) and Save the Children<sup>13</sup> (EUR 320 million or 4.3%) as illustrated in Figure 8.

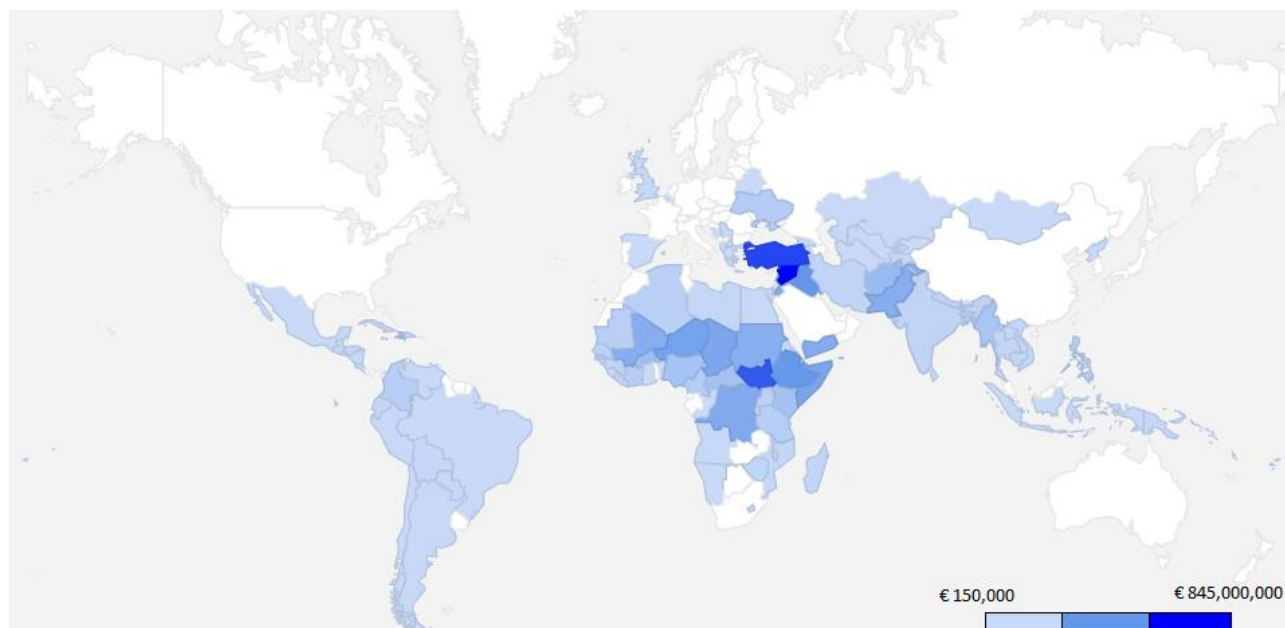
Figure 8. Top ten receiving partners, share of funding and number of implemented actions per type, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017. Note: STC (Save the Children), ACF (Action Contre la Faim), DRC (Danish Refugee Council).

## 2.2 EU humanitarian aid funding per country and region, 2012-2016

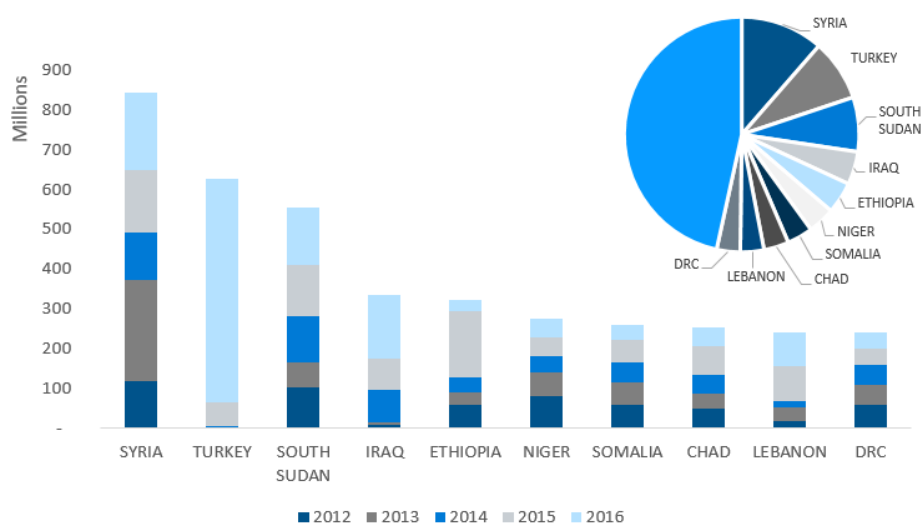
Figure 9. Total funding per country, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

EU funded humanitarian aid actions in 110 countries during the evaluation period but 53.3% of the total funding was allocated to the top ten beneficiary countries (Figure 10). The top three being Syria (EUR 844 million or 11.4% of the total funding), Turkey (EUR 625 million or 8.4%) and South Sudan (EUR 554 million or 7.5%).

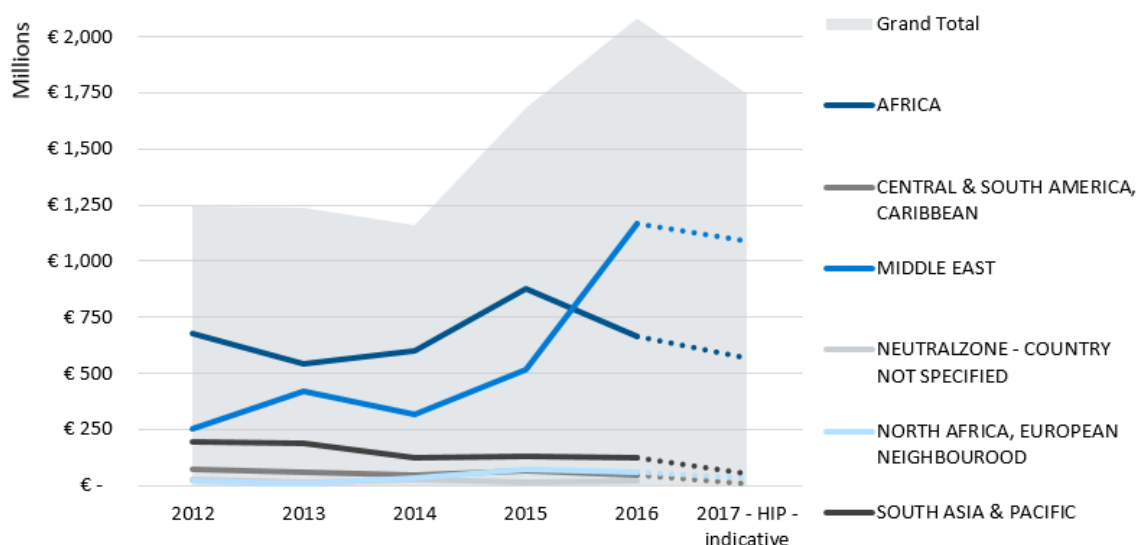
Figure 10. Evolution of funding to the top ten countries, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

As per Figure 11, the highest increase of funding in absolute figures was observed in the Middle East (from 2014 onwards), while the funding kept decreasing in regions of Central and South America, Caribbean and South Asia and Pacific.

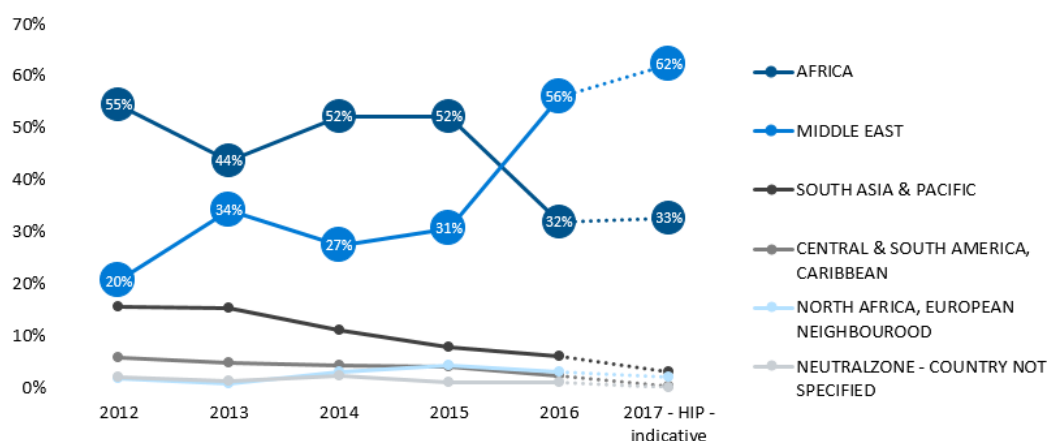
Figure 11. Evolution of EU humanitarian aid funding per region (based on regions defined by the HIP), 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017. Year 2017 is based on funding allocations from the HIPs 2017. Hence 2017 data is indicative.

Figure 12 shows the share of funding allocated annually to each region. The share of funding allocated to Africa has decreased from over half in 2011-2012 (respectively 53% and 55% of the total annual funding in 2011-2012, which can be considered as exceptional years due to the drought in the Sahel) to less than one third of the annual funding in 2016 and 2017 (32% and 33% respectively). As illustrated in Figure 11 the absolute level of funding allocated to Africa in 2012 and 2016 is however relatively similar, with a decrease observed in the 2017 HIP which has to be considered as indicative only.

Figure 12. Evolution of EU funding per region (share per year allocated to a specific region)

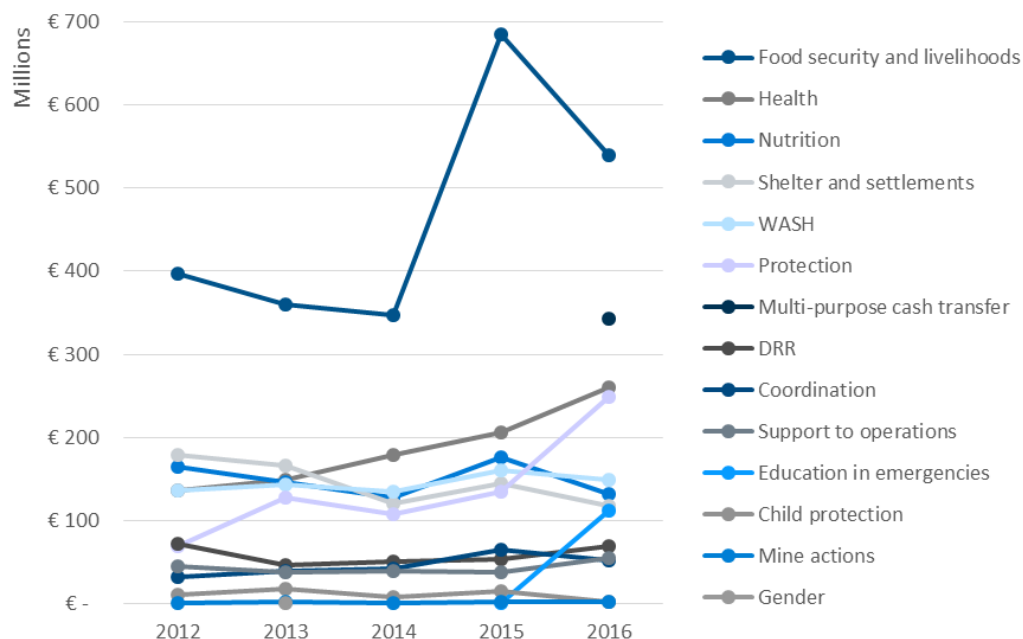


Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017. Year 2017 is based on funding allocations from the HIPs 2017. Hence 2017 data is indicative.

### 2.3 Overview of funding per sector, 2012-2016

In absolute numbers, health has been the only sector where the EU humanitarian aid funding has been continuously increasing over the entire evaluation period (Figure 13). Although the budget for food security and livelihoods (FSL) decreased in 2016, it still remained the most funded sector (EUR 539 million). In 2016 the newly introduced multi-purpose cash transfer received the second highest amount (EUR 343 million)<sup>14</sup> followed by health (EUR 260 million) and protection (EUR 248 million).

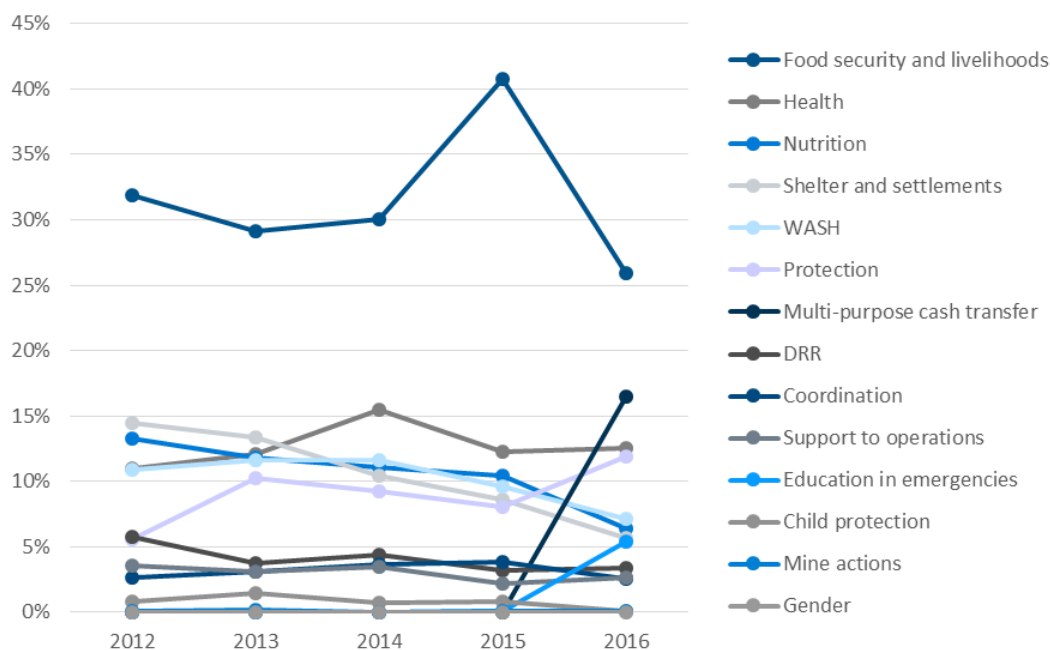
Figure 13. Annual EU humanitarian aid funding per sector, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

Over the evaluation period, FSL received the highest share of funding (31.4% out of EUR 7,400 million), followed by health (12.6%), nutrition (10.1%) and shelter and settlement and WASH (both at 9.8%). In recent years, the share of funding went down for several sectors (Figure 14). The sharpest decrease in 2016 was observed for FSL (-15pp in comparison to the previous year) but this decline has to be put in perspective as from 2016 DG ECHO started using MPCT as a separated category in its database capturing a large share of the fund previously recorded under FSL.

Figure 14. Evolution of share of annual EU funding allocated per sector, 2012-2016<sup>15</sup>

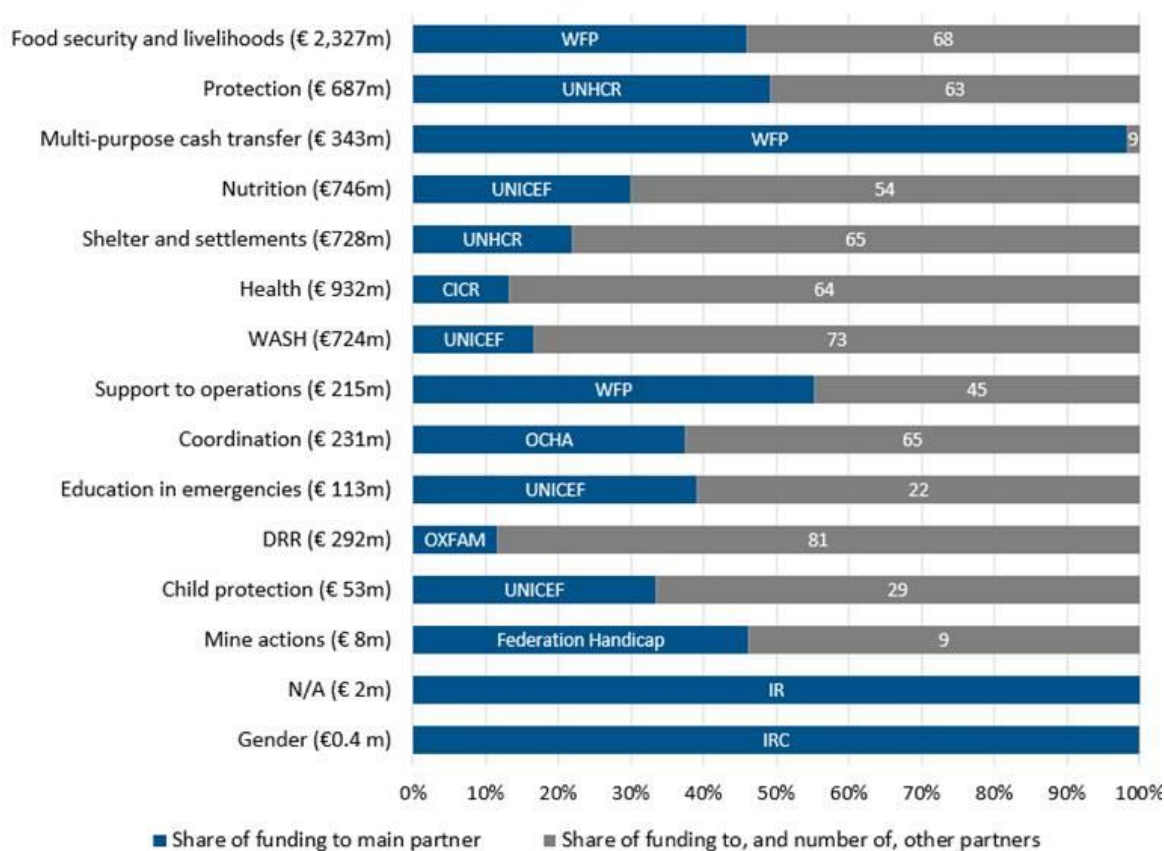


Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

Figure 15 presents for each sector: the main partner in terms of funding and the number of partners implementing at least one action in the sector. This shows that in all sectors, the largest partner received at least 10% of the total funding, while in seven sectors one partner

received more than 40% of the total funding. The overrepresentation of WFP in the MPCT category is due to its appearance in DG ECHO statistics in 2016 and the large budget allocation to a MPCT action implemented by WFP in Turkey that year.

Figure 15. Main partner per share of funding per sector and number of partners implementing at least one action in the sector, 2012-2016

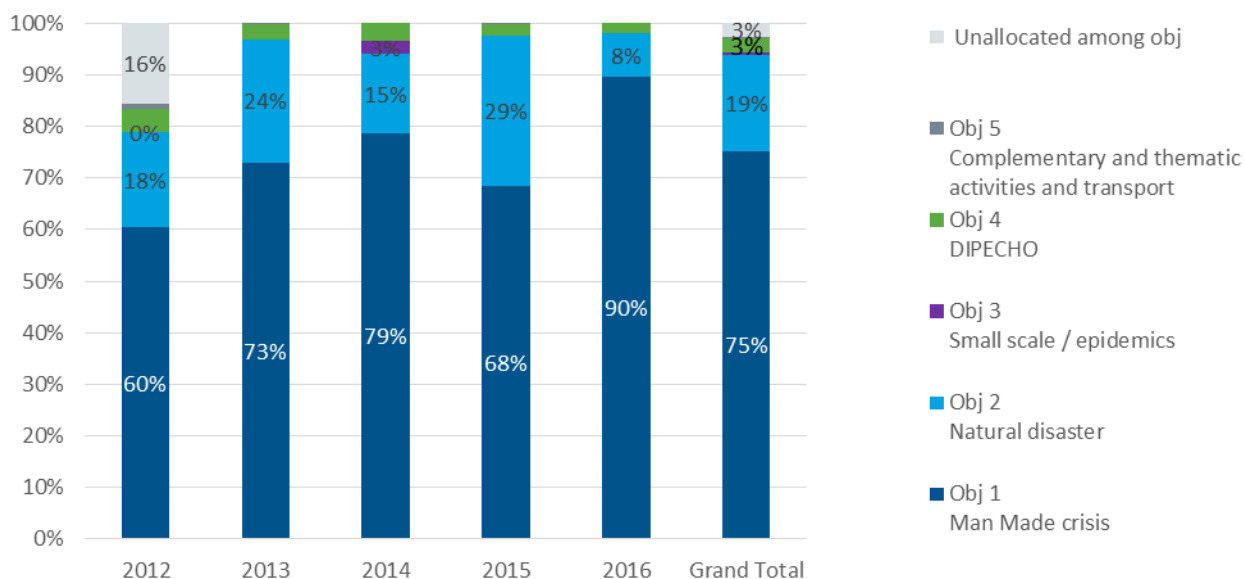


Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 19 April 2017.

## 2.4 Overview of funding per objective, 2012-2016

The HIPs provide a breakdown of funding by objective. An analysis of the latest versions of the HIPs shows that the most prominent objective is the objective 1 “Man Made crisis”<sup>16</sup> gathering between 68% and 90% of funding depending on the year. The share allocated to objective 2 “Natural Disasters” varies between 8% and 29%. European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department’s Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) attracts 2-3% of allocations each year. Other objectives are being allocated only minor shares of funding. The small scale / epidemics objective was allocated funding mainly in 2014 in relation to the Ebola crisis.

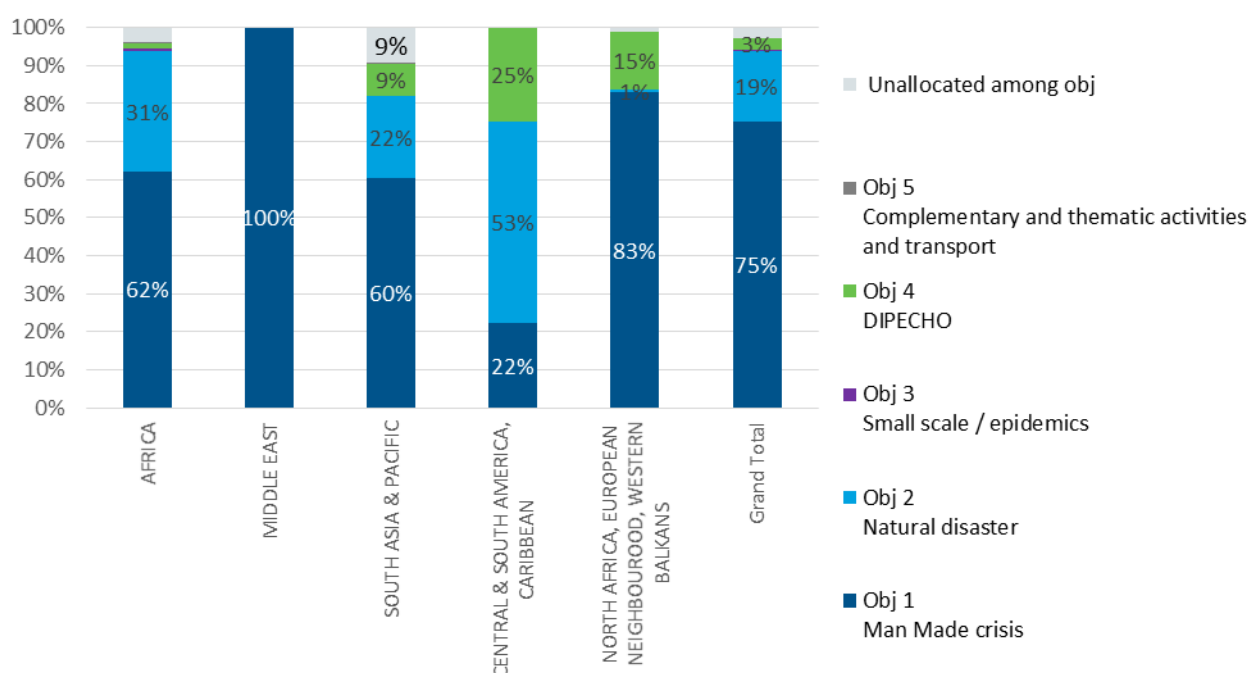
Figure 16. Breakdown of funding by specific objective and by year, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of latest versions of DG ECHO HIP, emergency and ad-hoc decisions 2012-2016. Note: the analysis does not cover documents linked to worldwide and complementary actions (e.g. Emergency toolbox, ECHO flight, ERC).

2016 is the year in which most funding has been allocated to man-made crises. This also reflects the increasing share of funding allocated to the Middle East, a region where all funding is allocated to man-made crises.

Figure 17. Breakdown of funding by specific objective and by region, 2012-2016



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of latest versions of DG ECHO HIP, emergency and ad-hoc decisions 2012-2016. Notes: the analysis does not cover documents linked to worldwide and complementary actions (e.g. Emergency toolbox, ECHO flight, ERC).

Some 2012 funding (mostly to Horn of Africa and South Asia & Pacific) could not be allocated to a specific objective.

### 3 Evaluation findings

#### 3.1 Relevance

##### 3.1.1 To what extent did the allocation of the EU humanitarian aid budget consider the needs, actions of other donors<sup>17</sup> and the EU humanitarian aid objectives ?

EQ1: key conclusions

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
Judgement criteria (JC): the allocation of the EU humanitarian aid budget is based on needs, actions of other donors and the EU humanitarian aid objectives.		
Evidence that the allocation of the EU humanitarian aid budget is based on needs	Literature and document review; Review of DG ECHO's approach to needs assessment; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other key donors to understand their approaches to needs assessment; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners; Expert opinion, OPC	<p>At the global level, the assessment of the needs drives the distribution of the EU humanitarian aid budget. For this DG ECHO has developed an elaborate framework. However, humanitarian needs exceed the available global funding which implies that choices have to be made.</p> <p>DG ECHO's funding distribution globally has met criticisms especially since the Syria crisis, which attracted large share of EU funds with as consequence some areas with continuous funding needs receiving a lower share than in previous years. <b>Changes to the funding distribution should be better communicated by DG ECHO.</b></p> <p>At the HIP level, budget allocations answered the most urgent humanitarian needs and DG ECHO's needs assessment processes is evaluated robust and participatory, but <b>some challenges remain to ensure the high quality of needs assessments in a systematic manner across all DG ECHO's actions.</b></p> <p>At the level of local needs assessments, the allocations were based on needs, as identified through assessments carried out at field/project level, but <b>their quality varied and this needs to be improved.</b></p>
Evidence that the allocation of the EU humanitarian aid budget considered the actions of other donors	Document review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners	DG ECHO's global, HIP and local needs assessment framework, incorporates the considerations of other donors and funding sources at various stages of the process through a number of well-functioning channels which <b>could be further supported and systematically applied.</b>
Proportion of the EU humanitarian aid funding allocated to each sector and compared to needs	Literature review	EU sector funding has appropriately been concentrated in the sectors where the most humanitarian needs were identified globally. But <b>some challenges were identified to ensure a systematic focus on the sectors with most needs and within each sectors on the most important needs</b>
Evidence that EU humanitarian aid budget's size was commensurate to EU objectives and expected results	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners	EU humanitarian aid funding alone would never be sufficient to address all the humanitarian needs around the world, additional funding would therefore be welcomed This being said, the EU humanitarian aid instrument's budget, after being topped up with reinforcements from the EAR and other redeployments within the EU budget, the EDF and External Assigned Revenues from EU MS and others, was commensurate to EU objectives and expected results insofar as it allowed the EU to respond to most pressing humanitarian needs in an effective and efficient manner.
Evidence of changes in budget allocation over the evaluation period (across sectors / geographies)	Document review (e.g. review of HIPs) and HOPE data analysis	<p>Redistribution of funding towards the Middle East region away from other world regions was appropriate as the region also had the largest humanitarian needs during the evaluation period.</p> <p>There was consistency between the distribution of funding outside the Middle East region and the needs as measured by humanitarian appeals<sup>18</sup>, although reductions in some geographic areas were made in spite of continuous needs.</p> <p><b>Despite this overall positive assessment, some countries</b></p>

received large allocations despite having a relatively lower level of needs, whilst in contrast some countries received comparatively small allocations despite having large levels of humanitarian appeals.

### 3.1.1.1 EU humanitarian aid allocations are based on needs

Across the global, HIP and local levels (see the description in 0 of the decision-making processes to determine DG ECHO's annual budget and the exact procedure of deciding on the allocation of funds per crisis and country), the budget distribution process in DG ECHO is complex, where the assessment of the needs for humanitarian support plays an important role, amongst other factors influencing the funding distribution.

**At the level of global allocation of funding (level 1),** the evaluation identified a strong view amongst the stakeholders consulted about the high quality of global DG ECHO needs assessments and their articulation through the GGOPHA documents. 71% of the respondents to the OPC also believed that DG ECHO's budget allocations were based to a large extent on the most pressing humanitarian needs during the evaluation period. The same view was shared by the Red Cross and UN respondents, half of the responding citizens, and two out of the three responding national authorities. Five position papers submitted in the OPC by the UN, Red Cross EU Office, CARE, VOICE and Trocaire agreed that DG ECHO was making efforts to ensure a needs-based approach to humanitarian needs, and more so than other donors (VOICE).

However, it was also acknowledged in the stakeholder interviews in DG ECHO HQ that not all regional and local support needs identified in the needs assessment process can be satisfied by the available funding. Furthermore, the mere activity of determining which regions and countries should have priority in terms of funding over others, where the needs levels are the same / similar, is by its nature a political decision even though needs based. Strategies and changes to the overall strategic approach to regions / countries were sometimes found to be unclear by implementing partners, as outlined in at least two evaluations. For example, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon, the annual changes to the HIP's priorities were considered as "not consistent and create extra work, particularly at the time of call for proposals and CAP preparations".

The evaluation concluded that DG ECHO was not consistent in its annual changes of funding allocations and, more importantly, had not communicated nor defined its thinking to its partners in a clear manner. Similarly, in Syria, funding levels fluctuated significantly over the period 2012-2014 and the lack of predictability was reported to have hampered programming and implementation. Similarly, the evaluation of the integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context indicated that "globally, DG ECHO lacks clarity around when it will consider certain responses, for example the use of special food products and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition". Here, clear and explicit communication towards DG ECHO field network and key partners about the rationale for the changing distribution of funding would be helpful. Indeed, several stakeholders in the OPC also expressed a view that there had been a recent shift in the budgetary allocations to crises closer to the EU (e.g. Turkey and Syria) strongly linked to the EU geopolitical agenda to the detriment of other protracted humanitarian crises, for instance in Sudan.

The field visits in the evaluation also showed strong evidence of robust needs assessments informing the DG ECHO choices of interventions as well as highlighting the challenge for DG ECHO to communicate better the changes when they occur in the global funding distribution. In the field trips to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Myanmar and Mauritania, the majority of interviewed stakeholders agreed that during the evaluation period the EU humanitarian aid budget's allocations per region and/or country were needs based overall but in 2016 and most markedly in 2017 important cuts were made which was viewed as a potential sign of politicisation. In terms of funding interventions (i.e. projects / actions) all stakeholders agreed that, once a HIP has been approved, these are based on robust needs assessments. Indeed, as further elaborated in section 3.1.1.3, at the central programming level, as part of the HIPs and other strategic decision-making by DG ECHO, it was found that the global budget allocations did not always fully address the needs, showing insufficient coverage of themes and, in some cases, a disconnect with specific regional/local needs.



**At the level of HIP allocation (level 2),** the vast majority of the stakeholders consulted in the evaluation considered that DG ECHO's strategies as defined in the HIPs and the associated technical annexes answered to the most urgent humanitarian needs on the ground and that DG ECHO's needs assessment processes have been robust and participatory. Challenges remain to ensure the high quality of needs assessments in a systematic manner across all EU humanitarian aid actions, review the flexibility allowed in the HIPs and their technical annexes and the need to communicate better the resulting changes in the funding distribution to the stakeholders on the ground.

The formal needs assessments also use the qualitative and quantitative data from the field network. This was also the dominating perception of the DG ECHO's framework partners and local partners, although less amongst the framework partners, where nearly 20% thought that other factors than the needs assessments decided the funding distribution (see 0, where partners pointed to the needs assessments becoming more political due to the migration crisis and DG ECHO's prioritisation of some crises over the others).

The process to develop the HIPs is considered by most stakeholders as robust and transparent although many framework partners insisted on the fact that they would like to be involved in that process in order to leverage their excellent field knowledge<sup>19</sup>. DG ECHO stakeholders recognised that such a consultation would add value to the HIPs and ensure the buy-in of the framework partners into DG ECHO's strategy. The framework partners also stressed that DG ECHO has good mechanisms in place to revise the HIPs when the situation on the ground requires and that in recent years, despite the (much) lower initial values of some HIPs, 'top-ups' were made swiftly available where needed. Also positive was the dominating perception amongst the DG ECHO's framework partners and local partners that DG ECHO has a good understanding of the humanitarian situation on the ground and the needs of the affected populations which is fed and reflected in the needs assessments (agreed and strongly agreed by nearly 90% of framework and local partners).

A more fundamental criticism of the recent HIPs and their technical annexes by the stakeholders in the field was that their wording has been quite generic and left significant flexibility in terms of geographical and sectoral coverage. This implies that the HIPs operational implementation is driven by the DG ECHO field staff and the DG ECHO HQ desk officers' assessment of the quality and relevance of the proposals<sup>20</sup>. Following the ECA audit report on the African Great lakes region a more systematic approach to project selection at country and/or regional level was developed and implemented by DG ECHO (see more details in section 4.3). It can also lead to a certain level of fragmentation of the available funding. This is especially the case in a context of decreasing funding and increasing needs. Some instances of this approach were also illustrated in the evaluations. The evaluation of education in emergencies approach found that geographical and EU Children of Peace HIPs covered by the evaluation period rarely provided a detailed, or any, assessment of education and protection needs of children. The Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) evaluation also pointed out that after 2011 the HIPs provided only very broad themes and have not targeted the needs of local capacity building which were identified. The field visit undertaken for this evaluation in the DRC also showed that DG ECHO strategic priorities reflects the needs on the ground but they are very broad and not consistent over time.<sup>21</sup>

It should however be stressed that DG ECHO's reasoning behind this relatively open strategy is to allow framework partners to submit a variety of projects and only select the best quality ones among those submitted, whilst at the same time being able to 'push' forward certain elements of approach (e.g. asking partners to work where access is difficult) and funding modalities (e.g. cash based assistance or protection mainstreaming). This also gives the opportunity to framework partners to flag particular needs in their proposal. What this could mean for DG ECHO in the future is the need to maintain a careful balance to ensure that the openness towards the partners' ideas and initiative is balanced with the need to enforce DG ECHO's approaches.

**At the level of local needs assessments (level 3),** the evaluations of the 2012-2016 EU funded actions showed that, overall, the design of these actions were based on needs, i.e. the needs as identified through assessments carried out at field/project level, ensuring an appropriate allocation of the EU humanitarian aid budget. DG ECHO was highly supportive of

assessments and consistently encouraged partners and other local actors to conduct their own analyses. For EU funded actions, needs assessments were regularly carried out by implementing partners in the context of the interventions developed on the ground (field/project level). The review of evaluations, however, also showed that the quality of such needs assessments varied substantially, even within the same country. In Indonesia, for example, the evaluation found that “*all partners conducted area-specific risk assessments as a basis for designing their projects, some more comprehensively than others*”.

The field visits in the evaluation also showed strong evidence of robust HIP and local level needs assessments informing the DG ECHO choices of interventions as well as highlighting the challenge for DG ECHO to communicate better the changes when they occur in funding distribution. The field trips to DRC, Tanzania, Myanmar and Mauritania demonstrated that DG ECHO’s resource allocation process within these countries was considered by the majority of the consulted stakeholders as very relevant and of high quality. The resource allocation at the global level was however strongly questioned by the vast majority of interviewed stakeholders.

Differences in the quality of local level needs assessments were found also across themes/sectors. For example, within the food security and nutrition sectors, some partners have developed sophisticated ways of analysing causes and assessing nutrition problems. “*Overall, partners provide good information on food availability and food access but insufficient information on food intake and food utilisation, despite the relevance of these elements. Partners’ analyses of causes of undernutrition were sometimes cursory, with the implicit assumption that food access in itself will ensure adequate nutrition*”. Similarly, within the education in emergencies sector, needs assessments varied in the level of detail and methods used (for instance, in use of participatory approaches, the involvement of children, etc.). The specific consideration of age and gender-based needs (and adapting activities accordingly) also varied according to partners. In this context, the evaluation of the Consensus also indicated a need for a more consistent approach to joint and impartial needs assessments at field/project level.

### 3.1.1.2 Changes in the budget allocation over the evaluation period across geographical areas were appropriate

Over the 2012-2016 period, the EU has funded humanitarian aid across the world but has increasingly focussed on Middle East and North Africa and European Neighbourhood (see Figure 10 and Figure 18). Especially in 2016, over a half of the funding was spent in the Middle East region (affected by major multiple humanitarian crises such as Syria, IS, Iraq and Palestinian territory) with funding declining to other world regions, even in absolute values, especially in Central & South America, Caribbean (-8.7% of compound annual growth rate over 2012-2016), South Asia and Pacific (-8%) and Africa (-0.5%). This move has been controversially received by external DG ECHO partners, especially the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) who have perceived an increased politicisation of DG ECHO’s approach driven by political priorities in the EU (this has been raised by numerous stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation). Five OPC position papers also highlighted an opinion, that a coherent humanitarian funding allocation was hindered by political priorities (see more details in 0).

Figure 18. Compound annual growth rate of ECHO funding to regions, 2012-2016

Compound annual growth rate	2012 - 2016
Africa	-0.5%
Central & South America, Caribbean	-8.7%
Middle East	35.5%
North Africa, European Neighbourhood	23.5%
South Asia & Pacific	-8.0%
Total	10.9%

Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017. Reading notes: The compound annual growth rate is a trend indicator. It is a theoretical rate which indicates by how much funding needed to grow/decrease each year to get from the initial value to the ending value (assuming the growth/decrease was steady over the time period to smoothen volatility).

Apart from the flexibility to redistribute the funding every year, a positive feature of DG ECHO's flexibility to respond to the changing needs has also been the annual retrospective modifications to the initial HIP funding distributions (see 0). The annual modifications have been undertaken every year in the 2012-2016 period, and the amounts increased have also increased from around EUR 336 million in 2012 to EUR 983 million in 2016. On average across the 2012-2016 period the funding through modifications was increased by 54%, driven by average increases of 71% to the funding of man-made crises and 62% increase to the funding of response to the natural disasters.

0 provides also a detailed assessment of the EU humanitarian aid funding evolution by country in the 2013-2016 period, set against the annual changes in needs (from IAF needs assessment process), the funding by other donors and the level of appeals for humanitarian aid (which is also indicative of the needs for humanitarian aid). From this overview, the redistribution of EU humanitarian aid funding 'weight' to the Middle East region was appropriate insofar that the largest appeals for humanitarian aid (as recorded in FTS database)<sup>22</sup> made in years 2013-2016 were consistently from Syria, followed by Jordan, Lebanon and in 2015-2016 Iraq and Yemen (which have consistently featured amongst the top 10 countries in terms of appeals). In this sense, the EU humanitarian aid funding change to the Middle East followed the change in the needs as measured by humanitarian aid appeals. After the Middle East countries, the other top countries with largest humanitarian appeals in the 2013-2016 period were South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. South Sudan and Somalia<sup>23</sup> were also consistently amongst the top 10 EU humanitarian aid funding recipients in the 2013-2016 period, thus also indicating a consistency between the distribution of EU funding and the remaining needs as measured by humanitarian appeals.<sup>24</sup> The annual evolution of the EU humanitarian aid budget distributions (see 0) illustrates that they follow the same trend as global humanitarian funding which is increasingly becoming concentrated on "mega-crises", in a more accentuated manner. Over 2013-2015, top 5 countries gathered 33-41% of EU funding and 41-47% of global funding. In 2016, the share of EU funding allocated to top 5 countries had increased to 56% (still at 47% at the global level). It also shows that for the top countries the budget reflected appropriately the high-risk level (with their average 6.5 score in INFORM classification, 10 being the highest) and the level of humanitarian needs (with their average score of 3 i.e. high). All had high numbers of people affected by humanitarian crises. Across the years, several top funded countries also consistently had the largest appeals for humanitarian aid (i.e. Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, Jordan). However, the available data also identifies several issues:

- Countries in regions from which the EU has been shifting away have not overall experienced an improvement of their needs situation over the time period. Amongst the countries receiving less EU funding, there are also some countries with high needs and high number of people affected (e.g. EU has been moving away from Asia since 2013, notably from India (now ranks 62th for EU funding, from 27th in 2013), while the needs are still assessed as high, affecting 5,000,000 people and other donors were not active either (India receives between EUR 5 and 25 million of humanitarian aid overall depending on the year, from all donors including the EU).
- Some countries received large funding sums despite having moderate level of needs as measured internally by DG ECHO through IAF needs assessment processes (e.g. Jordan in 2013 and 2014 and 2016; Lebanon and Turkey in 2015 and Turkey again in 2016).

### **3.1.1.3 EU humanitarian aid allocations considered the actions of other donors**

The DG ECHO's global, HIP and local needs assessment framework, in various stages of the process, incorporates the considerations of other donor funding through a number of well-functioning channels which should be further supported and systematically applied. As part of the global needs assessment, the FCA is based, among others, on an assessment of "donor interest as reflected in the level of public aid received and the qualitative assessment by the Commission's experts and geographical units"<sup>25</sup>. Also, the IAF includes the country and context analyses of humanitarian needs which covers the presence of other donors. At the level of HIPs, the contributions of other donors and the overall international humanitarian response (including the overall amounts, key actors and main activities covered) are formally reflected and considered in the formulation of DG ECHO's approach.

At the local level, the evidence from the field provides indications of the success of various mechanisms of DG ECHO reflecting the actions of other donors and challenges relating to the different funding cycles of various donors. Across the board, around 80% of the framework and local partners considered that the EU funding allocations also sufficiently takes account of the actions of other donors in the field (see 0). The field trips to DRC, Mauritania, Myanmar and Tanzania illustrated how this coordination with other donors works. In DRC, the EU resource allocation took the funding of other donors into account mainly through DG ECHO's very good and close cooperation with all other donors present in DRC under the leadership of UNOCHA. This close cooperation allowed DG ECHO to take the activities of other donors into account when allocating its budget to specific projects. Within the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) forum, the key donors kept track of the funding allocated by the different donors in order to prevent duplication. In Mauritania, DG ECHO did consider interventions of other donors, particularly regarding refugees, and advocated for long-term solutions in this respect. In Tanzania, the main coordination is undertaken through the framework partners, i.e. the UNHCR coordinates all actions in the camps which means that they take account of the actions of other partners and their donors. Here, the main obstacles for closer donor coordination in terms of funding related to the different funding cycles of the different donors which do not always match.

### 3.1.1.4 Sectoral distribution of the EU humanitarian aid funding was not always relevant to the needs in the sectors

Over the 2012-2016 period, the sectoral distribution of the EU funding has undergone a significant change (see Figure 13). Whilst the sectoral distribution of funding was quite similar in 2012-2014 (with a slight decrease observed for the FSL sector), in 2015, there was a sharp increase of funding in the FSL sector due to the increased allocation of funds in the Sub-Saharan Africa (including Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, etc.) and in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. In 2016, the relative share of funds allocated to FSL showed a fall and was taken over, in parts by the newly introduced sectors, namely MPCT,<sup>26</sup> and the education in emergencies, as well as by protection.

A comparison between the EU sectoral funding distribution patterns and the global needs in the main humanitarian aid sectors shows that sector funding has appropriately been concentrated in those sectors where the most humanitarian needs were identified globally (see Table 4– i.e. in the multi-sector, food and health sectors. Looking at the proportion of the identified sector needs covered by EU funding, the EU achieved the largest coverage of needs in the coordination and support services, health and water and sanitation. With the exception of health sector, the needs in these sectors were less significant.

Table 4. The needs and funding in the main humanitarian aid sectors, globally and by the EU, 2012-2016

Sector	Total needs, USD	Total EU funding, USD	Share of EU funding compared to the needs	Total global funding, USD (incl. EU)	Share of EU funding in the total funding
Multi-sector	22,584,185,478	1,280,720,163	6%	15,381,176,314	8%
Food	19,421,177,000	1,209,770,967	6%	19,646,880,311	6%
Health	9,605,722,252	1,412,050,221	15%	12,706,664,074	11%
Shelter and non-food items	6,156,270,495	416,842,164	7%	3,390,845,688	12%
Water and Sanitation	4,599,481,241	485,288,824	11%	2,939,479,936	17%
Protection/Human rights/Rule of law	3,795,826,806	313,474,549	8%	2,805,382,627	11%
Agriculture	3,691,435,332	219,375,949	6%	1,731,335,780	13%

Sector	Total needs, USD	Total EU funding, USD	Share of EU funding compared to the needs	Total global funding, USD (incl. EU)	Share of EU funding in the total funding
Coordination and support services	3,224,536,801	758,761,038	24%	6,534,068,391	12%
Economic recovery and infrastructure	3,077,280,252	194,392,760	6%	2,097,944,221	9%
Education	2,519,649,629	45,058,381	2%	1,326,912,156	3%
Mine action	308,935,578	7,333,185	2%	490,127,225	1%
Safety and security of staff and operations	104,138,942	9,154,699	9%	95,085,253	10%

Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of UNOCHA FTS database, data extracted on 29 September 2017. *Please note that DG ECHO and FTS use different classifications of sectors hence data from EVA (presented in Table 4) and FTS are not directly comparable. Sector not specified was omitted from the figure.*

This challenge to ensure a systematic focus on the sectors with most needs and within the sectors on the most important needs has also emerged through other evaluation sources. For example, in the area of education in emergencies, the thematic evaluation indicated that a multi-annual strategy to frame DG ECHO's and its partners' activities in both sectors was missing. As a result, in some contexts, DG ECHO's approach to funding Child Protection/ Education in Emergencies was ad hoc i.e. project-based, whereas in others it was more clearly rooted in the specific country / emergency response. Finally, a strategic approach was considered to be missing with regard to cash transfers<sup>27</sup>. The thematic report called DG ECHO to develop a strategic analysis of the potential for using cash transfers at crisis level, with a dedicated chapter in each HIP.

Furthermore, DG ECHO's sector funding patterns were not always fully relevant to the needs on the ground and, in some instances, EU funded actions presented some internal inconsistencies in how the different sectors / themes were interpreted / implemented. At least two thematic evaluations queried the relevance and consistency of sectoral funding across the different regions targeted. For example, the evaluation of integrated approach of food security and nutrition in the humanitarian context showed that nutrition was not consistently an objective of EU-funded food assistance. Fewer than half of the food assistance projects analysed by the evaluation were found to include nutrition-related results or outcomes. Evidence showed that practice varied across different regions: projects in Niger had nutrition more in focus, in line with DG ECHO's Sahel strategy to address acute undernutrition, compared to a more limited focus in South Sudan and Bangladesh. This was considered as problematic by the evaluation, given the high baseline Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates in these countries. Similarly, in the context of EU livelihood interventions, there were some inconsistencies in DG ECHO's support actions across contexts. Such inconsistencies mainly stemmed from the location of livelihoods within the food sector and differing views on what constitutes 'livelihoods' and a lack of definition of the term and a lack of clarity on whether DG ECHO is well-placed to address chronic food insecurity through its actions.

This evaluation also investigated several sectors through a rapid evaluation approach (see 0). Overall the evidence that DG ECHO allocates funding to where it is most needed is mixed. On the positive side, the majority of actions reviewed in the FSL sector (85%)<sup>28</sup> (see 0) explicitly stated that the beneficiaries who were most in need of this type of humanitarian sector assistance were targeted. This share was lower for other sectors, e.g., 69% for Shelter and Settlements (S&S), 59% for Protection, 53% for WASH and only 23% for Advocacy.

- In the FSL sector, the main needs over the evaluation period were the protracted and recurrent humanitarian crises in the Middle East and also the famines in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen,<sup>29</sup> where also the most of the food sector budget was

spent (see 0 Food rapid evaluation). On this basis, the concentration of country choices for interventions in the sector was appropriate.

- There was less evidence to confirm the funding allocations in the WASH sector, as WASH needs are not as 'visible', resulting from many different types of crises.<sup>30</sup> For example, EU funded 16% of total WASH funding provided to South Sudan<sup>31</sup> and 14% to Yemen<sup>32</sup>. This seems to be appropriate given that on overall the EU contributed 17% of the global WASH funding in 2016.
- In relation to protection sector, EU funding mainly targeted the countries affected by the Syrian crisis (i.e. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, etc.). Together, these received almost half of the total funds disbursed to the protection sector over the five years. This high allocation is specific to the EU as other donors have not prioritised the Syrian crisis to the same extent.
- Similar concerns were also identified in relation to the shelter and settlement sector, where it was considered that the highest shares of funding were not necessarily allocated to the countries with the highest shares of new internally displaced people (IDP) and refugees. For instance, Syria and Iraq were the two countries receiving the highest share of S&S funding (which is also partly explained by the much higher costs of living in the countries), while Yemen received the highest number of new IDPs in 2015<sup>33</sup> as a result of armed conflict and India, China and Nepal had the highest numbers of new IDPs as a result of natural disasters. Similarly, when looking at the number of refugees, countries such as Pakistan and Uganda hosted very high number of refugees but were not the main recipients of S&S<sup>34</sup>.

Furthermore, several aspects of the sector funding distribution were more difficult to understand, especially in case of some humanitarian emergencies receiving only a small share of the sector budget. For example, over the evaluation period, DG ECHO allocated FSL funding to 82 different countries (and in 17 countries received less than EUR 1 million). WASH funding went to 78 different countries, while 23 countries received WASH specific funding only for one year within the evaluation period. Considering that an average duration of a humanitarian appeal is seven years<sup>35</sup>, a one year funding might indicate a rather fragmented approach towards addressing the needs. Similar issues were also highlighted by some stakeholders consulted especially in sectors of WASH and S&S. It was suggested that sometimes DG ECHO had a rather limited strategic vision in the sector. For example, in 2013-2014, Mali received funding for WASH activities to be implemented in a consortium of partners. It was planned to be part of a long-term strategy, but in 2015 the funding was significantly decreased, despite the ongoing needs<sup>36</sup>. The decision to not grant the funding was not communicated in advance to the framework partners active in the field.

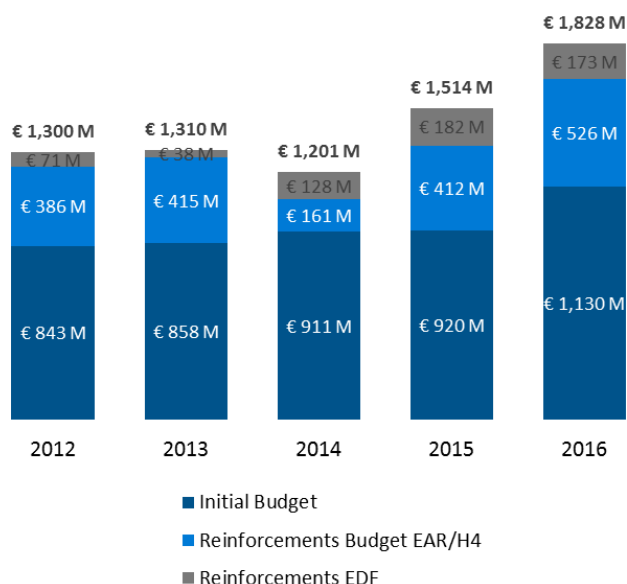
### **3.1.1.5 DG ECHO managed to maximise the impact that could be achieved with the resources available**

The EU humanitarian aid needs to be considered in a wider context where collective funding of all humanitarian aid donors has not been sufficient to meet the humanitarian needs around the globe.<sup>37</sup> In this context, it is not surprising that there was a strong stakeholder view expressed in the evaluation about being realistic about the EU objectives and expected results insofar that EU funding alone would never be enough to address all the humanitarian crises around the world, but needs to provide an adequate response to most pressing needs and address those humanitarian contexts where it can provide most added value (e.g. in forgotten crises, see also section 0). Nevertheless, there was also a strong view that more EU funding would have brought better results in addressing the humanitarian needs. Stakeholder views expressed in the OPC also showed that the funding available was not always seen as commensurate to the needs on the ground. ICRC highlighted an issue concerning the variation of funding available, referring to discrepancies of the allocations versus the number of people in need.

Stakeholders also acknowledged that EU humanitarian aid funding has been on the rise already in this period, as a consequence of reinforcements provided to meet the identified needs (i.e. via EAR, EDF and ExAR). As shown in Figure 19 if one look at the budget line controlled by the Commission, i.e. excluding ExAR which depends on the Member States, over the 2012-2016 period, the EU humanitarian aid budget rose by 40%, from EUR 1.3 billion in 2012 to EUR 1.8 billion in 2016. This was mainly driven by the response to the Syria crisis (see Figure 5). This

is an increase well above the cumulative Eurozone inflation rates and particularly important in contrast to other areas of EU budget which experienced decreases during the same period.<sup>38</sup> However, despite this absolute increase, the proportion of EU humanitarian aid in the overall global humanitarian aid has decreased over the period, from 12% in 2012 to 9% in 2016. This shows that the EU humanitarian aid grew at a slower pace compared to the rise in the global humanitarian aid.

Figure 19. Evolution of EU humanitarian funding (excluding Externally Assigned Revenues), by source, 2012-2016, EUR million



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO budget.

The strategic EU humanitarian aid objective is to save lives in the humanitarian crises contexts translating into the expected results of action of saved lives and alleviated suffering. By nature, it is very challenging to set quantitative targets or indicators of such expected results, hence, it is very difficult to measure the appropriateness of budget from this point of view. Overall, in view of the needs identified (see section 3.1.1.1) DG ECHO managed to maximise the impact that could be achieved with the resources available (see more details on the effectiveness of EU humanitarian aid in section 3.3). Amongst the stakeholders consulted within DG ECHO and key external partners, there was also acknowledgement that the humanitarian aid has been well resourced comparatively to other EU areas of intervention in the 2012-2016 period. The perception that EU funding was adequate to addressing its objectives is also echoed in the views of the field network, framework and local partners (see 0). Amongst all these stakeholder groups, the issue of funding is not considered to be the top challenge in the delivery of the humanitarian aid (instead, the top challenge was considered to be the lack of humanitarian access).

### 3.1.2 To what extent does DG ECHO have appropriate, comprehensive and context-adapted strategies in place for addressing regional humanitarian needs and different challenges, including medium and longer-term objectives, where applicable?

EQ3: Key conclusions

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: ECHO has made clear strategic choices in terms of funding regions		

Evidence of needs assessments informing priority setting as to funding allocations to selected regions/ countries	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field; Surveys: DG ECHO field	DG ECHO has made clear strategic choices in terms of funding regions, informed partially by needs assessments. Clearer communication may help in articulating the annual changes of the funding allocations and the underlying reasons
JC: The strategies put in place by DG ECHO for addressing regional needs are appropriate, comprehensive and context-adapted		
Evidence of regional strategies being based on assessment of the regional context and needs	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field; Survey: DG ECHO field; Fieldwork	Regional strategies were based on an assessment of the regional context and needs. The process to develop the HIPs is considered by most stakeholders as robust and transparent; more framework partner involvement could be helpful.
Evidence of the needs assessment having addressed all relevant aspects (e.g. sectors, vulnerable groups, gender, etc.)	Desk literature; Project mapping; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners	Different aspects and cross-cutting issues such as gender, age or other vulnerabilities are generally taken into account, but to a varied extent.
Evidence that needs assessment are based on robust methods involving participatory approaches and are regularly updated	Desk literature and project review; Project mapping  Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners	The needs assessment process at the level of DG ECHO actions is overall considered to be robust, of good quality and undertaken on a regular basis, including strong approaches to involve the beneficiaries and local stakeholders; which should be further applied systematically
DG ECHO's response is comprehensive, appropriate and timely given the identified needs and context	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners; Fieldwork	In the majority of field contexts, DG ECHO responses cover well some humanitarian needs, whilst other needs are not fully covered
JC: The strategies put in place by DG ECHO for addressing regional needs take account of medium and longer-term objectives		
Evidence of the regional strategies including provisions for entry – exit and LRRD	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field	DG ECHO placed greater importance on promoting LRRD approaches and defining exit strategies over the evaluation period, the extent to which the latter were successfully implemented in practice was inconsistent across themes and geographies
Evidence of the regional strategies taking account of (the possibility of) protracted crises and other longer-term challenges	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field	DG ECHO is increasingly better able to adapt its strategies to deal with protracted crises (with evolving circumstances and intervention requirements) and broader longer-term challenges
Evidence of regional strategies being adapted to local contexts and evolving needs	Literature review; Interview: DG ECHO field; Surveys: DG ECHO field, local implementing partners; Fieldwork: local authorities, beneficiaries, other relevant actors	DG ECHO is increasingly better able to adapt its strategies to better address the changing local needs and priorities with challenges to apply this systematically remaining

### 3.1.2.1 DG ECHO has made clear strategic choices in terms of funding regions informed partially by needs assessments

As described in section 3.1.1.3, in the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO has made clear strategic choices to increase the humanitarian aid funding to the Middle East and Africa and decrease in Latin America and Asia. The strategic funding choices by DG ECHO were taken through a complex decision-making process in which needs assessments played an important role. The final funding allocation decisions, as acknowledged by DG ECHO HQ stakeholders interviewed, can never satisfy the full spectrum of local and regional support needs identified at the DG ECHO field level. Hence, better communication might be instead more helpful in articulating the annual changes of the funding allocations and the underlying reasons between the DG ECHO HQ and the field network and the key partners.



Furthermore, there has been a very marked shift in the 2012-2016 period towards an increased use of regional HIPs, starting with the Horn of Africa HIP in 2012 and the Sahel strategy in 2013 and moving to developing predominantly regional HIPs by 2015<sup>39</sup> and 2016<sup>40</sup>. On one hand, this regionalised approach allowed for a more coherent and efficient approach to addressing the humanitarian needs in a more integrated manner compared to a single-country approach. On the other hand, some regional HIPs (e.g. Horn of Africa) were partly incohesive as the individual countries covered by such regional HIPs had very different humanitarian needs and hence required different approaches, although they had forced displacement and drought / food insecurity issues in common.

Changes in the regional strategies have been observed in the formally defined annual DG ECHO strategies<sup>41</sup> and show a mix of stable priorities and changes responding to the evolving needs (see 0). In that sense, DG ECHO's approach was consistent, i.e. funding on the one hand stable priorities more focussed on the medium term with appropriate allocations for fast evolving needs at the regional level, especially in the Middle East region (see section 1.1.3). At the level of global policy priorities, the key thematic issues of building resilience and supporting DRR as well as a combination of actions to improve the effectiveness of aid have remained relatively stable over the 2012-2016 period. New priorities have been introduced mostly in 2015 and 2016 in relation to cross-cutting thematic themes and sectors such as protection mainstreaming, or education in emergencies.

Overall, DG ECHO was highly supportive of needs assessments and consistently encouraged partners and other local actors to conduct their own analyses. The review of evaluations of DG ECHO actions in the 2012-2016 period also showed that DG ECHO's regional approaches / strategies were found to be particularly relevant (by at least three evaluations) to the needs of affected communities, especially with regard to cross-border issues such as, for example, malnutrition, drought as well as health-related emergencies as the Ebola outbreak. The implementation of a common approach to different countries enabled DG ECHO to be stronger in addressing needs and to facilitate cooperation between partners and authorities operating in the region. As indicated in the Sahel evaluation, for example, *"through the Strategy, DG ECHO applied a common approach of treatment, advocacy, research and prevention to a common problem. By being consistent in its messaging across the region, DG ECHO emitted a stronger message to partners, state actors and other donors. At the same time, DG ECHO's approach was flexible enough to take account of and adapt to country specificities (e.g. variation in humanitarian needs, national capacity etc.)."* Similarly, the evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus demonstrated the strong relevance of adopting a regional approach to DRR. This approach allowed DG ECHO to fund regional and multi-country/ cross-border projects, facilitating cooperation and collaboration across partners and national/ local authorities and promoting efficiencies through the exchange of material, good practices and lessons learned. The regional approach also gave DG ECHO the flexibility to deal with country level variations in the absorption of DRR funding. In Coastal West Africa<sup>42</sup>, regional and cross-border approaches were also considered to be very relevant to address the Ebola crisis in West Africa. As indicated in the specific evaluation *"in the context of epidemics, sub regional and cross border approaches are crucial"*.

However, at the central programming level, the budget allocations did not always fully address the needs identified in specific regions / countries (see section 3.1.1.3). Other weaknesses with regard to the extent to which DG ECHO made clear strategic choices in terms of funding regions were identified through the review of existing evaluations. They mainly related to the need to further develop the prioritisation of actions to implement as part of DG ECHO's HIPs where technical annexes contain initial guidance for project selection. Evidence from existing evaluations showed that the implementation of strategies was found to be insufficiently based on clear prioritisation of actions.<sup>43</sup>

### **3.1.2.2 The strategies put in place by DG ECHO for addressing regional needs are appropriate, comprehensive and context-adapted based on robust needs assessments**

#### **The needs assessments address some relevant aspects better than others**

In the needs assessment process, different aspects and cross-cutting issues such as protection mainstreaming, gender, age or other vulnerabilities are generally taken into account, but to a

varied extent. At the level of individual actions, this was evident in the sample of DG ECHO project documentation reviewed which showed that the relevant aspects such as age, gender or other vulnerabilities are integrated into the needs assessments but this varied (see 0). On the positive side, the majority of projects reviewed did include an adequate age and gender analysis and the consideration of protection issues. In contrast, the considerations of specific target or vulnerable groups were less widespread in the project level needs assessment.

The meta-evaluation showed that vulnerabilities were generally taken into account by DG ECHO and gender markers were overall applied. DG ECHO's interventions and the choice of specific activities were also found to consider the specific emergency contexts. Evidence showed that DG ECHO has indeed encouraged comprehensive and participatory approaches to needs assessments at field/project level by reinforcing the capacities of implementing partners and other local actors (in particular through DG ECHO's field offices acting as facilitators of cooperation). At country level, for example, in order to identify the humanitarian needs in Colombia and build its strategy, DG ECHO facilitated the cooperation between national authorities, Colombian NGOs and universities. Within the livelihood sector, DG ECHO has supported the development of inter-agency assessment tools and processes related to livelihoods. In doing so, DG ECHO has also contributed to increased capacity for needs assessment and livelihoods analysis among implementing partners.

EU humanitarian aid funding also contributed to strengthening international efforts with regard to needs assessment. In fact, ERC funding supported in two successive funding rounds the work of OCHA to develop related tools and to undertake advocacy work and capacity building in applying common needs assessments in rapid-onset disasters. The ERC evaluation showed that the coordinated needs assessment tools co-funded by ERC, either multi-sector and multi-cluster or sector-based, have addressed priority gaps in the emergency humanitarian response, and have significantly contributed to supporting the Transformative Agenda. The consideration of protection mainstreaming issues was also confirmed by the field visit undertaken for this evaluation in DRC. During the evaluation period, DG ECHO strongly supported the protection agenda at a global level but also in DRC, which benefited from 3% of EU humanitarian aid total funding allocated to protection between 2012 and 2016. This push was clearly noted and welcomed by some of the key protection actors in DRC (e.g. CICR, International Office for Migration (IOM), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)), who rightfully consider that protection and throughout protection needs assessment are fundamental for the design of humanitarian strategies and project. The particular focus put on protection needs assessment and analysis was identified as a strong point of DG ECHO's approach by NRC. It was also recognised that DG ECHO's positioning towards protection influenced other donors in DRC.

### **Needs assessment are mostly based on robust methods involving participatory approaches and are regularly updated**

The needs assessment process is overall considered to be robust, of good quality and undertaken on a regular basis, including strong approaches to involve the final beneficiaries and local stakeholders. This good practice should be further developed, and good-quality approaches more consistently and systematically applied across regions and countries. At the level of funded actions, the relevance of EU humanitarian aid interventions to regional needs was mainly ensured through the implementation of needs assessments at the field/project level (i.e. by implementing partners, local actors and DG ECHO field offices). Evidence in fact showed<sup>44</sup> that partners' proposals were routinely supported by a contextual analysis to justify the choice of modalities. Market analysis were also increasingly included when transfer modalities were envisaged as part of the interventions. Although the quality and comprehensiveness of such assessments varied across regions and countries, the latter ensured that EU humanitarian aid interventions remained appropriate and context-adapted through the years.

Some examples of good practices have been identified by the review of existing evaluations as, for example, in Pakistan where affected communities were involved in the needs assessments undertaken by partners. This robustness of needs assessment process is also echoed in the dominating view of the DG ECHO field network, which stated that the needs assessments undertaken in the DG ECHO field offices are participatory and involving a wide range of

relevant stakeholders, most frequently the NGOs involved in the delivery of the humanitarian aid, followed by, very importantly, the beneficiaries themselves and the local authorities and actors (see 0). In contrast, the field network involves less regional and national authorities in its needs assessments. This participatory approach is further corroborated to some extent by views of the DG ECHO framework and local partners, amongst whom around 70% considered that the needs assessment framework is participatory and based on robust methodology (see 0). Consequently, this indicates the challenges of ensuring the participatory approach and the participation of partners across all needs assessments. Around 80% of the projects in the sample reviewed for this evaluation also had evidence of the project partners having conducted own primary research to inform the needs assessments (see 0). The extent of involving beneficiaries in the needs assessments was slightly lower at 67% but still involving the majority of the projects reviewed.

However, evaluations reviewed during the 2012-2016 period showed that the quality of needs assessments conducted at field/project level varied substantially, with differences in the quality found across themes/sectors as well as within countries. Evaluation evidence pointed out at a need for a more consistent approach to the needs assessments. The challenge of ensuring a comprehensive participatory approach has also been identified in for example the field visit conducted for this evaluation in Tanzania. On the positive side, the HIPs covering the Great Lakes region during the 2012-2017 period were considered to be relevant and in line with the beneficiaries' needs. The framework partners recognised the timeliness and flexibility of the HIPs and DG ECHO's ability to allocate additional funding in case of new needs. In order to ensure the relevance of its funded actions, DG ECHO strongly encourages the involvement of final beneficiaries in the needs assessment to be completed by the framework partners. This is considered as an important feature of DG ECHO by the framework partners.

Finally, there is a need to continue ensuring that needs assessments are undertaken on a regular and systematic basis. DG ECHO field network considers that in the majority of contexts, it undertakes the needs assessments appropriately, on a regular basis or depending on the crisis context (see 0). In contrast, the continuous updating of needs assessments by DG ECHO field network was considered to be happening by around 60% of DG ECHO framework partners (see 0).

### **EU response is comprehensive, appropriate and timely given the identified needs and context**

In the 2012-2016 period, the EU regional level response has overall been comprehensive, appropriate and timely given the identified needs and context in some contexts of its intervention. In this context, the possibilities for top-ups from the EU budget and the EDF helped for the timely and flexible approach, enabling DG ECHO to quickly mobilise more funding and adapt the HIP during the implementation year. However, the comprehensive, appropriate and timely response has not occurred systematically across the geographical and sectoral contexts and not covered all the identified needs. The need to keep a regional approach sufficiently flexible to allow responding to changing local needs has also emerged as an important aspect. DG ECHO has introduced approaches to move towards pursuing the longer-term strategy, especially in relation to intervening in complex and protracted crises (e.g. in the move towards more regional HIPs with consideration given to previous DG ECHO activities, activities of other donors, national responses). The need to move to a multi-annual programming approach was highlighted consistently in the external DG ECHO stakeholder interviews, but also putting safeguards in place to ensure good performance of DG ECHO partners if this would also entail multi-annual funding.

Stakeholder feedback to the evaluation on this issue was mixed. A very clear view from the field network was that in the majority of field contexts, the EU funded responses covered well some humanitarian needs, whilst other needs were not covered (see 0). This view was somewhat echoed by DG ECHO framework partners (see 0) of whom the majority did consider that DG ECHO has context-adapted strategies in place for addressing country/regional humanitarian needs and DG ECHO's response is comprehensive, appropriate and timely, but around a third did not think this was happening.<sup>45</sup> This is quite a significant proportion and points to the challenges faced in this area. However, it needs to be mentioned that local partners had a much more positive view of DG ECHO in this respect with above 80% of them

considering DG ECHO's response is comprehensive, appropriate and timely. Finally, challenges were identified with regard to the appropriateness of DG ECHO's strategies in urban areas. The relevance of such approaches was also found to be low, due to an overall absence of guidance from DG ECHO and, in some instances, to the scarce experience of implementing partners in urban settings<sup>46</sup>. Despite the growing research on the issue, there is still a gap in the tools and guidance on adequate approaches to challenges in urban settings and the current DG ECHO efforts to address this should be further continued.

### **3.1.2.3 The strategies put in place by DG ECHO for addressing regional needs take account of medium and longer-term objectives to some extent**

#### **Evidence of the regional strategies including provisions for entry – exit and LRRD**

Over the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO has placed a greater importance on promoting LRRD approaches and defining exit strategies in the regional strategies and the accompanying programming process (e.g. through inclusion of sustainability considerations in the project design, implementation and monitoring arrangements, consideration of exit scenarios in the country/regional HIPs, see also section 3.5 Sustainability). However, the extent to which this was successfully implemented in practice was assessed as inconsistent across the themes and geographies. Nevertheless, it needs to be kept in mind DG ECHO has a mandate of delivering the Humanitarian Aid, and less of a mandate to promote longer term relief (see also section 3.1.5). It is equally important to bear in mind that particularly in complex crises where a 'solution' seems to be impossible to reach, it is very difficult to envisage an exit and /or plan for LRRD.

Challenges in this area were illustrated for example in the field visit for this evaluation to DRC, where the lack of medium and longer-term objectives is partly explained by the DRC context. It is particularly the case as there are no linear path from crisis to emergency response, early recovery and development in DRC but rather a chaotic pendula movement making any longer-term planning really challenging for a humanitarian donor. Where there potentially was scope for longer-term planning, in some cases, aspects of sustainability and LRRD were found to be not sufficiently captured or planned for, starting from the HIPs<sup>47</sup>. In other instances, where LRRD was reflected in strategic and policy documents, it was insufficiently translated/reflected on the ground/at the field level<sup>48</sup>.

Different stakeholders, including DG ECHO staff, pointed out in the consultations for this evaluation the lack of systematic anticipation capability and exit planning within DG ECHO, especially in countries where DG ECHO has been engaged for some time as also exemplified by the field visit conducted during this evaluation (e.g. in Mauritania). The field visit showed that there is a good level of awareness of the need to have an exit strategy in contexts where DG ECHO operates since many years but in practice DG ECHO focusses on the most urgent actions without a clear systematic plan for entry-exit and LRRD which would be important especially in the contexts of complex and protracted crises.

#### **Evidence of the regional strategies taking account of (the possibility of) protracted crises and other longer-term challenges**

In the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO is increasingly better able to adapt its strategies to deal with protracted crises (with evolving circumstances and intervention requirements) and broader longer-term challenges in the humanitarian contexts. This was seen as a positive and crucial factor also by the stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation in ensuring a higher relevance of DG ECHO's interventions and identified at regional/country level. From the country/region-specific perspective, efforts were invested in adapting country-specific strategies in the context of protracted crisis. For example, DG ECHO showed significant adaptability to the specific and evolving context inside Syria and its neighbouring countries (although the annual changes in funding were not always transparent to implementing partners).<sup>49</sup> Another interesting example was provided by the Sahel region where DG ECHO adapted (annually) the operational objectives of the HIPs to differences in the humanitarian and political context.<sup>50</sup>

However, some challenges remain. The field trips to Tanzania and Mauritania undertaken for this evaluation showed that despite this overall positive assessment of DG ECHO's strategy in the country, one important issue flagged by the framework partners was the fact that longer

term objectives were insufficiently addressed. In Tanzania, there had been for example limited support for livelihood activities in and around the refugee camps as DG ECHO did not consider such activities as a priority. Some improvements were anticipated as a result of the implementation of the EUTF in the region but concrete actions have not taken place yet. This is considered as a missed opportunity as the Tanzanian context is seen as appropriate for the development of longer term solutions, but the development of such solutions is also made difficult by the political environment, characterised among other by the encampment policy for refugees. In Mauritania, DG ECHO was not yet able to achieve system wide, integrated and comprehensive approaches to LRRD with examples of single initiatives supported by DG ECHO so far.

### Evidence of regional strategies being adapted to local contexts and evolving needs<sup>51</sup>

Over the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO has become increasingly better able to adapt its regional strategies to better address the changing local needs and priorities and through the possibility to amend and top-up the HIPs to adapt to fast evolving needs. While on the one hand this was seen as a positive and important factor for ensuring a higher relevance of DG ECHO's interventions by stakeholders in DG ECHO HQ and external partners, concerns were on the other hand also expressed as to the additional burden of processing top-ups. Framework and local partners also expressed positive views about DG ECHO's regional strategies being adopted to the local contexts and evolving needs (see 0). The majority of them did consider that DG ECHO has context-adapted strategies in place for addressing country/regional humanitarian needs and DG ECHO's response is comprehensive, appropriate and timely<sup>52</sup>. However, around a third of framework partners did not think this was happening<sup>53</sup>. Local partners had a more positive view of DG ECHO in this respect with above 80% of them considering that DG ECHO has context-adapted strategies in place for addressing country/regional humanitarian needs.

Adaptation to the local contexts and evolving needs has also occurred via the shifts in several themes/sectors. From a thematic/sectoral perspective, there is growing recognition, for example, of the need to ensure participation of affected communities within humanitarian interventions. This growing need was recognised/reflected in policies, standards and guidelines that have been recently developed both at international and EU level<sup>54</sup>. Another sector receiving growing attention is the education in emergencies. The launch in 2012 of EU-CoP clearly signalled that Education in Emergencies was a sector receiving increased attention by DG ECHO and was considered having a life-saving value reflecting the specific local contexts and the change in needs. Finally, nutrition-sensitive food assistance was reported to be a relatively new shift in the wider humanitarian community reflecting the evolving needs of beneficiaries, also as regards the relevant approaches of the partners.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.1.3 To what extent is DG ECHO's choice of partnerships<sup>56</sup> appropriate? How could DG ECHO improve in the choice of partners?

EQ2: key conclusions

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: DG ECHO chooses partners which are appropriate to respond to the needs identified in the HIPs		
Evidence that DG ECHO chooses appropriate partners given the humanitarian needs, partners' expertise and capacity, pool of available partners to work with and local context	Review of project documentation Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Surveys: DG ECHO field, local implementing partners Fieldwork: relevant local NGOs not involved in DG ECHO actions	DG ECHO framework partners implementing EU funded actions are a concentrated group of major international humanitarian aid actors (UN agencies, Red Cross, INGOs). The partnership ensures good and rapid communication, consistency and reliability of approach.  While the choice of framework partners to implement DG ECHO actions ensures a fairly reasonable expectation of successful implementation, it can restrict access by new

		players whose capacity to grow within DG ECHO system needs to be supported.
Evidence of successful implementation of projects by DG ECHO partners (linked to effectiveness criterion)	Review of project documentation; Interviews: DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners; Fieldwork: local authorities, beneficiaries, other relevant actors	The choice of partners to implement EU funded actions is appropriate insofar that DG ECHO partners tend to be successful in the implementation of the actions. The coordination in the field between the DG ECHO field offices and the framework partners is working well. The absolute majority of DG ECHO partners are assessed by DG ECHO staff as performing successfully
Evidence of the role of local implementing partners in the implementation of DG ECHO's interventions	Review of project documentation; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field; Surveys: DG ECHO field, local implementing partners; Fieldwork: beneficiaries, other relevant actors	Local NGOs are increasingly involved by framework partners in the implementation of EU funded actions but challenges remain and local NGOs need further capacity building.

### 3.1.3.1 DG ECHO chose appropriate partners given the humanitarian needs, partners' expertise and capacity, the pool of available partners to work with and the local contexts

DG ECHO engaged with a range of so-called framework partners, i.e. organisation who have signed a Framework Partnerships Agreements (FPA) with DG ECHO. Based on these agreements the framework partners are eligible to implement EU funded actions. They are split in different categories:

- Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) for UN agencies
- FPA for International Organisations (IOs) (ICRC and International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC))
- FPA for NGOs, including Red Cross national societies

The framework partners are selected in a two-stage process, which could be further improved to allow more new entrants and a greater focus on proving the quality of delivery approaches by the applicant organisations.

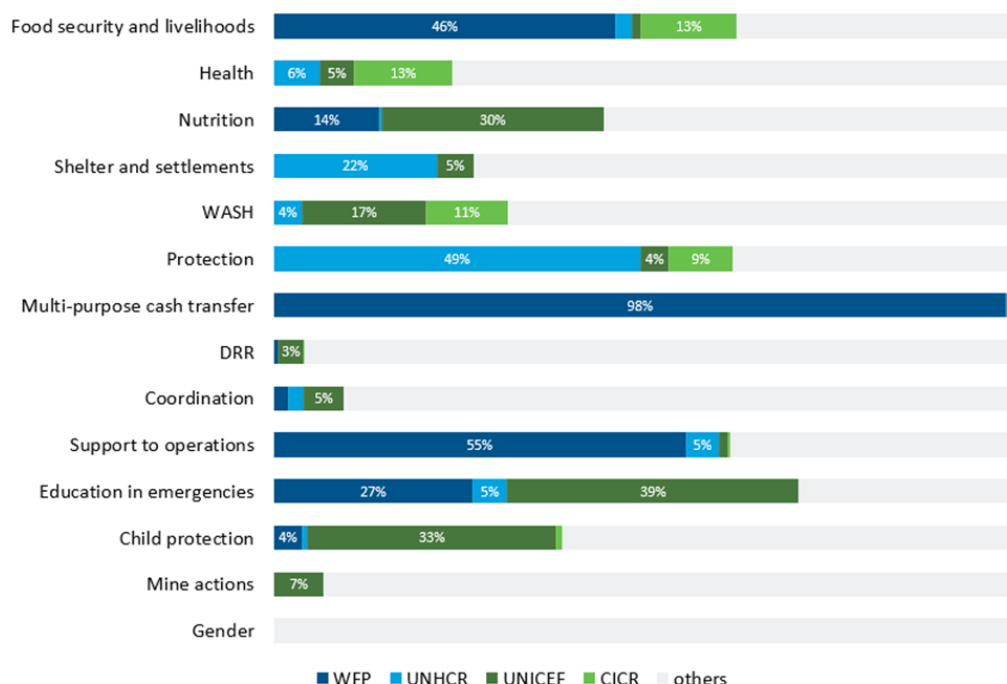
In the pre-selection stage, the organisations need to comply with a set of minimum criteria.<sup>57</sup> These minimum pre-selection criteria reflect the need to ensure that organisations applying to become framework partners have sufficient capacity and comply with basic eligibility criteria in terms of financial standing, integrity and willingness to comply with the EU rules. While some requirements may constitute a barrier for new entrants and less mature humanitarian NGOs (e.g. to have 3 years of operational experience with an annual minimum of EUR 200,000, additional value given to organisations with previous experience of implementing DG ECHO financed projects and to certain extent, annual accounts certified by an approved external auditor), these are appropriate in order to have a pool of partners which are stable and reliable.

In the second stage, the pre-selected organisations complete a detailed questionnaire, covering the seven areas and 86 questions.<sup>58</sup> Overall, the questions capture the necessary aspects to ensure that applicant organisations comply with the legal requirements, and have the necessary capacity and expertise to spend EU humanitarian aid funds in an effective and efficient way. However, the overall administrative burden with 86 questions in the questionnaire is high and some questions are less central to ensuring the best partners are selected (e.g. it is asked to specify the proportion of organisation budget spent on different DG ECHO sectors or list the local implementing partners whereas the answers are not assessed quantitatively nor are per se indicative of the organisation's quality of approach). This administrative burden seems excessive especially for newly established NGOs or NGOs with less capacity. The fact that extra points are given to organisations already implementing EU funded actions represents an additional barrier for new entrants. Overall, only some of the 16 questions under technical and logistical capacity would allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms in the applicant organisation, which would seem insufficient.

Over the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO had a large list of framework partners with more than 220 organisations (including three IOs, 19 UN agencies and 200 NGOs from a range of EU Member States, see 0). This indicates the width and breadth of partner expertise available to DG ECHO, as well as the robustness and effectiveness of the selection process (which was also identified in the stakeholder interviews in DG ECHO HQ and with key framework partners which also raised several aspects to improve this in the future<sup>59</sup>). Amongst the 220 organisations, DG ECHO has concluded contracts with around 80% of them since 2014, from 17 EU Member States and five third countries (i.e. Kenya, Norway, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Switzerland and US – these countries reflect the location of some of the UN agencies). Amongst the 17 Member States, organisations from United Kingdom (UK), France and Italy accounted for almost half of the contracts, indicating a certain geographical concentration and a lower level of involvement of partners from smaller Member States and under-representation of partners from larger Member States such as Germany and Spain. To some extent, this also reflects the country differences as some countries have longer and stronger humanitarian traditions and NGOs presence.

Around 20% of framework partners did not conclude a contract for EU funded action (see 0) since 2014. This included two UN agencies (International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Thailand (UNESCAP-TH) as well as 44 NGOs, most frequently located in Italy (7), UK (7), France (6) and Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia (3 each). This indicates a need for DG ECHO to review its partner engagement procedures to assess whether all the partners provide sufficient value added also in relation to other partners. Despite this wide range of framework partners, funding was concentrated among a small group. Half of the EU funding went to a limited number of large international partners (see 0). DG ECHO's main partners during the evaluation period were WFP, UNCHR, UNICEF and CICR; together they received 46% of EU humanitarian aid funding during the evaluation period (however, this amount is also affected by a large EUR 348 million project awarded to WFP in 2016). The top four partners remained the same over the 2012-2016 period: WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and ICRC. Collectively, these four partners accounted for a dominant share of the funding in the following sectors – MPCT (98% of all funding), education in emergencies (70%), support to operations (61%), protection (61%) and FSL (62%) (Figure 20). WFP is the major recipient of EU humanitarian aid funding as well as the major implementing partner of FSL actions (however, again, this is affected by a large EUR 348 million project awarded to WFP in 2016). UNCHR mostly implements programmes related to protection and shelter and settlements. UNICEF as per its mandate is the key partner for education in emergencies and child protection, but also a significant partner in the nutrition and WASH sectors.

Figure 20. Shares of EU funding to the four main partners, per sector, 2012-2016 (starting with the sectors who received most of the funding over the evaluation period)



Source: ICF, 2017, data extracted from EVA database on 18 December 2017.

Note: In the sector Education in emergencies, the share allocated to WFP refers to the action titled "Emergency Food Assistance to People Affected by Unrest in Syria" (ECHO/-ME/BUD/2016/01001) equivalent to EUR 30 million. This action consisted mainly in the distribution of powder milk but is classified as Education in emergencies in the EVA database managed by DG ECHO.

Another trend observed in the DG ECHO partner choice has been the increased concentration of funding via UN agencies, where by 2016 more than a half of EU funding was spent (an increase of 8 p.p., from 46% of total funding in 2012 to 54% in 2016) (see 0). This has occurred at the expense of decreased share of funding via NGOs (a decrease of 10 p.p., from 46% of total EU funding in 2012 to 36% in 2016), whereas the share of Red Cross national societies has remained roughly the same (around 8% on average in the period). This has also been accompanied by a move towards financing on average larger projects (see 0), which is favouring especially the UN agencies having the organisational and managerial capabilities to deliver large-scale interventions. This move was driven by clear rationale for such larger projects, especially reflecting the scale of some crises, such as Syria, leading to millions of displaced people. On the other hand, external stakeholders also pointed out that the UN agencies per se are not necessarily the most efficient implementation partners due to their large size, complex organisational processes and long delivery cycles. Whilst they have organisational and operational capacities to deliver large-scale interventions, smaller INGOs can be more agile and responsive in their delivery modes, as well as have better access. Another trend observed has been that NGOs (including those who are framework partners of DG ECHO) are subsequently contracted to deliver part of the DG ECHO project by the UN agencies, possibly adding to the transaction costs of the project.

The stakeholders interviewed in DG ECHO HQ during this evaluation also pointed at the concentration of partners in the implementation of EU funded actions and its advantages and drawbacks. On the positive side, having a constant limited group of key partners ensures a good and rapid communication, the consistency and reliability of approach and fairly reasonable expectations of successful implementation. In the available evaluations of 2012-2016 DG ECHO actions also specifically praised the diversity of the partners within the FPA<sup>60</sup> and the ability of DG ECHO to capitalise on the strengths of implementing partners<sup>61</sup>. The evidence from the field missions implemented during this evaluation also confirms that the partner selection process is considered as very strong, robust and transparent (see Box 3).

**Box 3. Appropriate choice of partners in DRC, Tanzania and challenges in Mauritania**



**(field trips in the evaluation)**

**In DRC**, DG ECHO provided financing to 50 framework partners during the evaluation period which together implemented 177 projects. The choice of partners by DG ECHO is considered as very relevant and appropriate to the needs identified in the HIPs. The framework partners share this positive evaluation of the selection process. Similarly, in **Tanzania**, the choice of partners is considered as appropriate and in line with the priorities identified in the HIPs by all the interviewed stakeholders. In the refugee camps each partner financed by DG ECHO covers a specific intervention area and they all strive to complementarity, under UNHCR coordination. No duplication of efforts was observed among the different projects. In Myanmar, DG ECHO choice of partners is relevant to the context, to objectives and results. DG ECHO nourishes partnership and mentoring approach with partners, with necessary adaptability and flexibility to ensure partner delivery is relevant (and timely). In contrast in **Mauritania**, DG ECHO had a limited choice of partners which led to negative consequences, such as a single partner being more vulnerable to logistical problems or a noticeable lack of partners to ensure holistic interventions. There is a case for DG ECHO strengthening its HIP dissemination and advocacy efforts to strengthen and diversify the local and international partner pool.

On the other hand, the implementing partner concentration could also mean that EU resources can become dependent on the performance of few external organisations and can be difficult to access by new partners or organisations which would be more appropriate in the changing context of the crises. This would imply a more systematic check by DG ECHO in the changing contexts whether they are really working with the most relevant set of partners for current situation, also considering humanitarian access, opportunity for localisation, etc. Areas for improvement were also identified in the evaluations of 2012-2016 DG ECHO actions, such as, for example, the need to provide further incentives for 'weaker' (although eligible) partners to "grow within the system"<sup>62</sup>. Currently, the diversity of partnerships may be undermined as partners may be reluctant to participate because of the complex FPA procedures and related high transaction costs, as well as reduced national budgets, which may affect their overall ability to deliver humanitarian aid and ensure co-financing. In relation to smaller /middle range partners, DG ECHO might wish to consider the simplification of the FPA requirements, specific capacity building activities and certain lowering of the implementation requirements. Another aspect raised in particular in the stakeholder interviews was the issue of consortia, which in general were considered to be a positive development, allowing to pool the collective expertise of different organisations in complex crises contexts requiring multi-faceted responses.<sup>63</sup> However, stakeholders also expressed a view that the consortia approach should continue to be a voluntary aspect in EU financed actions and a continuing flexibility in the partnerships is desired.

**3.1.3.2 Successful implementation of projects by DG ECHO partners**

Overall, DG ECHO partners tend to be successful in the implementation of their EU financed projects (see also section 3.3, effectiveness). The absolute majority of projects tend to achieve full (38%) or partial results (36%), and only 3% of projects have been assessed as not achieving any results (see 0, based on a mapping of a sample of projects in the 2012-2016 period). Similarly, the absolute majority of DG ECHO partners in the sample of projects mapped are assessed by DG ECHO staff as performing successfully (66%) and further 8% as performing on average. In only 6% of cases the partner performance in the implementation of EU funded actions was assessed as weak. The 20% proportion of projects for which the results were not clearly assessed by DG ECHO is however considered as too high, especially for the finalised projects (see 0). As expected, the majority of both framework and local partners surveyed in this evaluation view (most partners were involved in the implementation of EU funded actions) the role of partners like themselves as a key factor in the successful implementation of EU funded actions (see 0). This is the case especially for the local partners (with the majority of around 80%, compared to 60% on average amongst the framework partners).<sup>64</sup>

Overall, the coordination between the DG ECHO field offices and the framework partners in the implementation of EU funded actions can be considered as effective (rated as very and somewhat effective by 97% of field network respondents, 86% of the framework partners and 80% the of local partners, see 0). In contrast, the coordination between the DG ECHO field offices and local NGOs was rated as less effective by the consulted stakeholders (rated as very and somewhat effective by only 43% of field network respondents, see 0). This reflects the

fact that DG ECHO does not work directly with local implementing partners in the implementation of the EU funded actions. A more active interaction model may therefore be worth considering, also in view of the increased call for localisation. This would be particularly relevant in contexts where local NGOs are well established and organised and where framework partners have formed stable partnerships with local NGOs (see also below). However, the field network did not see the issue of framework partnerships amongst the key challenges in delivering the humanitarian aid (in comparison, the top challenge was considered to be the lack of humanitarian access).

### **3.1.3.3 The increasing role of local implementing partners in the implementation of DG ECHO's actions with challenges remaining**

In line with the localisation agenda promoted by the GB, international humanitarian aid donors are expected to involve more the local partners in the delivery of their humanitarian aid. In the EU context, the legal framework does not allow DG ECHO to finance the local partners directly and hence the framework partners whilst implementing EU funded actions need to take responsibility in involving local partners. The evaluation evidence analysed below indeed points to an increased localisation of the humanitarian aid delivery and the remaining challenges in ensuring this happens in a more systematic and appropriate way. This also needs to reflect that the local partner involvement is very much depending on the crises' contexts and the local partner capacity to deliver the aid in an effective way respecting the humanitarian principles. In this respect, DG ECHO could put a more systematic check in the project applications whether the local partners are planning to be involved by the framework partners in the implementation of EU funded actions and have been involved in its design, of course where the context would allow for this.

In this respect, it is very positive that the vast majority or 73% of DG ECHO framework partners always or often use the local partners when implementing EU funded actions, with respondents almost equally distributed between acting in the man-made, natural and both types of crises (see 0). Amongst those 28% of framework partners who rarely or never use the local implementing partners in the implementation of EU funded actions, respondents were almost equally distributed between acting in the man-made, natural and both types of crises (30, 30% and 40% accordingly, see 0). Their top reasons for this identified were using own organisation country staff, the lack of availability of suitable or credible local partners and the particular emergency context. The question of further involvement of local implementing partners and reinforced cooperation of DG ECHO (especially at field level) with local actors was raised in a thematic evaluation of DG ECHO actions<sup>65</sup>.

This need for an even more systematic involvement of local implementing partners and reinforced cooperation of DG ECHO (especially at field level) with local actors was raised by at least seven geographical evaluations of DG ECHO 2012-2016 actions both in natural and man-made crises<sup>66</sup>. They pointed out at a growing need to provide a more important role to local partners in the implementation of DG ECHO's interventions across the board. For example, the Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction interventions concluded that *"there is scope for DG ECHO partners to involve local NGOs to a greater extent in the design and implementation of their DRR actions with a view to long-term local capacity building, sustainability and paving the way for successful 'handovers'<sup>67</sup>"*. In this context, one evaluation<sup>68</sup> called on DG ECHO to initiate an internal policy reflection on local implementing partners, gradually taking part in the sector-wide reflection on this issue. Another report<sup>69</sup> also suggested a potential change to the Humanitarian Aid Regulation to allow a direct funding of local actors.

Overall, the predominant view amongst the framework partners surveyed in this evaluation was that the key advantages of using the local implementing partners (their local capacity, local knowledge, more cost effectiveness, better resolution of security and safety issues, see 0) outweigh the drawbacks. These related to the concerns over their capacity to implement the EU funded actions in an effective way as well as equally importantly, respecting the humanitarian principles. In this context, they also identified the 'risks' associated with using local partners in particular in man-made conflicts, where the national authorities may consider the local NGOs to be opposed to them and/or put pressure on the local NGOs. This positive evidence of local partner involvement is also echoed by local partners themselves surveyed in the evaluation (see 0). They also perceive themselves as being able to offer local capacity and

expertise, and better approach to dealing with the access and security issues. Importantly, local partners surveyed expressed a high extent of approval of the way the framework partners manage the local partners and actions, with satisfaction ratings of 80-90% (see 0). It is only when asked about the adequate allocation of resources to local partners reflecting their workload that the satisfaction ratings were lower (but still high around 70%).

The evidence from the field trips in this evaluation however raises a number of challenges in relation to ensuring the participation of local partners. In DRC, projects implemented in consortium and involving local implementing partners are an exception but were more the norm in Tanzania. The involvement of local NGOs was sometimes perceived as a risk by the framework partners, requiring strong coordination mechanisms and standard operating procedures to ensure a high-quality management and aid delivery. Overall, most of the framework partners agreed that a full risk analysis should be done prior to the involvement of local NGOs. In Myanmar, DG ECHO promoted a pragmatic approach to localisation, recognising the context where the localisation is possible and strongly encouraged (e.g. Kachin, Shan states) while in other areas (e.g. Rakhine) this was less possible. In Mauritania, in contrast, there has a noticeable lack of involvement of local NGOs across board.

### 3.1.4 To what extent does the configuration of DG ECHO's field network<sup>70</sup> ensure an added value in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of DG ECHO's actions?

#### EQ4: Key conclusions

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: The way in which DG ECHO's field network is set up contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of DG ECHO's actions		
Evidence of the field network successfully feeding into the needs assessment and HIP development	Interviews: DG ECHO field and DG ECHO HQ; Survey: DG ECHO field	Information from the field network is used and considered to be an essential input for DG ECHO HQ.  DG ECHO field network undertakes needs assessments appropriately, on a continuous basis or depending on the crisis context. The influence of DG ECHO's field network has been greater on the formulation and implementation of DG ECHO's regional/local strategies and sectoral strategies, and <b>less on global DG ECHO strategies and funding choices</b> . This reflects appropriately the field network mandate to provide technical assistance to DG ECHO HQ.
Evidence of the field network successfully contributing (in terms of monitoring, providing support, etc.) and providing support to implementation of DG ECHO actions	Review of project documentation; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners	All the evidence points towards the findings that the field network is key for the successful implementation of the EU funded actions. <b>Some challenges for the maximisation of the field network impact were identified, e.g. heavy monitoring burden and high workload.</b>
DG ECHO's internal architecture is fit for purpose for addressing needs in today's crises	Review of project documentation; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other EU, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners	The network is functioning well in delivering its core functions and is well recognised as one of the key asset and unique feature of DG ECHO by the key stakeholders. <b>Challenges pertain to further decentralise the network and ensure the adequate distribution of the available expertise across the globe but these are being appropriately addressed through mechanism of the internal fitness checks of the field network.</b>
Evidence that current configuration allows DG ECHO to respond rapidly	Review of project documentation; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners	The flexibility in the structure of the DG ECHO field network composed of regional, country, sub-country and antenna offices and different staff categories and functions allowed DG ECHO to respond rapidly to changing humanitarian needs

Evidence that network of Regional offices, country offices, sub-country offices/ antennas provide sufficient geographical coverage	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donor and aid providers; Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners; Analysis: mapping of DG ECHO locations	The extent of sufficient geographical coverage is high with <b>only minor gaps noted</b>
There is adequate capacity and expertise at field offices	Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners; Analysis: Ratio of field staff to funding in the field	A high level of DG ECHO staff knowledge at the HQ and field level has been identified. <b>Minor technical gaps and not always full awareness of local contexts</b>

### 3.1.4.1 The field network successfully fed into the needs assessment and HIP development

As shown in section 3.1.1, the information from the field network is used and considered to be an essential input for the needs assessments completed by DG ECHO and resulting in the annual GGOPHA and HIPs. Their formal role in these processes allows them to reflect their knowledge of the local contexts and needs into DG ECHO's annual strategies. It therefore helps guarantee the relevance of these strategies. This important role of the DG ECHO field network has been acknowledged by the majority of the DG ECHO field network, framework and local partners surveyed in the evaluation (the proportion of those who strongly agreed and agreed with such statements, see 0).

The influence of DG ECHO's field network has been greater with regard to the formulation and implementation of DG ECHO's regional/local strategies and sectoral strategies, and less on the strategic decision-making on global funding allocations. This is in line with the technical assistance role of the field network which is not a decision-making role. This was identified especially by the framework partners surveyed in the evaluation (see 0) and echoed in the field visits undertaken for this evaluation (see 0). In the DRC, the consultations also showed that while DG ECHO field staff is very much involved in the development of the IAF and HIPs/technical annexes together with the HQ staff and in the selection of EU funded actions at the HIP level, they considered their influence on the global funding allocations and policies as fairly limited. The field visit undertaken for this evaluation in Tanzania also showed that the presence of the DG ECHO field network allowed them to ensure the relevance of the selected projects compared to the identified needs.

The DG ECHO HQ stakeholders also acknowledged facing the challenge of balancing the views (which can also be subjective) from the field network (also from the different offices) with other considerations in the needs assessment process. It is also explicitly acknowledged in the HQ that the field network does not always see the 'full picture' across the global spectrum and the political environment available to DG ECHO HQ. DG ECHO field network itself undertakes the needs assessments appropriately on a continuous basis or depending on the crisis context (see 0). Also, nearly 90% of DG ECHO field staff surveyed in this evaluation considered the coordination with DG ECHO HQ to be very effective and effective, with 50% considering it to be very effective. This is an indication of a well-functioning internal DG ECHO's architecture.

### 3.1.4.2 The field network successfully contributed (in terms of monitoring) and provided support to the implementation of DG ECHO actions

Overall, the quality of the field network support to the operational implementation of DG ECHO actions has been identified as good. This was an aspect highlighted in the stakeholder interviews in the DG ECHO HQ. Furthermore, in the absolute majority of project reports, DG ECHO staff reviewed the partner needs assessments (in 80% of projects) and reflected on the factors and issues in the achievement of project results (92%). Both of these aspects are key in indicating a successful support of DG ECHO field staff.

The absolute majority of the field network itself considers its own monitoring to be very effective (68%) and somewhat effective (26%, see 0). Similarly, widespread positive views were noted in relation to the field network effectively guiding the partners, monitoring their progress and ensuring an effective and efficient delivery of aid in the local contexts. This positive view of successful field network support to the implementation is largely echoed by

the DG ECHO framework and local partners surveyed, amongst whom the absolute majority also considered the DG ECHO field support to be sufficient to the project implementation (see 0). Indeed, it is also positive that almost 60% of local partners surveyed reported being in frequent contact with DG ECHO staff (see 0), indicating a close relationship and interaction on the ground.

Finally, the field network supports the implementation of DG ECHO actions by ensuring good relations with the national and local stakeholders. DG ECHO's local presence also contributed to increased coordination and cooperation with framework partners on the ground and other donors. As mentioned in the evaluation of interventions in Syria, for example, *"DG ECHO's set up, with coordination at Brussels level and whole-of- Syria coordination, has been a critical element in its added value, as it made possible global oversight of the needs arising from the crisis"*. The importance and effectiveness of this role was also highlighted by the absolute majority of the DG ECHO field staff surveyed, and also confirmed by the framework and local partners (see 0).

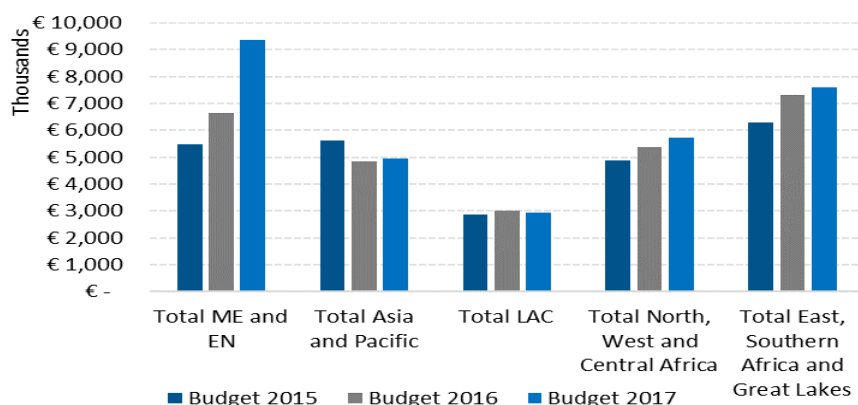
However, there are some challenges faced in maximising the impact of DG ECHO support to the local EU funded actions. Around a third of framework partners saw DG ECHO field support as very effective and 50% as effective (see 0)<sup>71</sup>, contrasted to nearly 70% of DG ECHO field staff itself who perceived it as being very effective. Indeed, these challenges were highlighted in the field visits undertaken for this evaluation. In the DRC, the drawbacks identified were the burdensome monitoring and evaluation requirements for the framework partners and the lack of access to DG ECHO field staff due to their high workload. The field visit undertaken for this evaluation in Tanzania also showed that despite the overall satisfaction with the support and role of the field network, the lack of formal feedback and follow-up on DG ECHO field missions should be addressed to keep track of progress. The field mission to Mauritania highlighted the challenges of not having a local DG ECHO office in the country (there is an antenna office in Mauritania but it is currently unstaffed). The absence of local staff was considered as mainly negatively impacting the effectiveness and efficiency of EU funded action delivery. This also illustrates the challenge of balancing the costs of having a country office versus the benefits of deploying full-time staff within the country.

### **3.1.4.3 The current configuration allows DG ECHO to respond rapidly as crisis situations develop and new needs emerge**

The flexibility in the structure of the DG ECHO field network composed of regional, country, sub-country and antenna offices and different staff categories and functions did allow DG ECHO to respond rapidly to changing humanitarian needs. This was the view amongst the majority of the DG ECHO field network, framework and local partners (considering the proportion of those who strongly agree and agree, see 0). The view of DG ECHO field network itself is also positive in this respect, with 79% of field staff surveyed strongly agreeing this is the case, in contrast with 35% of framework and 28% of local partners<sup>72</sup>. There are also some good examples of DG ECHO's rapid responses to new crises triggered by information from the field stressing the urgency of the crisis (e.g. the Burundian refugee crisis where DG ECHO was amongst the first donors to scale up the funding).

A key positive feature of DG ECHO's approach has been the flexibility in the geographical redistribution of its field staff (Figure 21 shows the increase of DG ECHO field staff and office budgets in the Middle East and Africa regions and the decrease in Asia and Latin America, in line with the redistribution of DG ECHO funding patterns) and the introduction of new staff roles. In particular, a number of Technical Assistants (TAs) have been provided with a surge role and a new category of expert has been created, namely surge response experts, who are hired on flexible terms to respond to particular emergencies. So far, the surge response experts have been deployed mostly in Turkey and Syria, and after initial positive experiences their number has increased to six in 2017.

Figure 21. Change in the DG ECHO field budget costs, by region



Source: DG ECHO, 2017. Internal Field Network Fitness Check. DG ECHO internal document. Notes: Budget includes closed offices. Graph original title: Geographic Rebalancing: Office Budgets (2015-2017) – Update 1st May 2017.

#### 3.1.4.4 High extent to which the network of regional offices, country offices, sub-country offices/antennas provide sufficient geographical coverage

DG ECHO's network of offices in the field, consisting of regional, country, sub-country and antenna offices, has covered the major humanitarian crises spots and the main beneficiary countries (see the respective mapping in 0). However, some minor gaps in the geographical coverage have been noted. Amongst the main crises hotspots and countries of operation, there was no physical presence in the Guatemala/Honduras crisis, which was covered from the DG ECHO's regional office in Nicaragua. Looking at the lesser crises hotspots, DG ECHO did not have a physical presence in Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe (which however also received comparatively low amounts of EU funded humanitarian aid).<sup>73</sup> These minor gaps in the geographical coverage have been picked up by the stakeholders in the field, stemming from the expectation that DG ECHO is present in every crisis globally. Whilst 70% of framework and local partners agreed that the geographical coverage of DG ECHO field network is sufficient (see 0), around a third of partners consider the geographical coverage to be insufficient.

Four evaluations of the interventions in the 2012-2016 period<sup>74</sup> and the field visits undertaken for this evaluation in DRC, Tanzania, Mauritania and Myanmar also emphasised the added value of DG ECHO's geographical set up, which certainly contributed to improving the coverage of its interventions.

#### 3.1.4.5 Adequate expertise at the field offices with capacity constraints

A high level of expertise of DG ECHO staff both at the HQ and field level has been identified in this evaluation. Very few other multi-sector international donors have matched the level and breadth of DG ECHO's expertise and knowledge. This wealth of knowledge was generated by DG ECHO staff through the needs assessments as well as through interactions with the stakeholders and the framework partners at field/project level and research activities.<sup>75</sup> DG ECHO has also been praised<sup>76</sup> for its special understanding of risks/disasters, a unique familiarity with the prevalent risks at the national or local level and a strong knowledge of local/regional institutions and policies. Thematic sectoral expertise has also been maintained in the DG ECHO network through a continuous function of the sectoral experts and global thematic coordinators (see Figure 21). These appropriately reflected all the main sectors of EU funded actions (see section 3.1.1). The distribution of thematic experts has also been in line with the sectoral distribution of the EU funded actions (see section 3.1.1). The development of thematic sectoral expertise in the individual sectors (see 0) has also been appropriately reflecting the increase of DG ECHO sectoral thematic expertise in Middle East and Africa regions and decrease in Asia and Latin America, in line with the corresponding redistribution of funding patterns.

The evaluations of EU funded actions in 2012-2016 also showed strong evidence<sup>77</sup> on the expertise of DG ECHO's staff and, in particular, the field staff in the crisis contexts and at many levels – from involvement with the clusters and consortiums to providing experience and

knowledge on specific thematic issues. The knowledge and professionalism of DG ECHO staff allowed for pragmatic solutions to be identified and implemented to the challenges the partners were facing<sup>78</sup>. A high level of technical and sectoral expertise amongst DG ECHO field staff has been noted by around 80% of the framework and local partners surveyed for this evaluation (see 0). Their level of technical assistance expertise (i.e. related to technical support, project monitoring, project assessment, feedback functions as well as regional/national expertise and advocacy actions) was considered to be almost at the same (the difference is only 6 p.p.). Interviewed stakeholders also stressed the fact that the field network had the right profiles for their mandate, i.e. combining a set of relevant skills such as monitoring, supervision, advocacy and operational roles.

Some concerns with regard to the expertise were however raised in at least four evaluations<sup>79</sup>. Such concerns related to gaps in in-house technical knowledge in some sectors such as Gender-Based Violence, shelter as well as child protection and education in emergencies<sup>80</sup>. Insufficient training of staff and capacity were noted, with some detrimental effects in terms of proposals selected (e.g. they were not sufficiently tailored to beneficiaries' needs) and also in terms of the monitoring of actions implemented by partners (e.g. there was uncertainty on what to pay attention to in particular).

Different stakeholder groups expressed concerns about DG ECHO's capacity to maintain the adequate capacity of the field network both in terms of staffing and technical skills across the areas of DG ECHO's interventions. The detailed analysis of the field network completed by DG ECHO in 2017 (see Annex 7) shows however a slight increase in field staff numbers between 2012 and 2016 (from 455 to 472). This increase was associated with a rebalancing across geographies and sectors linked to the need to follow DG ECHO's operational and thematic priorities. These concerns expressed by stakeholders seems therefore not entirely justified but indicates that DG ECHO needs to better communicate the changes to the field network amongst its key partners to avoid the development of such misconceptions.

Another development has been the increasing absolute costs of maintaining the field network (from EUR 36.2 million in 2012 to EUR 61.1 million in 2016 or an increase of 68%, see Annex 7). This is notably linked to the increased security costs associated with humanitarian interventions and the increasing number of emergencies where DG ECHO field network is involved. However, this absolute increase needs to be seen in the context of DG ECHO's expanding overall budget. As a proportion of the overall EU humanitarian aid budget, the field network cost has decreased from 3.7% in 2012 to 2.9% in 2016. This points to significant efficiency gains associated with the field network and such measures need to be supported in the future.

These challenges of ensuring the sufficient technical and sectoral expertise combined with deep awareness of the local contexts were well illustrated in the field visits undertaken for this evaluation in the DRC and Tanzania. In DRC, compared to the other DG ECHO regional offices, the Kinshasa office is a hybrid office as it combines sectoral coordination tasks with project monitoring tasks. This has the advantage that sectoral experts are very close to the field and can provide rapid guidance but also puts pressure on other staff's tasks and time. In Tanzania, despite the overall very positive assessment of the field network role, a series of drawbacks were also identified. Firstly, the fact that DG ECHO has no permanent presence in Dar-es-Salam prevents it to take a prominent role in areas such as donor coordination, advocacy, etc. This being said, framework partners also understood the rationale behind the limitations on the number of DG ECHO field offices and field staff. Secondly, DG ECHO field staff are not always fully aware of the operational dynamics and national contexts in which some of the framework partners operate and thus sometimes made recommendations not adapted to the local context.

Some areas for improvement were also identified in two evaluations in the 2012-2016 period<sup>81</sup>, in particular with regard to the contribution of the network to needs assessments, project-related monitoring and evaluation activities as well as internal coordination across members of the network. For example, within the ERC sector, the involvement and timely consultation of RO experts and country TA, which is recommended in the ERC principles of Active Involvement and Joint Approach, as well as their feedback and monitoring, still needed to be enhanced despite improved procedures. Evidence in fact showed that the level of buy-in from RSOs was

low, and TAs still felt that they are not systematically consulted or even informed about the ERC projects in their countries.

### 3.1.4.6 DG ECHO's internal architecture is fit for purpose for addressing needs in today's crises

Whilst the overall internal field architecture of DG ECHO is fit for addressing the needs, several challenges should be addressed to make it fit for the future. DG ECHO itself is well aware of the challenges and has a well-functioning network governance structures in place at the senior management level to undertake regular internal fitness checks and implement the identified operational adjustments. The most recent changes included the redistribution of the geographical presence the field staff towards the areas of highest concentration of EU funding and the introduction of new staff categories. These structures should be further supported and internal review processes maintained and strengthened (e.g. through a stronger involvement of the field network itself in DG ECHO's internal preparatory group, agreeing on a common set of office and staff relocation decision criteria, making processes more agile and evidence based<sup>82</sup>). Secondly, the network is functioning well in delivering its core functions and is well recognised as the key DG ECHO asset and unique feature by its key stakeholders and global and local partners. However, there are several challenges which will require further attention in the future:

- Further decentralisation of the network with more responsibilities devolved to the field (which was also ranked as the first future priority by the field network itself, see 0) and improvements of coordination between ECHO HQ and the field, especially in relation to involving the field network to a greater and more systematic extent in the decision making on the global allocations of EU funding. This needs to take account of the legal and institutional framework the field network, which currently limits its role to a technical assistance role.
- Distribution of expertise across the globe, including the distribution of sectoral experts and capping the number of TAs as well as further efforts to increase the local context knowledge amongst the field staff.
- Recognition of advocacy efforts by DG ECHO field staff and further support and sharing of expertise on this between the field network staff. This is also linked to better definition of the role and activities of the field network (and of headquarters) throughout DG ECHO's operational, policy, and advocacy and coordination processes which has also been identified in the latest 2017 fitness check. This would help to clarify and coordinate better between the respective roles and ensure a more consistent implementation and sharing of expertise across offices/regions.

### 3.1.5 Relevance of the EU humanitarian aid objectives to the global humanitarian aid needs and context

*EQ5: To what extent are the objectives of the Commission's humanitarian aid still relevant to the global humanitarian needs and context?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: The EU's humanitarian aid objectives are relevant to the global humanitarian needs, context and recent developments (WHS and GB)		
Evidence that objectives set in recent DG ECHO policy statements, funding decisions, etc. are aligned with the EU's humanitarian aid objectives.	Document review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ	Objectives are relevant as they have been addressing the continuing global humanitarian needs
Evidence of recent / arising needs and contextual changes in global humanitarian aid reflected in recent policy documents and funding decisions	Literature review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other EU, other donor and aid providers	Objectives formulated broadly allowing to adapt to the arising needs and changes
Evidence that WHS and GB commitments are reflected in recent policy documents and funding decisions	Document review; Interviews: DG ECHO HQ	Commitments reflected with <b>challenges remaining</b>



The EU humanitarian aid objectives as stipulated in its regulatory and strategic framework<sup>83</sup>, HIPs and other strategic documents<sup>84</sup> are broadly to save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises, in accordance with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (see Table 5). The objectives also include actions to provide assistance, relief and protection operations to save and preserve life in humanitarian crises or their immediate aftermath, and to facilitate or obtain access to people in need and ensure the free flow of humanitarian aid.

Table 5. Detailed strategic objectives as stated in the Consensus and HAR

European Consensus on the Humanitarian Aid (2008)	Regulation (EC) No 1257/96
<p>To provide a needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity wherever the need arises if governments and local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act.</p> <p>EU humanitarian aid encompasses assistance, relief and protection operations to save and preserve life in humanitarian crises or their immediate aftermath, but also actions aimed at facilitating or obtaining access to people in need and the free flow of assistance. EU humanitarian assistance is provided in response to man-made crises (including complex emergencies) and to natural disasters as needed.</p> <p>Local response to crisis and DRR, including disaster preparedness and recovery, are essential to save lives and enable communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. Capacity building activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and to enhance humanitarian response are also part of EU humanitarian aid</p>	(a) to save and preserve life during emergencies and their immediate aftermath and natural disasters that have entailed major loss of life, physical, psychological or social suffering or material damage;
	(b) to provide the necessary assistance and relief to people affected by longer-lasting crises arising, in particular, from outbreaks of fighting or wars, producing the same effects as those described in subparagraph (a), especially where their own governments prove unable to help or there is a vacuum of power;
	(c) to help finance the transport of aid and efforts to ensure that it is accessible to those for whom it is intended, by all logistical means available, and by protecting humanitarian goods and personnel, but excluding operations with defence implications;
	(d) to carry out short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction work, especially on infrastructure and equipment, in close association with local structures, with a view to facilitating the arrival of relief, preventing the impact of the crisis from worsening and starting to help those affected regain a minimum level of self-sufficiency, taking long-term development objectives into account where possible;
	(e) to cope with the consequences of population movements (refugees, displaced people and returnees) caused by natural and man-made disasters and carry out schemes to assist repatriation to the country of origin and resettlement there when the conditions laid down in current international agreements are in place;
	(f) to ensure preparedness for risks of natural disasters or comparable exceptional circumstances and use a suitable rapid early-warning and intervention system;
	(g) to support civil operations to protect the victims of fighting or comparable emergencies, in accordance with current international agreements.

Given the significant global humanitarian needs in the 2012-2016 period (see section 3.1.1), the EU objectives states above can only be considered as very relevant to the global context. This was recognised by all the stakeholders consulted during this evaluation. The objectives reflected appropriately the fundamentally humanitarian mandate of the EU and have been formulated in a broadly encompassing way which allowed the EU to provide tailored responses to particular humanitarian crises and contexts. Amongst the strategic objectives, no important aspects expected from a major humanitarian donor like the EU are missing. These strategic objectives are also mostly future-proof insofar as the overall humanitarian aid mandate of the EU will continue to be relevant in the future given that the abatement of humanitarian needs is

unlikely at least in the medium term (see also section 4 prospective evaluation). Further strategic reflection is needed towards an additional emphasis/refocus or incorporation of new objectives as follows.

First, the EU stated objective in the 2012-2016 period was to help those in most need of its assistance, as embedded through its global, regional and local needs assessment process (see section 3.1.1). However, stakeholders have perceived a shift in the EU funding allocation making the EU a more EU neighbourhood focussed donor, something which to some extent, as a result of the Syria crisis, has de facto happened as reflected in the funding decisions (see section 3.1.1). This 'tension', interpreted by many DG ECHO partners as a move towards greater politicisation of humanitarian aid, and its repercussions on the global humanitarian aid system needs to be acknowledged by DG ECHO and embraced as an opportunity to emphasise two more nuanced strategic messages:

- First, the EU alone is incapable of addressing all the most pressing humanitarian needs globally and other donors need to step up their commitments (including the new donors).
- The second message is that whilst the EU remains strategically committed to assisting people in most need, its decision-making process is accountable to its constituents and funders (as is the case for any other donor), which, in this case, ultimately are the EU taxpayers. Hence, in cases of major humanitarian crises in the EU neighbourhood it is legitimate and expected of DG ECHO to make a contribution, which has to remain needs-based, to addressing such crises, even if this may mean diverting resources from humanitarian crises elsewhere.

Second, in their current form, the EU objectives refer appropriately to the humanitarian assistance in both man-made and natural crises. The overall trend in the humanitarian needs is however towards increased assistance needed in the complex, political and protracted predominantly man-made crises (or interplay between natural and man-made crises), often requiring multi-level and multi-sector humanitarian aid, coupled with the political conflict resolution, diplomacy and longer term economic and social development efforts. If one extrapolates the past trends into the future, it is most likely that DG ECHO will continue to intervene mostly in very complex humanitarian crises contexts which will require further strategic and operational adjustments within DG ECHO. Hence, DG ECHO's aim to intervene also in complex crises could be acknowledged more prominently in its strategic objectives.

Third, in their current form, EU objectives focus more on providing immediate and short-term relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Building resilience and preparedness for risks of natural disasters are also reflected in the current objectives. However, the 2012-2016 period also saw a more fundamental shift towards more long-term interventions by DG ECHO, also in support of longer-term relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) agenda. As shown in section 3.5 sustainability, the links to LRRD agenda are critical to supporting the sustainability of DG ECHO interventions and ensuring exit strategies. Hence, this longer-term aspect of DG ECHO's interventions, or at least its role in promoting the nexus to development interventions, may need to be further explicitly recognised at the strategic level.

## 3.2 Coherence

This section is broken down in three different sub-sections covering respectively: EU humanitarian aid's coherence with the humanitarian principles; internal coherence; and external coherence.

### 3.2.1 Coherence with humanitarian principles

*EQ6: To what extent were the EU funded actions (particularly considering the challenges posed by restricted humanitarian access in conflict-related crises) consistent with the four humanitarian principles in their design and implementation?*

Indicator	Source of information	Key conclusions
JC: The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (grounded in IHL) were overall consistently reflected in the design and implementation of EU humanitarian actions		

Share of strategies reflecting the four humanitarian principles	Desk research: literature review, project review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field	Overall, the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence were consistently reflected in DG ECHO's policies and strategies.
Evidence of strategies clarifying a common EU approach towards the humanitarian principles and how these have to be applied during funded actions	Desk research: literature review, project review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field	The European Consensus provides clear definition of the humanitarian principles and DG ECHO's policies and strategies provide clarity on how to implement them.
Share of interventions where EU funded actions adhered to the humanitarian principles (or failed to do so)	Desk research: literature review, sample based project review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners Fieldwork	Quantitative data on the share of EU funded actions adhering to the humanitarian principles are not available but the qualitative evidence available suggest that the vast majority of EU funded actions adhere to the humanitarian principles.
JC: In a limited number of interventions (particularly in complex contexts where humanitarian access was restricted), the tension between humanitarian principles and practicalities of delivering humanitarian assistance were successfully resolved		
Evidence of different approaches and positions taken in applying the humanitarian principles in specific situations/interventions	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Fieldwork	DG ECHO's sectoral policies and guidance provide clarity on how to respect humanitarian principles but there is no specific guidance setting out specific approaches in case of challenges and dilemmas between the principles.
Evidence of how DG ECHO was able to strike a balance between ensuring compliance with the principles and avoiding negative impacts on the ground (e.g. insufficient ownership of projects' results by national authorities, burdensome application and reporting requirements, etc.)	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners Fieldwork (depending on choice of countries ultimately selected)	DG ECHO, as other donors, is sometimes struggling in striking a balance between ensuring compliance with the principles and avoiding negative impacts on the ground especially in complex crises.

### 3.2.1.1 DG ECHO has a clear and consistent approach towards the humanitarian principles in its policies and strategies

All the evidence collected during this evaluation points towards the fact that DG ECHO has a clear and consistent approach towards the humanitarian principles in its policies and strategies. Stakeholders also reported that DG ECHO's independent position within the Commission, separated from development, neighbourhood policy and foreign policy as part of the EEAS, also ensures, albeit to a certain extent, its independence from political influence. The Consensus frames this approach as it stresses the firm commitment of the EU to the humanitarian principles. It also provides clear definitions of the four principles and the 'do no harm principle' - see Box 4 below. This approach is then reflected in DG ECHO's sectoral policy guidelines and cross-cutting thematic policies and mainstreamed in its framework for funded actions throughout the programming cycle, from the needs assessment framework, annual strategies and HIPs, to the FPA and project selection process.

#### Box 4. The humanitarian principles as defined in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

- The Consensus provides the following definitions of the humanitarian principles:
  - "The principle of humanity means that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population. The dignity of all victims must be respected and protected;
  - Neutrality means that humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute;
  - Impartiality denotes that humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations;
  - Respect for independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives, and serves to ensure that the sole purpose of humanitarian

*aid remains to relieve and prevent the suffering of victims of humanitarian crises”.*

2. The Consensus also refers to the ‘do no harm principle’ as the minimum requirement underpinning sectoral policies, implying that environmental and other long term consideration must be taken into account from the onset of a humanitarian intervention.

DG ECHO directly refers to the humanitarian principles in most of its sectoral policies, which provide specific guidance on how to deal with these principles in the design and implementation of funded actions. Some examples include:

- The need to respect cultural values of the affected communities as long as they are consistent with the humanitarian principles<sup>85</sup>;
- The need to guarantee humanitarian principles when identifying beneficiary and involving local authorities in cash-based assistance<sup>86</sup>;
- The humanitarian principles are central within the EU’s protection approach alongside international human rights law (IHRL), IHL and Refugee Law – see the rapid evaluation on protection in 0 for a detailed analysis; and
- Neutrality is mentioned as one of the factors to take into account in the risk analysis linked to the development of DRR activities in the context of complex emergencies in line with the ‘do no harm principle’.<sup>87</sup>

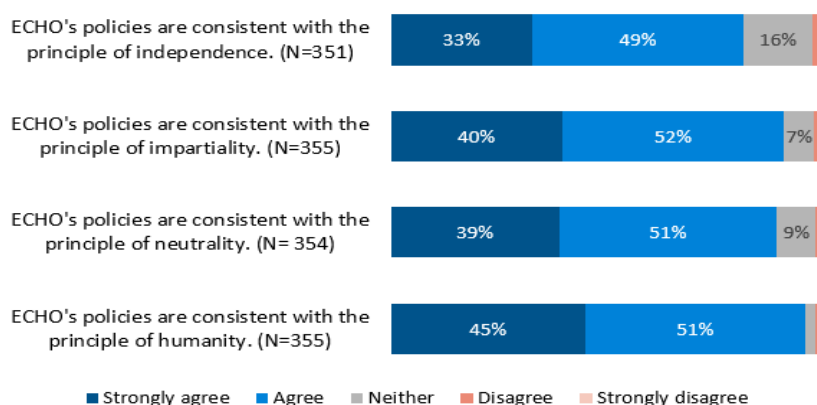
DG ECHO also referred to the humanitarian principles in each of its annual strategies and most of its HIPs during the 2012-2016 period. All annual strategies identified the need to strongly advocate for the respect of the humanitarian principles as a policy priority or key communication objective. Many HIPs also referred to the principles but this is not always the case and could be done more systematically to ensure consistency.

The humanitarian principles are also central in DG ECHO’s selection of framework partners and in the partnership agreements they sign with them. The FPAs directly refer to respect of the humanitarian principles as the most important compliance requirement in situations of armed conflicts alongside the respect of IHL. The General Conditions of DG ECHO’s FPAs identify “*the inability to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principles*”<sup>88</sup> as one of the reasons which can lead to the suspension and/or termination of the implementation of a funded action. This reason can be called by both DG ECHO and the framework partners and applies to all the framework partner categories (i.e., INGOs, UN and IOs). After the signature of the FPAs the framework partners are considered as complying with the humanitarian principles. As described below the compliance with humanitarian principles is one of the key aspects taken into account during DG ECHO field staff’s monitoring activities.

DG ECHO’s commitment to the humanitarian principles, when implementing the EU humanitarian aid, is also reflected in its project selection process, which, as described in section 3.1.1 (relevance), is strongly based on the needs of the affected populations. The field mission to DRC illustrated DG ECHO’s strong attachment to the principle of humanity in its project selection process as they aimed to cover a maximum of geographical zones and affected populations despite the limited humanitarian access in some areas, e.g. Medair’s and Danish Refugee Council’s funded actions respectively in Masisi and Walikale and North of Beni.

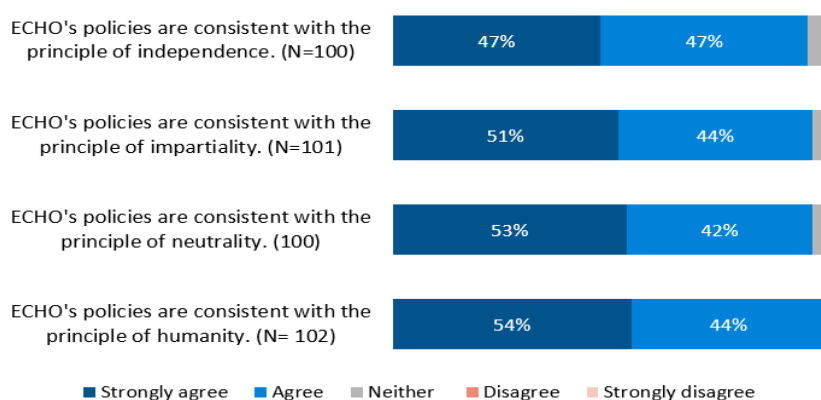
As illustrated in Figure 22 below the adherence of DG ECHO’s policies to the humanitarian principles is recognised by the vast majority of its framework partners and local implementing partners. It should however be noted that the adherence of DG ECHO’s policies to the principle of independence is less supported than the adherence to other principles, potentially reflecting the perceived political influence on recent funding decision described in section 3.1 (relevance). The evaluation of the Consensus published in 2014 showed that these perspectives are shared with the EU Member States as 81% (21/26) of the Member States surveyed stated that the EU as a whole (including the EU Institutions and Member States) had made progress on humanitarian principles in the past years. The OPC confirmed this positive assessment as 82% of the respondents confirmed that the EU humanitarian aid funded actions were consistent with the four humanitarian principles (see 0 for more details).

Figure 22. Views of the DG ECHO framework partners on the extent to which DG ECHO policies are consistent with the humanitarian principles



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.

Figure 23. Views of the DG ECHO local implementing partners on the extent to which DG ECHO policies are consistent with the humanitarian principles



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

### 3.2.1.2 The vast majority of EU funded actions adhered to the humanitarian principles

All evidence collected during this evaluation – including the meta-evaluation – confirms that the vast majority of EU funded actions adhered to the humanitarian principles during the evaluation period. This is ensured both during the selection of the framework partners themselves – see above – and during the selection of the actions to be funded (i.e. the DG ECHO staff involved in the process pay great attention to the humanitarian principles during the assessment of the proposals submitted by framework partners).

On the ground the DG ECHO field network is tasked with the “coherent roll-out of policy guidelines”<sup>89</sup> which are framed by the humanitarian principles and they can therefore monitor their respect in the field. However, a direct reference to the humanitarian principles in their mission statement could stress this point even further.<sup>90</sup> In order to ensure coherence with the humanitarian principles, DG ECHO staff (HQ and field) are strongly encouraged to participate in Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (UN-CMCoord) courses organised by UNOCHA (Civil-Military Coordination Section). All new DG ECHO field staff also receive a DG ECHO internal briefing on humanitarian principles and humanitarian civil-military relations before deployment. When DG ECHO directly engages with private counter parts, an ethical review is done on behalf of the Commission by an independent body, taking humanitarian principles into account.

In case of breach with the humanitarian principles or report of potential breach, DG ECHO investigates the situation before taking a final decision on the suspension or termination of the

activity. There are however no central records of the number of actions which faced such situation.

This evaluation confirmed the findings of an evaluation of DG ECHO's legal framework<sup>91</sup> completed in 2012, which pointed out that the humanitarian principles do not appear to be systematically referred to in project-related documentation. Out of the 183 projects mapped under this evaluation only 52% referred directly to the humanitarian principles in their Single Form. It should however be stressed that, although the template for specific grant agreements does not refer directly to the humanitarian principles, it does state that "*the terms and conditions of the Framework Partnership Agreement and its Annexes are fully applicable to this Agreement*"<sup>92</sup>. These terms and conditions do include a reference to the humanitarian principles.

### **3.2.1.3 In some contexts, DG ECHO struggled in striking a balance between ensuring compliance with the principles and avoiding negative impacts on the ground**

With regard to the respect of humanitarian principles on the ground, a distinction has to be made between different types of crises and associated humanitarian interventions as different challenges and dilemmas will emerge depending on the context. There is an ongoing academic and operational debate on the challenges to ensure respect for all four humanitarian principles in different contexts. For instance, humanitarian principles are not always easily applicable in complex crisis situations and might require trade-offs in their use. There are situations where staying neutral or adhering to the principles of impartiality may have an impact on the principle of humanity, e.g. operating in environments where the basic women's rights, such as education, are not or are less recognised than men's and therefore not including them in participatory approaches may affect the principle of impartiality but may adhere the one on humanity.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, most multi-mandate organisations, e.g. UN agencies or other INGOs, engaged in delivery of humanitarian assistance, often combine their humanitarian work with development and human rights or conflict-resolution interventions, making adherence to the four humanitarian principles at the same time not always an option.<sup>94</sup>

The evaluation revealed that in some contexts DG ECHO, like other donors, struggled in striking a balance between ensuring compliance with the principles and avoiding negative impacts on the ground. A series of recurrent challenges and dilemmas, identified in different sources, are discussed below:

- **Respect of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence versus humanity and humanitarian access in man-made and complex emergencies:** As stressed above, the field mission to DRC revealed how DG ECHO aimed to meet the principles of neutrality and impartiality by ensuring a large geographical coverage despite the limited humanitarian access in some specific zones. In other cases, DG ECHO struggled in striking a balance. This was for example the case in Sudan<sup>95</sup> where DG ECHO explicitly only supported projects in areas in which access by "diverse teams"<sup>96</sup> was ensured in order to adhere to the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. But the evaluation of EU interventions considered that such emphasis on a principled approach in funding could risk that the population most in need would be deprived of humanitarian assistance in some locations, jeopardising the principle of humanity. Similarly, in Syria and Iraq, DG ECHO had to balance between the principles of humanity and the 'do no harm' principle, when considering to deliver assistance in IDP camps where protection could not be guaranteed. On the one hand, being present would imply being able to deliver aid; but on the other it would mean condoning the selection and detention process that posed threats to protection and rights of IDPs. In the case of Syria DG ECHO had a policy of not supporting camps if basic protection could not be guaranteed<sup>97</sup>. In the case of Iraq, DG ECHO left this choice to the framework partners as a recent study on the principled humanitarian assistance of DG ECHO partners showed that DG ECHO partners adopted different strategies towards this issue. The study concluded that "*whatever the decision to work or not in a militarised, screening/detention site [...] the decisions [...] should be accompanied by continuous engagement and advocacy with the authorities to remind them of their obligations*"<sup>98</sup>.
- **Humanitarian civil-military relations and potential impact on humanitarian principles:** Depending on the context, humanitarian interaction with the military will

range from coexistence, to coordination or cooperation. In all those cases, there needs to be communication between humanitarian and civilian relief personnel on the one hand, and military on the other. Yet, association with one party may impact the perceived independence of humanitarian assistance. This dialogue therefore varies from context to context. The relationship will also change depending on the type of emergency and the roles and responsibilities of the military. DG ECHO's official line in this context is to follow the UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Guidelines composed of the 'Oslo Guidelines on the use of foreign military and civil defence assets in disaster relief'<sup>99</sup> and the 'Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies'<sup>100</sup> (often referred to as MCDA Guidelines), while supporting the overall UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination framework<sup>101</sup>. DG ECHO also encourages its partners to follow the 'Non-Binding Guidance on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys'<sup>102</sup> issued by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). While DG ECHO is supporting and strongly advocates for active and effective civil-military coordination practices (including the enforcement of the aforementioned guidelines), its partners ultimately decide on their respective approach vis-à-vis the military on the ground, resulting in different approaches and potential perception of tensions with the humanitarian principles of independence. A particular and rather common issue is the use of armed escorts for humanitarian convoys. In the context of DRC for example, some INGOs and IOs refused to be escorted by a UN Peacekeeping for DRC (MONUSCO) convoy as they did not consider it as a neutral actor but as a party involved in the conflict. The UN agencies, under UNDSS guidance, however were required to be accompanied by MONUSCO escorts in the zones considered as red in terms of security. On a more strategic level the lack of clear positioning from DG ECHO towards the MONUSCO exit strategy was identified as an important gap by the framework partners consulted in DRC.

- **Engagement with national and local authorities versus the principles of independence and neutrality:** This dilemma is discussed in more details in section 3.2.3.3 and its occurrence depends on the nature of the crisis addressed by a particular intervention.
- **Challenges of respecting the principle of humanity in contexts of declining funding and stable or increasing needs:** Although it is obvious that EU cannot fund all humanitarian needs worldwide, the recent decline in funding in regions where it was already active in spite of the needs remaining high led to some challenges for the respect of the humanity principles, as the same quality of aid cannot be provided to all vulnerable groups. This is for example the case in the refugee camps located in Tanzania where the new arrivals are proportionally more affected by the decrease in funding (e.g. the quality of the distributed shelter declined). In DRC and Mauritania, the framework partners had to increase the thresholds of their vulnerability criteria for the selection of beneficiaries who would receive support, leading to a new distinction between vulnerable and very (or the most) vulnerable, which created inevitable tensions among these groups and, to some extent, with the principle of humanity as the distinction could be considered as 'artificial' and both groups urgently required assistance.

Building on the recommendations from the Sudan evaluation<sup>103</sup>, there would be scope for DG ECHO to provide clearer guidance on how to deal with these dilemmas and integrate them in its strategy for advocacy of a principled approach. This could be done in the following ways:

- Internally, DG ECHO should better define with its "rules of engagement" when contradictions occur between the different humanitarian principles. This could take the form of policy guidelines recognising the occurrence of such dilemmas and setting out DG ECHO's recommended lines of action towards them. These should then be reflected in the GGOPHA and HIPs in order to inform the framework partners. These guidelines would also ensure a common approach towards framework partners when they raise potential issues.

- As these dilemmas depend on the contexts of each intervention, DG ECHO should consult with its framework partners when they occur in order to build consensus on how to tackle them or at least ensure a common understanding of the dilemma. This could happen at application stage in order to raise awareness among the framework partners but also during implementation when issues are raised.
- In situations where tensions between the principles are anticipated DG ECHO could request framework partners to describe how they intend to deal with them in their Single Form. This is currently partly done under the “specific security constraints”<sup>104</sup> part of the Single form but could be done more systematically also integrating dilemmas not related to security constraints.

### 3.2.2 Internal coherence

#### 3.2.2.1 Coherence of EU funded actions among themselves

EQ8 – Part A: To what extent were DG ECHO’s humanitarian aid actions coherent and complementary among themselves?

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is coherence at conceptual, policy and operational level between the EU funded actions		
Identification of possible conflicts or overlaps between EU funded actions (in terms of objectives, activities implemented across the themes/sectors, etc.)	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	There is a high level of coherence between EU funded actions, which is mainly guaranteed through the project selection process. Over the evaluation period, ECHO also ensured this coherence by pushing for example for more multi-sectoral projects. Improvements remain however possible, e.g. in terms of coherence across the years and within specific sectors.
Evidence of complementarity and coordination efforts between EU funded actions	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	

#### EU funded actions are internally coherent

The Consensus states that one of the objectives of the EU humanitarian aid is to “ensure coherence and complementarity in its response to crises, making the most effective use of the various instruments mobilised”. The first step in this pursuit of coherence is to ensure coherence and complementarity between the different actions funded by EU and implemented by the framework partners. The evidence collected during the evaluation pointed towards a high level of coherence between EU funded actions in specific regions and/or countries although some opportunities for improvements were also identified.

The coherence between EU funded actions within specific regions and/or countries is mainly guaranteed by the action assessment and appraisal process<sup>105</sup>, which is based on a ‘portfolio’ approach. This implies that, although each project is assessed individually based on fixed criteria (e.g. relevance in regard of DG ECHO’s strategy, quality of the needs assessment, relevance of the intervention and coverage, etc.), they are also considered together as part of a portfolio of projects aiming to tackle a particular crisis or answer a series of identified needs at country or regional level. The complementarity between different actions to be funded is therefore clearly assessed when and where relevant. DG ECHO also introduced different indicators and quality markers<sup>106</sup> (i.e., Gender-Age and resilience) in its assessment and appraisal process with the aim to improve the coherence between funded actions and DG ECHO policies. They also prevent incoherence between projects on these specific aspects.

During the negotiation phase, which follows the assessment and appraisal process, DG ECHO also has the possibility to request framework partners to modify their proposed actions in order to ensure further coherence and complementarity with other actions (e.g., in terms of geographical coverage). The strong involvement of the DG ECHO field network in this process also supports this search for coherence as their knowledge of the context allows them to identify remaining gaps and potential incoherence within the portfolio of selected actions. This approach resulted in very good examples of coherent project portfolio, e.g. in Tanzania, where each partner financed covers a specific intervention area in the refugee camps and all strive to



be complementary. In this particular example, coherence between projects is also facilitated by the strong coordination role of the UNHCR. Another example concerns DRC where efforts were made by DG ECHO to guarantee the geographical complementarity between the actions funded in North Kivu.

During the evaluation period DG ECHO also pushed for the development of comprehensive actions supporting a coherent approach towards specific issues and indirectly contributing to the coherence between different actions. This was done through:

- Support to the implementation of multi-sectoral projects, i.e. covering activities in several sectors - each helping to achieve outcomes in their own sector. These projects are assumed to contribute to an increased internal coherence of the interventions. Table 6 below shows the decreasing share of dedicated projects, i.e. covering only one sector, among DG ECHO's portfolio of actions both in terms of number of actions and total value of these actions. This shift was also reinforced by the emergence of projects including at least a share of MPCT, which very often support more than one sector. This analysis was confirmed by the rapid evaluations presented in 0.

Table 6. Share and value of EU funded actions dedicated to one sector only

	Number of dedicated actions	Number of actions	Share of count	Value of dedicated actions, EUR	Total value of actions, EUR	Share of value
2012	426	809	53%	534,492,992	1,244,822,217	43%
2013	366	718	51%	457,571,011	1,235,188,809	37%
2014	324	668	49%	473,748,868	1,157,082,841	41%
2015	394	849	46%	518,457,122	1,679,392,523	31%
2016	376	772	49%	601,177,698	2,083,517,667	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1886</b>	<b>3816</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>2,585,447,691</b>	<b>7,400,004,057</b>	<b>35%</b>

Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

- Push for the development of integrated programming and actions (i.e. activities in one sector helping to achieve outcomes in at least one other sector). As flagged by a DG ECHO official, multi-sectoral projects are not per se meeting the definition of integrated programming as per DG ECHO policy. DG ECHO's push for integrated actions was particularly strong in the protection sector, where dedicated actions only represented 37% of the allocated funding during the 2012-2016 period. The rapid evaluation revealed that the framework partners welcomed this push for integrated programming, although the number of integrated projects with a protection component remains currently limited.
- Support to the development of consortiums between partners, mainly to achieve greater efficiency in aid delivery. This push for consortium also reinforced the coherence of DG ECHO's approach as framework partners delivered actions together preventing risks of incoherence and ensuring complementarity between their activities. This was for example the case in Tanzania, where DG ECHO supported Plan International in building a consortium with other key partners (first with Save the Children and then with the International Rescue Committee (IRC)) in order to reach all the targeted beneficiaries across the different refugee camps.

In 2015, DG ECHO also decided to broaden its regional approach and move towards regional responses within certain HIPs covering not only the countries of the region where funding is envisaged but also: "the countries of that region for which DG ECHO would have identified vulnerabilities but for which no budgetary pre-allocation is foreseen and the countries of that region where DIPECHO actions are envisaged".<sup>107</sup> The objective of this move was to add speed and flexibility to the assistance provided. Indirectly it also created a framework for more coherent projects across countries affected by the same crisis. This also, at least partly, answers a point raised by the evaluation of DG ECHO's intervention in Pakistan (2010-2014),

where DIPECHO's Programme objectives were found to be insufficiently aligned with other DG ECHO initiatives.

Despite this push for a more integrated approach, a series of challenges were identified alongside with opportunities to even further improve the coherence among EU funded actions. The main challenge relates to the coherence among individual funded actions over time. DG ECHO operates based on an annual programming and financing cycle, which makes it more difficult to monitor and ensure coherence consistently over time. The evaluation identified a series of examples illustrating how changes in priorities and/or funding prevented coherence over the years. This was for example the case in the Sahel where Mali received funding for WASH activities to be implemented by a consortium of partners in 2013-2014. It was planned to be a long term strategy, but in 2015 the funding was significantly decreased, despite ongoing needs<sup>108</sup>. Framework partners highlighted that multi-annual programming, as already adopted by other donors such as DFID, could help prevent such situations. On the other hand, the development of policy guidelines during the evaluation period helped to provide more clarity on DG ECHO's vision in different sectors, promoting coherence over time.

The other challenges identified relate specifically to the food security and livelihood sector. The two components of that sector are considered together by DG ECHO and are associated in the Consensus which states that: "*Linking food aid with other forms of livelihood support helps to enhance the coping mechanisms of the affected populations*". The evaluation showed however that the level of funding going to dedicated livelihood activities was rather limited during the 2012-2016 period, although funding to MPCT increased considerably in the same period, with one of the main rationales for the use of MPCT being its impact on livelihood.<sup>109</sup> Despite this focus on MPCT, the field missions to Mauritania, Tanzania and DRC showed that DG ECHO adopts a very strict approach towards the financing of other livelihood activities such as the support to income generating activities for IDPs or refugees. Although this might partly be due to a prioritisation exercise in the context of diminishing funding, this was identified as a factor limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of some funded actions as no comprehensive approach could be put in place in these conditions (i.e. focus on immediate emergency support with limited considerations for longer term livelihood restoration). This would deserve more attention as many framework partners and local implementing partners consider these activities as key to ensure the sustainability of their activities and the longer-term development of the targeted beneficiaries. They moreover have many co-benefits such as simultaneously, either directly or indirectly, supporting host communities through improved local economy or women protection through livelihood activities targeting vulnerable women. Support to livelihood is also considered as an important sector in the perspective of the humanitarian-development nexus.

### 3.2.2.2 Coherence with the UCPM and the EUAV

*EQ8 – Part B: To what extent were DG ECHO's actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps, including with the UCPM and EUAV?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is coherence at conceptual, policy and operational level between the EU humanitarian aid activities and the UCPM		
Identification of possible conflicts or overlaps between EU humanitarian aid activities and the UCPM (in terms of objectives and activities implemented)	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	There is a clear legal and conceptual framework to ensure the coherence between EU humanitarian aid and civil protection activities and synergies improved during the evaluation period but more can still be done to improve complementarity and coherence.
Evidence of complementarity and coordination efforts between EU humanitarian aid and the UCPM, including success stories	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	
JC: The deployment of EUAV added value to EU humanitarian aid actions and operations globally		
Evidence of links between the EU Aid Volunteer Initiative and	Literature review	Evidence points at some obstacles to realise links and an overall lack of

wider DG ECHO policies and actions	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	awareness.
Evidence of complementarity and coordination efforts within DG ECHO	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field	Within DG ECHO, efforts to pursue complementarity and coordination have so far been limited, which is partly due to the late start-up of the EUAV initiative and its limited scale to date.

### **There is a clear legal and conceptual framework to ensure the coherence between EU humanitarian aid, civil protection activities and EUAV**

Although the respective remits of civil protection and humanitarian aid are distinct, there are numerous links between the humanitarian aid activities and the UCPM. These links are recognised in the legislative texts underpinning civil protection and humanitarian aid activities, which also provide clarity on how these two fields should interact. From a humanitarian aid perspective, the Consensus states that:

- The use of civil protection resources in humanitarian aid context should always be needs-driven and complementary and coherent with humanitarian aid;
- Civil protection resources can provide an important contribution to humanitarian actions in natural disasters and technological and environmental emergencies especially given their possible advantage in terms of speed and specialisation, especially in the early phase of relief response.
- The use of civil protection in complex emergencies should rather be the exception. It is considered as delicate and sensitive as it risks compromising the perception of the neutrality and impartiality of the relief effort<sup>110</sup>.

From a civil protection perspective, the Decision on the UCPM<sup>111</sup> issued in 2013 led to an increased number of activations in humanitarian, complex emergencies. The Decision states that:

- The Commission and the Member States shall identify and promote synergies between the UCPM and EU humanitarian aid activities;
- When assistance is provided under the UCPM in the context of a humanitarian response, actions shall be based on the identified needs and shall be consistent with the humanitarian principles and the principles on the use of civil protection and military resources as set out in the Consensus.
- In the case of disasters in third countries, the transport support provided by the UCPM is conditional on the complementarity between the civil protection intervention and the overall EU humanitarian response.

The interim evaluation of the UCPM realised in 2017<sup>112</sup> noted some improvements since the evaluation of the mechanism performed in 2013, but still highlighted the need to enhance the relevance of the UCPM for response operations in the context of humanitarian crises. It also flagged a particular concern regarding the activation of the mechanism in contexts that are not considered to lend themselves to civil protection response operations such as complex humanitarian aid emergencies. These situations are currently not covered by the UCPM Decision and the flexibility shown by the mechanism so far in such contexts potentially opens the door for future activations, going against the recommendation of the Consensus set out above.

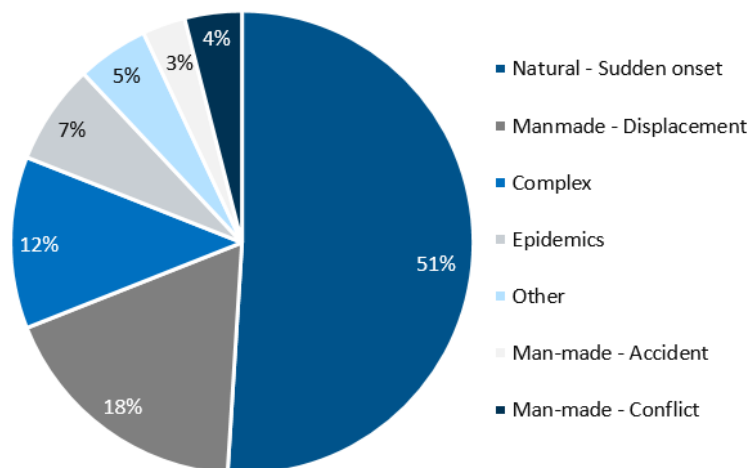
The following section explores the extent to which humanitarian aid activities interacted with the UCPM during the evaluation period and what recommendations stem out of this experience. Section 3.2.2.2 provides more details on the coordination between humanitarian aid activities and the EUAV.

### **Synergies between humanitarian aid and the UCPM improved during the evaluation period but there is still room for improvements**

During the evaluation period the UCPM was activated 73 times outside of the EU in a country where DG ECHO also provided humanitarian aid assistance on a total of 159 activations during the same period. In 57 (78%) of the cases the disaster for which the UCPM was activated was

also covered by DG ECHO from a humanitarian perspective. As illustrated in Figure 24 below the majority (51%) of these UCPM activations were linked to natural disasters. Activations linked to displacement, epidemics, conflicts and complex emergencies represent together 41% of the activations.

Figure 24. Overview of UCPM activations for disasters also covered by EU humanitarian aid activities



Source: ICF, 2017 based on record of UCPM activations between 2012 and 2016.

The evidence base to assess the nature and level of cooperation and coordination between the UCPM and humanitarian aid activities is too limited to draw firm conclusions as such cooperation are not recorded in a central database. The activation of the UCPM in humanitarian contexts revealed however interesting lessons learnt both in terms of positive achievements and opportunities for improvements. Some examples of good cooperation are presented in the table below.

Table 7. Example of good cooperation between the UCPM and humanitarian aid activities

Country	Year	Crisis	Nature of cooperation
Chad	2012	Floods	The Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) contacted the local DG ECHO field in order to assess the situation and map the actual needs on the ground. The information collected by the local DG ECHO TA concluded that no civil protection assistance was needed.
Ukraine	2014	Conflict	The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) deployed three liaison officers together with DG ECHO TA to establish an antenna in Ukraine. The mandate of the mission was to liaise with national and international actors in order to assess the needs of the affected populations.
Philippines	2014	Typhoon	The deployment of civil protection experts was cancelled following the needs assessment of the local DG ECHO field staff.
West Africa	2014	Ebola	The EU provided a coordinated response to the Ebola crisis channelling the delivery of material support from the Member States through the ERCC and providing humanitarian aid funding to address the most urgent humanitarian needs. The large scale of this intervention also resulted in important lessons learned for future cooperation between the UCPM and humanitarian aid activities.
Fiji	2016	Typhoon	DG ECHO TA on the ground informed the UCPM about local needs following a request for assistance from the national government.
Ecuador	2016	Earthquake	The DG ECHO field presence allowed the ERCC team to quickly deploy and gain access to first-hand information. Vice versa, the UCPM intervention indirectly helped the humanitarian aid community as it showed to the local authorities that DG ECHO could also provide direct support to the government in the case of major crisis.

Iraq	2016	Complex crisis	The UCPM deployed a small team to Erbil to assist the incoming in-kind shipments from Participating States. The team worked in close collaboration with the Humanitarian Operations Centre, the DG ECHO field office in Erbil, the EU delegation and DG ECHO HQ.
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Source: ICF, 2017 based on: DG ECHO, 2017. Database of UCPM activation; Stakeholders' interviews.

These examples show that there are good cooperation opportunities between the UCPM and humanitarian aid activities in terms of needs assessment and access to first-hand information. It also shows that in case of acute needs the UCPM can be a good tool for beneficiary countries to access additional resources, mainly in terms of in-kind support and expertise. Alongside these good practices a number of improvement opportunities were also identified by interviewed stakeholders and previous evaluations. These included:

- The UCPM's expertise in urban interventions linked to floods, search and rescue or urban shelter could be further leveraged to support humanitarian aid intervention in these areas. A DG ECHO field staff noted that the UCPM could provide useful support in the first emergency phase following a disaster in urban context.
- Following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, EU Civil Protection capacities have been used to carry out search and rescue activities. In this context, evaluators<sup>113</sup> found little evidence of active collaboration between the EU Civil Protection and other humanitarian interventions, even if the overall coordination of the response was, to some extent, facilitated by the EU Delegation office.
- The Evaluation of the EU's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector concluded that while cooperation between the sectors in the context of the deployment of the European Medical Corps showed some promising results, further efforts are needed to better integrate assets available under the European Medical Corps (EMC) and expertise of DG ECHO staff and partners' work in the field (e.g. providing epidemiological data, assets or expertise from EU Member States to inform funding decision-making and support to DG ECHO partners).

These different examples further illustrate that there are good opportunities for complementarity between the two areas of work. Mechanisms, or a standard procedure, should however be put in place to ensure close cooperation from the beginning of an UCPM activation. It was for example reported that in the context of the joint response to typhoon Haiyan, the UCPM completed its own needs assessment (based on the request received) without consultation with DG ECHO's humanitarian aid staff before establishing lines of communication with the DG ECHO field office. These findings confirm the observations of the European Court of Auditors which assessed the UCPM activations outside the EU in 2016 and concluded that 'potential synergies have not been fully exploited between the civil protection and humanitarian assistance areas'. In its lessons-learned report on Nepal, the Commission also acknowledged that 'Civil protection could make more/quicker use of the humanitarian aid partner network for assessments'.<sup>114</sup> A next step in this reflection could be the organisation of other lessons learnt workshops similar to the workshop organised in April 2017 on '*Refugee Crisis in Greece: Bringing Together the Humanitarian and Civil Protection Communities*'<sup>115</sup>, which falls out of the scope of this evaluation.

### Coherence between humanitarian aid and EUAV

While the EUAV initiative was established officially in 2014, based on Regulation (EU) No 375/2014, it was followed by a long start-up phase during which sending and hosting organisations had to be "certified" as well as, where necessary, benefit from grants to stimulate capacity building. This meant that the first set of volunteers could only be deployed end 2016 and that to date the total number of volunteers deployed is still rather limited, namely around 200 volunteers.

While in theory, there would be ample opportunities for coherence between humanitarian aid actions and the EUAV initiative, especially when considering that most certified partners are also framework partners, in reality this potential has not (yet) been realised. The recent evaluation of the EUAV initiative, as well as the evidence collected as part of this evaluation, points at several possible causes:

- EUAV are not expected to work in emergency contexts, which means that framework partners consider that in the vast majority of humanitarian aid actions, they cannot be deployed. Whilst indeed volunteers cannot be deployed in high risk zones where framework partners provide a first response, there is certainly scope for allowing them to fulfil back-office functions as part of emergency response actions.
- The level of awareness of the EUAV initiative is relatively low, especially amongst framework partners in the field. Several stakeholders interviewed had not heard of the initiative or had a partial understanding, but found it interesting in principle.
- The largest DG ECHO partners (e.g. UN agencies, Red Cross) have not signed up, or signed up late, for participation in the EUAV initiative.

As the evaluation of the EUAV initiative has identified that hosting organisations benefit significantly from volunteers in terms of capacity building, there may be scope in further considering how the EUAV initiative could be further promoted as one tool to enhance localisation.

At the level of DG ECHO, while HQ staff were aware of the EUAV initiative, it seems that to date efforts to ensure coordination between humanitarian aid actions and EUAV projects have been limited. This is in part due to the delayed start of the EUAV initiative and possibly in part due to a clear vision on how EUAV could be concretely linked to humanitarian aid actions.

### 3.2.2.3 Coherence with other EU external financing

*EQ9: To what extent were EU humanitarian aid actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps, with the EU other external financing instruments?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: While recent positive examples of synergies were highlighted by past evaluations, there is a need to further develop a more consistent, clear and common approach (in terms of planning, positioning and coordination) between DG ECHO and DEVCO/NEAR		
Evidence of inter-service collaboration within the HQ in the area of: - Humanitarian aid / development aid (LRRD, etc.) - Humanitarian aid / climate change adaptation - Humanitarian aid / displaced populations Level of satisfaction with the level of coordination (i.e. is it considered as sufficient and optimal?)	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, other EU Survey: DG ECHO field OPC	<b>DG ECHO/DEVCO:</b> Limited but increasing coordination between DG ECHO and DEVCO at HQ level in the period 2012-2016. Coordination due mainly to the increasing importance placed on LRRD and resilience. Multiple initiatives, policies and advocacy were undertaken by DG ECHO and DEVCO to promote LRRD and coordination. <b>DG ECHO/Climate adaptation:</b> Good policy framework for the integration of climate change adaptation in DRR actions. <b>DG ECHO/Displaced populations:</b> Limited coordination so far but promising framework in place since 2016.
Evidence of collaboration at country level in the area of: - Humanitarian aid / development aid (LRRD, etc.) - Humanitarian aid / climate change adaptation - Humanitarian aid / displaced populations Level of satisfaction with the level of coordination (i.e. is it considered as sufficient and optimal?)	Desk research: literature review, project review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other EU, other donors and aid providers Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	<b>DG ECHO/DEVCO:</b> Coordination in the field varies on a case-by-case basis, and is not done systematically. Coordination at the field level depends largely on the team and the individuals. <b>DG ECHO/Climate adaptation:</b> Coordination in the field varies on a case-by-case basis, and is not done systematically. <b>DG ECHO/Displaced populations:</b> Only anecdotal evidence collected so far showing the need to operationalise the new coordination framework.
Evidence of obstacles to improved coherence and/or factors hindering coherence in the area of: - Humanitarian aid / development aid (LRRD, etc.) - Humanitarian aid / climate change adaptation - Humanitarian aid / displaced populations	Desk research: literature review, project review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other EU, other donors and aid providers Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC Fieldwork: local authorities,	<b>DG ECHO/DEVCO:</b> The lack of coordination is to a large extent due to the distinct nature of humanitarian aid and development coordination, as well as the differences in the mandates, programming cycles, principles and overall approach of DG ECHO and DEVCO. <b>DG ECHO/Climate adaptation:</b> Lack of coordination mainly due to competing priorities. <b>DG ECHO/Displaced populations:</b>

Level of satisfaction with the level of coordination (i.e. is it considered as sufficient and optimal?)	other relevant actors	Same as for I9.1.2.
Extent to which funds contributed by the EU humanitarian aid instrument to the Trust Funds are pertinent and coherent with other actions financed as part of the EUTFs.	Desk research: literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, NEAR, DEVCO OPC	Insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the pertinence and coherence of the Trust Fund. It is seen as having an important potential for LRRD but many have concerns around the respect of the humanitarian principles due to the political nature of the instrument.

The architecture of EU financing for external policies is composed of a variety of instruments pursuing different goals and managed by different regulations (e.g. EDF, EUTFs, European Fund for Sustainable Development)<sup>116</sup>. Based on the scoping interviews carried out at the beginning of this evaluation, two main instruments were identified as relevant for the EU humanitarian aid activities, i.e. the EDF, which is considered alongside other policies implemented by DEVCO, and the EUTFs. In addition to these two instruments, this section also covers the coherence between the EU humanitarian aid activities and other relevant policy areas, i.e. the Commission's approach towards forced displacement and climate change and environmental policies. Before diving into these different policy areas, it should be noted that the OPC, which addressed these policies together, showed an overall positive feedback on their coherence with the EU humanitarian aid activities. 63% of the respondents considered however the level of coherence to be moderated highlighting the potential for further improvement, especially with development aid policies and DRR (see 0 for more details).

### Coherence with DEVCO

This evaluation revealed that there has been some, albeit limited, coordination between DG ECHO and DEVCO at field and HQ level in the period 2012-2016. More specifically, DG ECHO has attempted to engage with DEVCO through policy and advocacy work at the Brussels level and coordination has been increasingly happening over the years due mainly to the growing importance placed on resilience that had a high potential in terms of LRRD.

DG ECHO and DEVCO implement several instruments relevant to LRRD and have also taken joint initiatives to improve coordination and cooperation. For instance, the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) adopted in December 2011<sup>117</sup> aims to provide better support to LRRD actions implemented by the EU, taking a holistic approach to address transitional situations and better supporting interventions in fragile states and post-crisis situations. That same year, a LRRD analytical framework tool was developed, namely the Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF). The latter aims to strengthen operational cooperation of EU actors on the ground by jointly assessing the nature and causes of crises and to guide the identification of strategic assistance priorities.<sup>118</sup>

More recently, the Commission published a Joint Communication on a Strategic Approach to Resilience<sup>119</sup>. In addition, the Commission announced a new policy framework building a stronger humanitarian and development nexus and shifting from a linear humanitarian-development approach (i.e. LRRD) to resilience building in the field of forced displacement. A comprehensive approach integrating humanitarian aid, development cooperation and political engagement was adopted to ensure that political and developmental stakeholders, in close cooperation with humanitarian actors. The document also outlined a set of actions under each element to establish "*better responsibility sharing between humanitarian and development actors, while fully respecting the humanitarian principles.*"<sup>120</sup>

Along the same lines, DEVCO and DG ECHO, following the WHS, have recently adopted a new more systematic approach to LRRD to strengthen the humanitarian development nexus in fragile contexts.<sup>121</sup>

The above reiterates DG ECHO's strong commitment to LRRD (see section 0) and illustrates the various attempts to strengthen coordination and cooperation with DEVCO at policy level over the years. Interviews with DG ECHO and DEVCO further emphasised the increasing coordination and synergies at HQ level with regular meetings and DEVCO participation in the development of HIPs. These efforts did not remain unnoticed. Approximately half (48%) of the

framework partners surveyed reported that there was a joined-up approach between the Commission's approach to humanitarian aid and development aid.<sup>122</sup>

Although the need for such cooperation is widely recognised and agreed upon, at the field level, cooperation was judged as not optimal by many stakeholders consulted. The practical implementation of LRRD strategies or other joint initiatives/interventions remain challenging and are implemented on a case-by-case basis rather than systematically. Less than half (45%) of DG ECHO field staff reported that the coordination between their field office and DEVCO was somewhat effective. Only 7% reported the coordination to be very effective.<sup>123</sup> DG ECHO staff recognised that it depends largely on the country team and individuals involved. Relations are often limited to exchanges of information through (regular) meetings rather than there being real cooperation. For instance, in the countries visited as part of this evaluation<sup>124</sup>, it was reported that DEVCO was consulted during the development of the HIP, which sometimes meant that they were present at meetings where the HIP was presented but that they were not involved in its development. A similar approach was reported at HQ level. Local partners also considered that improving coordination between humanitarian and development actors was one of the key issues to be addressed in the future.<sup>125</sup>

The meta-evaluation also highlighted a number of less successful examples. In Colombia, for instance, DG ECHO and DEVCO failed to design their strategy jointly as well as to implement their actions in concert.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, in the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region, despite noticeable improvements in cooperation, DG ECHO and DEVCO were not successful in developing jointly planned and complementary mid-term initiatives with a common goal, location and targeted beneficiaries.<sup>127</sup> The Sahel evaluation (2010-2014) showed that despite the development of the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR)<sup>128</sup>, gaps still existed between the actions of DG ECHO and DEVCO in particular in relation to (the lack of) longer-term prevention actions at community level and longer-term investment in the scaling up and integration of nutrition and nutrition-sensitive services at national level. This lack of coordination was further identified through the online survey of DG ECHO field staff. Challenges in cooperation arise due to the distinct nature of humanitarian aid and development coordination, as well as the major differences between DG ECHO and DEVCO conceptual and operational frameworks as well as diverging funding cycles. Table 8 highlights the main conceptual and operational differences.

Table 8. DG ECHO and DEVCO conceptual and operational differences

	DG ECHO	DEVCO
Mandate	DG ECHO is responsible for providing assistance, relief and protection operations on a non-discriminatory basis to help people in third countries. Particularly the most vulnerable among them, and as a priority those in developing countries, victims of natural disasters, man-made crises or exceptional comparable situations. <sup>129</sup>	DEVCO is responsible for formulating EU development policy and thematic policies in order to reduce poverty in the world, to ensure sustainable economic, social and environmental development and to promote democracy, the rule of law, good governance and the respect of human rights, notably through external aid. <sup>130</sup>
Principles	Humanitarian law. Follows the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence	Principles of country and democratic ownership, alignment and mutual accountability
Budget lines	EU humanitarian aid budget (council regulation 1257/96)	Geographic instruments: EDF, DCI, Thematic instruments: DCI Thematic, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
Priorities	Focus on individuals and certain specific themes such as protection, shelter	Focus on the wider picture and the society.
Objectives	Save lives and protect civilians that are at risk. Focus on the most vulnerable.	Longer-term and multifaceted objectives including poverty reduction and sustainable development. Focus on poor people.
Programming	Annual strategies based on HIPs	5-7 year programming cycles based on



and funding cycle		consultation with national authorities and stakeholders. <sup>131</sup>
Timing	Proposals developed quickly and funds disbursed quicker	Proposals developed over a longer period and disbursement of funding takes longer
Access	Provide assistance in highly volatile environment and remote areas	Do not have access to certain areas
Partners	NGOs, UN agencies, IOs. <sup>132</sup>	Governments, civil society organisations, private sector, IOs, UN agencies, peacekeeping operations <sup>133</sup>

Source: ICF stakeholders' interviews and European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), 2016. *Living Apart Together' EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis*.

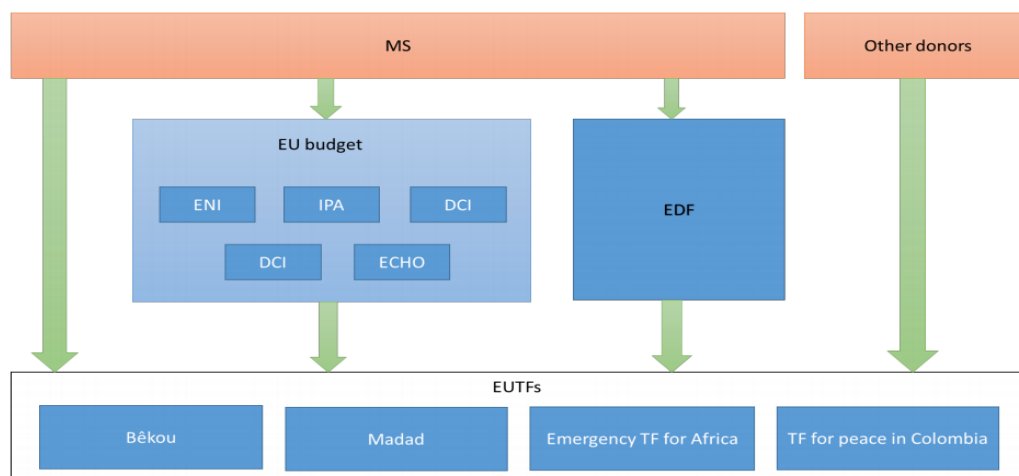
However, several good practices have also been identified. In 2016 DG ECHO and DEVCO worked together to establish a roadmap towards resilience in Bangladesh and co-financing partners in Ethiopia to build local resilience against the next episodes of drought.<sup>134</sup> DG ECHO's also actively contributed to DEVCO's Mid-Term Reviews with a view to develop a coherent joint humanitarian-development framework in Myanmar.<sup>135</sup> In Haiti last year, cooperation was reported successful in response to the hurricane Matthew, with DEVCO and DG ECHO developing a joint strategy for response and recovery. In DRC a transition programme was developed in the health sector in Ituri, where DEVCO is integrating health zones previously covered by DG ECHO in its work.<sup>136</sup> One of the cooperation initiatives, which was cited by several evaluations as being particularly effective in strengthening coherence with the development sector, was the EU strategy for SHARE.<sup>137</sup> In the framework of SHARE, the EU supported the recovery from the drought through close cooperation between humanitarian aid and long-term development.

In addition, there are other EU funding mechanisms that are faster to contract and shorter to implement, such as the EUTF (see next section) or the Pro-Resilient Action (PROACT), which therefore might be more appropriate for the *New Way of Working* to occur. Nonetheless, such mechanisms were not or only rarely mentioned by the stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation. Participants to the evaluation's validation workshop reported a lack of clarity and communication surrounding how EU external instruments are linked to each other and how the funding decisions of these different instruments are connected or at least inform each other. DG ECHO's position within the EU system and DG ECHO's interaction with other instruments should be better disseminated.

### Coherence with the EU Trust Funds

EUTFs are extra-EU budget tools that pool together resources from the EU budget, EDF and other donors in order to enable a quick, flexible, and collective EU response to the different dimensions of an emergency situation. EUTFs address the fragmentation of existing EU instruments in situations of crisis or fragility, bridging the gap between short-term relief and longer-term development.<sup>138</sup> The architecture of the EUTFs is presented in Figure 25. As illustrated the funding comes from the EU budget, the EDF and contributions by Member States, IOs and other public or private donors. EUTFs are directly managed by the Commission. They are governed by a Board and an Operational Committee, which are both chaired by the Commission; contributing donors are represented as well.

Figure 25. The architecture of the EUTFs financing



Source: European parliament, 2017. *The budgetary tools for financing the EU external policy.*

The EUTF takes a regional approach with for instance, the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa<sup>139</sup> worth EUR 2.9 billion<sup>140</sup> coming from the EDF, the EU humanitarian aid instrument, European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), DCI, Member States and other partners. As of November 2017, 117 programmes across three regions (Sahel/Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North Africa) have been approved.

Evidence collected through this study does not allow to assess the extent to which the EU humanitarian aid instrument's contribution to the Trust Funds is pertinent and coherent with other actions financed as part of the EUTF. The stakeholders consulted only had limited knowledge of the specifics of the instrument and related projects, which may suggest a lack of transparency, communication and exchange of information with DG ECHO staff (at HQ and field level). The few framework partners and DG ECHO staff who were able to comment reported that in some cases there were complementarities while in others overlaps were identified among the EUTF funded projects. For instance, DEVCO in Sudan was engaged in registration of refugees, which was felt as primarily a humanitarian duty. In addition, the choice of projects was being questioned by certain framework partners, as this did not appear to meet neither humanitarian nor development requirements. When reviewing the EU Bêkou Trust Fund for Central African Republic, the ECA found that there was neither a formal assessment of the choice of funding mechanisms nor a comprehensive needs analysis.<sup>141</sup> However, some coherence is sought through DG ECHO's participation in the project selection at different levels: first through the comments provided in writing and during the Quality Support Group (QSG) meeting organised by DEVCO and informing the overall strategy and programme; second through the participation in the Operational Committee; and third through potential participation in the development of calls for proposals at field level and in some cases involvement in the selection process at project level. It was however stressed that in the past, when consulted, DG ECHO staff had to meet very short deadlines preventing detailed feedback and involvement.

Stakeholders consulted recognised that the EUTF constituted an interesting approach, which should allow for better linkages between humanitarian and development activities. In Africa for instance, it helps to implement more resilience-oriented activities to address the root causes of displacement in addition to humanitarian crises addressed directly by DG ECHO. It is seen as a flexible tool that can absorb money from different donors and partners, and can disburse funds quickly. However, issues surrounding the slow provision of the funding pledged were reported. This has created concerns in ensuring that resources are provided to the selected projects for their entire duration.

Though the potential added value is recognised, framework partners have different opinions on the EU humanitarian aid instrument's involvement in the Trust Fund, mainly due to the humanitarian principles and more particularly the principle of neutrality. In addition, accessibility and politicisation of aid remain important concerns for humanitarian and development actors under the Trust Funds mechanisms. Another concern relates to

transparency, several DG ECHO framework partners reported a lack of transparency in the management, disbursement and utilisation of funding.

### **Coherence with the Commission's approach towards forced displacement**

As specified in the HAR, coping with the consequences of population movements (refugees, displaced people and returnees) has historically been one of the key objectives of the EU humanitarian aid interventions. Over the evaluation period 73% (equivalent to EUR 5.2 billion) of EU humanitarian aid funding went to activities at least partly targeting displaced populations. 28% (equivalent to EUR 1.4 billion) of this share went to activities targeting exclusively refugees and 7% to activities targeting exclusively IDPs (equivalent to EUR 349 million). The vast majority of the activities targeting displaced population were thus combining multiple groups of beneficiaries (such as local populations).<sup>142</sup>

The level of coherence between these activities and other EU efforts towards forced displacement is difficult to assess as the evidence base is fairly limited. The meta-evaluation did not reveal any specific findings on this specific topic and it was not identified as a major concern by any of the rapid evaluations. The survey of DG ECHO framework partners shows a certain level of unawareness about this topic as the majority of the respondents (51%) were neutral towards the level of coherence between EU humanitarian aid and the Commission's approach towards forced displacement – see full results in 0. This lack of relevant findings is potentially due to the fact that until recently forced displacement was mainly considered as a humanitarian aid issue with only limited connections with other policy areas. As stressed by the Commission before 2016 there was no EU legislation, policy or action plan to address protracted forced displacement in a comprehensive manner.

The changing nature of displacement crises, which are no longer temporary phenomena but mostly long-term crises – displacement lasts currently on average 20 years for refugees and more than 10 years for 90% of IDPs – and the context of the evaluation period, characterised by a major refugee crisis in Europe and an increasing number of displaced people worldwide<sup>143</sup>, forced the Commission to rethink its approach towards these crises. This was specifically requested by the European Council in December 2014, which called for the Commission to elaborate a coherent and coordinated development approach towards refugees and IDPs issues<sup>144</sup>. This demand was reiterated in the European Agenda on Migration published in May 2015<sup>145</sup>.

These requests resulted in a Joint Communication on Forced Displacement and Development '*Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance*'<sup>146</sup> published in April 2016. This Communication was developed by DG ECHO, DEVCO and DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) in close coordination with other Commission services and the EEAS. The Communication brings a number of important precisions and changes to the EU approach towards forced displacement and the role of humanitarian aid in this context – the key ones are presented in the box below.

#### **Box 5. Communication on Forced Displacement and Development, key elements framing humanitarian interventions**

- Forced displacement is not only a humanitarian challenge and the humanitarian system alone cannot accommodate the growing development needs of forcibly displaced people and host communities. Humanitarian intervention is incompatible with the large-scale and protracted nature of forced displacement;
- The EU needs to develop a new, coherent and collaborative policy framework to address protracted forced displacement and move away from the current exclusion of displaced people from development opportunities (by both development actors and many host governments);
- Humanitarian assistance needs to be combined with development assistance to enable the design of more effective and lasting protection and self-reliance strategies;
- In full respect of the humanitarian principles the EU should involve all relevant actors throughout the whole duration of displacement;
- At regional level foster joint analysis of risks and vulnerabilities, joint strategic programme design and humanitarian-development frameworks for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable;
- In full respect of the humanitarian principles, engage in policy dialogue from the onset of a crisis to define long-term strategies and development plans;

- Closer cooperation should be put in place between humanitarian and development actors to ensure continuity of education by closing the gap between education in emergencies and access to full, equitable and quality education at all levels.

The evidence collected during the field missions, completed in July and September 2017 and which therefore relates mainly to the end of the evaluation period, results in a mixed assessment of this new approach:

- In Mauritania, DG ECHO was praised by partners for its recent efforts to find durable solutions for refugees in the Mbera camp and taking the initiative to gather the main donors and agencies to coordinate a comprehensive response to the refugee crisis. DG ECHO took several initiatives in the partners' forums to advance the LRRD agenda, notably through the mobilisation of Nouakchott based donors to address durable solutions to the refugee crisis.
- In Tanzania, on the other hand the framework partners flagged that DG ECHO did not sufficiently address medium and long term objectives, although the context is seen as appropriate for the development of longer term solutions, especially given that at present refugees are entirely dependent on support by the international community. The joint mission to Tanzania organised by DG ECHO, DEVCO and the EU Delegation in February 2017 and which specifically aimed at the implementation of the Communication on Forced Displacement created hope among the framework partners but it did not result in any concrete actions so far due to the uncondusive political environment in Tanzania illustrated by the encampment policy in place in the country. The launch of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)<sup>147</sup> in Tanzania is also considered as a real opportunity for DG ECHO and DEVCO to coordinate with other stakeholders and help the government implement this new framework, but there has been limited engagement of DG ECHO in the CRRF so far, among other due to the difficult political context set out above.

Tanzania is also one of the eligible country under the EUTF for Africa which was set up to *"help foster stability in three regions - Sahel region and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North Africa - and to contribute to better migration management by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, through the promotion of economic and equal opportunities, security and development"*<sup>148</sup>. But no projects were financed through the Trust Fund in Tanzania so far and DG ECHO's involvement in the development of the Trust Fund was reported as very limited to date.

Overall the coherence between EU humanitarian aid activities and the Commission's approach towards forced displacement seems to have been limited during most of the evaluation period as such approach did not exist outside of humanitarian aid until recently. The new framework seems promising as it clearly stresses the need to develop a coherent approach involving all the relevant actors. It however needs to be rapidly operationalised by DG ECHO and other in order to actively engage recent initiatives such as the CRRF and the EUTFs.

### **Coherence with the Commission's climate change adaptation policies**

The Consensus recognised the impacts of climate change on the severity of natural disasters and it stressed that humanitarian needs are likely to increase due among others to environmental factors, including climate change. Based on the 'do no harm' principle the Consensus also calls for the integration of environmental considerations in humanitarian aid sectoral policies and interventions, even short-term emergency ones. This mandate is mainly reflected in DG ECHO's DRR policies and guidance, which represents DG ECHO's main approach to climate change adaptation. The guidance<sup>149</sup> requires DG ECHO framework partners to integrate the risks associated with climate change and environmental degradation into their risk assessments and DRR activities. The guidance also stresses the relevance of DRR, and indirectly climate change and environmental considerations, in all the humanitarian sectors and contexts.

In parallel to the publication of the DRR guidance, the Commission published in 2013 its 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries', whose objective is to *"establish a systematic and holistic approach to building resilience in crisis and risk-prone contexts"*<sup>150</sup>. The

Action Plan stresses EU efforts to consistently support prevention and preparedness for crises in the most vulnerable countries, notably through the identification of the need to integrate DRR and climate change adaptation into crisis response/recovery actions, humanitarian response and development cooperation. This translated in activities linked to fragility assessments, risks assessments and the development of early warning systems in risk-averse countries.

Based on this relatively strong policy framework for the integration of climate change adaptation into DG ECHO's DRR interventions, the meta-evaluation included several positive assessments and good examples of coherent approaches in the field, notably in the Horn of Africa, DG ECHO's drought risk reduction interventions applied climate change adaptation principles into practice by helping communities to better cope with the impact of drought (and thus, adjust / adapt to one of the main effects of climate change in the region)<sup>151</sup>. However, the situation is different in a few other sectors of intervention, where despite the call from the Consensus to also consider environmental issues, the level of integration of climate change adaptation elements within DG ECHO's intervention vary. The LAC evaluation revealed for example that the implemented projects increasingly recognised the link between humanitarian aid and climate change. As mentioned in the regional evaluation, "*over three hundred DG ECHO project files for the LAC region were reviewed with close to a one hundred mentioning climate change in some form or another, sometimes only in passing but in many cases citing it as a root cause in creating a hazard or multiple hazards*"<sup>152</sup>. In other contexts, the level of integration was very limited or mainly pushed by the framework partners and not by DG ECHO itself. This was for example the case in Tanzania, where different partners flagged the importance to integrate environmental degradation aspects within the funded actions design as the refugee camps are both affected by and causing important environmental issues. These need to be addressed, especially as they often have important cost-effectiveness implications (e.g. cost of water extraction, firewood, disaster prevention, etc.).

This mixed assessment is confirmed by the survey of DG ECHO framework partners which revealed that 13% of the respondents disagreed with the fact that DG ECHO effectively coordinates its humanitarian aid policies and responses with the Commission's climate change objectives and 47% remained neutral towards this, clearly highlighting a large scope for improvements. This could be done by a more systematic integration of climate change adaptation and environmental degradation considerations within DG ECHO sectoral guidance – this is currently only done in the DRR guidance discussed above and the WASH guidance. DG ECHO could also include reference to climate change adaptation and environmental degradation considerations into the Single Form guidance. The "resilience marker"<sup>153</sup> as it currently stands does not fulfil this role as it only refers to these elements in the part dedicated to the analysis of vulnerability, hazards and threats and not in the other parts of the marker.

### **3.2.3 External coherence**

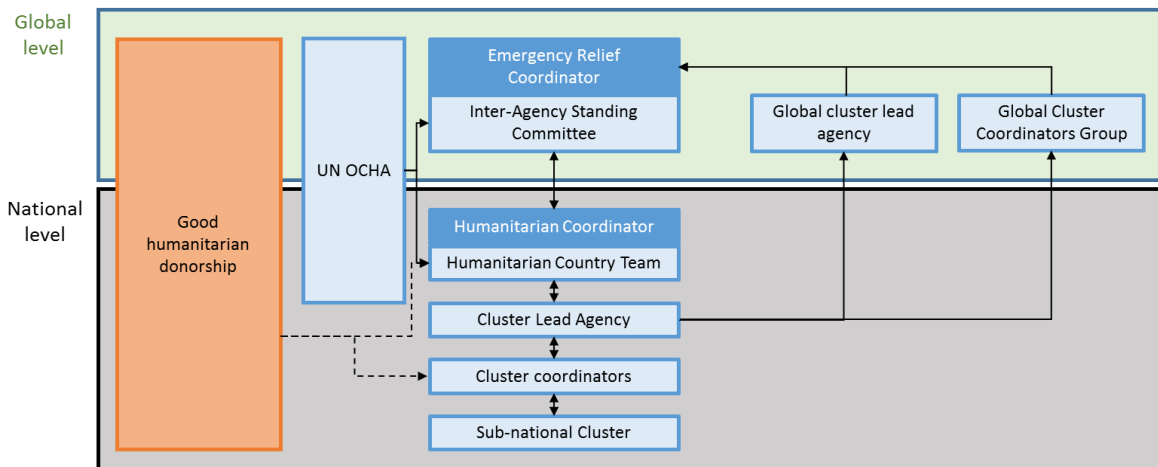
This section provides an answer to the different evaluation questions linked to the coherence of EU humanitarian aid with external stakeholders (i.e. the EU Member States, other donors, UN agencies and beneficiary countries).

As stipulated in Article 4 of the HAR, EU humanitarian aid budget can also be used to finance "*measures to strengthen the Community's coordination with the Member States, other donor countries, international humanitarian organisations and institutions, NGOs and organisations representing them*"<sup>154</sup>. The Consensus reinforce this aspect and clearly expresses the will of the EU to strengthen the overall humanitarian response and contribute to shaping the international humanitarian agenda. It also stresses that "*the EU strongly supports the central and overall coordinating role of the UN, particularly OCHA, in promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises*".

Based on this DG ECHO has been heavily involved in the humanitarian coordination structures both at global and national level. Figure 26 provides an overview of this architecture: the blue boxes represent the coordination structures of the cluster approach as developed by the IASC following the 2005 Humanitarian Reform and mainly involving UN agencies and INGOs. Humanitarian aid donors, such as the EU (DG ECHO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), DFID, etc. meet under the GHD group at global and country level. These meetings are among other used to coordinate the donor's funding efforts and their policies.

Figure 26. Overview of the humanitarian coordination structures



Source: ICF, 2017. Based on: [humanitarianresponse.info](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/who-does-what), 2017. Who does what? Available at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/who-does-what> [18 September 2017].

Before diving into the assessment of EU humanitarian aid external coherence, the humanitarian coordination structures developed by the IASC at different levels are briefly presented below.

- The IASC is at the top of the coordination structure under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. DG ECHO is not part of the IASC<sup>155</sup> but is a strong supporter and plays an active role in its initiatives. DG ECHO took for example a leading role in supporting the Transformative Agenda launched by the IASC in 2011. This implied among other participation in the regular meetings of the IASC Emergency Directors-Donor Group (EDG). DG ECHO also hosted the EDG-donor meeting in Geneva in December 2014 that focused on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Transformative Agenda.
- The IASC and the humanitarian coordination structure as a whole are supported by UNOCHA both at global and field level (in the form of support to the Humanitarian Coordinator's leadership). UNOCHA is legally part of the UN Secretariat. The EU recognises its central and overall coordination role in the Consensus. Alongside other donors, DG ECHO is involved in UNOCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG), which was chaired by DG ECHO during the first half of 2014. The ODSG acts as a 'sounding board' and a source of advice on UNOCHA's policy, management, budgetary and financial questions.<sup>156</sup>
- The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum located within beneficiary countries. It is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator, which is appointed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator "upon the occurrence of a complex emergency or when an already existing humanitarian situation worsens in degree and/or complexity"<sup>157</sup>. As the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organisation, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory, the HCTs are therefore not automatically created (e.g. there are no HCT in Tanzania or Uganda for example). HCTs typically involve representatives from UN agencies, international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement but also local NGOs depending on the context. The role of donors within the HCTs, even as observer, is under debate and they were recently officially excluded from the HCT composition on the basis of the independence principle but in the practice DG ECHO and other donors still take part in the HCT meetings in many countries.
- The cluster approach, which resulted from the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, was revised under the Transformative Agenda in order to "simplify processes and

mechanisms, improve inter-agency communication and collaboration, and building confidence in the system as a whole, from the immediate response to longer-term planning”<sup>158</sup>. The clusters represent the backbone of the humanitarian coordination structure with presence at global, national and sometimes local level and a coverage of all the relevant sectors of intervention. There are 11 different global clusters headed by different lead agencies depending on their focus. A cluster can be activated at country or local level based on request from the humanitarian coordinator. Under the Transformative Agenda it was agreed that activation of clusters must be more strategic, less automatic, and time limited. The official role of donors within the clusters is limited to the role of invitee to the clusters’ Strategic Advisory Groups (SAG), which can be created to support the clusters’ strategic framework, priorities and work plan. In practice DG ECHO’s participation in the clusters vary depending on their geographical level and DG ECHO’s involvement in the country or region.<sup>159</sup>

### 3.2.3.1 Coherence with humanitarian aid activities of other donors

DG ECHO maintains close contact with most other humanitarian aid donors with the objective to provide a coherent and comprehensive response to the identified needs. DG ECHO’s effort takes a variety of formats, as further discussed below. Although no systematic statistics exist about all these efforts, DG ECHO’s 2013 Annual Activity Report mentions that DG ECHO met with 80 organisations<sup>160</sup> and donors in 2013 with the objective to ensure effective coordination with donors and relief organisations.<sup>161</sup> This information is however not systematically reported in other Annual Activity Reports.

As shown in 0, DG ECHO’s framework partners and local implementing partners largely approve DG ECHO’s effort in this area (i.e. 70% of framework partners and 89% of local implementing partners agree that DG ECHO effectively coordinates its response with other donors to avoid overlaps). One fourth of the framework partners remains however neutral towards this question flagging the potential for further improvements. This section will investigate this question in more details, first assessing the coherence with the Member States and then looking at the wider donor community.

### Coherence with humanitarian aid activities of the EU Member States

*EQ7: To what extent are EU humanitarian aid actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps with those of the Member States?*<sup>162</sup>

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: An overall trend towards improved coherence and consistency between EU and Member States humanitarian aid policies/strategies/priorities was identified		
Evidence of synergies (or lack of them) between EU and Member States humanitarian aid policies/strategies/priorities	Literature review Interview: DG ECHO HQ, select MS humanitarian agencies	There are coordination structures and mechanisms in place to promote the coherence between EU and the Member States' humanitarian aid policies and activities. However, these structures are not always used as they should, preventing detailed discussion and further coordination.
Identification of factors overall influencing coherence and consistency (policy and coordination instruments and tools established and implemented, external and internal factors, etc.) of EU and Member States humanitarian aid policies/strategies/priorities	Literature review Interview: DG ECHO HQ, select MS humanitarian agencies	
JC: Intra-EU humanitarian (i.e. between EU and the Member States) synergies and coordination at the field level have improved		
Evidence of synergies (or lack of them) between EU and Member States humanitarian aid actions at the field level	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, select MS humanitarian agencies Survey: DG ECHO field	Good examples of synergies and complementarities between EU and the Member States were identified in the field but they need to be made more systematic
Identification of factors overall influencing coherence and consistency (policy and coordination instruments and tools established and implemented, external and internal factors, etc.) of EU and Member	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, select MS humanitarian agencies Survey: DG ECHO field	

States' humanitarian aid actions at the field level		
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**There are mechanisms in place to promote the coherence between EU and the Member States humanitarian aid policies but their use could be improved**

Based on Article 10 of the HAR, the Commission promotes close coordination between its own activities and those of the Member States, both at decision-making level and on the ground to guarantee and enhance the effectiveness and consistency of the EU and Member States' humanitarian aid actions. The Consensus further 'frames' this cooperation as it explicitly aims at improving the coherence of the EU humanitarian response. The Member States and the Commission put in place two main fora to promote this coherence and coordination, i.e. a working party under the Council in 2009 and a Comitology Committee following the HAR in 1996.

The Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) is tasked with: (1) monitoring humanitarian needs; (2) ensuring the coherence and coordination of the EU collective response to crises; (3) discussing international, horizontal and sectorial humanitarian policies; and (4) promoting the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the humanitarian principles and IHL<sup>163</sup>. According to the interviewed Member States representatives, the main added value of the COHAFA meetings relates to: (1) the information shared by DG ECHO and the Member States on ongoing crises, which are particularly valuable given DG ECHO's access to first-hand information through its field network; and (2) the development of common advocacy and diplomatic messages ensuring a common EU approach to particular crises.

Despite this added value, the consulted Member States stressed that important improvements remain possible in terms of COHAFA's contribution to the coordination between DG ECHO and the Member States. The lack of early access to preparatory documents was flagged as a particularly important obstacle for productive discussions during the COHAFA meetings. The lack of transparency and consultation with regard to certain strategic choices notably in terms of funding allocation was also identified as an issue preventing coordination. This was for example the case for the selection of pilot countries for the implementation of the Consensus Action Plan and for the selection of pilot countries for the humanitarian-development nexus, which were done unilaterally by the Commission with limited considerations to the criticisms expressed by the Member States.

The second important forum for coordination between DG ECHO and the Member States is the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC), which was established following the HAR<sup>164</sup>. In line with the HAR, the HAC has to meet at least once a year and provides feedback on financial decision exceeding EUR 2 million made by DG ECHO – emergencies are an exception as in that case DG ECHO doesn't need to consult the HAC for decision of up to EUR 10 million. In theory the HAC should also discuss DG ECHO's general guidelines and coordination with the Member States together with changes in the way DG ECHO administers humanitarian aid and the assessment of the deployed aid.<sup>165</sup> In practice, the consulted Member States did not consider the HAC as a discussion or a coordination platform, but rather as a mandatory 'administrative step' for DG ECHO to get the World Wide Decision and the operational strategy approved. The main criticism of the HAC reported by the Member States related to: the lack of early access to preparatory documents, the limited scope for discussion during the meeting, the limited responses provided by DG ECHO in case of questions and the lack of justification for proposed decisions on budget allocations to the HIPs. This last point is considered as a major missed opportunity, as there is clear scope to increase information sharing between DG ECHO and the Member States on anticipated budget allocations across regions and crises in order to divide priorities and ensure a coherent and comprehensive humanitarian aid response. A particular example of DG ECHO insufficiently taking Member States' perspectives and questions into account relates to the Commission's decision to finance the distribution of dairy products as part of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria taken in March 2016<sup>166</sup>. This decision was taken despite heavy criticism and questioning by some Member States, notably as to whether this decision was supported by a needs assessment, whether local procurement could not have been used instead and how this aligned with DG ECHO's strategy to support for cash-based assistance in the region. Procedurally, the Commission's decision in question however



was taken in respect of the comitology rules, i.e. following a favourable opinion expressed by the Committee.

The main improvement opportunity suggested by some of the consulted Member States and supported by both civil society representatives and DG ECHO officials concerned the organisation of a midterm HAC meeting in order to discuss ongoing interventions and future planning well in advance of the HIPs finalisation. This would reinforce the transparency of DG ECHO's decision making and allow more strategic alignment between DG ECHO and the Member States.

A third coordination forum was recently launched by DG ECHO and consists of meetings of the Director Generals of the Member States' departments in charge of humanitarian aid with DG ECHO's Director General. Being relatively new, no detailed feedback on this forum was provided during the evaluation. Interviewed Member States reported however that it could be a good forum to have more detailed discussions.

### ***External Assigned Revenues, a new possibility to increase coherence between EU budget and Member States?***

ExAR are financial contributions from Member States and/or third countries, including their public agencies, entities or natural persons, to certain external aid projects or programmes financed by the EU budget and managed by the Commission. Since the entry into force of the new EU Financial Regulation in 2013, DG ECHO is able to receive ExAR and use them for humanitarian aid activities. The terms under which the contributions are provided are specified in 'Contribution Agreements', which can cover multiple years. In this case the funding is provided by the contributor in successive instalments. Each contribution is also associated with a 'Description of the Action' agreed among the parties. The contributor can choose to allocate its ExAR to a specific crisis as addressed in the HIPs or to a specific action. DG ECHO manages the ExAR in line with its overall portfolio, i.e. based on the HAR, the Consensus and the EU Financial Regulation. The management of the ExAR falls under the sole responsibility of DG ECHO, which retains a share of the allocated fund to cover its operational costs. This share cannot exceed 5% of the ExAR.<sup>167</sup>

The objectives of the instrument are to:

- Diversify the portfolio and partnership of the contributors;
- Leverage DG ECHO's expertise in implementing and delivering humanitarian aid;
- Increase the funding available to support EU activities or cover needs usually less covered;
- Ensure better coordination between different actors;
- Ensure economies of scale.

As summarised in the table below, EUR 635.25 million were allocated to the EU humanitarian aid instrument in the form of ExAR since 2013. Two third of this amount were allocated by Member States to the 'Facility for Refugees in Turkey' in 2016. It is important to stress that the EU humanitarian aid instrument also contributed directly to the Facility (i.e. EUR 165 million in 2016 and EUR 145 million in 2017) and that the total contribution of Member States to the Facility amounts to EUR 2 billion for 2016-2017 covering both humanitarian aid and other activities<sup>168,169</sup>. These EUR 2 billion were split as follow between both types of activities: EUR 910 million to DG NEAR for non-humanitarian activities, and EUR 1,090 million for humanitarian funding<sup>170</sup>.

DFID's contribution represents close to 90% of the remaining EUR 200 million of ExAR allocated to the financing of humanitarian aid actions in the Sahel, notably through the PHASE programme. DFID's main motivations to allocate its funding through DG ECHO include: increased leverage and efficiency of funding by pooling resources; good value for money and reduction of DFID's indirect cost<sup>171</sup>; trust in DG ECHO management capacity and excellent transparency; and key added value through DG ECHO's strong presence in the Sahel. The remaining budget was allocated by three different Member States and one third country in 2013 and 2014 with no other recent use of ExAR.

Table 9. Overview of ExAR allocated to humanitarian aid activities

Contributor	Year	Amount (million EUR)	Objective
Government of Ivory Coast and the Agence Francaise de Développement (AFD)	2013	18	Restore the functioning and accessibility of basic public services (over a 3-year period) in Ivory Coast
Luxembourg	2013	0.5	Contribution to the Children of Peace initiative
Austria	2014	0.25	Contribution to the Children of Peace initiative
UK, DFID	2014	178	Contribution to the PHASE programme in the Sahel (over a 3-year period)
Government of Ivory Coast and AFD	2014	2.5	Contribution to Ebola preparedness activities in Ivory Coast
Austria	2014	1	Ebola preparedness activities in Burkina Faso.
Group of Member States	2016	435	Contribution to the Facility for refugees in Turkey

Source: Commission, Explanatory note on ExAR and DG ECHO's budget.

The interviews with different Member States revealed as summarised in Table 10, that although most of the consulted Member States representatives recognised the theoretical added value of the mechanism in terms of coherence and coordination, they also stressed their intention to continue financing directly humanitarian aid activities for visibility reasons and to support their national NGOs.

Table 10. Motivation and reluctance to use ExAR according to Member States

Motivation	Reluctance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modest national humanitarian budget, financing via DG ECHO ensures efficiency</li> <li>Sectoral or geographical expertise missing at national level but present within DG ECHO</li> <li>Provision of multi-annual funding</li> <li>DG ECHO's clear strategy and portfolio of funded actions</li> <li>DG ECHO's guaranteed good performance due to its presence on the ground</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National presence in the field</li> <li>Different approaches towards humanitarian aid, e.g. stronger focus on DRR</li> <li>National will to provide both earmarked and non-earmarked funding</li> <li>Doubt regarding DG ECHO's needs-based approach</li> </ul>

Source: Interviews with Member States

In terms of evaluation of the ExAR in the practice, the recently published evaluation of DG ECHO's intervention in the health sector analysed the use of ExAR in Ivory Coast and concluded that the instrument was appropriate for the objectives of the agreement (i.e. reinforcing the healthcare system in a post-conflict context, as well as improving the link between humanitarian actions and development ones), which were best served through a multi-annual action. In particular, the multi-annual approach allowed for improved cooperation among the partners involved, favoured the integration of the partners' activities into the national healthcare system and allowed to monitor practices and results over time. The case study showed however that DG ECHO's working mechanisms were not adapted to this multi-annual approach limiting the effectiveness of the project on the ground. If there is a will to make more frequent use of the ExAR by both DG ECHO and the Member States, one should identify sectors and/or regions where Member States want to intervene but do not have the capacity to do so while DG ECHO is able to channel the aid. The use of the ExAR in the context of the 'Facility for Refugees in Turkey' is still fairly recent and was not evaluated to date.

**Good examples of synergies and complementarities between DG ECHO and the Member States were identified in the field but they need to be made more systematic**

The evaluation of the Consensus covering the 2008-2012 period showed an increasing level of coordination between DG ECHO and the Member States at policy level but it resulted in a mixed assessment of their operational cooperation. Based on the evidence collected as part of this comprehensive evaluation, the situation improved over the 2012-2016 period as several very good examples of synergies and complementarities were identified in the field. These relate not only to the use of ExAR but also to the overall recognition of DG ECHO’s technical capacities at field level, which is considered as crucial to inform the Member States’ interventions. The alignment between DG ECHO’s strategies and some of the Member States’ strategies in specific areas also reinforced these synergies (e.g. common push for the use of MPCT). The OPC confirmed this positive assessment (42% of the respondents considered that there was a large extent of coherence between the EU and the Member States humanitarian aid funded actions) but also nuanced it as 37% of the respondents considered that the level of coherence was moderate, highlighting the potential for further improvement – see more details on this below. On the positive side, the evaluation of the Sahel Strategy concluded that DG ECHO had a major influence on the Member States’ intervention in the region, both in terms of modality and geographical focus. This resulted in the allocation of ExAR by DFID and a ‘gap-filling strategy’ from SIDA and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), which aimed at complementing DG ECHO’s interventions in the region. The field mission to DRC also illustrated the crucial role of DG ECHO’s TA in terms of donor’s coordination through the GHD group, although this was not only directed to EU Member States. Different Member States representatives also praised DG ECHO’s willingness to share insights on specific funded actions or framework partners contributing to a common approach to specific crises.

Despite these good examples of synergies and complementarity, the evaluation showed that coherence and complementarity could be pursued more systematically, especially in places where DG ECHO has no local presence. In Tanzania, for example, framework partners called for DG ECHO to take a more prominent role in donor coordination efforts in view of the launch of the CRRF.

Other factors which hamper further cooperation with Member States include:

- The fact that in some Member States the humanitarian aid budget is managed by the development aid department limiting their ability to actively engage in coordination forum dedicated to humanitarian aid, although some Member States manage to do so;
- Many Member States want to maintain their visibility in beneficiary countries through their humanitarian aid activities. This limits the scope of joint implementation efforts.

**Coherence with other donors**

*NEW EQ1: To what extent were DG ECHO’s actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps, with actions implemented by other donors?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is a good level of coherence and complementarity between DG ECHO actions and the actions of other donors		
Evidence of mechanisms put in place by DG ECHO to ensure coherence and complementarity	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Survey: DG ECHO field, FPA partners Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	There are many coordination mechanisms and structures to promote coherence among humanitarian aid donors. DG ECHO is an active player in these fora and aims at coordinating its strategies and interventions with the ones of other donors.
Evidence of DG ECHO’s participation to mechanisms put in place by others/or in collaboration with others such as Donors coordination set-up, e.g. GHD initiative.	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, other donors and aid providers Survey: FPA partners	

Evidence of obstacles to improved coherence with other donors	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Survey: DG ECHO field, FPA partners Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	No major obstacles preventing coordination between DG ECHO and DAC donors were identified. A major improvement point relates to DG ECHO's relation with "new" donors.
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***DG ECHO plays an active role in the coordination mechanisms and structures put in place to promote coherence among humanitarian donors***

Coordination and complementarity with other humanitarian donors are promoted by DG ECHO among the framework partners to prevent gaps in the assistance provided, avoid duplications, ensure quality, continuity and sustainability, and maximise the overall impact of the resources available. During the evaluation period DG ECHO strengthened cooperation with other donors and was active at different levels and involved in different forums to promote complementarity and coherence between them. The leading role of DG ECHO within the humanitarian coordination structures at global and local level was recognised by most of the interviewed stakeholders, which noted DG ECHO's ability to lead and bring technical expertise to the discussions. This was also recognised by the respondents to the OPC, as half of them considered that EU humanitarian aid funded actions were largely coherent with the activities of other international donors while one third considered that it was the case but to a more moderate extent.

The key coordination mechanisms between DG ECHO and non-EU donors are presented below together with an assessment of DG ECHO's role within them – the cluster approach set out by the IASC under the UN will be discussed in the next section.

The GHD is the main forum for coordination among donors. Originally established in 2003 by 17 donors based on a list of 23 principles and good practice, the GHD currently involved 42 members and is an informal donor forum and network<sup>172</sup>. The GHD meets not only at global level to support donors and improve the quality and impact of humanitarian assistance but also sometimes at national level in order to coordinate donors' activities in beneficiary countries. DG ECHO was active at both levels during the evaluation period:

- At global level, DG ECHO participated in annual High Level GHD meetings and contributed to different work-streams either as leader (e.g. on the topic of needs assessment) or as participants (e.g. on the topic of reporting requirements and multi-annual planning and funding);
- At national level, DG ECHO actively supported the activities of the GHD group of other informal donor groups – when such group existed. In DRC, DG ECHO is for example currently co-chairing the GHD group together with UNOCHA. The forum is a key tool to ensure coordination between the funding provided by the different donors present in the country. It helps participating donors keeping track of all the financing in order to prevent double funding and keep everyone informed. This is not an easy task given the financing cycles of the different donors. Hence, donors also rely on their implementing partners to communicate their different funding channels. A good example of complementarity in terms of financing is the support given to International NGOs Safety Organisation (INSO's) security information services, which is shared among the key donors present in DRC and benefits all of them. These donor coordination groups can also be used to prepare common positions among donors notably to inform the HCTs. In other contexts, DG ECHO was less successful at contributing to the coordination among donors – but this will be discussed in more details below alongside the IASC cluster approach.

DG ECHO also promoted the active involvement of donors in the IASC cluster approach presented below. For example, in the shelter and settlement sector, DG ECHO strongly advocated for the development of a donor consultation group within the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) to further improve donors' coordination. DG ECHO also encouraged the GSC to engage more actively with the World Bank (e.g. by including a condition in the 2017-2018 ERC grant in support of GSC and by inviting the World Bank to join the GSC donor consultation group<sup>173</sup>).

DG ECHO also is also part of the ICRC Donor Support Group and the IFRC Donor Advisory Group. Although these two groups were set up by IOs, they represent good platforms for high-level strategic and policy dialogue and involve a variety of donors. The exact nature of DG ECHO's role within these groups is however unclear.

As reported in DG ECHO's Annual Activity reports, DG ECHO also maintains close relationships with other donors on a bilateral basis. This occurs both at HQ and field level. During the evaluation period DG ECHO maintained close bilateral coordination with the following Development Aid Committee (DAC) donors<sup>174</sup>: United States of America (in the form of Strategic Dialogue and monthly video-conference at technical level), Norway, Switzerland, Canada and Japan<sup>175</sup>. Interviews with representatives from the USA in the field confirmed the close relationship between DG ECHO and USAID OFDA.

DG ECHO also cooperated with non-DAC donors and other regional organisations during the evaluation period (e.g. Turkey, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and some BRIC countries as well as the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). As described in DG ECHO's Annual Activity reports these coordination efforts mainly occurred at relatively high policy level (e.g. high level ministerial meetings, study tours, strategic dialogue).<sup>176</sup> In June 2014, DG ECHO also organised a partnership event on the role of regional and inter-governmental organisations in the humanitarian architecture.

Despite these different coordination efforts, the field visits completed during this evaluation revealed very low levels of engagement between DG ECHO and the non-DAC donors in the field. It is also a topic which received low level of attention during the evaluation period. It would therefore be beneficial if DG ECHO would continue its coordination effort at high-level and analyse how to expand these efforts at field level. As already pointed out by the 2012 evaluation and review of humanitarian access strategies in EU funded interventions, improved strategic cooperation with these new donors could considerably increase humanitarian access in some contexts. A first step in this direction could be to initiate discussion on the integration of some of these new donors within the GHD.

### 3.2.3.2 Coherence with the IASC coordination structures and the UN agencies

*NEW EQ2: To what extent were DG ECHO's actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps, with actions implemented by UN agencies?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is a good level of coherence and complementarity between DG ECHO actions and the actions of UN agencies		
Evidence of mechanisms put in place by DG ECHO to ensure coherence and complementarity	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Survey: DG ECHO field, FPA partners Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	Indicator deleted as it is not part of DG ECHO's mandate to establish new coordination mechanisms with the UN.
Evidence of DG ECHO's participation to mechanisms put in place by others/or in collaboration with the UN agencies (e.g. through the cluster approach and the Humanitarian Country Teams).	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, other donors and aid providers Survey: FPA partners	DG ECHO improved its involvement in humanitarian coordination structures at policy and field level during the evaluation period
Evidence of obstacles to improved coherence with the UN agencies (e.g. through the cluster approach and the Humanitarian Country Teams).	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Survey: DG ECHO field, FPA partners Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	DG ECHO should continue its efforts to support the UN coordination structures (and challenge them when necessary)

## **DG ECHO and the IASC coordination structures**

The relation between DG ECHO and the UN agencies occurs at two distinct levels: first at the framework partnership level, as the UN agencies implement a large share of EU funding; and secondly within the humanitarian coordination structures set up by the IASC and involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. This section focusses on this second level, starting with the coherence between DG ECHO and the IASC coordination structures and then focusing on the specific relation between DG ECHO and the UN agencies.

### **Evaluation of DG ECHO's role with respect to the IASC coordination mechanisms**

The meta-evaluation revealed that throughout the evaluation period DG ECHO increasingly acknowledged the importance of contributing to existing coordination mechanisms and the clusters approach at global and national level. It however also showed that such support was sometimes assessed as insufficient or patchy. In fact, at least six evaluations (five thematic and one country-specific) pointed out at some issues with DG ECHO's participation in existing structures, with weaknesses related to the inconsistency of support across different sectors and missed opportunities for coordination. The evaluations called for a more consistent participation of DG ECHO in existing clusters across sectors and a more proactive approach in promoting some thematic practices within established structures both at HQ and field level.

The rapid evaluations completed during this evaluation showed that in the sectors investigated (i.e., protection, WASH, FSL and shelter) DG ECHO is currently systematically supporting the global clusters. This is also the case in a series of other global clusters (i.e., Camp Coordination and Camp Management, early recovery, logistics, nutrition). The format of the support seems however to vary depending on the needs. Some examples include:

- DG ECHO financially supported the development and implementation of the Global Shelter Cluster Strategy 2013-2017 and already committed financing for 2018 via the ERC Fund<sup>177</sup>;
- DG ECHO is part of the SAG in the Global Logistics Cluster<sup>178</sup>; or
- DG ECHO is an observer within the Global Nutrition Cluster<sup>179</sup>.

As shown in 0, the majority of the consulted DG ECHO framework partners considers this level of engagement as appropriate as 68% of them agree to strongly agree that DG ECHO actively engages with relevant global clusters. 30% of them remain however neutral indicating that DG ECHO's engagement could be further improved. If one looks into which sectors these 30% are active in, two sectors stand out, namely education in emergencies and protection. These two sectors are respectively over-represented by 6% and 4% among the respondents to this particular question when compared to the overall sectoral distribution of the respondents to the survey<sup>180</sup>. This indicates a potential need for DG ECHO to even further engage in the global clusters linked to these two sectors, especially as they have been very active in developing their own policies on these topics. The evaluation of DG ECHO's intervention in the education in emergencies sector drew a similar conclusion, namely that DG ECHO's engagement in the child protection and education in emergencies clusters and bodies, was inconsistent over the 2008-2015 period. According to the report, DG ECHO should seek to exercise greater influence in these areas via engagement in global and country level forums and clusters.

With regard to DG ECHO's engagement with national and local clusters, the meta-evaluation only identified relevant evidence in evaluations covering the period up to 2013. These pointed to a need for DG ECHO to more strategically approach cooperation with UN partners and other key organisations, in some regions as well as within particular humanitarian aid sectors (for example drought risk reduction, nutrition and food security). Shortcomings in the coherence of interventions were noticed both at country level as well as within sectors by at least three evaluations<sup>181</sup>. The evaluations also outlined a need to further involve its partners in DG ECHO's strategic decision-making in countries and sectors concerned by humanitarian crises.

The framework and local implementing partners' surveys completed in 2017 revealed a certain level of improvement in this area over the evaluation period as close to 80% of both framework partners and local implementing partners approved DG ECHO's level of engagement within national and local clusters. The rapid evaluation confirmed this positive assessment in the WASH and food security sectors but nuanced it in the shelter sector, where a decreasing role of DG ECHO field staff was noted in national shelter clusters in recent years, which

negatively affected coordination at country level. This was mainly due to the lack of capacity within DG ECHO field network. The recently completed health evaluation came to the same conclusion and found that in some cases DG ECHO was not able to critically engage with the relevant actors in the national health clusters due to capacity reasons and/or differences in favoured approaches. The evaluation also noted that, at country level, the extent of DG ECHO's collaboration with health clusters varied by country. For example, in South Sudan, DG ECHO rarely attended health cluster meetings.

In addition to its own engagement in clusters DG ECHO also encourages the framework partners to take part in relevant national and local clusters. This is done by directly funding the work of national and local clusters and direct references to the cluster approach in DG ECHO's thematic policy documents.

Given the multitude of clusters present at global, national and local level it would seem logical for DG ECHO to prioritise its available resources and engage in clusters which are most important in terms of coordination and needs. This of course implies that DG ECHO cannot engage systematically in all clusters, which was one of the critics raised by the evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (covering the period 2008-2014). That evaluation concluded that DG ECHO's case-by-case approach was perceived as weakening the global drive to strengthen coordination, with practical consequences for coherence, planning, and implementation. The key would therefore be for DG ECHO to define a clear framework for its approach towards the IASC coordination structures, which would include setting out the criteria influencing its decision to engage or not in a particular cluster.

### **Evaluation of DG ECHO's coordination with UNOCHA and other UN agencies**

The relations between DG ECHO and UNOCHA – and other UN agencies – are complex and views on them vary widely, depending on the stakeholders consulted.

Starting with the mandates of UNOCHA and DG ECHO, it is important to re-state that, as recognised in the Consensus, UNOCHA is the sole party in charge of coordinating effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.<sup>182</sup> Based on its ambition to help shape the international humanitarian agenda, DG ECHO has played a prominent role in the coordination of humanitarian aid by supporting and getting involved in setting up these structures in certain occasions. A key example is the case of Syria, where DG ECHO was able to set up the infrastructure for improving coordination amongst all humanitarian actors in the early stages of the crisis in 2012-2013. DG ECHO contributed to setting up a regional response across five countries, including Syria to improve conditions for refugees, IDPs and other affected populations.

Views on DG ECHO's 'coordination role' within the humanitarian landscape vary greatly within the humanitarian community, but can be broadly categorised into two groups:

- The first group supports DG ECHO's coordination role and even consider that DG ECHO should do more to 'challenge' the humanitarian coordination structures and the UN agencies as a whole;
- The second group, rather on the opposite, considers that DG ECHO goes beyond its mandate when taking a prominent operational coordination functions. In the view of these second group DG ECHO should seek to better fit within the UN system. Within this logic, the meta-evaluation revealed for example that DG ECHO and the Member States seem to differently interpret the boundaries and inter-relationships between the operational coordination functions of the EU and the UN. This became a point of contention between DG ECHO and several Member States, which affirmed that the primary responsibility for operational coordination should lie with the UN and were actively seeking to further reinforce this.

The composition of these two groups is very heterogeneous and some individuals and/or organisations actually defend both positions stating for example that although DG ECHO should aim to fit within the UN system, it should also challenge it in order to make it more transparent, accountable and efficient. In DRC, some framework partners questioned, for example, DG ECHO's ability to challenge the UN cluster approach while others noted that it was not within DG ECHO's responsibility to do so. Others again stressed that DG ECHO should

have a clearer position towards some of the UN actors or communicate this position more clearly towards its partners as it was raised as an issue by many stakeholders.

Based on these observations it should be stressed that since the 2014 evaluation of the Consensus, which requested DG ECHO to clarify its objectives in terms of humanitarian coordination and relations with UNOCHA and other UN agencies, good progress has been recorded by DG ECHO, notably through:

- The development of regular strategic dialogues between DG ECHO and the UN agencies;
- The development of thematic discussion on key topics and sectors (e.g. in the area of MPCT); and
- The establishment of close cooperation between DG ECHO and the UN in case of new crisis, implying considerable information exchange and the development of common approaches and messages.

DG ECHO should therefore continue its effort to reinforce its relationship with the UN agencies and where needed challenge them in cooperation with its key partners.

### 3.2.3.3 Coherence with beneficiary countries

*NEW EQ3: To what extent were DG ECHO's actions coherent and complementary, and avoiding overlaps, with national policies from beneficiary countries*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is a good level of coherence and complementarity between DG ECHO actions and the national policies of beneficiary countries		
Evidence of direct dialogue with national authorities in the selection of priorities and activities for DG ECHO-funded interventions (linkages with need based approach) which led to good level of coherence	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field Fieldwork: national / local authorities	DG ECHO seems to be too-cautious sometimes in its level of cooperation with national and local authorities, due to its interpretation of the principle of independence. Within the boundaries set by the humanitarian principles DG ECHO should recognise the need to develop context-specific approaches towards national and local authorities.
Evidence of sectors and/or geographies which suffered from an insufficient coordination with national and/or local authorities	Literature review Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field Survey: DG ECHO field Fieldwork: national / local authorities	

The level of coherence between EU humanitarian aid activities and national and local policies within beneficiary countries was not identified among the original evaluation questions raised by DG ECHO. However, given the strategic nature of this evaluation and its focus on issues linked to the humanitarian principles and LRRD/humanitarian-development nexus, it was added to this coherence section.

As stipulated in Articles 7, 8 and 9 of the HAR, DG ECHO can only finance activities implemented by humanitarian NGOs, IOs or agencies and potentially by specialized agencies from the Member States or the Commission. It can therefore never fund public authorities from third countries directly. The humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence, presented in section 3.2.1, also put limits on the level of cooperation between humanitarian aid actors and national authorities, especially in a situation of armed conflicts. Based on these observations, a first distinction needs to be made between (1) technical cooperation to ensure the effective implementation of projects, which often occur at local level; and (2) coherence at policy level which is a much more complex and sensitive issue in which DG ECHO does not act on its own but in close cooperation with the EU Delegation. This section mainly focusses on this second component and assesses the level of coherence between DG ECHO and national and local authorities in different contexts.

- In the case of **complex crisis** implying a conflict involving the national and/or local authorities (or the lack of functioning authorities), the principles of independence and neutrality imply delivering humanitarian aid fully autonomously from national and local authorities. In these contexts, DG ECHO often limits its interaction with the host governments to advocacy activities promoting the humanitarian principles and safe humanitarian access. DG ECHO, as other donors, sometimes faces an overall lack of



receptiveness to humanitarian advocacy by host governments, as was for example the case in Sudan and DRC during the evaluation period.

It should also be noted that the principle-based approach can create difficulties in countries with important regional differences. This is for example currently the case in Myanmar, where DG ECHO and its framework partners face protection and access issues with the government in Northern Rakhine, while in South-East Myanmar framework partners are cooperating with the government on DRR and development programmes.

- In other contexts, some degree of cooperation with the national and/or local authorities is 'unavoidable' because the **national authorities are involved or even leading the humanitarian response**. This can include authorities of countries which deal with the displacement effects of a conflict in a neighbouring country, or countries in which the (manmade) crisis on their territory is not caused directly by the state. Nevertheless, the host government may have strong views on how aid should be delivered or deal with the crisis in a way which is not fully in line with the humanitarian principles.

In these contexts, where a dialogue is possible, DG ECHO, as other donors, may wish to actively engage in advocacy to encourage the country to respect the humanitarian principles, as well as seek to secure cooperation at least at a practical level from the government (e.g. around camp security, access, transport, etc.). In the case of Tanzania, DG ECHO's engagement, either directly or via the EU Delegation, with the national authorities was very limited so far despite their crucial role in shaping the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis and some threats to the principle of humanity following the withdrawal of the prima facie recognition of Burundians as refugees and subsequent possible cases of refoulement at the border. This left the UNHCR in a difficult situation as they have to advocate for the rights of the refugees while at the same time maintain very good relationship with the government who are in charge of the refugee camps.

- Finally, in some contexts **cooperation with national and local authorities is recommended** because these authorities are key to ensure the success of the intervention (e.g. in the case of DRR interventions supporting resilience). The 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries' published by the Commission in 2013 supports this approach as it recognises that "*aligning humanitarian and development aid to national resilience strategies and frameworks is a precondition for sustainable results*"<sup>183</sup>. The meta-evaluation<sup>184</sup> showed however that DG ECHO was sometimes reluctant in engaging with local authorities on DRR activities based on the imperative of independence from national or local institutions. This reluctance was considered as counterproductive, especially in resilience initiatives requiring integration into local DRR and development initiatives. A closer alignment with national strategies was therefore deemed necessary in order to support project ownership and long term impact. This call for alignment is clearly stressed in DG ECHO's Single Form guidelines which require the framework partners to explain how the action will inform and influence relevant government plans or strategies, in line with the resilience strategy. The ongoing evaluation of DG ECHO's intervention in Nepal showed a good level of improvement as it concluded that engagement with the government was an integral part of the design of the DRR and institutional strengthening projects.

Overall DG ECHO seems to be sometimes too cautious in its level of cooperation with national and local authorities due to a rather rigid interpretation of the principle of independence. Although humanitarian principles should remain at the centre of DG ECHO's approach towards humanitarian aid, in specific contexts cooperation with national and local authorities is either unavoidable or even recommended. DG ECHO should acknowledge this and develop an approach to frame this cooperation setting clear boundaries but allowing for a more engaged cooperation with local and national authorities when the context permits it.

### 3.3 Effectiveness

#### 3.3.1 To what extent has DG ECHO achieved its objectives?

The theories of change presented in section 1.2 serve as basis to assess the effectiveness of DG ECHO activities during 2012-2016 as they present the logical chain of what DG ECHO intended to achieve, and how. In line with section 1.2, effectiveness is therefore assessed at two different levels: (1) Effectiveness of EU funded actions; and (2) Effectiveness of DG ECHO's advocacy, coordination and policy's activities.

The first of these two sections (i.e. section 3.3.1.1) is broken down as follows:

- DG ECHO's efforts to monitor and assess the effectiveness of its funded actions are first presented focusing both at DG ECHO monitoring efforts at project and strategy level;
- Assessment of the impact data available and whether this impact can be considered as satisfactory given the contexts, circumstances and constraints.

The second section assesses the effectiveness of DG ECHO's advocacy, coordination and policy's activities in two separated sub-sections.

In order to align this section with the rest of the evaluation, the table below provides an overview of the key conclusions per judgement criteria and indicator identified in the evaluation framework.

*EQ11: To what extent has the EU achieved its humanitarian aid objectives?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is evidence to demonstrate that humanitarian aid actions met identified humanitarian needs and significantly contributed to: (i) Saving lives (ii) Reducing morbidity and suffering (iii) Improving dignity of life (iv) Influencing and shaping the global humanitarian system (v) Making humanitarian aid more effective		
Evidence of the type and volume of activities / interventions / measures implemented supporting each of these objectives	Literature review and review of project documentation	The part of this indicator relating to objective (i) to (iii) is mainly answered by section 2 providing a snapshot of DG ECHO's activities in 2012-2016. The evidence collected during this evaluation also reflects DG ECHO's willingness to influence the humanitarian system and make it more effective.
Evidence of effectiveness of activities / interventions / measures implemented, i.e. how the identified activities / interventions / measures contributed to achieving the objective, more specifically, in terms of results and outcomes produced, impacts achieved, success factors, good practices, lessons learnt, etc.	Review of project documentation Interviews and online survey with DG ECHO field officers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with local authorities, beneficiaries and other relevant actors	The evidence collected during this evaluation show that the activities funded by DG ECHO were largely effective and positively contributed to DG ECHO's core objectives, both in terms of aid on the ground and advocacy, coordination and policy's activities.
Evidence of obstacles encountered/improvements to be introduced	Review of project documentation Interviews and online survey with DG ECHO field officers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with local authorities, beneficiaries and other relevant actors	The evaluation identified a series of internal and external factors which impeded the effectiveness of DG ECHOEU funded actions. Given its position, DG ECHO has the possibility to tackle these internal factors, which is likely to even further improve the effectiveness of its funded actions.
JC: DG ECHO monitoring, evaluation and reviewing mechanisms allow for an effective assessment of progress made in achieving the objectives		
Identification of mechanisms,	Literature review and review of	ECHO has a good and robust monitoring and

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
indicators, benchmarks, KRIs, etc. established	project documentation	evaluation framework in place at project level, which allows a good follow-up on projects. The collected data are however not sufficiently analysed and aggregated preventing the systematic identification of good practices in terms of effectiveness. DG ECHO recently established a new monitoring and evaluation framework at organisational level but there is however no framework to monitor and assess the effectiveness of specific HIPs. This prevents the systematic assessment of DG ECHO's achievements in a particular region or in a specific sector.
Evidence of effectiveness of the identified mechanisms, indicators, benchmarks, KRIs, etc. in assessing the extent to which objectives are being achieved, including monitoring of outputs and results, identifying problems and informing revisions / redesign of actions, as well as evaluating the extent to which and how outputs and results contribute to the achievement of objectives.	Review of project documentation Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with relevant actors	

### 3.3.1.1 Effectiveness of EU humanitarian aid actions

As exposed in the theory of change, DG ECHO pursues two core functions through its actions:

1. Providing immediate / short term emergency response in the form of life- saving assistance, protection and / or crucial basic services to populations affected by crisis;
2. Building resilience over the medium to long-term, ensuring stability and creating a nexus to development, and reduced dependence on further (external) aid.

The overall aims of these funded actions are to: reduce mortality, reduce suffering and morbidity and ensure the dignity of life of affected populations.

#### DG ECHO's approach to monitoring and evaluation at action level

In order to monitor its progress in achieving these objectives, DG ECHO's has developed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation approach at action level. This approach has evolved during the evaluation period and consists of the following steps:

- **Monitoring by the partners:** This includes the collection of progress data during the implementation of the actions and their analysis in order to assess the actual progress of the action compared to the original planning. The partners have to present their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the Single Form. These mechanisms are closely linked to the indicators, sources and methods of data collection to be implemented by the partners in order to objectively assess their progress towards their objectives. In this respect important changes were brought by DG ECHO during the evaluation period as Key Results Indicators (KRI)<sup>185</sup> were introduced in 2014 to monitor the progress of specific results. KRIs are linked to sub-sectors and partners are required to use them if their action/result targets subsectors for which KRIs exist. The objective of DG ECHO with these KRIs was to *"simplify project design and increase quality and policy coherence. KRIs will enable DG ECHO to aggregate data on the results of the actions it funded"*<sup>186</sup>. The partners can also choose to use custom indicators, as long as these are measurable. In addition since June 2016 partners are required to report on Key Outcomes Indicators (KOI)<sup>187</sup>. The framework partners provided very positive feedback on these two mechanisms as close to 90% of the respondents to the survey considered them as useful to monitor the impacts of the funded actions. Some found that the KOI and KRI were not always adapted to local circumstances and/or projects which were not purely focusing on aid delivery such as INGO Forum or INSO security services. As stressed in the recommendation of the recently published evaluation of EU humanitarian intervention in the health sector, DG ECHO should further promote the use of these indicators as to date there are still confusion among the framework partners between output and outcome indicators.
- **Monitoring by DG ECHO:** This consists in at least one visit of DG ECHO per funded action with the objective to verify the progress of the action, detect potential issues, identify potential needs for readjustment and meet the beneficiaries. The monitoring

missions are a key component of the DG ECHO field staff's role and, as exposed in details in section 3.1.4.2 above, the framework partners and local implementing partners consider these as helpful for the implementation of their projects.

- **Evaluation by the partners:** Framework partners can conduct both external and internal evaluation of their funded actions. They have to include these evaluation activities in their proposal and the results of these evaluations can be communicated via the Final Report associated with each action or the Single Form of a potential follow-up action. Here again the vast majority of framework partners stressed the usefulness of both types of evaluations to assess the impacts of DG ECHO actions.

Overall DG ECHO's approach to monitoring and evaluation was considered as robust and of very high quality by the majority of the interviewed stakeholders, including other donors. It is also considered as facilitating the effectiveness of delivery of EU funded actions by the majority of the surveyed framework partners (66%) and local implementing partners (89%). Close to one third of the framework partners remained however neutral towards this statement indicating a need to further improve how monitoring and evaluation can be used to positively impact the results of funded actions. This finding is corroborated by the meta-evaluation which concluded that there were concerns raised by at least nine evaluations about the quality of DG ECHO monitoring and evaluation activities and its subsequent impact on measuring effectiveness. The field missions highlighted that framework partners were not sure what DG ECHO did with the monitoring data. One of the options to further increase the usefulness and visibility of DG ECHO monitoring activities is to share the results of these activities – and the associated data – more widely and systematically, for example through reporting on HIPs, as discussed in more details below.

Indeed, despite DG ECHO's efforts and requests to collect impact data more systematically (notably via the KRI and KOI presented above), these data are currently not aggregated in a central database or analysed across actions in order to identify good practices in terms of effectiveness. The only indicator reported in the EVA database concerns the number of beneficiaries covered by result but these figures are not always reported on and are subject to strict limitations, as recognised by DG ECHO: *"the increasing number of operations funded by the EU in the context of which multi-sector assistance is provided to beneficiaries leads to the precise computation of absolute numbers of beneficiaries being fraught with practical and methodological difficulties and potential inaccuracies"*<sup>188</sup>.

### **DG ECHO's approach to monitoring and evaluation at the level of the DG**

DG ECHO also developed efforts to assess its overall performance as a humanitarian aid donor during the evaluation period. This was done at the level of the DG as a whole and communicated through DG ECHO's Annual Activity reports. A review of the five annual reports linked to the evaluation period shows that DG ECHO did not adopt a consistent and systematic approach to assess its performance over the years. Rather on the contrary, it appears to have adapted its approach to the changing policy priorities. Over the evaluation period, DG ECHO used eight different key performance indicators (KPIs) to report on its most significant achievements in the area of humanitarian aid – this evaluation only analysed the KPIs linked to the intervention logics presented in section 1.2 and did not cover KPIs linked to DG ECHO's civil protection interventions, EUEAV or budgetary performance. As shown in Table 11 below, DG ECHO only reported systematically on one of these KPI across the evaluation period, i.e. the total number of beneficiaries.

Alongside the KPIs, DG ECHO used 12 different result and outcome indicators to track its progress towards its two key humanitarian aid objectives (i.e. immediate / short term emergency response and building resilience) – 0 provides an overview of these additional indicators. The only indicator which was systematically reported on in this list since 2013 is the share of DG ECHO funding directed to forgotten crises – therefore included in Table 11 below. The 2013 Annual Report presents a detailed reporting framework including a series of indicators and targets for each objective but this framework was not re-used in the following years. In 2014 and 2015 DG ECHO used a consistent reporting framework but the approach changed again in 2016 to reflect new policy priorities such as education in emergencies and the focus on forced displacement. This new approach is detailed in DG ECHO's Strategic Plan for the 2016-2020 period<sup>189</sup>. Each general objective is split in different specific objectives

associated with different result indicators – which differ from the KRI used at action level. Each indicator is linked to a 2015 baseline, a 2018 interim milestone and a 2020 target and source of data. If applied consistently over the next four years, this approach should allow to assess DG ECHO's effectiveness more systematically.

Table 11. Overview of DG ECHO's KPI and associated target over the evaluation period

KPI	Target	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Nº of beneficiaries (million)	>125 by 2020 <sup>1</sup>	122	124	121	134	201 <sup>2</sup>
Nº of beneficiaries through humanitarian aid and food assistance (million)	107 in 2013 <sup>3</sup>	108	106	No data	110	No data
Nº of beneficiaries through DRR (million)	>7 <sup>3</sup>	14	18	No data	24	No data
% of projects tracking quality standards in food, nutrition, health, shelter and WASH	90% in 2015 <sup>1</sup>	No data	No data	73%	77%	No data
Nº of beneficiaries (million) of EiE projects.	>5 by 2018 <sup>4</sup>	No data	No data	No data	No data	1.8
Nº of beneficiaries (million) in situation of forced displacement.	50-60 by 2018 <sup>4</sup>	No data	No data	No data	No data	64.9
Nº of vulnerable countries with country resilience priorities in place	20 by 2020 <sup>5</sup>	No data	No data	7	9	No data
% of DG ECHO funded projects which strongly integrate resilience (i.e. resilience marker value given by desk officer = 2)	33% by 2018 <sup>6</sup>	No data	No data	No data	No data	43%
% of funding directed to forgotten crises	>10% in 2013 <sup>3</sup> >20% by 2020 <sup>1</sup>	No data	16.4%	15%	17%	15.8%

Source: DG ECHO Annual Activity Reports for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Note:

<sup>1</sup> Target formulated in the 2014 Annual Report as Output Indicator for specific objective 1, i.e. provide needs based delivery of EU assistance to people faced with natural and manmade disasters and protracted crises.

<sup>2</sup> In 2016 the indicator used was the number of EU-funded humanitarian interventions and not the absolute number of beneficiaries.

<sup>3</sup> Target formulated in the 2013 Annual Report.

<sup>4</sup> Target formulated in the 2016 Annual Report as Result Indicator for specific objective 1.1, i.e. people and countries in need are provided with adequate and effective humanitarian and civil protection assistance.

<sup>5</sup> Target formulated in the 2014 Annual Report as Result Indicator for specific objective 5, i.e. build the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster affected communities.

<sup>6</sup> Target formulated in the 2016 Annual Report as Result Indicator for specific objective 1.2, i.e. resilient people and communities at risk of disasters.

To inform the indicators identified by DG ECHO to monitor its performance as an organisation, DG ECHO does not only build on its internal datasets (e.g. EVA database) but it also commissions external evaluations focusing either on specific sectors or themes, or on specific geographies. The evaluations completed during the 2012-2016 period were all reviewed as part of the meta-evaluation conducted under this comprehensive evaluation. All these evaluations made some references to the overall effectiveness of DG ECHO and found some significant achievements in saving lives, reducing morbidity and suffering as well as improving dignity of life. An explicit statement on how well 'humanitarian needs' (saving lives, reducing morbidity and suffering as well as improving dignity of life) had been met was however only made by three evaluations, with all three praising DG ECHO for its contributions.<sup>190</sup> This lack of a consistent approach indicates the difficulty to assess DG ECHO's effectiveness based on the currently existing data.

While the evaluation shows that DG ECHO now has a fairly comprehensive monitoring framework, it lacks an evaluation framework which would help to assess its performance overall, as well as at the level of HIPs and at the level of sectors and themes. This includes a lack of intervention logics / theories of change at any of these levels, as well as a clear link between these and what framework partners are aiming to achieve at the level of funded actions. The 2016-2020 Strategic Plan does for example not include any reference to the KOI that partners have to use to monitor their actions and it only refers to the KRI on gender, age and resilience.

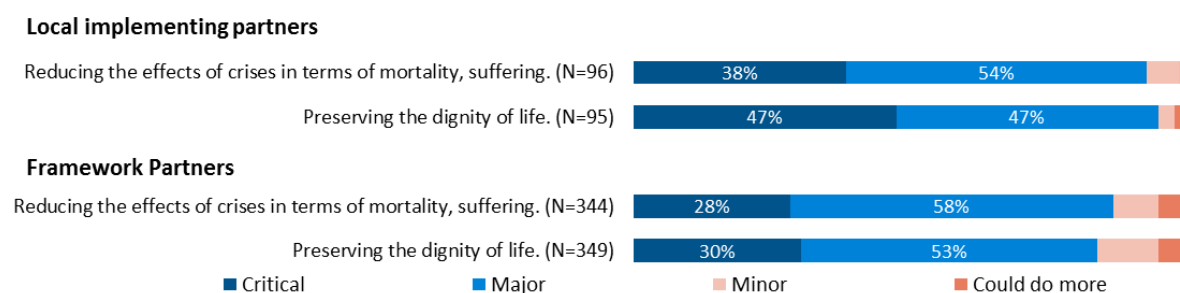
In order to have more consistent and coherent evaluations in the future, there would be benefit in DG ECHO developing an evaluation framework, similar to the framework it developed for assessing cost-effectiveness, which at the level of inputs and outputs could be used for internal monitoring and which as a whole could be applied in evaluations.

### Assessment of EU humanitarian aid's effectiveness and key facilitating factors and obstacles identified

As mentioned above, there are no aggregated data on the effectiveness of EU funded actions, the assessment presented here is therefore based on the triangulation of a variety of sources. It is structured alongside the key factors impacting the effectiveness of actions identified during the evaluation.

The overall conclusion, which was strongly supported by the surveyed DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners and by the respondents to the OPC, is that EU funded actions were indeed effective and positively contributed to saving lives, reducing morbidity and suffering as well as improving dignity of life of population affected by disasters. Figure 27 below shows the detailed feedback provided by the partners.

Figure 27. Framework partners and local implementing partners view on EU contribution to its core objectives: In your views, what has been EU role in...



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

### The scale of EU funding allowed to make an impact on the ground

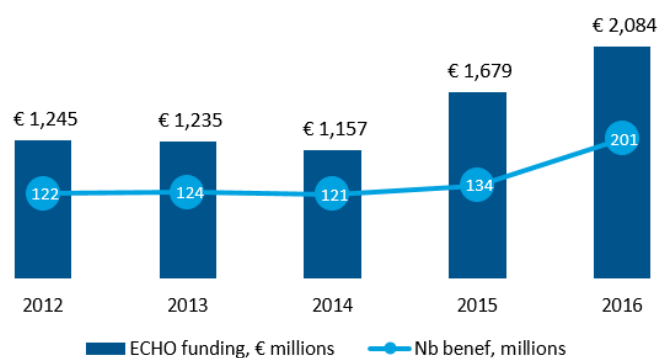
As detailed in section 3.6 on EU added value, EU accounted for 9% of the total humanitarian aid funding during the evaluation period, making it the second global donor (after the USA), providing a critical mass of funding to address the humanitarian needs – see section 3.1.1.5 for a discussion of EU budget compared to the needs identified. This large scale of funding allowed the EU to be effective in the crises and sectors it targeted during the evaluation period. Key examples include:

- In Sudan and South Sudan the evaluation highlighted the significance of EU work as the third largest donor and found overall that this level of funding enabled EU to make positive changes, notably in the nutrition, health and WASH sector<sup>191</sup>;
- The rapid evaluation of the food and livelihood sector, which benefited from the largest share of EU funding during the evaluation period, showed that EU aid in the sector reached on average 16-17 million people per year. This is about 20% of the estimated 80 million people suffering from food shortages due to humanitarian crises. This is much higher than the 12% EU share in the total global humanitarian aid funding to the sector, indicating a higher reach of beneficiaries than the share of funding. The absolute number of people benefiting from EU food security and livelihood aid on an annual basis decreased however during the evaluation period despite an increasing budget allocated to the sector;
- EU large scale response to the Syrian crisis and the associated refugee crisis, allowed to have real impact on the ground although many humanitarian needs were left unmet. EU also included innovative elements in its response by supporting the large scale use of unconditional cash transfers to meet refugee needs in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria. In 2016, EU allocated EUR 348 million to a single project to be implemented by WFP, in cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent and the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies, in the form of MPCT in order to provide emergency social safety net assistance to refugees in Turkey. An independent evaluation of the programme is currently ongoing but according to the latest quarterly bulletin, over 1 million refugees had received assistance by October 2017, representing half of the initial target. The programme will run until December 2018<sup>192</sup>.

In regions where EU only allocated limited funding compared to its overall envelope, the evaluation showed that it was also able to have a positive impact on the ground by selecting projects with high leverage or multiplier effect potential. This was notably the case in the LAC and Pacific regions or Nepal. These actions related to DRR or resilience initiatives and most of the time involved a certain level of cooperation with local authorities and/or local communities in order to improve the response led by these communities and/or authorities. DG ECHO published an internal document highlighting key examples of such “small budget, high impact” actions in the LAC region.

At global level and bearing in mind the limitations of the data on the number of beneficiaries reached by EU aid, Figure 28 shows that these numbers do evolve in parallel to the funding provided, confirming the logic conclusion that the more funding the EU provides for humanitarian aid, the more beneficiaries on the ground are reached.

Figure 28. Number of beneficiaries reached by EU humanitarian aid varied alongside the total funding during the evaluation period



Source: ICF, 2017 based on DG ECHO Annual Activity Reports and DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 18 December 2017.

### **DG ECHO strong selection process resulted in projects of high quality and a high level of successful implementation among projects**

Although there are no general statistics on the level of success of EU funded actions, all the evidence collected during this evaluation pointed towards a high level of successful implementation among projects. This is largely due to DG ECHO's strong and robust selection process which put a lot of attention on project quality and its expected impact – this is discussed in more details in section 3.1.3.1. The project mapping completed during this evaluation revealed for example very positive outcomes of the activities implemented. Out of the 175 mapped projects, 144 had clear information on the level of results achieved. Among these, 52% had fully achieved their objectives and 42% had partially achieved their objectives with only 3% of the actions not achieving their intended results. The justification for not having achieved the results were mainly of external nature, e.g. lack of access due to governmental restrictions or logistical obstacles. Those actions with no clear information (32 in total) were either ongoing (26) or the reporting was of poor quality inhibiting any analysis.

The four field missions completed during the evaluation confirmed this high success rate. They also showed how the combined impact of EU funded actions positively contributed to the situation on the ground:

- In Mauritania, the field mission concluded that overall, DG ECHO's intervention contributed to some extent to stabilising the food and nutrition situation, during the lean season in particular. However, the lack of prevention and resilience strategies and activities over the evaluation period meant that the same assistance was required every year. In a context where crises are structural and chronic, DG ECHO could improve the effectiveness of its intervention by developing more comprehensive strategies.
- The field mission to Tanzania came to the same conclusion, although some very good examples of effective actions were identified on the ground which yielded long term impacts. Large scale beneficiaries' surveys implemented by Plan International and their partners revealed for example the significant improvement in psychological and social well-being of children who attended the child friendly spaces provided by the project.
- In DRC, DG ECHO's support to IOM's biometric identification of IDPs in 2015 and 2016, supported the effectiveness of aid delivery in North Kivu by preventing double counting of IDPs and facilitating accurate planning.

The majority of the stakeholders consulted during the evaluation also recognised the quality of EU funded actions. As shown in Table 11 in 2014 and 2015, DG ECHO reported on the share of projects tracking quality standards in food, nutrition, health, shelter and WASH following the introduction of the KRI. This was used as an indicator of DG ECHO's progress towards the provision of needs based humanitarian aid. DG ECHO had fixed itself the target to reach 90% of quality reporting in these sectors by 2015 but this was not achieved (i.e. 77% in 2015) due, according to DG ECHO, to the time needed by the framework partners to get used to this new mechanism and the new Single Form. DG ECHO therefore still considered this result as satisfactory.

### **The timeliness and rapidity of EU interventions contributed to its effectiveness on the ground**

As mentioned in section 3.1.2.2 the vast majority of framework partners positively rated the timeliness and flexibility of DG ECHO's interventions, improving their effective delivery – see more on that aspect in section 3.4.1.1 on efficiency. This timeliness and rapidity of intervention was also considered as crucial to ensure the effective delivery of the aid, especially in the case of emergency situations. The evaluation of the shelter sector published in 2013 concluded for example that in primary emergency situations in the shelter sector, "DG ECHO's funding can be available in three days, which places it among the most efficient humanitarian donors". More recently EU was also one of the first donors to react following the Burundian crisis in 2015, allowing the UNHCR and its partners to increase their level of aid and for example re-build the Nduta refugee camps, which was left abandoned following a previous refugee influx. The framework partners confirmed this analysis as more than 84% of them



considered that DG ECHO's speed of response to emerging crises facilitated the effective delivery of their actions.

The timeliness of DG ECHO's response beyond primary emergencies, is however considered as sometimes lagging behind, negatively affecting its effectiveness. Paradoxically, one of the key examples also relates to the shelter sector, for which the rapid evaluation stressed that effective shelter interventions require a longer-term perspective, which DG ECHO does not appear to take into account systematically as also mentioned in the 2013 evaluation: "*other donors may be faster, as the process of releasing DG ECHO funds for follow-up work / recovery phase can be much longer, sometimes to the point of making projects almost irrelevant*"<sup>193</sup>.

The rapidity of intervention was identified as one of the result indicators linked to DG ECHO's overall humanitarian aid objectives in 2014. It was defined as "*the share of contracts issued under following targets for number of days elapsed from decision to contracting: primary emergency decision: 5 days; emergency decision: 18 days; other decisions: 56 days*"<sup>194</sup>. The objective was to reach a 95% performance by 2020, which was already almost achieved in 2014 (87%) but as the indicator was not used in the following years progress cannot be tracked on this regard.

The overall timeliness and rapidity of DG ECHO interventions has contributed to its effectiveness on the ground during the evaluation period. Moreover, the closer cooperation with the UCPM, which is deployed in the hours following a disaster, and the stronger commitments to LRRD and resilience, are likely to further improve the timeliness and overall effectiveness of EU response to disasters.

### **DG ECHO encouraged partners to adopt specific modalities and practices which supported the effectiveness of their actions**

As will be described in more details in section 3.3.1.2 and section 3.3.2 DG ECHO supported a number of practices and modalities during the evaluation period with the objective to increase the effectiveness of the actions it funded. The key ones include:

- **Strong push for the use of cash-based assistance:** As already mentioned and further developed under section 3.4.1.1 DG ECHO has been a key player in the 'normalisation' of cash based aid in the humanitarian world. As revealed by the DG ECHO evaluation on the use of different transfer modalities, one of the key arguments for the use of cash is the fact that it is "*undoubtedly more effective at meeting diverse needs through a single transfer. The flexibility of cash transfers reduces the risk of targeting beneficiaries with the wrong goods or services*". Beneficiaries consulted during that evaluation also expressed a strong preference for cash transfers as it allows them to select the goods and services according to needs. The use of cash based transfer can however not be considered as a "one size fits all" approach to ensure effectiveness, which depends on many other factors (e.g. design of the action, context, purpose, etc.).
- **Ensuring the involvement of local communities in needs assessments:** As detailed in section 3.1.2.2 DG ECHO framework partners routinely involve local communities and beneficiaries in their needs assessment. This is crucial to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the funded actions as these are tailored to the needs of the targeted populations.
- **Strong push for protection needs and risks analysis:** Although the rapid evaluation on protection showed that much effort still needs to be done in order to mainstream the development of protection needs and risks analysis among the framework partners, this push positively impacts the effectiveness of EU funded actions. Indeed, as stressed by one DG ECHO framework partner, without a good protection needs and risks analysis there is a high risk of misallocating humanitarian aid funding.

### **Factors impeding effectiveness**

One of the main factors identified as impeding effectiveness of EU funded actions in the meta-evaluation and the framework partner's survey is the fixed and relatively short duration of the EU humanitarian aid funding cycle. During the evaluation period, the average duration of an EU humanitarian aid funded action was 12 months, with none of the actions lasting more than 24 months. As illustrated in Table 12 below, the total share of projects lasting between 13 and

24 months went up and down from 31% in 2012 to a peak of 43% in 2016, representing also an increase in value from 32% of the budget in 2012 to 51% in 2016.

Table 12. Distribution of EU humanitarian aid funded actions across different project length

	Project lasting up to 12 months		Project lasting between 13 and 18 months		Project lasting between 18 and 24 months	
	Share of total number of projects	Share of total value of projects	Share of total number of projects	Share of total value of projects	Share of total number of projects	Share of total value of projects
2012	68%	67%	26%	26%	5%	6%
2013	64%	62%	24%	27%	11%	11%
2014	65%	62%	26%	25%	9%	12%
2015	66%	57%	23%	33%	10%	9%
2016	57%	48%	28%	39%	15%	12%
Total	64%	58%	25%	31%	10%	10%

Source: project data extracted from HOPE on 20 December 2017.

Dispute the slow move towards longer term projects, the overall short time frame of EU funded action was reported as an issue by at least three evaluations<sup>195</sup> which stressed that it was especially the case in the context of crises which could be expected to last multiple years. The evaluation of education in emergencies in particular highlighted that “it is widely acknowledged that education requires a medium to long term response in protracted crises” and that the annual allocation of funding created uncertainty and discontinuity negatively affecting effectiveness.<sup>196</sup> In Colombia, a lack of flexibility on project length was also felt by implementing partners as a constraint not only on coordination efforts but also with regard to efforts in LRRD. Finally, all partners interviewed in the context of the evaluation of humanitarian health interventions expressed a preference for a longer funding period of two to three years as it would allow for better forward-planning, development of a regional strategy and less service disruption due to funding gaps (particularly in protracted crises).

This assessment has to be nuanced by the results of the framework partner survey which revealed that close to 70% of the respondents consider that humanitarian aid funding cycle facilitated the delivery of EU funded actions. Among the 30% of respondents which remained neutral (18%) or disagreed with that statement (12%), two sectors are over-represented among the respondents to this question when compared to the overall survey sample, i.e. DRR (+8% compared to the overall sample) and FSL (+4% compared to the overall sample). The field mission to Mauritania also suggests that the short time frame of EU funded actions pushed framework partners to select activities which can deliver results within the time available but which are not per se the most efficient, e.g. short term answer to food security rather than more structural support to food production.

This shows that in most situations humanitarian aid short funding cycle is adapted to the emergency response provided by the framework partners. In specific sectors (e.g. DRR, FSL but also health and Education in Emergency (EiE)) and contexts (i.e. protracted crisis) however this short and fixed funding cycle is an obstacle for the effective delivery of the humanitarian aid and should therefore be adapted.

Next to this obstacle the evaluation identified a series of internal and external factors impeding the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, notably through the framework partners survey. Most of these factors are already discussed in other parts of this evaluation and are therefore only briefly mentioned here. The key internal factors include:

- Lack of comprehensive strategy taking the root causes of crises into account, especially in the case of complex protracted crisis;
- Limited budget and unanticipated budget variations limiting the predictability of the aid provided by DG ECHO and leading to inconsistency in the strategy adopted by the partners or sharp decrease in the amount of aid provided with very concrete impacts

such as the rationing of food distribution or the strengthening of the vulnerability criteria used to identify beneficiaries;

- Long administrative procedures and delays in payments to local NGOs, as well as belated starts of projects, either as a result of DG ECHO approval procedures or national government decision making;
- Lack of political attention to specific crises by EU policy makers including by EU Member States leading to limited funding to address identified needs;
- Lack of coordination between different donors;
- Lack of, or limited, technical expertise and capacity among partners, particularly in the shelter and health sectors;<sup>197</sup>
- Challenge with the management of the funded actions especially if they involve multiple parties and stakeholders.

The key external factors include:

- Hostile political environment in beneficiary countries taking the form of constraints imposed by national governments and other authorities, which may either reject humanitarian assistance altogether or attempt to regulate humanitarian activities in areas under their control (such as, inter alia, restrictions of freedom of movement, security issues and anti-terrorism legislation);
- Lack of humanitarian access to specific regions and/or countries leaving large groups of the population without assistance;
- The lack of technical infrastructure in receiving countries to support initiatives, particularly innovative ones, e.g. different transfer modalities;<sup>198</sup>
- Climate changes and its impact on livelihood conditions of affected populations leading to additional tensions between communities; and
- Issues linked to property rights and access to land to host IDP and refugee populations.

### **3.3.1.2 Effectiveness of DG ECHO's advocacy, coordination and policy's activities**

This covers DG ECHO's actions aimed at influencing and shaping the global humanitarian system and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid. As per the theory of change, it is split in two different levels of actions:

1. DG ECHO's '*internal*' efforts to in particular increase the impact of the humanitarian aid it delivers
2. DG ECHO's '*external*' actions to impact on the global humanitarian system and the delivery of humanitarian aid by others

#### **Effectiveness of DG ECHO's internal policies**

In the 2012-2016 period, DG ECHO implemented a number of internal reforms and other internal initiatives to strengthen the impact and effectiveness of its humanitarian aid delivery. Overall, these developments have been useful and appropriate to their intended aims, and positively received by DG ECHO's stakeholders. However, important challenges remain to ensure their value is fully maximised by DG ECHO and its stakeholders. The key internal reforms (analysed in turn below) include:

- Continuous adjustments to DG ECHO's global needs assessment process (e.g. INFORM and the IAF) and needs assessments at the level of funded actions;
- 2015 a move towards regional versus country-specific HIPs;
- Continuous development of sectoral guidelines;
- Change to the structure of the field network;
- Engagement with DEVCO and development of joint strategies;
- Engagement with Member States through better coordination and the use of ExAR.

Key reforms in the needs assessment process undertaken by DG ECHO have been the strengthening of the global needs assessment methodology in DG ECHO, manifested through

the introduction of using the INFORM tool and the IAF (see Section 3.1). This helped to strengthen the use of qualitative and quantitative evidence on humanitarian needs in a more systematic way. Consequently, it made DG ECHO's approach to needs assessments more robust and more scientific – something which was also recognised by the stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation. They pointed at the high quality of DG ECHO's needs assessments as articulated in the global strategies and elaborated in the annual HIPs. The main criticisms of this process related to the use of sometimes outdated indicators in the INFORM and IAF process (e.g. relating to the affected populations). However, this appears to be relatively minor and a consequence of data infrastructure of varying quality regarding the humanitarian needs at the global level. DG ECHO is still envisaging further improvements to the needs assessments process to render it even more 'scientific', for example by including additional indicators and more precise data.

At the same time, as also discussed in section 3.1 on Relevance, despite the use of the new and more robust needs assessment methodology<sup>199</sup> whose results have been consistently made available in the public domain<sup>200</sup>, DG ECHO has allowed the development of a strong perception amongst its stakeholders that its ultimate funding choices have become increasingly politicised and focussed on addressing only the crises in the EU immediate neighbourhood. Changes in the allocations to other regions/countries were not always appropriately communicated to partners. This has affected negatively DG ECHO's reputation as a needs-based principled donor which in turn affected negatively the relationships with key partners which are key to the successful implementation of EU funding.

In addition to the needs assessment process at the global and HIP level, DG ECHO has also streamlined the local needs assessments processes undertaken by partners when submitting applications for EU funding through the use of the Single Form.<sup>201</sup> The local needs assessments have become more robust and evidence based, and involving approaches to involve the final beneficiaries and local stakeholders (see section 3.1). However, the quality of the local needs assessments still varied substantially between the different geographical contexts, and also between themes and sectors. The quality of local needs assessments needs to be improved more systematically as this affects significantly the effective implementation of EU funded actions.

DG ECHO also moved towards the development of regional HIPs, with the objective of rationalising its previous single-country approach and making the programming process more efficient. This regional HIP approach started with the Horn of Africa HIP in 2012 and the Sahel strategy in 2013 and resulted in the development of almost exclusively regional HIPs in 2015<sup>202</sup> and 2016<sup>203</sup>. On the one hand, this regionalised approach allowed for a more coherent and efficient approach to the humanitarian needs across the region – as compared to a single-country HIP approach. On the other hand, some regional HIPs (e.g. Horn of Africa) were partly incohesive as the individual countries covered by such regional HIPs had very different humanitarian needs and hence required different approaches, although they had forced displacement and drought / food insecurity issues in common. In that sense, merging them together in a regional HIP did not bring about the desired improvements in the effectiveness of DG ECHO's approach. However, it should also be acknowledged that efforts have been made to treat the forced displacement and the drought/food insecurity issue as issues of common interest and such efforts to address issues through a common framework should be further encouraged and systematically applied where relevant.

Another key development within DG ECHO has been the adoption and dissemination of a number of thematic and sectoral guidelines aimed at strengthening the implementation of EU funding in certain themes and sectors (see section 3.3.2).<sup>204</sup> They were developed appropriately reflecting the international standards and in close consultation with the relevant partners. However, the utility and use of the guidelines varied across sectors and geographies with difference in levels of awareness and understanding of the guidance (although the majority of framework and local partners considered they were useful in supporting effective implementation, see 0). Nevertheless, the guidelines represent a step forward in strengthening the consistency of DG ECHO's partner approach, sharing and mainstreaming of best practice and lessons learnt, with further efforts needed to ensure all partners use them in a systematic way to maximise their impact on the effectiveness of DG ECHO's approach.

In addition, DG ECHO has undertaken continuous improvements to its field network in the 2012-2016 period (see section 3.1). A key positive feature of DG ECHO's approach has been the flexibility in the geographical redistribution of staffing (with an increase of DG ECHO field staff and office budgets in the Middle East and Africa regions and decrease in Asia and Latin America, in line with the redistribution of DG ECHO funding patterns) and the introduction of new staff roles to respond to new circumstances. In particular, a number of TAs have been provided with a surge role and a new category of "surge response experts" has been introduced. These staff are hired on flexible terms to respond to a particular emergency. This continuous review of the field network structure undertaken by DG ECHO every two years allowed to maintain the necessary flexibility in the structure of the DG ECHO field network. The structure, composed of regional, country, sub-country and antenna offices and different staff categories and functions, allowed DG ECHO to respond rapidly to changing humanitarian needs. This was the view amongst the majority of the DG ECHO field network, framework and local partners (considering the proportion of those who strongly and agree, see 0).

The evaluation only found some minor gaps in the geographical coverage of the field structure and the overall level of expertise of DG ECHO field staff was considered as very high, with only minor gaps in sectoral and technical expertise identified<sup>205</sup>. However, challenges remain to address stakeholder concerns about the cuts in DG ECHO field staff in some regions even though the analysis of the field network evolution (see section 3.1.4) demonstrates a slight increase in the total field staff numbers associated with a geographical rebalancing of field staff between the different crises, which might explain the stakeholder misperceptions.

To strengthen the sustained impact of its humanitarian aid, DG ECHO has also sought to engage with DEVCO through joint policy and advocacy development at the HQ level and coordination at the field level, reflecting the growing importance placed on LRRD and resilience challenges in the humanitarian aid (see section 0). These included the Joint Humanitarian Development Framework, joint needs assessments and the recent polity framework to build a stronger humanitarian and development nexus. Whilst the joint efforts in this area have somewhat supported the effectiveness of DG ECHO (and the EU), missed opportunities for systematic inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination remain, negatively affecting the effectiveness of DG ECHO's approach. In particular, the practical implementation of LRRD strategies and other joint initiatives/interventions remains challenging as they appear to be implemented on a case-by-case basis rather than systematically.

Finally, DG ECHO also sought to strengthen the effectiveness of its approaches through better coordination with EU Member States. Mechanisms to promote the coherence between EU and the Member States humanitarian aid policies were further improved in the evaluation period (see section 3.1.1), with the COHAFA providing a regular forum to share information by DG ECHO and the Member States on ongoing crises, which are particularly valuable given DG ECHO's access to first-hand information through its field network; and the development of common advocacy and diplomatic messages ensuring a common EU approach to particular crisis. In parallel, the HAC, established following the HAR,<sup>206</sup> has met at least once a year, providing feedback on financial decisions exceeding EUR 2 million made by DG ECHO. Despite these positive developments, the use of current coordination mechanisms could be further improved through giving COHAFA and HAC members early access to preparatory documents and strengthening the transparency and consultation with regard to certain strategic DG ECHO's choices.

In addition to the coordination mechanisms, a financial innovation since 2013 (see section 3.1.1) has been a tool of External Assigned Revenues (ExAR) which are financial contributions from Member States and/or third countries, including their public agencies, entities or natural persons, to certain external aid projects or programmes financed by the EU and managed by the Commission on their behalf. Since the entry into force of the new EU Financial Regulation in 2013, DG ECHO is able to receive ExAR and use them for humanitarian aid activities. This tool has been used to a limited extent by four Member States, as most Member States prefer to continue financing directly their national humanitarian aid activities for visibility reasons and to support their national NGOs.

## **Effectiveness of DG ECHO's external advocacy, coordination and policy's activities**

At a system level, DG ECHO also had a strategic objective to influence the global humanitarian system and the delivery of humanitarian aid by others to make its results more effective. As set out in the theory of change, this has been undertaken through several channels:

- DG ECHO's leading/supporting role in key initiatives (e.g. Transformative Agenda, WHS, GB);
- DG ECHO's leading/supporting role in key policies (e.g. Education in Emergencies, cash based assistance, protection); and
- Advocacy at the different levels.

DG ECHO played a leading and useful role in the development of key initiatives in the global humanitarian system over the evaluation period, such as the implementation of the *Transformative Agenda*, which was agreed in 2011. As part of the latter, DG ECHO worked on enhancing the collective humanitarian response through global coordination, which included the EU chairing the OCHA Donor Support Group from July 2013 to July 2014. DG ECHO also supported the organisation of the WHS and the adoption of the GB commitments. For example, for the WHS in 2016 DG ECHO coordinated the EU participation in the Summit and the process leading up to it, as well as coordinated the EU 100 commitments on policy, operational, and financial issues. This enabled DG ECHO to influence the development of key policies and practices in the humanitarian response. The strength of DG ECHO's 'external' role is confirmed also by the views of the framework and local partners surveyed in the evaluation, of whom over 80% were of the view that DG ECHO played a critical and major role in shaping the global humanitarian system as well as making the humanitarian aid more effective (See the detailed answers in 0). What remains to be ensured is that DG ECHO systematically implements the commitments made in these strategies to lead other donors by example.<sup>207</sup>

In line with the European Consensus, in 2014 DG ECHO and the Member States worked on aligning their humanitarian aid support based on a set of good practice initiatives, for example in the area of humanitarian aid allocations and needs assessments. However, some issues were encountered with the level of engagement of some of the actors involved<sup>208</sup>.

There also have been several concrete success stories of how DG ECHO's leadership role in the global system has resulted in the development of more effective humanitarian aid approaches. For example, DG ECHO's insistence on multi-purpose cash has changed the delivery of humanitarian aid in certain contexts and sectors (see also section 3.4.1.1). In other cases, DG ECHO's push in certain sectors and themes drew attention and funding to under-funded sectors in the field of humanitarian aid (e.g. more attention to the education in emergencies leading to a demonstration effect in terms of encouraging other donors to support more this sector<sup>209</sup> and the mainstreaming of protection agenda into the delivery of the humanitarian aid, see 0). The OPC confirmed that the policies developed by DG ECHO added value to the international humanitarian aid political agenda over the evaluation period, especially in the area of cash and vouchers, resilience, DRR and EiE.

Advocacy activities undertaken by DG ECHO in the evaluation period were complex and varied (see 0). In terms of advocacy mechanisms, three levels of advocacy are distinguished, including advocacy at DG ECHO HQ level, at the field network level and by DG ECHO framework and local implementing partners. DG ECHO engaged in advocacy for several reasons – from enabling and increasing humanitarian assistance, to encouraging actors to uphold international humanitarian law, to seeking broader solutions to crises, to raise awareness etc. In this way, advocacy has permeated most of DG ECHO's activities at different geographical and implementation levels from the HQ high level political summits to the delivery of individual projects on the ground in the contexts of crises. The issues covered in the DG ECHO advocacy activities were reflective of EU humanitarian mandate and the aspirational role of DG ECHO to be a principled reference donor. The evaluation identified several success stories of how DG ECHO's advocacy changed the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g. multi-purpose cash) or promoted the adoption of 'new' sectors in the humanitarian aid (e.g. more attention to the education in emergencies and protection). Another success example was advocacy in the health sector, where it has influenced other actors to address gaps in their response, apply best practices and carry out follow-up actions. Concrete examples of such

successes included DG ECHO's advocacy for better access to remote areas to address gaps in the humanitarian response; the funding contributing to large-scale polio campaigns in the Horn of Africa and Syria; working with World Health Organisation (WHO) on the response to Ebola and on WHO's internal reform; participating in the development of essential health service packages; advancing the discussion on cash for health discussions; supporting implementation work on increasing access to quality of medicines; and work towards adapting processes and procedures of global health actors in fragile settings.<sup>210</sup>

Thus, DG ECHO's advocacy efforts were largely effective during the 2012-2016 period, including advocating the upholding of the key humanitarian principles, lobbying for more and better spent donor resources, drawing attention to new, changing and emerging issues (e.g. education in emergencies and protection) and the changing nature of the humanitarian crises (e.g. Sudan or Syria). The advocacy activities in the field have been individualised, flexible and responsive, reflecting the experience of DG ECHO field staff. On the negative side, they were not always fully joined up, which indicates a lack of fully coordinated approach to advocacy and efficient sharing of experiences and lessons learnt between the different DG ECHO offices and contexts where advocacy on the ground takes place.

Advocacy is important but requires a strategic approach with clear priorities and actions. Activities have already been developed within DG ECHO to support such a strategic approach (e.g. the recently adopted DG ECHO advocacy toolkit), but this needs to be rolled out across the organisation and its key partners, reflecting the existing examples and experiences of implementing the advocacy toolkits in UN Agencies and other DG ECHO partners (see UNESCO 2010).

Reflection should also be given to the experiences of promoting more strategic advocacy approaches whereby the key field based advocacy parameters are set at the global HQ but implemented operationally at the field level.<sup>211</sup> However the proliferation of policies, tasks and the volume of work make adding 'one more strategy' a potential box to tick for DG ECHO staff and partners. Advocacy strategies, therefore, may require more visible engagement and follow-up, including by senior management of DG ECHO.

### 3.3.2 Effectiveness of DG ECHO sectoral policies

*EQ12: To what extent do DG ECHO's sectoral policies contribute to the effectiveness of DG ECHO's operations?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: DG ECHO's sectoral/ thematic policies and guidelines: (i) reflect an appropriate approach in the sector concerned (ii) have improved the quality of EU funded actions		
Identification of main factors and elements of DG ECHO's policy approach which made implementation more effective	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers, other donors and aid providers Online survey with DG ECHO field officers, FPA and local implementing partners	DG ECHO as a donor has a strong leverage to put topics/ issues on agenda. It has done so with several policies leading to a positive impact.
Evidence of specific impacts generated by the above factors and elements on DG ECHO's humanitarian aid operations.	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers, other donors and aid providers Online survey with DG ECHO field officers, FPA and local implementing partners	Positive impact has been achieved and acknowledged by stakeholders on DRR, protection and education in emergencies.
Evidence of use of DG ECHO's standards and guidelines and feedback on utility/ quality	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers, other donors and aid providers Online survey with DG ECHO field officers, FPA and local implementing partners	The use of DG ECHO's guidelines is mixed. There is some degree of overlap of policy guidelines in certain sectors with those of other donors / implementing agencies When used, the guidelines are considered to contribute to the effectiveness of EU funded actions.

### **3.3.2.1 DG ECHO's sectoral and thematic policies and guidelines did reflect an appropriate approach in the sector concerned. They are developed in line with international standards and in close consultation with relevant partners.**

Since 2005, there are 11 Global Clusters,<sup>212</sup> each of which further broken down in sub-clusters. For example, the Global Protection Cluster covers child protection, gender based violence (GBV), Mine Action and other elements as sub-clusters. Guidance documents are available for all clusters. During the evaluation period, DG ECHO published eight policy documents to support the implementation of EU funded actions in the sectors of food assistance, nutrition, WASH, health, cash and vouchers, protection, gender and DRR. Each of these policies were developed in close consultation with DG ECHO partners active in a particular sector. This consultation process was considered by stakeholders to be an effective way to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of the documents, which were overall also seen to be reflecting international standards, although the rapid evaluations also identified a few weaknesses. However, framework partners noted a change to the consultation process in 2017 with the development of guidance on medium to large-scale cash transfers, as there was little to no consultation prior to the publication of the document, which had led to some dissatisfaction with the guidance.

### **3.3.2.2 The choice of DG ECHO's sectoral and thematic policies and guidelines was overall in line with the needs identified**

The choice of the eight sectors covered by the guidance issued by DG ECHO reflects the key trends in the humanitarian landscape in terms of:

- **Global needs:** DG ECHO published guidance on the six sectors identified by FTS as in needs of the highest funding (i.e., multi-sector, which is covered by the cash and voucher guidance, food assistance, WASH, health, protection and shelter and settlements);
- **DG ECHO's funding priorities:** The sector listed above also reflect the sectors which received large shares of EU funding during the evaluation period. Protection, which DG ECHO considers as a specific sector and received a large share of EU funding also benefited from guidance;
- **DG ECHO policy priorities:** As exposed below, DG ECHO also developed guidance for sectors which were identified as key policy priorities, i.e. EiE, DRR and gender.

Overall, the choice of sectors benefiting from guidance seems therefore appropriate. The only key sector which was missing during the evaluation period being shelter and settlements, but this has now been resolved with the publication of dedicated guidance in early 2017. During the evaluation period, specific focus was placed on:

- **Disaster risk reduction and resilience** was high on agenda during the previous Commissioner, Kristalina Georgieva. The efforts made during this mandate focused, among other, on implementing Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), increased attention to the Early Warning Mechanisms and development of DG ECHO's thematic policy guidance on DRR. The policy contributed to the development of the AGIR<sup>213</sup> and EU SHARE which supports a joint humanitarian development approach to improve the resilience. Under this policy the 'Resilience Marker' was introduced in the Single Form;
- **Education in Emergencies** was a priority put forward by the current Commissioner, Christos Stylianides. At the Oslo Summit in July 2015 he committed to increase funding to education in emergencies to 4% of EU humanitarian aid. At the forum on Education in Emergencies on 30 November 2016, he announced a further increase to 6% of the humanitarian budget for 2017. The evaluation of Education in emergencies found evidence of positive changes which could be directly attributed to EU funded actions, for example with regard to access to education, particularly in refugee settings, and improvements in the psychosocial well-being of children and their perceptions of safety; and the prevention of child soldier recruitment.
- With the development of **Protection** policy guidance, in combination with the financing of specific targeted actions and efforts to mainstream protection aspects, DG ECHO has contributed to the increased awareness on the importance of the protection. The rapid



evaluation of the protection sector showed that protection is now systematically considered and increasingly integrated in humanitarian actions. In 2016, DG ECHO introduced a requirement to carry out a **protection analysis**. However, despite DG ECHO's efforts to build the capacity of its partners over the recent years<sup>214</sup>, there is still a significant gap. For example, EU funded actions were only occasionally underpinned by protection risk analysis as not all partners know how to do this.

### **3.3.2.3 The use of DG ECHO's sectoral/ thematic policies and guidelines is mixed**

While in the survey, a vast majority of DG ECHO framework partners (84%) confirmed to use the guidelines in the design and implementation of actions, during the field visits framework partners showed a broad knowledge of DG ECHO's policies but a lower level of awareness of the specific guidelines developed as part of these.

Possibly, the difference between the two is that several of the partners met in the field were 'leaders' in their respective sectors, such as the WFP with regard to food assistance and the UNHCR with regard to protection, with their own guidelines in place (which have often informed those developed by DG ECHO). Interestingly, framework partners which were leaders or at least very specialised in a certain sector did indicate to use DG ECHO's policies and guidelines for the implementation of actions in another sector. For example, in Myanmar, partners having substantial experience in implementing activities in technical sectors (e.g. WASH) were not using DG ECHO's WASH guidelines however, they were consulting protection guidelines as they had less experience in implementing this component in their integrated actions.

Both in the field and in the survey, framework partners indicated to also make use of other international guidelines and standards. For example, of the 16% of the framework partners who indicated not to use the guidelines, 52% used internal guidelines or guidelines issued by other international organisations. Partners implementing actions with funding from multiple donors also saw the effectiveness hindered by the need to refer to various guidelines, depending on the donor.

This above raises the question whether, with regard to some sectors or themes, DG ECHO could opt to rather 'adopt' the policies and guidelines prepared by other donors or implementing agencies, and possibly provide a 'DG ECHO addendum' to stress certain aspects, rather than developing its own.

### **3.3.2.4 DG ECHO's sectoral/ thematic policies and guidelines provided a useful framework for partner action and advocacy purposes**

For survey respondents, DG ECHO's thematic guidelines were mostly effective for providing a useful framework for partner action (81% of framework partners and 98% of local partners strongly agreed and agreed). Framework partners saw them as less effective in contributing to the effective implementation of actions (68% strongly agreed and agreed).

The results of two online surveys show that the most consulted DG ECHO guidelines were those on visibility (100% of local implementing partners and 94% of framework partners had used these). This can be explained by the contractual obligation to adhere to visibility requirements. The second most frequently used guidance by the framework partners were the ones on cash and vouchers (66%) and DRR (66%), while local implementing partners mainly consulted the guidance linked to gender (78% responded that had used them to a large or moderate extent) and protection (53%).

DG ECHO framework partners (67%) and local implementing partners (81%) were of an opinion that DG ECHO's guidelines on specific sectors and themes facilitated the effective delivery of actions. However, quite significant share was also of an opinion that these guidelines neither facilitated nor impeded the effectiveness (30% of the framework partners and 17% of LNGOs).

Only three evaluations<sup>215</sup> discussed the standards and guidelines issued by DG ECHO, with one finding "potential" indications of their role in supporting effective operations while another in contrast identified a lack of good guidance. DG ECHO Regional advisers were identified in one evaluation to have a key role in raising awareness and understanding of Commission standards and guidance at a country level. This is echoed also in the field, with framework partners

stressing the need for DG ECHO field staff to receive more training on DG ECHO's suggested approaches with regard to certain sectors and themes.

DG ECHO's policy guidance also supported the advocacy efforts of framework partners in these areas, as they gave a clear signal of DG ECHO's willingness to invest and how it wanted these investments to be implemented, which could be used in discussions with authorities, other donors and implementing agencies.

### 3.3.3 Visibility of DG ECHO activities

*EQ13: With reference to DG ECHO's visibility manual, to what extent do DG ECHO activities achieve proper visibility through funded actions?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: The extent to which EU funded actions effectively promote visibility for the EU		
Evidence of the type and volume of activities/ interventions/ measures implemented supporting the visibility objective	Literature review and review of project documentation	Partners overall adhere to the visibility requirements. Activities going beyond the minimum requirements have helped to raise DG ECHO's profile. Some obstacles limiting the effectiveness include a lack of capacity to develop communication activities of framework partners
Evidence of the level of awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities within and outside the EU	Interviews with DG ECHO field officers Interviews with other donors and aid providers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with other relevant actors	The awareness of the EU humanitarian aid activities inside EU is high and increased during the evaluation period despite a drop between 2015 and 2016. DG ECHO funded activities to raise awareness within the EU through a series of dedicated HIPs..  Qualitative evidence suggests that the level of awareness of EU activities outside EU is medium to high.
Evidence of effective use of the communication and visibility manual within EU funded actions	Interviews and online survey with DG ECHO field officers Online survey with local implementing partners	Visibility has not been sufficiently evaluated in the past evaluations, limiting the analysis of developments.  Partners found DG ECHO being flexible donor towards visibility requirements when implementing activities in natural or man-made emergencies, considering sensitivity issues. Local partners were more positive about the usefulness of visual identity display in meeting objectives than DG ECHO framework partners. Audio-visual products, pictures, as well as publications and printed material were found to be the most useful to acknowledge the EU funding and partnership.

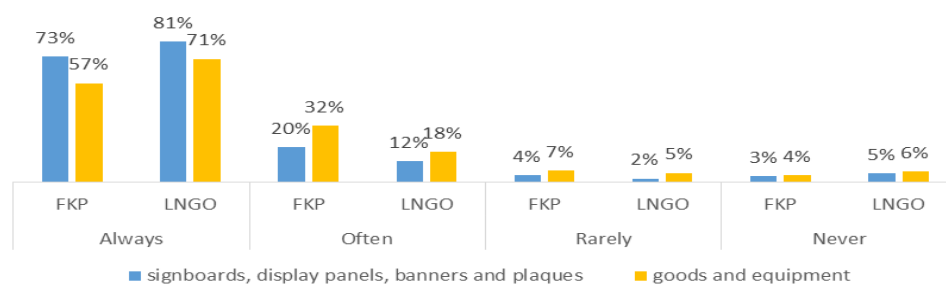
#### 3.3.3.1 Partners overall contribute to visibility by adhering to the visibility requirements, but activities going beyond the requirements are more impactful

All framework partners implementing an EU funded action have a contractual obligation to apply standard visibility requirements<sup>216</sup>. This entails displaying the EU humanitarian aid visual identity as well as providing written and verbal recognition of the EU role and funding in humanitarian aid activities implemented.<sup>217</sup> The visibility requirements are designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support. The Communication and Visibility Manual for EU Humanitarian Aid<sup>218</sup> provides details on how this should be ensured. In addition, the organisation must also provide evidence of the visibility actions in the Final Narrative Report.

Framework partners can receive additional funding (exceeding the threshold of 0.5% of the direct eligible cost) if they opt for 'above standard visibility', which mostly concerns activities to raise awareness of EU audiences.

Overall, framework partners adhere to the visibility requirements and do not find these to be too bothersome. The fieldwork confirmed that partners acknowledged the source of funding and used the logo through different means (e.g., tags, flags, stickers). Similarly, the majority of DG ECHO partners surveyed confirmed that they had displayed EU humanitarian aid visual identity on most occasions. Where the response was 'rarely' or 'never' it was not possible to link it to a specific reason, e.g., whether the lack of use was due to the type of context the action was implemented or another reason.

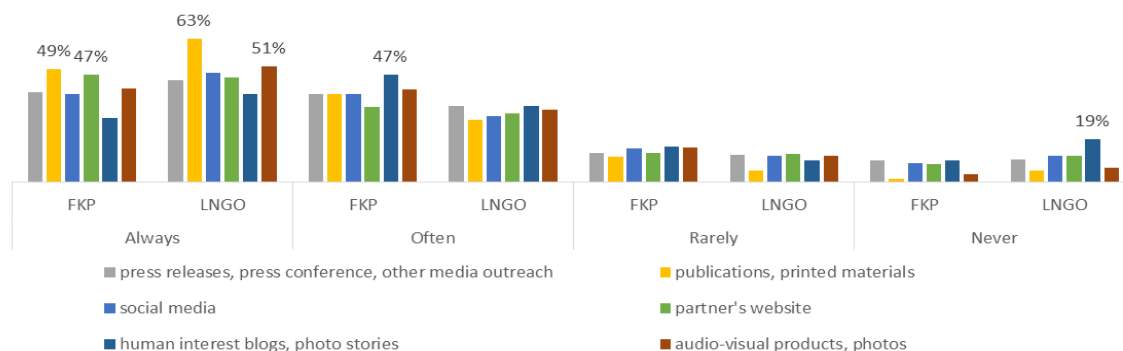
Figure 29. Frequency of use of different visibility tools by DG ECHO partners: How often do you use the following visibility tools:



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

Partners used different channels to acknowledge the EU funding and their partnership with DG ECHO. For local implementing partners, the most often used channels were publications and printed materials (63%) and audio-visual products and photos (51%). Framework partners used a wider range of channels, also including for example interest blogs and photo stories (47%).

Figure 30. Use of different media to acknowledge the EU funding and partnership



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

Several interesting examples of raising EU visibility were identified. For example, in Tanzania in 2014, WFP organised a concert in Nyarugusu which was interspersed with information about DG ECHO and the EU.<sup>219</sup> In Myanmar, the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience (MCCR) produced a CD with information on its DRR activities to be shared with different stakeholders as well as produced short videos to be shared on its Facebook page<sup>220</sup>. These kinds of activities have helped to raise the profile of DG ECHO more than the mere use of logos and brief descriptions. Framework partners were also aware of DG ECHO's own dissemination efforts and many found these to be of good quality.

A practical obstacle raised concerned the difficulty of ensuring compliance with the visibility requirements in case of Cash Based Transfer (CBT) and MPCT especially when handled electronically. More importantly, not all framework partners appear to have a good understanding of how to develop and implement a communication strategy, with some

expressing a need for more support. Especially given DG ECHO's strong in-house experience with communication, there may be scope in organising capacity building and/or training for organisations who have little experience with the visibility requirements and with communication and dissemination in general.

### 3.3.3.2 Dedicated funding to raised awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities has been provided

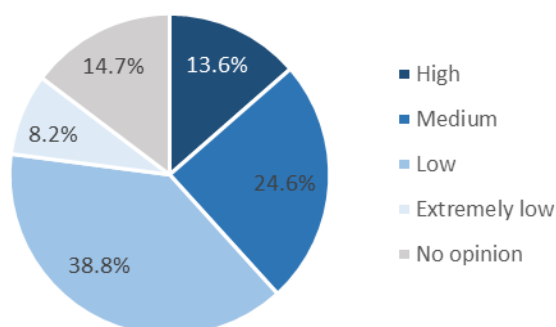
In order to further public awareness through information and communication actions, the Commission (DG ECHO) established a dedicated funding decision - Public Awareness, Information and Communication actions in the Humanitarian Aid field HIP. The funding gradually increased from 2012 onwards reaching its peak of EUR 4 million in 2016.

The type of activities covered by the HIPs included for example a Communication campaign on Healthcare, Awareness raising of Humanitarian Work in Europe, the First Responders campaign, the Family Meal campaign and others. The 2015 evaluation of these HIPs found that while the campaigns had delivered the expected outputs in terms of messages conveyed and target audiences reached, the absence of a monitoring framework made it very difficult to measure their wider European or global impact. The fact that the HIPs combined communication activities which had been previously scattered was positive and helped coherent messaging, although the responsible framework partners would have appreciated clearer guidance from DG ECHO in terms of strategy and expectations.

### 3.3.3.3 The level of awareness within the EU is high but has decreased somewhat since 2015 and varies greatly between Member States

Special Eurobarometer 453,<sup>221</sup> published in 2017 and covering the 2016 period, revealed that 71% of respondents were aware that the EU funds humanitarian aid activities. The share has increased since 2012 when the awareness level was at 68% but a 5% decrease was observed between 2015 and 2016. Some large variations between Member States were observed. The highest levels of awareness were measured in the Netherlands and Luxembourg (88%) while the lowest levels were found in Hungary (55%) and Italy (59%). DG ECHO framework partners were less positive regarding the level of awareness within the EU, with almost half of respondents to the survey (47%) considering that the level of awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities within the EU was low or extremely low (see Figure 31).

Figure 31. How would you rate the level of awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities within the EU? (n=353)



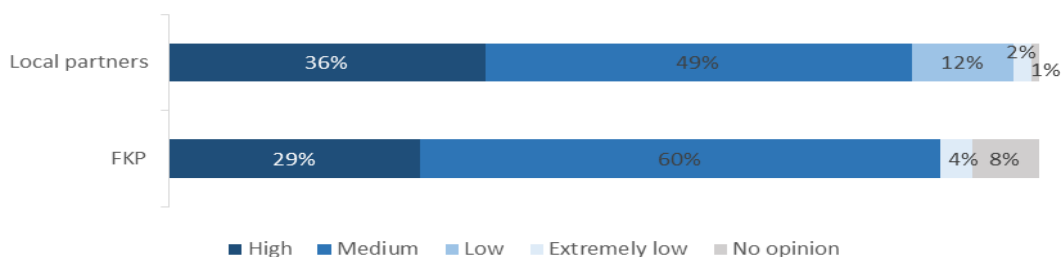
ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.

Framework partners, for example those in DRC, mentioned that DG ECHO communication efforts should also focus more on drawing attention to forgotten crises with the general public.

### 3.3.3.4 Level of awareness in beneficiary countries outside the EU is perceived to be higher than within the EU, however no robust data available to confirm this.

According to DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners, awareness in beneficiary countries ranges from high to medium. The field visits confirmed this to some extent, with the evaluators observing good overall awareness of local stakeholders and end beneficiaries. Framework partners considered that DG ECHO could make better use of the good level of awareness to also put forward its advocacy messages to beneficiary countries.

Figure 32. How would you rate the level of awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities outside the EU? (n framework partners=271; n local partners=102)



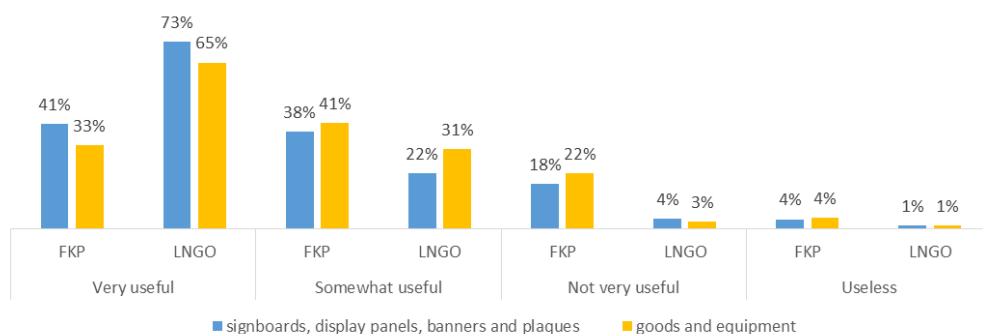
Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

### 3.3.3.5 DG ECHO’s visibility manual is perceived overall as useful but depending on the context

While DG ECHO’s visibility manual is considered overall as useful, framework partners do not always consider that ensuring visibility is their main priority and that possibly at project level they were best placed to increase awareness of DG ECHO to a wider audience, in particular of EU citizens. This was raised in three earlier evaluations as well as during the field visits in DRC, Tanzania and Myanmar. Especially when delivering humanitarian aid in crisis situations, where a rapid response is required, ensuring EU visibility was sometimes complicated.

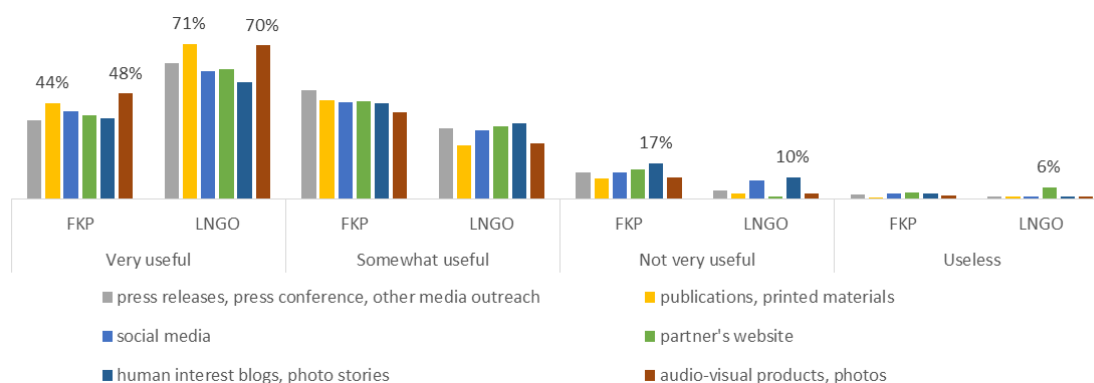
Local implementing partners surveyed were overall more positive about the usefulness of the visibility tools than DG ECHO framework partners (see Figure 34 and Figure 34). The use of signboards, display panels, banners and plaques was seen to be more effective (73% of local implementing partners found them very useful and 41% of framework partners) than goods and equipment (65% and 33% accordingly). When looking at the tools to acknowledge the EU funding and partnership, audio-visual products and pictures (70% and 48%) as well as publications and printed material (71% and 44%) were considered to be the most useful. Human interest blogs and photo stories were seen not very useful to achieve this objective (10% and 17%).

Figure 33. Usefulness of different communication tools to ensure visibility



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

Figure 34. Usefulness of different tools to acknowledge the EU funding and partnership



Source: ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August; ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.

### 3.4 Efficiency

#### 3.4.1 The 'cost-effectiveness' of EU humanitarian aid interventions

EQ14: To what extent did DG ECHO achieve cost-effectiveness in implementing EU humanitarian aid response?

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
<i>Cost-effectiveness of the EU as a donor</i>		
JC: DG ECHO balanced cost in relation to effectiveness and timeliness in making strategic choices about its portfolio of assistance		
Evidence of DG ECHO considering cost effectiveness in making portfolio choices related to partners, sectors, approaches, geographical locations, beneficiaries and transfer modalities	Literature review Interviews with DG ECHO Analysis of DG ECHO portfolio	Evidence of strategic thinking around cost-effectiveness Adoption of innovations and best practices Some implementation deficits Need for a clearer view of costs throughout the delivery chain Some room for improvement: No formal process to weigh cost and benefits of choices made Many channels available to mobilise funding swiftly however repeated top-ups not very efficient
<i>Cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions</i>		
JC: DG ECHO and partners took appropriate actions to ensure cost-effectiveness throughout the project cycle		
The extent to which cost data and quantitative indicators of efficiency (e.g. administrative costs as a % of total budget, cost per unit/ beneficiary), are available and used to drive efficiency	Review of project documentation	Consideration of cost-effectiveness is not typically based on quantitative indicators Quantitative indicators not systematically available in a standardised manner (some progress made however)
Evidence of DG ECHO and partners considering economy, efficiency and cost-effectiveness throughout the project cycle	Interviews with DG ECHO and partners Review of project documentation Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners	Key element of selection / monitoring process although no standardised approach Cost-effectiveness analysis should be more embedded in DG ECHO' programming cycle and/or in project cycles A number of actions undertaken to improve cost-effectiveness Lack of harmonised reporting requirements still impeding efficiency

There are feedback and learning mechanisms (examples of efficient delivery are identified and disseminated)	Review of project documentation Literature review (monitoring reports & evaluation) Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with partners and DG ECHO field officers	Feedback and learning mechanisms one of the main means to improve cost-effectiveness
JC: Humanitarian actions funded by the EU via DG ECHO were cost-effective		
Evidence that actions funded by the EU via DG ECHO were cost-effective	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with other relevant actors	Humanitarian actions implemented by DG ECHO generally being cost-effective (although judgement not always based on hard data) Differences in cost effectiveness due to crisis contexts and often fully justified (e.g. need to reach those with least access).
JC: Obstacles to / success factors for cost-effectiveness are clear and appropriate adaptation strategies are put in place as a response		
Evidence of success factors / obstacles to cost-effectiveness and of adaptation strategies	Review of project documentation Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with other relevant actors	Good awareness of success factors / obstacles

The cost-effectiveness of EU action has been assessed at the following levels:

- Cost-effectiveness of EU as a donor (section 3.4.1.1):
  - The extent to which DG ECHO balanced cost in relation to effectiveness and timeliness in making strategic choices about its portfolio of assistance
- Cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions (section 3.4.1.2):
  - Extent to which DG ECHO and its partners took appropriate actions to ensure cost-effectiveness throughout the project cycle (sub-section A)
  - Extent to which humanitarian actions funded by the EU via DG ECHO were cost-effective (sub-section B)
  - Extent to which obstacles to / success factors for cost-effectiveness are clear and appropriate adaptation strategies are put in place as a response (sub-section C)

### **3.4.1.1 Cost-effectiveness of EU as a donor: Evidence of balancing cost in relation to effectiveness and timeliness in making strategic choices about its portfolio of assistance**

#### **Despite lack of formal process, DG ECHO invests in strategic thinking and translates this into practice with the stated objective to increase cost-effectiveness**

DG ECHO has no formal process in place to weigh the costs and benefits of strategic portfolio choices made (e.g. in terms of types of partners, sectors, transfer modalities, consortium approaches, focus on DRR or LRRD). Recent work however commissioned by DG ECHO illustrates DG ECHO's strategic thinking about its portfolio choices. Over the last two years, DG ECHO notably commissioned a study on funding flows to have a clearer view of costs throughout the delivery chain<sup>222</sup> as well as a dedicated evaluation with regard to the use of different transfer modalities<sup>223</sup>.

There is also some evidence of this strategic thinking translating into actual practice. DG ECHO promoted certain approaches with the explicit objective to increase cost efficiency, e.g. consortium approaches<sup>224</sup> or (as far as resilience activities are concerned) multi-hazard approaches<sup>225</sup>. Furthermore, following recommendation<sup>226</sup> to use MPCTs (as opposed to traditional mono sectorial transfers), MPCT was introduced as a specific sector in 2016.

It also "intervened" to reduce the identified inefficiencies<sup>227</sup>. For example, it transitioned from multi-country contracts to single-country contracts on the basis that inefficiencies had been

noted with multi-country contracts during the Syria crisis in 2013-2014. More precisely, the Syria evaluation mentioned two main reasons for inefficiencies: (i) a mismatch between the multi-country contract structure and the single-country staffing structure within DG ECHO headquarters, which led to delays in the approval process by desk officers and (ii) the significant variance in country contexts across the five implementing countries, which meant that individual country subcomponents were often implemented at different paces.

More details on the extent to which some of these approaches actually drove cost efficiency are presented in the next sub-sections. Cases of "implementation deficits" (i.e. evidence leading to no change) are also highlighted.

### **DG ECHO adopts and promotes innovations and best practices driving cost effectiveness (e.g. with regards to cash agenda)**

On the specific topic of cash transfers, EU is largely recognised as a key donor which led the way to the 'normalisation' of cash, in particular through the removal of the EUR 100,000 cap on unconditional cash transfers from its thematic guidelines in 2013 and its ongoing operational support to partners, demonstrated in several contexts including Syria and the response to the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines<sup>228</sup>. Cash transfers have been assessed as generally the most efficient transfer modality when compared with vouchers and in-kind transfers, although it is not true in all contexts. In complex emergencies and slow onset crises notably<sup>229</sup>, it seems the other modalities are more efficient<sup>230</sup>. The recent evaluation of the EU humanitarian aid assistance in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region, for example, confirms that when food insecurity is chronic and due to frequent re-occurrence of crises, market disruptions make cash transfers unsuitable and food in-kind distributions remain more appropriate.

Cash transfers absorbed 29% of EU funding in 2016 and cash and vouchers taken together were already at 27% of funding in 2015 (see 0). As a benchmark, Development Initiative estimates that approximately USD 2 billion was delivered in the form of cash or vouchers in 2015 (or 8% of total assistance globally)<sup>231</sup> which confirms that DG ECHO is at the forefront in terms of implementing humanitarian aid through cash in a routine manner, in line with the GB commitments. One limitation of DG ECHO approach is however that cash transfers seem however to be reserved for particular sectors (mostly food security and livelihood recovery sectors, while use of cash transfer remains anecdotal in e.g. WASH sector) – see 0). Besides, the use of MPCT is marginal (the Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey aside) and response modalities generally remain sector-specific, as also noted in the recent Evaluation of the DG ECHO interventions in India and Nepal, 2013-2017.

Despite the relatively strong push, DG ECHO in general does not advocate for "cash first", i.e. for the preferential use of cash regardless of the context, at least in its policies<sup>232</sup>, although some framework partners considered that on some occasions on the ground, alternative transfer modalities were disregarded while they could have offered better value for money given the circumstances (e.g. distribution of in-kind transfers in cases where the local price of grain is high, and the cost of importing and distributing it is relatively low)<sup>233</sup>. Others raised concerns about possible unintended consequences of cash transfers affecting cost-effectiveness (e.g. concerns from WASH experts that cash-based interventions would divert households' funding to most pressing needs and mechanically lower investments in infrastructure or maintenance<sup>234</sup>; concerns from protection experts that cash-based interventions in the health sector would no longer allow DG ECHO to gather sensitive information to be used for protection advocacy since DG ECHO has no links with health professionals active on the private market<sup>235</sup>).

Beyond cash transfers, there are some other examples of DG ECHO being open to innovative approaches and accepting a degree of risk taking with a view to increasing the cost-effectiveness of its actions. DG ECHO notably uses the ERC funds to provide seed funding for new initiatives aimed at increased cost-effectiveness (e.g. in the WASH sector, for the use of solar energy for sustainable water pumping)<sup>236</sup>. In Mauritania, DG ECHO's partners are also considering the use of Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) for the distribution of cash<sup>237</sup>. These examples however show a collection of good practices rather than a systematic push for innovation and challenges were reported around the scaling up of successful ideas. This was evidenced also in the health evaluation<sup>238</sup> which concluded that when selecting proposals, DG



ECHO rarely conducts detailed efficiency analyses on new or innovative health projects and prefers to fund action types that are already known to be efficient, or where the largest percentage of funding is allocated to beneficiaries rather than to overhead costs (innovative projects will often initially have poorer ratios because of the learning curve involved).

**There are however some “implementation deficits” (e.g. localisation agenda or multi-annual funding)**

In some areas, notably localisation and multi-annual funding, DG ECHO shows an “implementation deficit”, i.e. a lack of change or follow up despite the existence of evidence pointing at the efficiency of certain types of approaches.

With regard to the first area, localisation, EU has signed up to the respective GB commitment, confirming its intention to pay at least a quarter of its humanitarian aid funding by 2020 “as directly as possible” to local and national responders “*within the limits of its current legal environment*”<sup>239</sup>.

It is worth noting that the decision to implement the GB commitment without changing the EU humanitarian aid instrument’s legal base, which limits the organisations that can be funded to UN agencies and INGOs with headquarters in the EU Member States<sup>240</sup>, has been criticised by some. For example the Network for Empowered Aid Response argued that passing through an intermediary would contradict the spirit of the agreement<sup>241</sup>. While cutting out intermediaries (i.e. framework partners) may indeed lead to cost-savings, it would also entail substantial additional costs to DG ECHO for selection, management, coordination and administration of an expected much higher number of smaller grants. Also, the extent to which direct funding is at all possible varies greatly, depending on the presence of local NGOs, their capacity and the political climate in which they operate. For this reason, DG ECHO’s current *modus operandi* may work best to enhance localisation, provided a few changes are introduced as further discussed below.

Nevertheless, the cost-effectiveness potential of localisation is recognised in at least eight evaluations reviewed during the meta-evaluation which pointed at a need to make further progress in this area. Indeed, when looking at the share of EU funding which is (indirectly) implemented via local implementing partners (i.e. channelled through framework partners), EU falls well below target: a 2017 study<sup>242</sup> on a sample of 27 projects found that only 1.5% of EU funding was allocated, indirectly, to local and national actors.

This low level could in part be explained by a certain level of *underreporting*, for example because some of the costs of local partners are financed by other sources accessed by framework partners (given that in the survey 70% of framework partners indicate they always -40% - or often -30% - work with local implementing partners). However, it may primarily be because DG ECHO largely relies on UN organisations to implement its actions (56% in 2016) which often adds an additional layer as the latter often engage INGOs which in turn may contract local NGOs (no data is available on the share of funding being transferred from UN organisations to local partners through INGOs). Another reason for the low level of funding to local partners relates to the fact that DG ECHO does not specifically promote their inclusion by allowing framework partners to set aside funding for capacity building, training, infrastructure and equipment to local partners to enable them to scale up. DG ECHO framework partners therefore may opt for direct implementation, as reported for example in the Mauritania field mission.

A possible way forward would include several changes to EU funding model. First, as already highlighted in 2013<sup>243</sup>, EU should allow framework partners to fund their capacity building activities for local partners (allowing this as one result for any of funded actions for instance). In this context, it is positive to note that nearly all framework partners (95%) indicated in the survey that working more with local implementing partners should be encouraged despite that many of them (67% of the total) also recognized possible drawbacks of such an approach. Second, once validated, DG ECHO could make use of the localisation marker which it recently contributed to develop as part of the Humanitarian Financing Task Team Working Group<sup>244</sup>. Thirdly, DG ECHO could consider to add as a specific selection criterion, or to add extra ‘points’ to project proposals based on the extent to which these focus on localisation by involving local partners in the implementation.

The second area, multi-year programming and funding is another GB commitment. Currently, there is no benchmark to determine the scale of multi-annual funding at the global level (tracking of multi-year commitments is not yet possible through the FTS although changes are under consideration)<sup>245</sup>. While DG ECHO is still reflecting on the issue, considering whether and how to adjust HIP timelines and budgetary processes<sup>246</sup>, other donors are more advanced in this domain. DFID for example introduced a multi-annual approach in 2014, reporting that: “*multi-year planning and funding (is) rapidly becoming the default approach for DFID humanitarian support in protracted crises*”. It further aims to increase the share of multi-year contributions from current 30%<sup>247</sup>. Canada reached that share of 30% in 2016 and Belgium adopted new rules enabling five-year contributions<sup>248</sup>.

While hard evidence is however still missing on the actual efficiency gains from multi-year planning and funding, evaluations have concluded that opportunities are clearly there and partially realised (administrative savings of less proposal writing, of smarter procurement, less recruitment; changes to delivery modes e.g. smaller but larger grants). Studies also note the obstacles which remain for their full realisation (multi-year funding received by partners being used in traditional annualised or short term planning frameworks, meaning benefits of multi-year funding are in many cases not passed through implementing partners) and quantitative evidence is difficult to find as systems not (yet) designed to collect data on the changes<sup>249</sup>.

### **More information is needed to ascertain whether UN agencies’ large role in implementing DG ECHO’s projects is the best solution, from a cost-effectiveness point of view**

Overall, DG ECHO choice of partners is assessed as appropriate although concentrated on a small group in volume terms (see section 3.1.3 under relevance). Over the evaluation period, the role of the UN agencies in implementing EU funded actions has increased, mostly because projects have on average become larger (UN agencies implementing 56% of value in 2016, up from 46% in 2012). This is commensurate with the role multilateral organisations play at the global level: in 2016, multilateral organisations capture 46% of all international humanitarian assistance in the first instance (and 61% of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) DAC donors’ assistance)<sup>250</sup>. This reflects in part the increased need for agencies which have the capacity to set up very large-scale operations to deal for example with the mass displacement resulting from the Syria crisis.

The extent to which this strategic choice is efficient is still subject to debate. While external stakeholders consider that UN agencies are not necessarily the most efficient implementation partners due to their large size, complex organisational processes and long delivery cycles, a recent study found that UN projects had a lower share of support costs (with thus a higher portion going to the beneficiary directly or directly enabling the delivery of goods). The authors do highlight however that the UN-support costs are typically not included in projects’ proposals and therefore not reported upon (support costs are funded through other means, including un-earmarked funding). The a priori higher performance could thus be a reflection of a data comparability issue rather than a true higher performance.

### **There is mixed evidence on DG ECHO’s tendency to ‘scatter’ resources**

Overall, data suggest that DG ECHO stimulates the development of large partner network in countries where absorption needs are high, to avoid fragmentation of funding in many smaller allocations. While over 2012-2016, an average of 31 partners (for an average of 90 projects) had been active in the 30 countries which received most funding (between EUR 55 million and EUR 800 million approximately), in the 40 countries which receive between EUR 5 million and EUR 50 million, the average number of partners is eleven (for an average of 19 projects).

One the other hand, 23 countries appear in the list of those receiving EUR 1 million or less over 5 five years (with between 1 and 3 projects being implemented). As also noted in the rapid evaluation on Food<sup>251</sup>, this ‘micro’ spending is a priori not the most efficient choice to achieve critical impact, unless it is spent on strategic actions (for capacity building purposes or on pilot innovative projects) or is justified by the need to maintain some presence. In a few cases, limited budgets have stimulated innovation, for example in Myanmar<sup>252</sup> where a relatively small funding envelope<sup>253</sup> was used to boost attention to certain topics (e.g. to Mine Risk Education, which was lacking attention, via a 500,000 euro action financing a Toolkit

which was later used by the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee i.e. the new national reference centre for preventive mine action).

### **There is a need for a clearer view of costs throughout the delivery chain**

The traceability of donors' funding throughout the delivery chain requires further improvement, as also recognised in the GB commitment: this is true both for DG ECHO and the humanitarian aid system as a whole. While the Single Form asks partners to list all their implementing partners and the budget share allocated to them<sup>254</sup>, calculating the share of funding which goes directly to the end beneficiaries is not straightforward. It in particular will require further data collection and analyses similar to the ones which have been undertaken as part of the study on funding flows throughout the Humanitarian Aid system. A related weakness is that the data standardly collected does not allow to determine for what type of cost the funding reaching local NGOs was used. For instance, the recent study<sup>255</sup> was able to calculate the budget share going to local implementing partners but not to classify the funding provided (share reaching the beneficiary, delivery costs, support costs).

The study indeed calls for increased transparency as a means to drive up efficiency. It would be important for DG ECHO to ensure that any changes it intends to make to upgrade its internal financial tracking system are coordinated with those of other donors, so that the reporting burden on framework partners is reduced and there is a possibility for analysis at the aggregate global level.

### **The EU humanitarian aid instrument's initial budget can be topped-up through various means but the process of repeated top-ups itself is not very efficient**

The effectiveness and efficiency of EU as a donor depends largely on its ability to mobilise funding swiftly as needs arise.

The annual budgetary allocations for the EU humanitarian aid instrument as part of the EU budget are generally not sufficient to cover the most pressing humanitarian needs. Over the 2012-2016 period, the initial EU humanitarian aid instrument's budget represented, depending on the year, between 49% and 73% of the final implemented budget (all funding sources taken together) (see 0). It is therefore dependent on top-ups from other funding sources throughout the year. For this, there are several mechanisms on which DG ECHO can draw, stemming from EU budget or other sources. The most important funding sources during the year are the EAR and Heading 4 redeployments<sup>256</sup>, which, together represented between 13 and 30% of the EU humanitarian aid instrument's final budget (including Externally Assigned Revenues) depending on the year for 2012-2016 (see 0 for more details). The main disadvantage of these funding sources is that, at least in the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), it works based on ad-hoc requests which need to be approved by the Parliament and the Council<sup>257</sup>. The typical length for this procedure is two-three months, which cannot be considered as swift in a humanitarian context. If funding is required at shorter notice however, other channels do exist, including DG ECHO operational reserve and Emergency toolbox HIP. These other channels are however for smaller scale funding only. Outside the EU budget, DG ECHO can draw on EDF funding and Externally Assigned Revenues.

Overall the process and balance across funding sources seems to be working well, there are many channels through which new funding can be made available when needs arise. Framework partners welcome additional money being made available throughout the year for humanitarian aid. This was for instance noted in DRC<sup>258</sup> where DG ECHO was able to allocate an additional EUR 5 million in response to the deteriorating crisis in the Grand Kasaï provinces (as advertised in the flash appeal issued by UNOCHA on 25 April 2017). Generally, the timeliness of the response is very well rated (84% of surveyed framework partners agreed that DG ECHO speed of response to emerging crisis strongly facilitated or facilitated the effective delivery).

The process itself of constant revisions can however negatively affect DG ECHO and its partners in their programming cycle. Some HIPs have four or five successive top-ups each year which is burdensome for DG ECHO (HIP revision process) and its partners (who need to resubmit applications when new funding arises even to extend / scale up current projects for instance). This also causes uncertainty for partners and undermines continuity of their operations<sup>259</sup>.

There are also questions on the extent to which emergency channels are used for new needs only and this repeated need for ad-hoc decisions can be regarded as “a rather reactive approach to (protracted) crisis situations”<sup>260</sup>. In protracted crises especially, partners could certainly better plan the year ahead (e.g. in terms of Human Resources) if the initial broad allocation was closer to reality than what is currently the case. Finally, there are also concerns that these resources will not necessarily be sustainable / accessible at all times (e.g. Heading 4 redeployments are potential sources of funding for the EU humanitarian aid instrument but there is no guaranteed access).

### **3.4.1.2 Cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions**

#### **A. Evidence of DG ECHO and its partners taking appropriate actions to ensure cost-effectiveness throughout the project cycle**

##### **Consideration of cost-effectiveness is not typically based on quantitative indicators**

Framework partners largely confirmed that DG ECHO is taking cost-effectiveness criteria into account in the selection of actions to be funded, in interviews and in the survey: - 69% of the framework partners agree or strongly agree with the fact that EU funding allocations take efficiency and cost-effectiveness criteria into account in an appropriate way<sup>261</sup>. However, the extent to which cost data and quantitative indicators of efficiency are readily available and used to drive efficiency is limited. When looking for example at the share of projects mapped which refer to quantitative indicators, only 40 out of 184 mapped projects (i.e. 22%) refer to the administrative costs in absolute values or in percentage of total cost of the project. In addition, there is no harmonised definition and costs may include (or not) personnel costs (salaries of staff), equipment, support services, transport/storage, security costs, visibility costs, office and administrative costs<sup>262</sup>. The share of mapped projects referring to cost per beneficiary<sup>263</sup> or cost per result is even lower (10% or less). Furthermore, only 39 out of 184 mapped projects (i.e. 21%) include some reference to cost effectiveness or value for money of their projects or parts of their actions in the project documentation, without adding much detail on how this would be ensured. For example, project documentation would mention procurement would be done according to guidelines to ensure value for money, or would mention that a final evaluation of the action would be conducted to assess, inter alia, efficiency criteria. Only in a few isolated cases, a concrete discussion on how to assure value for money and cost efficiency was included. Similarly, DG ECHO had provided some cost-efficiency related comments only in 22 of the actions reviewed (mostly concerning the choice of transfer modality or the need to coordinate with other players to increase efficiency or comparing unit cost with what other partners can deliver).

DG ECHO published in 2016 a “Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of EU Humanitarian Aid Actions”<sup>264</sup>, which assessed the feasibility of using recognised approaches to cost-effectiveness analysis and provides practical approaches for assessing cost-effectiveness. The study also made recommendations for improving monitoring and management systems to facilitate cost-effectiveness assessments in DG ECHO. The study confirmed the difficulties in measuring efficiency / cost-effectiveness. In particular, the report noted that in previous evaluations, answers to efficiency evaluation questions were not based on quantitative data analysis.

This under-use of quantitative indicators can be attributed to two main factors: (i) some of the traditional approaches which are used in cost-effectiveness analysis (e.g. Cost-effectiveness or cost benefit ratios) are not applicable in the context of EU humanitarian aid operations and (ii) DG ECHO information systems (Single Forms and HOPE dataset) are not, at present, designed to facilitate this type of analysis<sup>265</sup>, meaning that a lot of effort, time and skills are needed to produce the information (which will be undertaken only if dedicated resources are set aside for that purpose). Please refer to the 0 and 0 for more information on the feasibility of calculating key indicators on cost-effectiveness of EU funded actions.

Some recent positive developments<sup>266</sup> relate to the introduction in the Single Form, in June 2016, of a tab on transfer modalities that enables an automatic calculation of alpha ratio<sup>267</sup> for projects using cash, vouchers or in-kind transfer modality<sup>268</sup>. This facilitates the work of DG ECHO staff appraising actions to be funded, as it allows them to draw comparisons across actions. However, further work could be done to allow DG ECHO to ensure that the gaps which

make it difficult to measure efficiency as identified in the cost-effectiveness study are addressed more systematically (see also below).

### **Despite lack of quantitative indicators, cost-effectiveness is still taken into account**

Despite the current lack of systematic and standardised consideration of value for money based on quantitative indicators and the rather low prominence given to cost-effectiveness in project documentation, DG ECHO and partners agree that cost-effectiveness is one of their operating priorities throughout the project cycle. DG ECHO and partners for instance highlighted how cost-effectiveness is one of the criteria taken into account in the selection of actions to be funded by the EU. The budget submitted by the partners are closely analysed by DG ECHO using different ratios (e.g. administrative budget or logistics budget vs total budget or approximated budget reaching beneficiaries – if format of the budget is adequate to perform the assessment) alongside the expected results and taking account of the context in which the project will be implemented.

Partners, on their side, reported efforts to design activities that were assumed or known to be more cost-effective. During the negotiation phase of the project, DG ECHO is known to push for proven cost-effective approaches (e.g. Cash-based transfer or local procurement) and scrutinise project's spending data<sup>269</sup>. Monitoring visits were also mentioned as a good opportunity for DG ECHO to follow up on project cost efficiency and propose cost-effective adaptive measures if and as required<sup>270</sup>. It seems however DG ECHO and its partners do not systematically take full advantage of these opportunities: a few framework partners for instance stressed that the limited feedback sometimes received after project visits stood in the way of further efficiency improvements.

When prompted about the action typically taken by their organization to ensure value for money in the delivery of actions<sup>271</sup>, framework partners and local implementing partners highlighted the same three actions in more than 80% of the cases. The most common actions for framework partners are: "Use of local procurement where it is demonstrably more cost-effective" (92%), "Use of local staff" (89%), "Use of feedback and learning mechanisms" (70%). For local implementing partners, it is similarly "Use of local staff" (87%) and "Use of feedback and learning mechanisms" (70%) (see 0 for more details).

In order to improve cost-effectiveness, there would be scope to focus on building on lessons learned and exchanging good practices. Only 16 out of the 182 projects mapped mention lessons learned in the project documentation and in many cases the "lessons learned" section is more repeating the achievements of the projects than listing actual lessons learned, or explaining how previous lessons learned were built upon. There may be scope for DG ECHO to further facilitate learning exchanges between framework partners, for instance through workshops on specific topics, the publication of lessons learned, sharing of project evaluations (where framework partners have undertaken these), etc.

### **Cost-effectiveness analysis should be more embedded in DG ECHO project cycle**

DG ECHO does not follow a pre-defined approach to the analysis of cost-effectiveness, which can be considered as a weakness, as it may lead to inconsistencies in project appraisal stage depending on the person responsible for the review and the parameters taken into account. The fact that the process is not documented appropriately is also not transparent towards partners. The FichOps Guidelines adopted in March 2016 provide some guidance on specific criteria to be considered by DG ECHO staff when appraising projects (international/national staff ratio; local versus international procurement; cost per beneficiary and the admin cost ratio) but these guidelines are not publically available, do not cover all possibly relevant criteria and there is very limited awareness of these Guidelines among DG ECHO staff presently which certainly compromises their application.

There may be scope in using a more detailed checklist<sup>272</sup> as part of the appraisal process and while monitoring projects, which while not 'straightjacketing' framework partners, would support DG ECHO staff to get a better understanding of the cost-effectiveness of funded actions. Due attention should be given to the major external factors that influence cost-effectiveness, such as the type of crisis, the geography, access and security matters, the cost of living in the country, etc. It will also be important for DG ECHO to remain flexible as a donor in the light of the sudden changes that may occur.

The fieldwork confirms that DG ECHO is flexible and willing to accept variations of costs across projects when duly justified by the context (depending on access, presence of implementing partners, need to recruit international staff, level of innovation of the project). DG ECHO is all the more well placed to understand these cost variations as compared to other donors as it has an extensive field network / high technical expertise.

### **DG ECHO complex reporting requirements are still seen as impeding efficiency**

DG ECHO itself presents its Single Form as “one of the most complex reporting formats”<sup>273</sup>. Partners met during the field missions raised the complexity of reporting requirements as an issue on numerous occasions. DG ECHO is said to have reporting requirements which are more complex than EU Member States’ own development agencies, suggesting that the complexity is not purely linked to the need to be transparent towards EU tax payers. Framework partners recognise and welcome that the latest consultations helped achieve a certain degree of simplification. However, simplification and above all harmonisation is still often called for. A recent study estimated to several hundred thousands of hours the time which could be saved by implementing partners if all donors could have the same reporting requirements<sup>274</sup>.

As stated by DG ECHO itself in its first GB annual self-reporting exercise<sup>275</sup>, it is also an area of concern that because of the complexity of the Single Form, technical project staff do not typically write the proposals but only provide inputs. If their inputs are not appropriately collected, it could mean important information on technical factors affecting e.g. cost effectiveness are not found in the Single Forms but rather in annexes. Given the identified lack of a concrete technical discussion on how to assure value for money and cost efficiency in reviewed project documentation, as highlighted above, it seems indeed that important technical information is missing from the Single forms, which may mean relevant information is not fully used to inform DG ECHO decision making on which project to fund. Another shortfall of the reporting template is the lack of a standardised format for partners’ budget – which does not facilitate the calculation of standard ratios (including e.g. the share of budget reaching the beneficiary).

One advantage of DG ECHO reporting requirements over those of other donors is that it is a Single Form – meaning the same template is used throughout the project cycle – interim and final reports being updates of the proposal. The streamlining of the process from proposal to reporting cycle is one of the means considered to increase efficiency and DG ECHO’s good practice in this respect is recognised<sup>276</sup>. Another positive development is DG ECHO’s current discussions with framework partners on a harmonised reporting template, which could be introduced in 2019.<sup>277</sup>

### **B. Evidence of humanitarian actions funded by the EU being cost-effective**

Bearing the methodological-related considerations in mind, the evidence gathered through the meta-evaluation indicates that, overall, DG ECHO’s interventions were cost-effective (at least four evaluations included positive considerations<sup>278</sup>). In light of the lack of consistent indicators, the assessments were based on stakeholder surveys to measure the extent to which DG ECHO’s interventions were efficient<sup>279</sup>, which provided a level of quantification to some extent; others<sup>280</sup> used evidence of DG ECHO’s achievements on the ground to conclude “with a reasonable degree of confidence” that EU funding was “well spent”.

Furthermore, the Evaluation of the Use of Different Transfer Modalities in Humanitarian Aid Actions 2011-2014 provides some benchmarks for average total cost transfer ratio (TCTR)<sup>281</sup> for cash, in-kind and vouchers interventions. It also distinguishes by type of crisis – with the result that, as expected, the TCTR vary a lot depending on the context. The first results on the types of crises which typically have the greatest efficiency are however not consistent if looking at a sample of projects in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region only. While ADE found that the fast onset disasters and projects of shorter duration have lower TCTRs, the opposite conclusion was made in the evaluation focused on the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region (see 0<sup>282</sup>).

In addition, the recent study on funding flows through the humanitarian aid system<sup>283</sup> included a first attempt to calculate the share of DG ECHO assistance which reached the final beneficiary. It concluded that 38% of the EUR 300 million of funding analysed reached beneficiaries directly (cost of commodities, cash grants and any tangible items delivered to

beneficiaries, or cost of staff directly involved in service delivery). A further 43% enabled the direct delivery of goods and services (delivery costs, logistics), thus potentially meaning that the aid was delivered with an overhead of less than 20%. There would be scope to further examine the extent to which the 'enabling' costs could be further reduced, for example through local procurement and cooperation with local partners.

There is no benchmark as yet to compare the EU against other donors. The progress report on the GB notes that: "*Despite efforts to track humanitarian aid financing through the FTS on a voluntary basis since 1992, it remains impossible to find out how many cents of every dollar spent by donors actually reaches aid recipients.*"<sup>284</sup> The study on funding flows through the humanitarian aid system concludes that, to have benchmarks and overcome the main limitation that analysis on project-by-project basis overlooks certain types of support costs, it would be more appropriate to fund research analysing all flows reaching a partner in a particular country or all flows reaching a beneficiary community. Should benchmarks become more widely available, the analysis of ratios should still be made with caution so as not to give wrong incentives / encourage detrimental actions to improve ratios (e.g. deliver higher-cost products to beneficiaries to increase share of funding reaching beneficiaries, reduce appropriate delivery costs e.g. linked to security below limits, or focus on areas with easier access but less persons in need).

### **C. Evidence that obstacles to / success factors for cost-effectiveness are clear and appropriate adaptation strategies are put in place as a response**

Both DG ECHO staff and framework partners have a good understanding of the factors which have a positive or negative effect on cost-effectiveness and adequately take these into account as part of the project cycle.

Several earlier evaluations<sup>285</sup> included a thorough *qualitative* analysis of factors influencing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The factors that were cited as mainly contributing to efficient implementation (under certain circumstances only) were the approaches already mentioned (consortium approach<sup>286</sup>, multi-hazard approaches<sup>287</sup>), use of local partners<sup>288</sup> and contextualised choice of transfer modalities. Respondents to the surveys conducted as part of this assignment highlighted as well "use of local staff" along "use of local procurement" and "feedback and learning mechanisms" as the main options to increase value for money. During the field work conducted in DRC<sup>289</sup>, the involvement of private sector was identified as having impacted positively the response to the Ebola crisis.

At least eight evaluations also identified the presence of some obstacles to the efficient implementation of DG ECHO's interventions, including weaknesses in the timeliness of funds disbursement (particularly in the immediate onset of a crisis)<sup>290</sup>, the short duration and small size of the projects<sup>291</sup> as well as the need to improve internal processes (in line with the GB commitments<sup>292</sup>) and reporting requirements. While the survey results were generally positive, around 10% of respondents considered "DG ECHO's twelve to eighteen month funding cycles" and "capacity of local partners" as impeding factors. The rapid evaluation and field work also allowed to identify a few sector-specific or country-specific obstacles to cost-effectiveness. Internal factors included a lack of technical expertise for shelter and external factors raised related to compartmentalisation of protection actors<sup>293</sup>, rigid national procurement law and regional authorities barring the use of semi-permanent structures for school classrooms in the case of Tanzania<sup>294</sup>).

Overall, it seems that main factors influencing cost-effectiveness are well understood as similar lists of factors are identified across different sources of information<sup>295</sup>. The rapid evaluations also confirmed that DG ECHO staff and partners have a good overall understanding of the main cost drivers affecting their sectors (e.g. transfer modality choice in the case of food, salary levels for protection case management interventions)<sup>296</sup>.

### 3.4.2 Impact of coordination with other humanitarian aid actors on efficiency

EQ15: How successful has DG ECHO been in coordinating its operations with other main humanitarian actors, and with its civil protection actions, e.g. by promoting synergies and avoiding duplications, gaps and resource conflicts?

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: DG ECHO's coordination processes with other main humanitarian and civil protection actors have helped to better target funding		
Identification of coordination processes and activities with other humanitarian actors at international / HIP / project level  Evidence of synergies and instances in which duplication, gaps and resource conflicts were avoided.	Covered under coherence / added value	
JC: DG ECHO's coordination processes with other main humanitarian and civil protection actors have helped to reduce the costs of actions / increase their outputs / outcomes		
Informed by I15.1.1, Evidence of coordination leading to cost reductions / enhanced outputs and results	Literature review Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and DG ECHO field officers Interviews with other donors and aid providers	Evidence generally lacking (however this does not preclude cost reductions have happened) Specific examples of ExAR and Trust Funds provide some evidence of cost-effectiveness (and some shortcomings to be addressed in the case of Trust Funds)

This sections look at the gains from coordination in general before turning to the specific case of Externally Assigned Revenues and Trust Funds.

#### 3.4.2.1 To some extent, synergies led to reduced costs of actions/increased outputs and outcomes and duplication, gaps and resource conflicts amongst donors were avoided

As already mentioned under Coherence and EU added value, there is evidence of synergies between DG ECHO interventions and activities of other humanitarian actors. By definition, synergies and reduced duplication (including better communication and exchange of information amongst humanitarian aid donors and civil protection actors) should lead to reduced duplications and gaps<sup>297</sup>. There is however very limited evidence on the quantification of the savings made, in particular due to current information systems not capturing these costs. Qualitative evidence of synergies leading to cost savings is found with respect to the following:

- (i) Common needs assessments: for instance, the Sahel evaluation showed that main donors (e.g. USAID, World Bank, SIDA) have relied upon the evidence produced by DG ECHO to help decide where and how to fund interventions and what type of practices to support.
- (ii) Sharing evidence of what works for whom and under which circumstances: an example quoted in the Sahel evaluation is the USAID OFDA which made use of DG ECHO's research on blanket feeding, WASH and nutrition, and the World Bank which has taken up findings of DG ECHO linked to social safety nets.
- (iii) Creation of forums gathering humanitarian donors but also development donors and national governments. As exemplified by the case of the AGIR in West Africa, this kind of forum setting priorities for actions are a channel to avoid overlaps and share experiences.

At least four evaluations, however, found that coordination was still under-developed and this resulted in missed opportunities for cost savings<sup>298</sup>. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon, for example, evaluators indicated that "DG ECHO could have a much stronger role in identifying areas for coordination between its partners and sharing best practices, in order to help avoid duplications and to improve efficiency".



### 3.4.2.2 The impacts of specific funding channel mechanisms (ExAR, Trust Funds) on increasing efficiency will need to be confirmed over time

One of the main arguments in favour of using ExAR as in the case of Sahel with DFID<sup>299</sup> relate to efficiency / cost-effectiveness. By pooling resources, leverage can be increased and donors funding humanitarian aid through ExAR reduce their indirect costs. For DG ECHO, ExAR is also a way to deliver on multi-year planning which in turns increases cost-effectiveness, as illustrated in the results of a case study undertaken as part of the health evaluation<sup>300</sup>. The latter shows that using multi-annual actions were key to reinforcing the healthcare system in a post-conflict context, as well as improving the link between humanitarian and development actions. The multi-year approach also allowed for improved cooperation among the partners involved and favoured the integration of their activities into the national healthcare system. It also allowed to monitor practices and results over time.

EUTFs are another coordination instrument expected to have major benefits in terms of efficiency / cost-effectiveness, pooling resources from several donors for specific purposes. As analysed in section 3.2.2.3, it appears that to date the potential benefits have not yet been fully realised. The evaluation of the Bêkou EUTF<sup>301</sup> (to which the EU humanitarian aid instrument contributed 2% of the fund's resources) for instance concluded that there were some shortcomings with regards to (i) coordination with other donors (e.g. donors increasing their activities outside the fund over the period); (ii) transparency and speed of procedures and the cost-effectiveness of delivering aid (e.g. management costs not fully transparent and already at the limit of the 5% without taking into account all cost incurred); and (iii) its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (no systematic process in place to identify lessons from managing the trust fund<sup>302</sup>).

## 3.5 Sustainability

*EQ16: To what extent have the EU humanitarian aid actions been successful in LRRD considering both the continuum and contiguum aspects?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: There is evidence of continuation of some activities even after EU humanitarian aid funding has ended, however, difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach to sustainability and linking EU funded actions and longer-term development processes have been identified		EU humanitarian aid funding has ended, however, difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach to sustainability and linking EU funded actions and longer-term development processes have been identified
Evidence of continuation of activities and success factors leading to increased sustainability	Online survey with DG ECHO field officers, FPA and local implementing partners Open public consultation Fieldwork interviews with local authorities and other relevant actors	DG ECHO was partially successful at implementing sustainable interventions. There is limited evidence of continuation of activities. There is limited evidence of sustainability of outcomes.
Evidence of difficulties hindering the development of a consistent approach to sustainability	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with DG ECHO field officers	Challenges to sustainability are multiple; some are context specific such as the legal framework or political landscape while others relate to DG ECHO's mandate and modus operandi. There appears to be a limited strategic focus from DG ECHO on elements such as livelihood activities, disaster preparedness and DRR, elements which are known to be more sustainable.
Identification of measures and approaches to increase sustainability such as advocacy, policy dialogue and coordination; integration of EU funded activities with national/ local systems e.g. health systems, education systems; building capacity at national and/ or local level; community engagement and participation	Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Online survey with DG ECHO field officers and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with local authorities and other relevant actors	Including a resilience component in projects is key to ensure sustainability. Several measures to increase sustainability were identified and include development of a clear strategy, close coordination with development actors, increased involvement of local partner, multi-year funding and collaboration with authorities.
Evidence that partners are systematically considering sustainability issues in	Review of project documentation Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners	Partners consider sustainability in their project to some extent but this it is not done systematically. Some types of interventions are by definition

projects	Fieldwork interviews with relevant actors	sustainable while others, due to their nature, do not consider sustainability as an objective per se. Dedicated projects have a higher sustainability potential.
The extent to which LRRD approaches/ exit strategies adopted by EU funded projects are plausible and sensible	Literature and project documentation review Interviews with DG ECHO HQ and field officers Interviews with other aid donors and aid providers Online survey with FPA and local implementing partners Fieldwork interviews with local authorities and other relevant actors	DG ECHO encounters difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach to LRRD across regions and sectors. DG ECHO does not have a specific operational framework or guidelines in place on how to implement LRRD and transition / exit strategies. There is limited evidence on complementary approaches and handover between DG ECHO and DEVCO or with other development actors. The lack of cooperation between DG ECHO and development actors is in part driven by the differences between the goals and objectives, mandate, programming cycle, basic principles, approach, and mechanism of the two types of donors. Challenges have also been identified in specific sectors, contexts and types of crisis.

### 3.5.1 Concept of sustainability for DG ECHO's work

In common usage, sustainability refers to the quality of having lasting, enduring effects over time. In the context of DG ECHO's work, sustainability is not clearly defined but may apply in different ways to different aspects of DG ECHO's programming including<sup>303</sup>:

- Sustainability of **funding** of activities beyond the formal duration of EU funded actions;
- Sustainability of the **activities** of EU funded actions (either by DG ECHO, other humanitarian or development actors, or by national/ local actors);
- Sustainability of EU funded actions' **outcomes** and **impacts**, the latter being typically only discernible over long periods of time.

While sustainability is not at the core of the EU funded actions and there is ongoing debate on whether humanitarian interventions should be sustainable given their nature (i.e. short term) and core mandate (i.e. saving lives), it has been widely recognised that the wider context and longer-term goals should be considered when developing humanitarian interventions. In that sense, DG ECHO has promoted the concept of resilience, which is defined as *"the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks."*<sup>304</sup> Aspects of resilience have been increasingly present in the HIPs over the evaluation period and in 2014, a resilience marker<sup>305</sup> was developed and integrated into DG ECHO Single Forms. Nonetheless, DG ECHO recognised that the context matters and resilience should be considered differently in sudden-onset and protracted emergencies, in natural disaster and conflict settings, and depending on the local capacity<sup>306</sup>.

One way of achieving the above-mentioned sustainability and reinforce resilience is through the concept of LRRD. As mentioned by the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides: *"Today more than ever, we need to reach out across borders and beyond traditional modes of operation, to improve our principled humanitarian approach and improve the lives of victims of disaster. We also need to build on the links between humanitarian and development aid, to ensure sustainability and resilience of affected populations."*<sup>307</sup> This statement further emphasises that, although addressing longer term issues is not at the core of DG ECHO's mandate, in the current context, aspects of sustainability should be considered and new ways of working are necessary to achieve LRRD.

The concept of LRRD has been on the international agenda for decades. Initially, LRRD was conceived as a linear continuum sequence, meaning that humanitarian intervention should be followed by development intervention. However, this approach failed to respond to complex and protracted crises. A continuum approach was therefore deemed more appropriate, which entails simultaneous and complementary use of different instruments.<sup>308</sup> While the concept has evolved over time and has increasingly attracted the attention of humanitarian and development actors, its implementation on the ground remains difficult.

In line with the Consensus, the EU has repeatedly endorsed LRRD through different means such as the DCI for the period 2014 – 2017, and the development of a LRRD analytical framework tool to maximise its response.<sup>309</sup> DG ECHO has demonstrated this focus on LRRD since the early stages of the evaluation period. In its 2013 annual Management Plan, LRRD was high on DG ECHO's list of priorities.<sup>310</sup> However, despite this continuing focus, many issues hindering the implementation of LRRD in practice were identified and only a few examples of successful LRRD activities exist today. In a 2016 report by the ECA, it was advised that the Commission should prioritise LRRD.<sup>311</sup> Whilst agreeing with the recommendation, the Commission emphasised that certain local contexts can pose significant constraints to the implementation of LRRD, which can only take place when a minimum set of conditions are met in the areas of intervention (see section 3.5.3). Following such findings, DG ECHO has noticeably developed its LRRD approaches in a more coherent and systematic manner.

Following the WHS and DG ECHO's commitment to the GB, DG ECHO introduced a more coherent and systematic approach to LRRD in order to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, together with DEVCO (see more under section 3.2.2.3). This was announced in a note to the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, and the Commissioner for Humanitarian and Crisis Management.<sup>312</sup>

Currently, DEVCO and DG ECHO are working together to set up a joint contextualised analysis of risks and vulnerabilities, and establish programming priorities and division of responsibilities.<sup>313</sup> Coordination is also ensured with the EEAS and the Member States for a more efficient mobilisation of different instruments.<sup>314</sup> This new framework is being trialled in a selection of pilot countries in the Horn of Africa, West and Central Africa, and Asia.<sup>315</sup> It demonstrates a positive shift towards achieving stronger LRRD approaches, and also takes on board the recommendations from the 2012 policy briefing on LRRD<sup>316</sup>, which proposed for DG ECHO, DEVCO and EEAS to develop joint planning and analytical frameworks.

### **3.5.2 Evidence of continuation of activities, success factors leading to increased sustainability and measures and approaches to increase sustainability**

The evaluation found that DG ECHO was partially successful at implementing sustainable interventions, finding only limited evidence of continuation of activities and sustainability of outcomes after the end of EU funding. While some types of interventions are by nature 'more sustainable' (e.g. demining or activities funding documentation for refugees and IDP's), others do not have sustainability as an objective per se (e.g. food distribution).

Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents held the view that most EU funded actions are somehow continued by local communities or other donors even after EU funding has ended, but not in the same way.<sup>317</sup> Approximately a third (29%) of DG ECHO actions reviewed as part of the project mapping contains consideration of continuation of activity in the report. However, DG ECHO reports only describe how the project activity might/will be continued beyond EU funding but strategies are often vague or high level (e.g. the partner will look for other funding or the partner will maintain the activities for as long as needed) without including concrete steps on how to ensure continuity of activities.

The main ways identified to ensure a continuation of activities include:

- Handover/ continuation of the actions either by the partner itself or by other actors including local partners or development actors in a few cases;
- Transfer of responsibilities/activities to the authorities; and,
- Handover of activities to the community.

Similarly, approximately a third (30%) of DG ECHO actions reviewed as part of the project mapping contains evidence of sustainability of outcomes, i.e. a description of which outcomes will be sustained beyond EU funding. Strategies to increase sustainability of outcomes were identified by DG ECHO framework partners<sup>318</sup> and local implementing partners<sup>319</sup> and mainly encompass:

- Community engagement and participation (selected by 27% of framework partners and implemented partners);

- Building capacity at the national and/ or local level (selected by 27% of DG ECHO framework partners surveyed and by 23% of implementing partners surveyed); and,
- Integration of EU funded activities with national / local systems (selected by 24% of DG ECHO framework partners surveyed and by 24% of implementing partners surveyed).

The project mapping corroborated the above and also includes the following approaches:

- Advocacy, policy dialogue and coordination;
- Investment in durable infrastructure; and
- Creation of livelihood opportunities (e.g. Income Generating activities).

The ultimate aim mentioned by DG ECHO framework partners is to increase the resilience of the community. Indeed, most evidence of sustainability was found in interventions related to resilience and DRR and in interventions with a resilience component<sup>320</sup>, mainly in the LAC region (i.e. 25% of total funding were allocated to DRR interventions through DIPECHO in the region<sup>321</sup>). This shows the importance of the resilience aspect and therefore the resilience marker within DG ECHO's projects to ensure the sustainability of the actions and outcomes. It might also suggest that, due to the nature of DG ECHO's interventions, resilience might be a more realistic and appropriate concept for DG ECHO and its partners to achieve sustainability.

Data from the project mapping further highlights that dedicated projects or projects having one major sector (i.e. one sector representing over 66% of the total funding) have a higher sustainability potential. This might be explained by the attention from technical experts to sector specific actions, therefore highlighting the role of technical knowledge and expertise in ensuring sustainability.

Measures to further increase sustainability have been identified by DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners and include:

- Clearly consider and develop a sustainability/resilience strategy at the proposal stage as well as a viable exit strategy;
- More coordination between humanitarian relief and development;
- Increase role of local partners, encourage participation of local organisations in an attempt to reduce administrative costs, and improve response time;
- Involve beneficiaries and local communities effectively in the design and delivery of humanitarian aid;
- Multi-annual funding and longer-term planning; and,
- Ensure high levels of ownership and commitment of local and/or national authorities.

However, stakeholders consulted emphasised again the importance of devising context specific approaches (see next section).

### **3.5.3 Evidence of difficulties hindering the development of a consistent approach to sustainability**

The evaluation identified a number of conditions that should ideally be in place for sustainability to happen and therefore a number of related difficulties hindering the development of a consistent approach to sustainability.

Some of these elements are context specific and in most cases, out of DG ECHO's control. For instance, the legal framework for Syrian refugees in Turkey, regulated by the Temporary Protection Law, does not allow implementing recovery or development programs targeting Syrian and Iraqi refugees living in Turkey.<sup>322</sup> Similarly, the in-camp policy in Tanzania makes it impossible for them to develop a formal economic activity or access employment<sup>323</sup> or in Nepal, the lack of a clear policy framework for post disaster recovery hampered sustainability<sup>324</sup>. The political landscape may also prevent the sustainability of EU funded actions, especially when the State is the cause or a significant contributor to the crisis. Even where it was not, DG ECHO staff reported the lack of national ownership and political will as the main factors preventing the sustainability of the humanitarian aid delivered by DG ECHO.<sup>325</sup> This was further corroborated by DG ECHO framework partners through the online survey<sup>326</sup> and the review of the project mapping. DG ECHO staff also highlighted the lack of adequate political, social and economic structures in the country preventing the handover of

the activities.<sup>327</sup> Unstable context was also identified in the project mapping as hindering the development of sustainability, particularly in countries where there is a lack of security or moving population. This confirms that context is essential when it comes to addressing sustainability and should be taken into account when developing sustainability strategies.

Other difficulties hindering the development of a consistent approach to sustainability are linked to DG ECHO's mandate to provide needs-based emergency support aimed at preserving life,<sup>328</sup> and its modus operandi. First, a large share of funding is dedicated to providing a first response, in terms of delivery of life-saving assistance and crucial basic services, meaning that sustainability is not necessarily considered. DG ECHO framework partners confirmed that in several instances, sustainability was not a priority while in other cases, the activities were by definition not sustainable (e.g. food distribution, refugee shelters).

Second, there is no formal definition of what sustainability entails and how it should be addressed – framework partners are asked to ensure sustainability without there being guidance on the kind of actions that can be considered to enhance sustainability (e.g. actions to ensure resilience, LRRD, etc.), in which context and to what extent. Nonetheless, as DG ECHO is responding to crises that are increasingly complex and protracted, it seems justified that sustainability should be taken into account.

Another aspect hampering sustainability relates to the interpretation of the respect for humanitarian principles. The principle of independence was quoted as a reason in several instances to explain the lack of engagement with national authorities and consequently the lack of appropriation of the activities by the authorities once the EU funded action reached its end. For instance, in Indonesia, there was an overall lack of endorsement of the National Board for Disaster Management (BNPB), the “only institution able to stimulate adoption and expansion of DG ECHO models” at national level/on a wider scale. These difficulties were considered mostly to be the result of “a deficient marketing by DG ECHO rather than a lack of national resources”.<sup>329</sup> A more pragmatic approach, which implies involving authorities which are interested (and not in breach of IHL), would better support the achievement of systemic change.

In addition, DG ECHO's annual programming and funding cycle is also not inductive to achieving sustainable results. For instance, several DG ECHO framework partners emphasised that in both water supply and sanitation, behavioural change is essential for sustainability of investment.<sup>330</sup> Short humanitarian funding windows are therefore not always the most adequate form of resources for such activities, and linking relief and development (i.e. LRRD) is particularly crucial for them. Over half (51%) of DG ECHO field staff surveyed also recognised the lack of sufficient coordination between humanitarian actors and development actors hampering on sustainability.<sup>331</sup> This was further emphasised by DG ECHO partners, who highlighted a lack of coordination between DG ECHO and DEVCO (see section 3.2.2.3). Also, DG ECHO has made several attempts to engage in multi-year programming in Mauritania or Ivory Coast, through the ExAR for instance (see section on ExAR in section 3.2.3.1). However, DG ECHO did not adapt its modus operandi and kept its short-term funding cycles (e.g. yearly funding in the case of Mauritania), therefore the benefits of a multi-annual approach were not realised on the ground.<sup>332</sup>

DG ECHO also places insufficient focus on actions which, by their nature, have the potential to deliver more sustainable results, such as livelihood activities, disaster preparedness and DRR. For example, over the period 2012-2016, only 3% of the EU humanitarian aid instrument budget was allocated to disaster preparedness.<sup>333</sup> While it is understandable that DG ECHO focuses mainly on response, it was reported to be relatively rigid and strict on the type of interventions they fund even when these would have provided scope for longer-term sustainability. Although there has been an increase over the evaluation period, prevention activities remain equally limited. For instance, in Mauritania, Tanzania or Myanmar, the lack of prevention, resilience and livelihood activities over the evaluation period meant that the same assistance was required every year.<sup>334</sup> In a context where crises are structural and chronic, such strategies are not appropriate and not only sustainability but also the effectiveness and efficiency of EU actions may be diminished.

Another way to enhance sustainability is to increase engagement of local actors (e.g. NGOs) so that they can, where the context allows this, continue some of the actions autonomously.

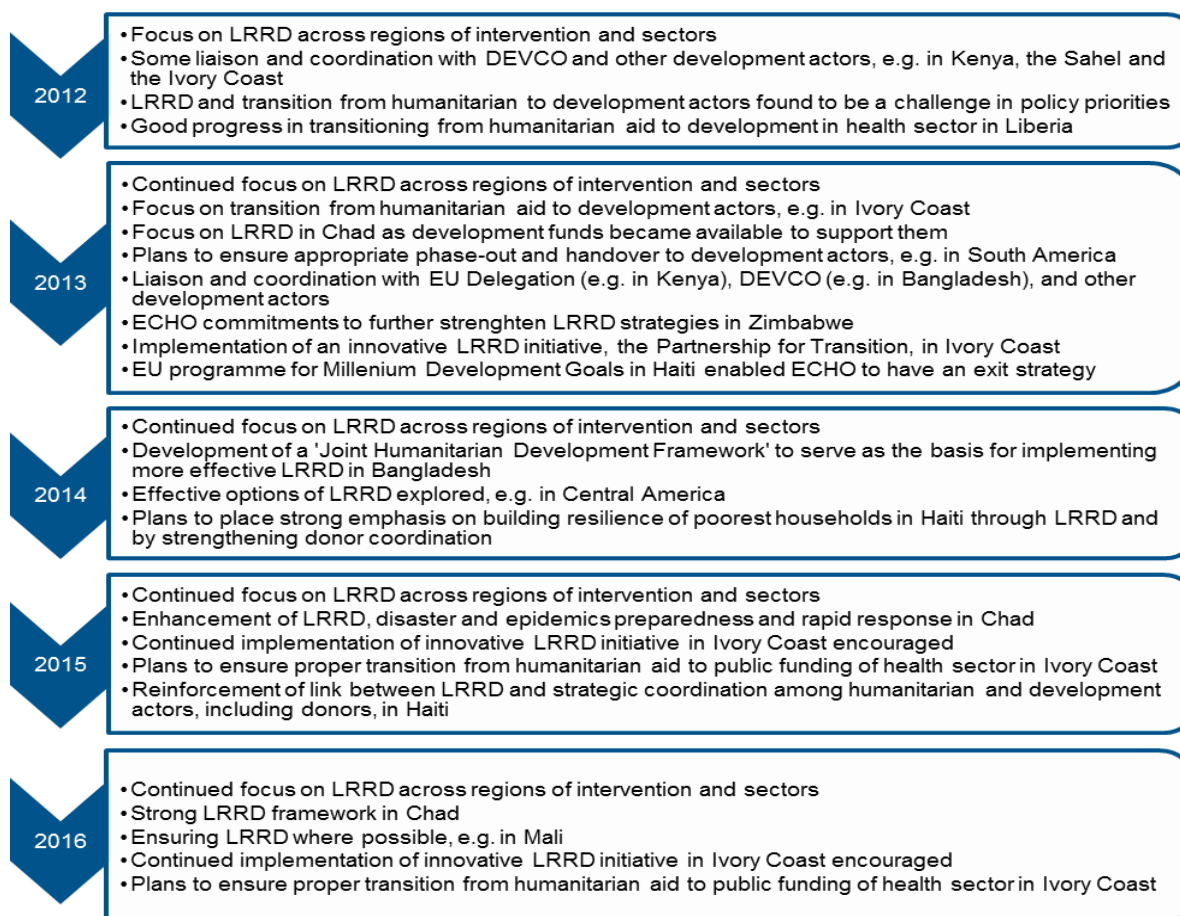
Some good examples of working with local partners have been identified on the ground during the field visits and a large majority of local implementing partners surveyed (90%) judged that DG ECHO had played a role in supporting the role of local partners in the implementation of humanitarian aid activities.<sup>335</sup> Nonetheless, stakeholders consulted feel that such cooperation should be further encouraged and promoted. As such implementing partners selected “further ensuring the increased local delivery of humanitarian aid” as the second key issue (after involving beneficiaries and communities) for DG ECHO to address in the future.<sup>336</sup> Increased localisation, as also discussed under the prospective evaluation (see section 0) will require some changes to DG ECHO programming, such as using the localisation marker, earmarking funding to be allocated to local partners in framework partner projects, capacity building etc. It is also important to understand, as set out in section 3.1.3.3, that it is not always possible to work with local partners due to the political situation, regulatory restrictions, etc.

### 3.5.4 Extent to which LRRD approaches/ exit strategies adopted by EU humanitarian aid actions were plausible and sensible

As mentioned earlier, the EU commitment to establish a nexus between humanitarian and development has been reiterated in a number of policies and communications since 1996 and several instruments relevant to LRRD have been developed.<sup>337</sup> Over the evaluation period, DG ECHO has placed a greater emphasis on promoting LRRD approaches and defining exit strategies. However, it encountered difficulties in ensuring a consistent approach to LRRD across regions and sectors. While in theory the concept seems understood, its implementation remains challenging.

Figure 35 below provides an overview of how DG ECHO’s strategy and approach to LRRD has evolved over the evaluation period according to their annual strategies.

Figure 35. Change in DG ECHO’s strategy and approach to LRRD over the evaluation period



Source: ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO’s General Guidelines on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid. 2012-2016.

DG ECHO has taken several initiatives to advance the LRRD agenda by seeking to influence a range of actors to come together earlier to prevent emergencies and find sustainable approaches for protracted crises in particular. The rationale for this emphasis relates largely to aid effectiveness. DG ECHO staff recognised the evolution from a continuum approach where LRRD related mainly to funding aspects and more particularly to the continuity of funding between DG ECHO and DEVCO to a contiguous approach through the increasing focus on resilience and following EU commitment to the GB. The latter suggests a complementary approach rather than a follow-up. However, stakeholders consulted indicated that, although the principle is well understood at HQ level, in the field, the continuum approach still prevails in most instances. Possibly due to the fact that DG ECHO does not possess any operational tools framework or guidelines on how to implement LRRD and exit strategies within their actions. Even in its own assessment (i.e. IAF), DG ECHO's criteria is called "Potential for LRRD and possible exit scenarios" which specifies the timeframe for an LRRD/exit strategy, again suggesting a continuum approach. Many DG ECHO framework partners have 'multiple' mandates and already work on both humanitarian aid and development. There is therefore significant potential for DG ECHO in working with such partners to adopt a contiguous approach to implementing LRRD strategies.

The evaluation found that only very few transitions took place over the period under review. While two-thirds of the survey respondents held the view that most of DG ECHO activities evolve, to some extent, into the next phase of development after EU funded has ended (i.e. transition from relief to rehabilitation or from humanitarian aid to development), only 3% reported that the activities fully evolve to the development phase<sup>338</sup>. Following DG ECHO's country assessment (i.e. IAF) for 2016, there is potential for LRRD/ exit strategies in less than half (42%) of the countries covered in the medium (1-2 years) or longer term (> 2 years). In addition, seven countries (9%) already contain such strategy in their current regional HIPs (i.e. West Africa, South America and South Asia). See Figure 36 below for further details. It is to be noted that in the IAF, one marker captures two elements, the potential for LRRD but also the assessment of a potential exit, therefore interpretation and application of this marker varies among DG ECHO field staff. While some assessments do not envisage an exit strategy, they see potential for LRRD. For instance, in Ethiopia, DG ECHO field considers high potential for LRRD but highlights it is too early for an exit strategy given the food security issues and refugees' situation, the marker is therefore "No".

LRRD and exit strategies were not necessarily translated into project design. As specified earlier (section 3.5.2), approximately one third (29%) of DG ECHO actions reviewed as part of the project mapping contains specific considerations on the continuation of activities in their reports and exit strategies mostly focus on handing over the activities to national or local authorities, or to the communities. Exit strategies involving development actors are few. Thirteen projects (7%) reported that the activities would be followed up but did not specify how, while five (4%) reported looking for additional funding to pursue the activities but only one specifically mentioned development funding. Moreover, the projects considering such strategy were not necessarily located in a region identified (by DG ECHO) as having LRRD potential under the current HIP. This suggests a limited emphasis on exit strategies/LRRD in the design of EU funded actions and a lack of consistency across regions. Further to this, the meta-evaluation highlighted that the extent to which exit strategies and LRRD were successful in practice is still patchy/inconsistent across sectors and geographies.

A number of factors jeopardising the implementation of LRRD strategies were identified. The major challenge lies in the lack of cooperation between DG ECHO and development actors and in the differences between the objectives, the mandates, the basic principles, programming approach and funding mechanisms (see section 3.2.2.3 for more information on the differences between DG ECHO and DEVCO). Some partners interviewed even referred to "antagonist" approaches between the humanitarian and development actors. Other challenges identified relate to protracted transition periods, insufficient investments, the limited presence of development actors in certain areas/sectors, limited policy support by national authorities, insufficient LRRD planning at HIP level, and limited capacity of certain partners to develop and implement LRRD strategies. Finally, as mentioned previously, the fact that development agencies tend to work closely with national authorities, meaning that they may be more politically engaged (see section 3.1.1), may go against the humanitarian principles.<sup>339</sup>

Challenges have also been identified in specific sectors, where development and humanitarian actors have a different understanding and approaches. For instance, in the area of protection, there is a large gap in understanding of the humanitarian protection agenda, the EU tends to have a systemic view (i.e. focusing on the rule of law) while DG ECHO focuses more on the individual.<sup>340</sup>

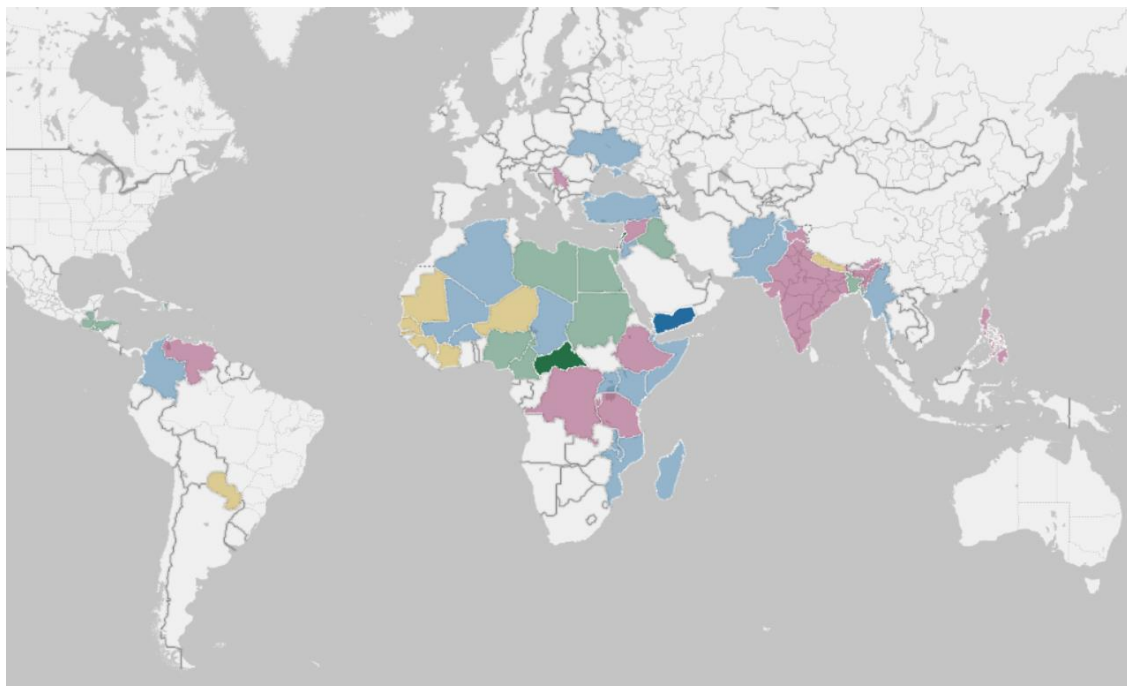
As sustainability in general, LRRD is highly context specific. In certain contexts, such as armed conflicts, development actors cannot intervene due to the volatile and uncertain situations limiting longer-term vision and LRRD opportunities. The type of crisis also matters; natural and/or protracted crises entail different needs and actions compared to emergencies, focussed on behavioural changes. This further confirms that a context-based approach is required to successfully implement LRRD strategies. The map in Figure 36 below shows the potential for LRRD and possible exit scenarios as assessed by the field in the IAF process (limitations explained earlier). Figure 36 also highlights (i.e. darker colours) where development funding appears insufficient to cover humanitarian activities, this by comparing data from the OCHA Financial Tracker System and the Official Development Assistance for 2016.

Development funding is available in higher volumes than humanitarian funding in most countries where DG ECHO is active suggesting that, at first glance, sufficient funding to ensure the follow-up of (some) humanitarian activities should be available (see Figure 36). This does however not take account of the longer programme cycle of development aid (i.e. development programmes are prepared every seven years for a period of implementation that can be longer than the seven years; preparation of implementation must follow the bilateral programme architecture) and the fact that funding may be spent differently (e.g. in different geographies, on different sectors/activities, via different funding channels).

Figure 36 also shows insufficient development funding in Yemen as well as limited funding in Central African Republic (CAR) and Lebanon although DG ECHO considered that there was scope for an LRRD strategy in these countries - but only in the medium or long term and under certain conditions (e.g. peace, political will). In the case of Lebanon, it might simply be due to the fact that development funding is not necessarily needed. On the other hand, in CAR and Yemen, the high volatility of the situation prevents intervention of development actors. In other countries, development funding appears sufficient but DG ECHO does not envisage an LRRD/exit strategy (e.g. India, DRC, Ethiopia, South Sudan). In India for instance, DG ECHO has de facto exited but the termination of EU funding was considered as too abrupt by the field to have time for a proper LRRD strategy. In DRC, DG ECHO field believes there is no potential for LRRD strategy at the national level given the persistence of conflict, LRRD would however be possible in specific zones where development actors engage. In South Sudan, there is no exit possible because of the corruption levels which excludes possibility to hand over to government.



Figure 36. Potential for LRRD and possible exit scenarios



Source: DG ECHO, 2016. IAF and ICF calculation based on ODA and FTA data.

Legend:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="color: pink;">■</span> No                                       | <span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Yes, in the long term (+2 years) |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Yes, in the medium term (1-2 years) | <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Yes, under the current HIP           |

Note: the countries highlighted in dark (i.e. Yemen, CAR and Lebanon) indicates where development funding is insufficient or limited.

A few “success stories” were identified, where transitions from humanitarian to development interventions were successfully implemented. In these cases, the inclusion of LRRD within HIPs, good cooperation between humanitarian and development actors at field level, the early design and adoption of clear transition strategies as well as the involvement of national and local authorities were cited as factors leading to the successful implementation of LRRD approaches.<sup>341</sup>

For instance, in Laos, DG ECHO started with the financing of nutrition activities, these were then overtaken by DEVCO and are now part of the national policies.<sup>342</sup> Another example is the Sahel region, with the implementation of the Sahel Strategy, which supported LRRD by integrating longer-term objectives, such as resilience building and malnutrition-prevention, into emergency response actions and by funding partners to support the integration of health services funded by international humanitarians into national systems. The Strategy also led to the launch of AGIR, an initiative which brought together humanitarian and development donors with national actors to set priorities for national and international funding to address malnutrition. In Colombia for instance, DG ECHO integrated LRRD in its strategy over the evaluation period and implemented hand-over strategies successfully at implementation level. All DG ECHO’s global plans and HIPs for Colombia explicitly devised an approach to ensure LRRD, and the evaluation observed specific success in terms of connecting DG ECHO’s support to longer term assistance and hand over projects to local actors.<sup>343</sup>

More recently, following the WHS, DG ECHO and DEVCO proposed a new systematic approach to LRRD to address fragility and crisis in complex situations.<sup>344</sup> This means working together on joint analysis or risks and vulnerabilities, evaluation of needs at global level and in fourteen pilot countries “to establish coherent programming priorities and a division of labour and financing”.<sup>345</sup> The new approach has been recently tested in Haiti and Nigeria with promising results.<sup>346</sup>

The above analysis of sustainability emphasises the importance of joint analysis and planning from the very start following a contiguum approach. It was recognised by the stakeholders consulted that while DG ECHO should not be expected to do everything, it should play a role in advocating for longer term funding and coordinating with development actors. In complex and fragile situations, it will be increasingly imperative to ensure that all actors come together to discuss the needs and constraints. On the basis of a sound global analysis, DG ECHO can then decide how to intervene along its principles. Equally, political actors (such as EUDs or MS) should be further included in discussion and national actors should also be taken on board where feasible to ensure appropriate response, increased ownership and successful handovers.

### 3.6 EU added value

*EQ10: What was the added value of EU humanitarian aid interventions? How could the EU Added Value be maximized? What would happen if the EU would stop its humanitarian aid interventions?*

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
JC: Actions financed by EU on the ground have a clear added value compared to actions financed by other donors		
Illustrative examples of results that could not have been achieved without a coordinated effort at the EU level	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC Fieldwork: local authorities	Strong financial added value and achievement of results Focus on forgotten crises, gaps and themes Acting as a reference donor and coordinator Pushing for operational improvements
Identification of specific aspects contributing to the development of EU added value	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC	Strong operational and technical expertise Global and local presence Flexible approach in the implementation Politically independent by adhering to the humanitarian principles
Identification of factors giving a particular added value of EU action compared to other donors	Interviews: other donors and aid providers Surveys: FPA partners, local implementing partners Fieldwork: local authorities, beneficiaries, other relevant actors	Strong operational and technical expertise across the board Global and local presence unparalleled to other donors Flexible approach in the implementation Politically independence through principled adherence to the humanitarian principles (some donors different)
Identification of instances where the EU added value was not fully exploited	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: FPA partners, local implementing partners Fieldwork: other relevant actors	Need for stronger EU-UN coordination (operational and system levels) Partial support to clusters Partial medium or long-term strategies Certain gaps in technical expertise
Evidence of factors hindering the maximisation of EU added value	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: DG ECHO field, FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC	Complex EU-UN coordination structures Parallel implementation mechanisms to clusters Structural challenges to developing medium or long-term strategy Internal staff recruitment and development structures
JC: Stopping EU funded activities would lead to increased fragmentation, increased risks of duplication of efforts, ineffectiveness and/or inefficiencies, reduced adherence to IHL		
Assessment based on evaluation evidence gathered (under effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and coherence) and stakeholders' views	Interviews: other donors and aid providers Surveys: FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	Stopping EU interventions would result in: Huge financial gap affecting the achievement of humanitarian aid results Reduced coordination and increased fragmentation Reduced adherence to the humanitarian principles
JC: Some measures and approaches should be put in place in the future in order to maximize the added value of EU humanitarian aid interventions		

Indicators	Sources of information	Key conclusions
Assessment based on evaluation gathered (in particular see I10.1.2 and I10.1.3 above) and stakeholders' views	Interviews: DG ECHO HQ, DG ECHO field, other donors and aid providers Surveys: FPA partners, local implementing partners OPC Fieldwork: local authorities, other relevant actors	Further improvements to maximise the added value through better coordination with UN and global clusters; development of longer term strategies; closing gaps in DG ECHO's technical expertise

The added value has been assessed at the three levels (analysed in turn below):

- Added value of EU humanitarian aid actions on the ground;
- Systemic added value linked to the DG ECHO's work within the overall humanitarian aid system;
- Added value of EU level actions as compared to action by the EU Member States.

### **3.6.1 Actions financed by the EU on the ground have a clear added value compared to actions financed by other donors**

#### **3.6.1.1 Significant humanitarian aid results could not have been achieved without EU action**

On the ground, the EU significant humanitarian aid funding to address the humanitarian needs around the globe is a key aspect of its added value. This is evidenced through the fact that in the 2012-2016 period, EU accounted for 9% of the total humanitarian aid funding, which makes EU the second global donor (after the USA), providing a critical mass of funding to address the humanitarian needs (see 0). This means that stopping EU interventions would leave a significant proportion of humanitarian needs globally unaddressed, in a global context where these needs already to a large extent remain unfunded (see section 3.1 on Relevance). This financial added value translates into tangible results of saving lives (see also section 3.3 on Effectiveness) which is at the core of EU added value. In the 2012-2016 period, EU has financed over 3,700 projects for a total value of EUR 7.1 billion in 115 countries across the globe<sup>347</sup> (see section 2). This financial added value translates into successful advocacy efforts as the EU is able to influence other humanitarian aid actors (e.g. other donors or framework partners).

This aspect of the added value of EU humanitarian aid actions is further corroborated by the evidence from the stakeholder consultations. Overall, there was wide agreement amongst the OPC respondents (see 0) that EU funded actions have added value to actions financed by other donors, including Member States. This is mostly because DG ECHO has inspired Member States and donors alike to develop their own policies and engage partners in collective reflection on thematic issues. Another frequently given reason is that thanks to its outreach and global network of field experts, DG ECHO is driving humanitarian aid forward, including in specific areas such as cash and food security and gender- and age-sensitive aid.

The overwhelming majority (82%) of the local implementing partners surveyed in the evaluation stated that there were humanitarian aid results which could not have been achieved without the EU funding (see 0). Furthermore, the field visits completed during the evaluation also provided concrete illustrations of financial added value of EU interventions. In Mauritania, EU contributed to 48% of the framework partners funding over the period 2015-2016 and 90% in 2016 alone. Also in the DRC, EU provided much needed funding to humanitarian partners (about 20-30% for the UN agencies) and up to 100% of INGOs.

#### **3.6.1.2 EU humanitarian aid actions on the ground added value by focussing on forgotten crises, humanitarian response gaps and under-funded themes**

EU humanitarian aid actions have added value in the global humanitarian response by focussing on forgotten humanitarian crises (both natural and conflict/political crisis). On average, around 16% of the EU funding in the 2012-2016 period was allocated to forgotten crises<sup>348</sup>. By comparison other donors only allocated 12% of their funding to crises identified as forgotten by DG ECHO (this is also expected as one of the factors taken into account by ECHO in the identification of forgotten crisis is the "*interest of donors as reflected in the level of public aid received*").

As detailed in 0, the level of EU funding to these forgotten crises remained relatively stable during the evaluation period (i.e. between USD 310 million and USD 237 million) but the global funding considerably increased over the years peaking at close to USD 3.7 billion in 2016. Consequently the share of the EU contribution dropped from 13-20% in 2012-2014 to 7-8% in 2015-2016. In the forgotten crises which received less global funding in absolute terms like Algeria, Bangladesh or India, the EU provided the majority of funding in some specific years (see 0). This added value has been widely recognised by external stakeholders who saw the EU systematically addressing in the 2012-2016 period this type of crises which receive little or no funding from other donors.<sup>349</sup>

In the 2012-2016 period, on average per year DG ECHO identified around 10 crises as forgotten. Humanitarian crises in the majority of these countries (i.e. Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, India, Myanmar and Yemen) were assessed as forgotten crises every year, which indicates a stability in DG ECHO's approach. It could also be a sign of continuous lack of attention from other donors. Humanitarian aid funds were allocated to all the countries identified in the forgotten crises assessment. However, EU humanitarian aid funding to these forgotten crises decreased by 7% between 2012 and 2016 (from USD 310.7 million to USD 290.1 million) whereas global humanitarian aid funding to these crises increased by 70% from USD 1.9 billion to USD 3.4 billion (see Annex 9, based on EVA data). Especially large decreases were observed in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (despite the DG ECHO needs assessments remaining stable over the period)<sup>350</sup> with Sudan being the only forgotten crisis registering an increase of funding of 53%.

This aspect of the added value is implemented through a formal part of the annual needs assessment, by DG ECHO undertaking the FCA<sup>351</sup> and has been demonstrated in a number of evaluations of EU humanitarian aid actions in the 2012-2016 period<sup>352</sup>. In Indonesia, for example, *"DG ECHO directed its assistance to the most vulnerable groups affected by disasters often largely ignored by other donors: a neglected food crisis in Eastern Indonesia and the West Java earthquake largely under-funded by external donors were some of the "forgotten crises."*<sup>353</sup> Other examples of DG ECHO's focus on forgotten crises identified during the 2012-2016 period included EU funded actions in Bangladesh (the Chittagong Hill Tracts), Algeria (the Sahrawi refugee crisis) and Colombia (the armed conflict).

Moreover, DG ECHO addressed the humanitarian needs in several geographical contexts where a gap in the humanitarian aid existed (e.g. where the humanitarian support was harder to provide, where the humanitarian needs were acute and/or not immediately recognised by other donors and local authorities).<sup>354</sup> For example, in Syria (one of the key countries receiving EU funding in the 2012-2016 period), EU made important contributions to the setting-up of large-scale humanitarian aid operations where humanitarian capacities and expertise of other donors were either not present or not adequately addressing the rapidly growing crisis. In Sudan (also one of the key countries receiving EU funding in the 2012-2016 period), EU supported activities and sectors which were not funded by other donors. EU funded actions in Indonesia filled a critical gap in those humanitarian aid aspects where the national/ local authorities were unable to respond due to the lack of resources, capacity and know-how.<sup>355</sup> The evaluation field visit to Tanzania also showed that EU was one of the first donors to scale up the assistance when the humanitarian needs started increasingly dramatically with the arrival of the Burundian refugees. The field visit to Myanmar highlighted how EU is pushing for topics that are not priorities to other donors. For example, in DRR project EU funds the Safe Hospital project which works on hospital preparedness in a case of natural emergency. The push for this comes following the DG ECHO advocating for the concept "no one left behind".

In addition, in the 2012-2016 period EU funded actions in several specific humanitarian themes and areas which were underfunded by other donors. This includes a strong focus on the protection sector on documentation and registration processes of those who have fled their country (as opposed to the child protection or GBV aspects for instance which were covered by other donors) (see 0 containing the rapid evaluation on protection covering DG ECHO's achievements in the area of protection mainstreaming). Another example of EU's added value in this respect was its focus on education in emergencies, a theme which was underfunded by other donors.<sup>356</sup>

This means that stopping EU interventions would leave a significant proportion of forgotten humanitarian needs and under-developed themes globally unaddressed.

### **3.6.1.3 EU added value through actions on the ground by supporting operational improvements**

EU action has also achieved added value by supporting the implementation of a series of operational improvements which have added value to the delivery of the humanitarian aid for example by strongly pushing for:

- Cash-based assistance, which is a very relevant way to implement humanitarian aid in the contexts of functioning markets;
- Protection mainstreaming and the implementation of common protection standards across the partners (see 0 containing the rapid evaluation on protection covering EU achievements in the area of protection mainstreaming);
- The localisation agenda for the involvement of local communities and beneficiaries in the needs assessments and project design and push for local procurement when possible using the local NGOs (see section 3.1.3.3 on the evaluation findings on the localisation aspect);
- Evidence based needs assessment for the distribution of aid (see section 3.1.1 on the evaluation findings on the relevance of needs assessments).

This means that stopping EU interventions would lead to reduced effectiveness and inefficiencies of implementing the humanitarian aid on the ground.

### **3.6.1.4 EU added value acting as a reference donor and coordinator**

DG ECHO is becoming increasingly known (and respected by implementing partners) for its coordination and leadership role in the EU financed actions (see also the section 3.1.1 on coherence). This was evidenced in a variety of geographical contexts of EU interventions. In Syria, for example, the capacity of DG ECHO to participate in different coordination mechanisms, at the donor coordination level as well as the operational level of delivering the humanitarian aid, has been seen as an added value by its partners. Over the 2012-2016 period, EU also added value in coordinating the delivery of the humanitarian aid by liaising with other donors and partners. In Colombia, for example, EU was the most important actor in terms of the financial volume of aid amongst the humanitarian donors. This in turn conferred EU a potential leverage to play a key role in terms of coordination between different donors.<sup>357</sup> In Sudan, the consistent EU support for coordination, especially within the cluster system, was found to be adding value to the humanitarian efforts.<sup>358</sup>

The field visits completed during the evaluation also highlighted positive examples of EU coordination role. In Myanmar, stakeholders pointed at a strong effort to promote in-country coordination (e.g. by funding the INGO forum, providing support to the DRR forum). In Mauritania, EU provided coordination support in the context where other donors were withdrawing and made valuable efforts to coordinate remotely, from its regional office, through frequent monitoring visits to the field and occasional trips. There is significant evaluation evidence<sup>359</sup> linking the added value of EU to its strong role as coordinator of humanitarian aid interventions on the ground. On one hand, EU was able to coordinate closely with its framework partners thanks to regular contacts maintained through DG ECHO field officers on the ground<sup>360</sup>. On the other hand, EU was also able to coordinate closely with other humanitarian aid actors and to act as a reference donor, enforcing a more coordinated, coherent and quality-driven response across the globe. This strong coordination role means that stopping DG ECHO intervention would lead to a significant risk of fragmentation and duplications in the delivery of the humanitarian aid.

## **3.6.2 EU added value at the system level**

### **3.6.2.1 Promotion of the humanitarian principles**

The key added value of EU contribution to the development of the humanitarian aid system was EU global stance as a strongly principled donor. This was a dominating perception in the stakeholder interviews, where EU advocacy of the humanitarian principles was seen as adding value to the global humanitarian system where such principles are not always universally supported (see 0, rapid evaluation on advocacy). This was also valued by stakeholders in

complex emergencies where the potential for the principles to be eroded is high. For example, in its response to the Syrian crisis, the EU reputation as a principled donor helped it engage with the different host country governments on issues such as protection<sup>361</sup>. The fact that the EU is purely a humanitarian donor gives the freedom to take a strong stand on humanitarian principles, although as described under the coherence section, it is sometimes difficult to ensure respect for each principle at the same time.

The importance of EU adhering to the humanitarian principles and promoting these at the global scale was also seen as an important aspect of added value by over 90% of framework and local partners surveyed for this evaluation (see 0). At least five evaluations<sup>362</sup> identified such adherence to the humanitarian principles as one of the main elements contributing to the added value of EU action.

There is however also a strong perception amongst the stakeholders that this is reducing, as further discussed in section 3.1.1.2 on the changes in EU budget allocation. While they still see EU as a needs-based and principled donor, over the last years there have been growing concerns of politicisation of aid and the potential impact on the geographical allocation of funds. The needs-based approach has been one of the factor of the added value of EU, and the partners call for EU to remain committed to it. In the existing evaluations of the 2012-2016 period the stakeholders called on DG ECHO to further promote the respect and compliance with IHL (and step up the coordination, leadership and accountability efforts within the global humanitarian system). In this respect, as shown in section 3.1 on Relevance, DG ECHO needs to communicate more strongly the results of its needs assessment process, and acknowledge the necessarily political nature of DG ECHO's funding choices given the vast extent of the humanitarian needs, also in the EU immediate neighbourhood.

This means that stopping DG ECHO role globally is most likely to lead to reduced adherence to IHL without a principled stance of DG ECHO evidenced in the past.

### **3.6.2.2 Global leadership within the humanitarian system**

The EU has played an important role in the international policy field, by providing crucial inputs into several strategic developments in the evaluation period, including the adoption of the GB and the results of the WHS. This enabled it to influence key humanitarian aid policies and practices during the evaluation period. There also have been several concrete success stories of how EU leadership role in the humanitarian system has changed the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g. multi-purpose cash) or drew attention and funding to under-funded sectors in the field of humanitarian aid (e.g. more attention to the education in emergencies leading to a demonstration effect in terms of encouraging other donors to support more this sector and the mainstreaming of protection agenda into the delivery of the humanitarian aid).

### **3.6.2.3 Support to the sectoral clusters and shaping the humanitarian response**

This aspect of EU added value was especially prominent in the sectoral approaches. The support to the global and national/ local clusters was seen as adding value, for example, in the food security, WASH and shelter /settlement sectors (see 0 containing the rapid evaluations). EU contribution allowed the clusters to test different working modalities, work with rapid assessment teams and advisers to develop the best approaches for the sector. This consistency and reliability of EU has been of high value and not available from other donors.

WASH and S&S experts also highlighted the support to local clusters and regional coordination platforms as an added value of EU. The WASH Regional Platform for East Africa brings for example together different humanitarian aid actors and allow them to discuss issues and use these as strategic tool. These platforms require experts to provide their support to operations, but also to think more strategically on issues like impact and cost efficiency.

EU also added value by shaping the delivery of the humanitarian response globally. This can be exemplified in the food security and protection sectors:

- Due to DG ECHO's advocacy towards cash-based assistance, the approach has now been generally accepted as appropriate in the food security sector (see 0 containing the rapid evaluations).<sup>363</sup>
- As for protection, there are examples of global partners modifying their tools and practices as a result of the push for protection mainstreaming and integrated

programming. With IOM, for example, this has been done through adaptations to its displacement tracking matrix, which is a tool to track displacement (where people are, how many they are, where they are going).

The EU also provided added value across sectors and themes by providing partners with thematic and sectoral guidelines to inform better programming and implementation of humanitarian aid.<sup>364</sup> The utility and use of the guidelines varied across sectors and geographies with difference in levels of awareness and understanding of the guidance (see EQ 13, in section 3.3), however overall the guidelines represent a step forward in strengthening the consistency of DG ECHO's sectoral approach contributing to the sharing and mainstreaming of best practice and lessons learnt.

### **3.6.3 EU added value in comparison to the Member State action alone**

In the 2012-2016 period, EU was the second largest donor in the humanitarian sector globally, providing 9% of the total global funding (top donor the US with 30% of the total funding) (see 0). No other single EU Member State alone has matched the size of EU resources (UK is the third largest donor accounting for 8% of the global humanitarian aid, Germany 4<sup>th</sup> with 7%, Sweden and Norway are 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> with 4% each). This points to the added value of pooling the humanitarian aid resources at the EU level and using the DG ECHO architecture (especially the field network) to distribute it across the globe.

This added value of coordinated action at the EU level implemented by DG ECHO has been recognised by the Member States themselves which have used the existing channels to spend some of their humanitarian aid budgets via the EU financial channels. This concerns mostly the UK, but also, for the year 2014, Luxemburg, Austria and France and, when it comes to their contribution to the Facility for refugees in Turkey, all Member States (see 0 There have been also instances where Member State authorities have requested DG ECHO's assistance, advice and expertise in the implementation of national humanitarian aid (e.g. on the choice of implementing partners or needs in the humanitarian contexts).<sup>365</sup>

Thus, for Member States, EU provides a channel for some of their external aid assistance, given also EU technical expertise and geographical reach of the DG ECHO network.<sup>366</sup> This is especially important for the smaller Member States, who do not have the presence in the humanitarian crises contexts or technical expertise on par with the DG ECHO's field network, but still spend their humanitarian aid budgets (this was confirmed in the interviews with the Member State representatives).

### **3.6.4 A combination of factors contributed to EU added value, which should be further maximised**

#### **3.6.4.1 Factors contributing to EU added value**

##### **DG ECHO's global and local presence**

The key unique factor distinguishing EU from other donors and ensuring its added value is its field network (see also section 3.1, relevance). With its presence, DG ECHO has a large network of partners and staff on the ground that provide very good information on the needs and changes of situation, particularly important when a situation changes very rapidly. The field network also allows DG ECHO to have a better-balanced overview of the humanitarian situations on the ground by being able to triangulate the information collected from various sources. It is important that DG ECHO network reaches further than the EU Delegations and accesses areas where other EU actors cannot reach.

The strong presence of DG ECHO and its technical staff in the field was seen as particularly useful as it not only results in a good overview and understanding of the needs and context in the field but also shortens communication lines when implementing actions. The field presence is also perceived to be a reason for the flexibility in addressing changing needs, as highlighted by stakeholders consulted for WASH, S&S and FSL sectors. Stakeholders consulted for WASH sector also highlighted that EU is usually the first donor to respond to emergencies as a result of its local presence.

The role of the DG ECHO's field network was also noted as a key factor of EU added value by the majority of framework and local partners (see 0) for whom the field network ensures that

EU is close to the local context and is able to provide specific targeted support to the implementation of the humanitarian aid. This positive view was also echoed by the field network staff themselves surveyed for this evaluation (see 0) and as part of the field visits. It was also largely echoed in the OPC results (see 0). Other factors identified as contributing to DG ECHO's added value in the OPC include the diversity of partnerships between DG ECHO and other worldwide organisations (e.g. UN, Red Cross) and with various NGOs to identify and address diverse needs.

Furthermore, at least four evaluations of actions in the 2012-2016 period<sup>367</sup> praised the added value of DG ECHO in relation to its set up, which certainly contributed to improving the coverage of its interventions. DG ECHO's local presence also contributed to the increased coordination and cooperation with local partners and other donors. Some stakeholders consulted also highlighted examples where DG ECHO has engaged with local stakeholders to initiate a dialogue where this is required to deliver aid (see 0 containing the rapid evaluations in the FSL, WASH, S&S and protection). It was seen that DG ECHO's ability to do this is strengthened by the presence of strong technical staff in the field.

### **DG ECHO's strong operational knowledge and technical expertise**

The high level of DG ECHO staff knowledge at the HQ and field level has contributed to ensuring DG ECHO's actions added value on the ground. DG ECHO staff were able to support the full cycle of humanitarian aid delivery from the detailed needs assessment to monitoring and evaluation with specialised geographical, sectoral and technical knowledge. This was achieved through the dialogue and communication with the framework partners, field monitoring, advocacy and advisory activities in the field.<sup>368</sup> Very few other multi-sector international donors have matched the level and breadth of DG ECHO's expertise and knowledge.

The wealth of knowledge generated by DG ECHO staff through the needs assessments carried out at the HQ as well as through the framework partners at field/project level added value by increasing the relevance of EU humanitarian aid interventions to the needs of beneficiaries. DG ECHO added value to its humanitarian aid interventions through its research and needs assessment activities.<sup>369</sup> By generating such knowledge, and filling a knowledge gap and generating outputs that could be used beyond the interventions evaluated, DG ECHO had a comparative advantage over other donors. DG ECHO was also praised<sup>370</sup> for its special understanding of risks/disasters, a unique familiarity with the prevalent risks at the national or local level and a strong knowledge of local/regional institutions and policies. OPC respondents also frequently identified needs-based programming and the delivery of activities monitored by field experts as one of the key aspects of DG ECHO's EU added value (see 0).

The evaluations of EU funded actions in the 2012-2016 also showed strong evidence<sup>371</sup> of the key added value in the expertise of DG ECHO's staff and, in particular, the field staff in the crisis contexts and at many levels – from involvement with the clusters and consortiums to providing experience and knowledge on specific thematic issues. The knowledge and professionalism of DG ECHO staff allowed for pragmatic solutions to be identified and implemented to the challenges the partners were facing<sup>372</sup>.

This level of technical DG ECHO staff knowledge and its usefulness to the delivery of the humanitarian aid was also exemplified in the specific DG ECHO sectors investigated in more depth in this evaluation (see 0 containing the rapid evaluations):

- In the protection sector, while USAID and DFID are the main actors at a global level, EU clearly added value at the field level with its technical expertise. The TAs in Syria for example were strongly valued for their dedication to dialogue, field monitoring and their advisory role<sup>373</sup>.
- In the WASH and shelter sectors, the stakeholders consulted also highlighted the value of the monitoring visits undertaken by DG ECHO staff, which were considered useful to identify the critical elements for improvement, especially from a technical point of view (when these visits involved technical experts). This was especially useful as other donors do not provide technical inputs in the same systematic way as DG ECHO.

The field visits to Tanzania and DRC also highlighted the value of DG ECHO's operational knowledge to the actions on the ground. In Tanzania, DG ECHO's presence in the field and



high technical knowledge ensured a good follow-up of the projects and a high level of commitment towards the framework partners. In DRC, the added value aspect of DG ECHO's knowledge was slightly different insofar as DG ECHO experts and respected field staff coordinated and supported well the DG ECHO's framework partners through various fora.

However, concerns have been identified in relation to certain gaps in DG ECHO's in-house technical knowledge such as gender-based violence, IT, shelter as well as child protection and education in emergencies<sup>374</sup>. These evaluations also pointed at the insufficient training of staff and capacity, which had some detrimental effects in terms of proposals selected (i.e. which were not sufficiently tailored to beneficiaries' needs) and also in terms of the monitoring of actions implemented by partners (e.g. there was uncertainty on what to pay attention to in particular).<sup>375</sup> Interviews with DG ECHO HQ showed that recently actions have been taken to address some of these gaps and mechanisms are in place to identify and fill the staff training and development needs.

### **DG ECHO's flexibility of approach on the ground**

The DG ECHO's flexibility in approach also compared to most other global donors has also been highlighted as a key aspect of its added value in the stakeholder interviews. Some stakeholders expressed the view that DG ECHO is still relatively small and hence a more agile and more flexible donor able to react more rapidly to the changing contexts and needs.<sup>376</sup> DG ECHO's advantage in comparison to other donors is the relative speed of its response (this is confirmed in the effectiveness analysis, see section 3.3). On the other hand, some stakeholders also stressed that DG ECHO's speed of intervention has been decreasing over the years, potentially threatening one of its key advantages. DG ECHO's flexibility in its approach enabled also through the annual funding cycle was highlighted also by the majority of the framework and local partners surveyed (see 0). DG ECHO framework partners also appreciated the openness of DG ECHO staff to discuss the decisions made, including the funding allocations, in a constructive dialogue (this was exemplified in the rapid evaluation of protection and the field visit to Tanzania).

#### **3.6.4.2 Actions to maximise the added value of DG ECHO in implementing EU humanitarian action**

The evaluation identified room for maximising the added value of DG ECHO with several types of measures to be put in place.

As the field network is a key aspect of DG ECHO's added value, any measures taken to improve the performance field network are also going to contribute to maximise this added value (see section 3.1 Relevance). This includes improvements of coordination between the HQ and the field and a continuing development of technical expertise of in-house staff. A related point is the need to maintain the DG ECHO presence globally and locally in terms of the coverage of the network. The global presence helps to maintain the EU reputation and also enables DG ECHO's ability to respond quickly to new humanitarian crises. Maintaining the global presence will allow DG ECHO to remain a donor of global importance and able to weigh on the international humanitarian system.

Actions to enhance coherence and coordination with other international donors (see also section 3.1.1 on coherence) will also aid to maximise DG ECHO's added value. At strategic level, the cooperation framework between DG ECHO and the UN is to be clarified, so that the boundaries and inter-relationships between DG ECHO and the UN are more consistently interpreted. Also, tensions between the UN as a key implementing partner for DG ECHO and UN providing a global leadership in humanitarian aid issues are to be resolved. At operational level, shortcomings in the coherence of interventions both at country level as well as within sectors should be addressed to improve the coordination and cooperation between DG ECHO and other international partners (mainly the UN), especially with regard to the implementation of strategic approaches to humanitarian crises; and increase the support from DG ECHO to the existing coordination mechanisms and clusters. Finally, closing gaps in the in-house DG ECHO technical knowledge in some sectors such as Gender Based Violence, shelter as well as Child Protection and Education in Emergencies would also help to maximise the added value of DG ECHO.

## 4 Prospective evaluation

### 4.1 Part 1: what are the implications of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain for DG ECHO's strategic direction and operating framework?

#### 4.1.1 Taking forward the EU commitments for the World Humanitarian Summit

The EU is committed to strong progress on each of the seven core commitment areas put forward following the WHS<sup>377</sup>. To this end, 100 EU individual commitments were elaborated<sup>378</sup>, outlining future action (a summary of the EU commitments is presented in 0). While presenting a detailed overview of progress under each core commitment falls outside the scope of this assignment, the sub-sections below provide some broad considerations on future priorities and issues to be taken into account by DG ECHO with regard to the implementation of the WHS. Overall, evidence showed that the EU is progressing on all the WHS commitments and humanitarian actors are overall pleased with recently-implemented activities going in this direction. This was also reflected by the results of the OPC, where the majority of the survey respondents held the view that DG ECHO is largely contributing to progress on EU humanitarian commitments.

#### ***Further develop the nexus with development, conflict prevention and climate change***

Four out of seven WHS core commitment areas focussed on the importance of further developing synergies between humanitarian aid, development, conflict prevention as well as climate change interventions<sup>379</sup>. The GB also called for greater integration of humanitarian and development interventions as part of an overall and long-term external action narrative (commitment 10).

As a consequence of the increased blurring of lines between humanitarian and development interventions<sup>380</sup>, significant efforts were recently made, within the humanitarian sector, to take a more integrated and holistic approach to address crises, including investments in preparedness and in community resilience as well as a vision towards long-term and sustainable solutions to protracted displacement<sup>381</sup>. DG ECHO recently introduced a more coherent and systematic approach to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, together with DEVCO<sup>382</sup>. The findings of the retrospective evaluation showed some progress in developing synergies, in particular through dialogue at HQ level (to establish programming priorities and division of responsibilities) as well as practical efforts for example as part of JHDFs and the implementation of joint contextualised analysis of risks and vulnerabilities. Coordination was also increasingly ensured with the EEAS and the Member States for a more efficient mobilisation of different instruments. This new framework is currently being tested in a selection of pilot countries in the Horn of Africa, West and Central Africa, and Asia<sup>383</sup>.

Looking ahead, 2017-2020 will be crucial years. Political and organisational changes such as the revision of the European Consensus on Development, the review of the EU External Financing Instruments and the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement are important opportunities for the EU to back the ambition of a truly joined-up approach with an external financing and aid architecture that is fit for purpose<sup>384</sup>. In this context, DG ECHO will need to invest further efforts to improve the nexus, inter alia, by:

- *Striving for resilience-building in all contexts without losing its principled life-saving focus. Further build the capacity of partners to implement the Resilience Marker in practice;*
- *Introducing multi-annual programming and, where appropriate multi-annual funding, as well as adaptive management to be able to adapt funding to changing circumstances (see more information under GB commitment 7);*
- *Collect information and lessons learned from pilot countries where a joint approach to analysis and strategy was tested. Further roll out this approach and incentivise coordination at the operational level with regard to joint analysis and strategy for engaging in fragile and conflict-affected contexts;*

- *Ensure sufficient human resources to promote coordination on the ground, including strong support from HQ, senior management and Member States for joint strategic work to take place;*
- *Further explore possibilities for integrated service delivery, inter alia, by improving the use of EUTF;*
- *Building a more coherent approach to the climate change issue, consistently including references to climate change within its funding decisions, where relevant, as well as further funding specific projects integrating DRR and climate change interventions.*

### **Upholding the norms that safeguard humanity**

The WHS called the international community to further ensure respect for norms that safeguard humanity. IHL, international human rights and refugee law remain as relevant as ever to provide protection to civilians as well as to humanitarian and medical missions. With regard to recent progress made in the protection area, in May 2016, DG ECHO published new policy guidelines ("*Humanitarian Protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises*"), which outline the definition and objectives of the *Union's* humanitarian protection work. The document provides guidance for programming of protection work in humanitarian crises, measuring the effect of interventions and for planning related capacity building activities.

With regard to advocacy for the respect of IHL and humanitarian principles, the retrospective evaluation showed that the principles were consistently reflected in DG ECHO's sectoral policies, HIPs, the needs-assessment framework, project selection process, field staff's monitoring activity, etc. The adherence of DG ECHO's policies to the humanitarian principles was also recognised by the vast majority of its framework partners and local implementing partners. To further improve efforts, a toolbox on advocacy was recently adopted (September 2017), pooling together the existing knowledge and developing a more systematic approach to advocacy activities across DG ECHO. In the future:

- *With regard to protection, DG ECHO should focus on the roll-out and dissemination of its policy guidelines on protection, including through dedicated training, capacity building and awareness-raising. DG ECHO should also continue<sup>385</sup> to build capacity of its own staff in relation to protection. In addition, the implementation of protection should be accompanied by specific funding allocations to protection mainstreaming in particular, as this is a relatively new element;*
- *With regard to advocacy, DG ECHO<sup>386</sup> should roll out its new advocacy tool across the organisation and its key partners, reflecting the existing examples and experiences of implementing the advocacy toolkits in UN Agencies and other DG ECHO's partners. Reflection should be given to the experiences of promoting more strategic advocacy approaches whereby the key field based advocacy parameters are set at the global HQ but implemented operationally delegated at the field level.<sup>387</sup>*

### **Women and girls: Catalysing action to achieve gender equality**

The WHS pledged to defined, coordinated strategic initiatives to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action. Steps towards a better mainstreaming of gender equality into humanitarian interventions were recently taken at EU level. For example, since 2014, the EU uses a gender-age marker to assess the extent to which each humanitarian action integrates gender and age considerations. In 2015, 89 % of all EU humanitarian aid integrated gender and age considerations 'strongly or 'to a certain extent'<sup>388</sup>. However, recent evaluation results<sup>389</sup> identified mixed results with regard to the implementation of the marker, with some partners using the gender-age marker merely to report disaggregated beneficiary data. While the marker was assessed as a useful tool for considering gender and age issues in the design of actions, findings called for more attention to be paid to gender and age issues at the implementation stage.

An increased focus on gender was also identified in more recent humanitarian policy developments. For example, the above-mentioned *Humanitarian Protection guidelines*, stressed the need to further take gender into consideration, providing additional guidance for

programming of protection activities. Ensuring that gender is taken into consideration in EU humanitarian aid is also included in the “*EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*”, setting out the framework for action for all activities on gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU external relations.

In June 2017, DG ECHO took over the leadership of the “*Call to Action on Protection from Gender- Based Violence in Emergencies*”, a global initiative which aims to drive structural change in the humanitarian system to address gender-based violence. A Road Map 2016-2020 sets out an operational framework with common objectives for the humanitarian community to be translated into targeted actions on the ground<sup>390</sup>. In the next future, DG ECHO could consider the following points to further advance gender equality:

- *Further invest efforts in capacity building to ensure that the gender marker is correctly implemented in practice;*
- *Further invest efforts on 'localisation' and 'the participation revolution', as outlined in the GB (see section below) with a particular focus on the participation of women. In doing so, DG ECHO should further/more consistently ensure that decision making is informed by the experience of women and girls from affected communities and that the latter are adequately included in project implementation.*

### **Financing: Investing in humanity**

The WHS outcomes indicated a strong desire<sup>391</sup> to ensure a different way of financing. During the summit, numerous commitments were made to increase the quantity, diversity and quality of humanitarian funding by, inter alia, bringing in non-traditional partners. The WHS also identified the importance of increasing cash-based assistance in Humanitarian Aid (as elaborated under GB commitment 3). According to evidence collected, progress in achieving such objectives was made as DG ECHO took steps to scale up cash-based assistance, as further elaborated below. Progress in increasing the diversity of humanitarian funding, inter alia, by further involving the private sector, was also made, as further elaborated below.

In the next future, it will be important for DG ECHO to further explore the benefits associated with less-traditional forms of financing (through, for example, better use of EUTF, possible introduction of Humanitarian Bonds, etc.), which would reflect the changing needs of beneficiaries and the emergence of new actors in the Humanitarian Aid sector.

#### **4.1.2 Delivering the GB**

The sub-sections below present some considerations on the nature of each of the 10 work streams put forward, DG ECHO's activities related to each work stream as well as possible future issues to be addressed/activities to be implemented by the DG to deliver the Bargain. The main driver behind the progress observed so far is the GB's unique design, being the only agreement that has brought donors and aid organisations together and commits both sides to contribute their share (i.e. quid pro quo or mutual concession nature of the agreement). Overall, evidence showed that DG ECHO is progressing on all work streams of the GB but that more efforts should be invested in particular with regard to improving transparency, implementing the localisation agenda and reducing duplication and management costs. The OPC showed that almost two-thirds of the survey respondents were in full agreement that DG ECHO should lead by example in implementing the GB. The majority of the survey respondents were also in full agreement that DG ECHO should launch pilot initiatives relating to the implementation of the work streams (58%) and that it should use its leverage as one of the biggest humanitarian donors to encourage its counterparts to implement the Bargain (52%). Finally, the OPC results also showed that DG ECHO should further foster dialogue with co-conveners to ensure greater synergy among the work streams and that implementation should aim to foster complementarities between the global, national, and local level.

#### **GB Work stream1: Greater Transparency**

In this context, following the WHS, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing made the strongest call for a commitment from aid organisations and donors to increase the transparency of their humanitarian aid. Greater transparency could<sup>392</sup>: 1) support effective planning, management and coordination of resources between actors on the ground and those

at Headquarters; 2) prevent duplications; and 3) help reduce transaction costs and increase effectiveness. In this context, future areas of focus for DG ECHO might include:

- *Improving transparency and communication around criteria and processes underpinning HIP allocations. In line with the findings of the retrospective evaluation, DG ECHO should be more transparent also about why it prioritises certain areas over others and improve its overall communication around the budget planning process;*
- *Better understanding the cost structures<sup>393</sup>; while DG ECHO recently improved its transparency around funding and its use<sup>394</sup>, more could be done in terms of enhancing transparency and streamlining reporting requirements for partners.*
- *Further improving monitoring and reporting of cost-effectiveness both at project and HIP level: DG ECHO might consider a more thorough approach to ensure that cost-effectiveness has been taken into account throughout the programming cycle;*
- *Improve the digital platform and engage with the open-data standard community<sup>395</sup>; further supporting the work of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and publishing high quality data on DG ECHO's aid activities in accordance with the IATI; strengthen engagement and advocacy on data sharing in the humanitarian sector including through the application of emerging technologies and digital solutions for identity management that can enable improved aid delivery and strengthen efficiency.*
- *Strengthening global and joint needs assessment: as further described under GB work stream 5.*

### **GB work stream 2: More support and funding tools for local and national responders**

As regional organisations and national governments take increasing ownership and effective control over disaster response, local organisations within these countries are, more than ever, critical elements of humanitarian responses<sup>396</sup>. Evidence increasingly shows that the growing complexity of modern crises calls for an evolution towards direct funding to those local humanitarian responders, when possible and relevant<sup>397</sup>.

With regard to recent progress made in this area, DG ECHO provided technical support for the establishment of the localisation marker<sup>398</sup>, in particular as regard parameters on tracking funding flows of local and national responders. Moreover, the DIPECHO programme increased local actors' and communities' resilience through training, establishing or improving local early warning systems and contingency planning. DG ECHO also used the ERC instrument to fund pilot initiatives<sup>399</sup> to reduce barriers to direct funding to local responders, promoting partnerships and facilitating their inclusion in the humanitarian system. However, despite progress made, evidence from the retrospective evaluation showed that DG ECHO falls well below the target of 25% set by the GB<sup>400</sup>: a recent report funded by DG ECHO showed that only 1.5%<sup>401</sup> of EU funding is currently channelled, indirectly, to local and national actors (nevertheless other – but less recent – evaluations as well as survey results indicate that the majority of DG ECHO framework partners use local partners when implementing EU funded actions). In part this is because the current legal base does not allow for providing either direct or “as direct as possible” funding to local response providers. In this context, areas of focus for the future action by DG ECHO might entail:

- *Further promoting dialogue in order to reduce the “disconnect” with national/local institutions and groups. While respecting the humanitarian principles and where conditions arise, DG ECHO should further engage and seek cooperation with national actors to foster the implementation of humanitarian interventions;*
- *Better mapping such actors and understand their role but also to ponder the priorities for future cooperation<sup>402</sup>. This includes examining in which contexts there is more scope for local partners to be involved in EU funded actions;*
- *Identifying measures to further strengthen the capacity of smaller and local civil society organisations to take part in EU funded actions<sup>403</sup> (for example by earmarking a part of the overheads paid to framework partners to their own local implementing partners);*

- *In line with the EU Communication on engagement with the civil society in external relations, promote a more strategic engagement with CSOs, for example by contributing to the elaboration of EU roadmaps for engagement with CSOs at country level. The roadmaps should identify long term objectives of EU cooperation with CSOs and encompass dialogue as well as operational support, identifying appropriate working modalities;*
- *Channel funds to local humanitarian responders using networks, or pooled funds led by the UN, the IFRC or other NGOs, when they are accessible to local humanitarian responders; or through delegated co-operation to other donors; and*
- *(In the longer-term) Launching an internal discussion on the possible revision of the legislative framework to allow the direct funding of local implementing partners.*

### **GB work stream 3: Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming**

The WHS and the GB marked the policy momentum for using cash as a primary option in responding to humanitarian needs. Evidence showed that DG ECHO is advancing towards achieving this work stream through policy initiatives<sup>404</sup>, strengthened partnerships<sup>405</sup> and field interventions<sup>406</sup>. Looking at the future, DG ECHO should be further focusing on:

- *Further improving the coordination of cash-based programming with other international donors (DG ECHO has already cooperated closely with other donors, in particular the UK and Germany, on making its operations in Lebanon more streamlined<sup>407</sup>). More specifically, efforts should be invested, within DG ECHO, to further understand the cash coordination mechanisms established within third countries and further support lead agencies to mainstream cash in an organised way. To ensure coherent and coordinated cash response, DG ECHO should also further ensure that its framework partners are attending or linking up with the relevant cash coordination mechanism, such as the Cash Working Group or a UN cash co-ordination lead agency (i.e. OCHA, UNHCR or WFP).*
- *Obtaining a better understanding of where and why different modalities are used, with a view to identifying opportunities to scale up the use of cash transfers in all areas and across all sectors. Further research is needed on the circumstances and contexts (sectors, local factors such as functioning markets etc.) in which cash programming is the most appropriate modality<sup>408</sup>.*
- *Improving transparency, by providing IATI with more detailed information on cash-based interventions, including forecasting information and project documents.*

### **GB work stream 4: Reduce duplication and management costs with periodic functional reviews**

Humanitarian crises are growing at a time when resources to respond are increasingly constrained. Reducing management costs is expected to increase the proportion of funding used for the direct benefit of affected people<sup>409</sup>. In this context, evidence showed that donors, including EU, are increasingly aware of the importance of streamlining and simplifying bureaucracy and internal procedures (for partner selection, reporting, auditing, etc.) to achieve greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Evidence gathered through the retrospective evaluation indicated that DG ECHO's annual funding cycles entail high management costs triggered by the comprehensive needs assessment process (entailing a global, regional / country HIPs and project-level assessments), complex mechanisms and procedures for selecting partners, proposals to be funded through grants, etc. In addition, partners are confronted with a substantial administrative burden throughout the project cycle (Single Form, reporting requirements as also further elaborated under work stream 9 below, etc.). In this context, evidence showed that improvements could be gained through better internal coordination within DG ECHO, smoother procedures as well as by an overall management focused on simplification, transparency and flexibility.

Other donors have already increasingly introduced changes to their funding models, which includes multi-annual programming, multi-annual funding (implemented, inter alia by SIDA and DFID), simplification of project funding mechanisms, etc. Within the UN, there has been

also a push for further simplification and increased coherence in working modalities, although this has not always been down-streamed to implementing partners. In this context, the Harmonization of Business Practices Plan of Action<sup>410</sup> was launched, developing a set of projects aiming to help the UN system to deliver better programming results through improved coherence in management practices. Along the same lines, in January 2017, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) hosted an initial briefing considering options to harmonise due diligence and partner selection through an expanded use of the UNHCR Partner Portal, agreement templates and budgets as well as shared audits<sup>411</sup>.

In this context, evidence showed that some efforts were invested, at EU level, to streamline reporting requirements (as further described under GB work stream 9), however, limited information was found on progress made by DG ECHO in relation to specifically reducing management costs as well as developing joint regular functional monitoring and performance reviews. In this context, DG ECHO should further:

- *Explore ways to reduce management costs by further moving to multi-annual programming with, where possible, an increased number of multi-annual HIPs and longer term projects – during the evaluation period none of the EU funded actions lasted more than 24 months but this might change in the near future as the 2017 worldwide HIP allow funded actions to last up to 48 months. This will be particularly important in the context of an increase in protracted/long-term crises, which receive the majority of humanitarian aid each year;*
- *Examine opportunities to reduce management costs, for example by signing agreements with a single organisation covering multiple countries at least in the same region (e.g. the UN agencies receive the lion share of funding for similar activities which are all covered under separate projects). Multi-annual funding could possibly facilitate the implementation of multi-country interventions. This approach would reflect the trend towards an increasing regionalisation of the HIPs. However, two preconditions could be introduced, namely: 1) such contracts could be awarded only to “‘trusted’ or ‘strategic’ partners” (in line with strategic recommendation 3.1 – see below); and 2) DG ECHO’s capacity to manage regional projects should be further built, in particular to take account of the different pace of developments and implementation by framework partners within the countries in question; and*
- *Further supporting the integration of technology and innovation in humanitarian aid operations to reduce costs and measure the gained efficiencies.*

#### **GB work stream 5: Improve joint and impartial needs assessments**

Significant efforts have been made in the past few years to strengthen the quality and coordination of humanitarian needs assessments used for strategic decision-making. For example, DG ECHO, through the ERC 2017 funding programme, published in November 2016, supported initiatives strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian community to conduct needs assessments in line with this specific work stream. DG ECHO has also engaged with UN agencies and clusters, International NGOs and specialist actors in order to come to a shared understanding of the gaps concerning needs assessments, and to identify steps forward.

In order to address this specific GB work stream, DG ECHO and OCHA have also recently organised a technical workshop (February-March 2017) to collectively identify the current challenges and possible ways forward. The workshop was also used to define an approach to measure the quality of needs assessments. An action Plan was drafted indicating the next steps and milestones. In this context, a report noted that although this seemed like an important step in the right direction, there is still no indication that incentives for improved inter-agency collaboration in needs assessments have changed<sup>412</sup>.

Despite recent efforts, a lack of shared understanding, expectations and commitment to the collective endeavour in the humanitarian aid sector still remains. In order to further strengthen this work stream, DG ECHO<sup>413</sup> together with OCHA (the second co-convenor for this specific work stream), could consider the following actions:

- *Continue working towards a single, comprehensive, cross-sectoral, methodologically sound and impartial overall assessment of needs for each crisis to inform strategic*

*decisions on how to respond and fund, thereby reducing the number of assessments and appeals produced by individual organisations;*

- *Coordinate and streamline data collection to ensure compatibility, quality and comparability;*
- *Further and more consistently share internal needs assessment data<sup>414</sup> as evidence showed that, currently, there is no structured procedure for formalising this process<sup>415</sup>; and*
- *Commission independent reviews and evaluations of the quality of needs assessment findings and their use in prioritisation to strengthen the confidence of all stakeholders in the process.*

### **GB work stream 6: A participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives**

The GB identified the need to include the people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities in decisions on humanitarian aid interventions to be certain that responses are relevant, timely, effective and efficient. Evidence gathered by the retrospective evaluation showed that DG ECHO strongly advocated for beneficiary involvement in all parts of the project cycle. Positive examples of community participation in the design of humanitarian interventions as well as their delivery were identified<sup>416</sup>. Such examples, however, seemed to be still patchy and not sufficiently mainstreamed as good practices across geographies and sectors. In this context, possible future areas of focus for DG ECHO might include<sup>417</sup>:

- *Contribute to developing common standards and a coordinated approach (amongst donors and humanitarian aid organisations) for community engagement and participation;*
- *Further identifying incentives to promote effective participation of the people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities in DG ECHO's interventions, identifying success factors in practices that have worked well in this area;*
- *Harness technologies to support more agile, transparent but appropriately secure feedback from affected communities. Build systematic links between such feedback and actions to adjust programming.*

### **GB work stream 7: Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding**

At the WHS, humanitarian donors made commitments to shift from annual to multi-year humanitarian funding. However, one year after the summit, the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017 did not identify significant progress towards this objective<sup>418</sup>. There is however also still no benchmark to determine the scale of multi-annual funding at the global level (tracking of multi-year commitments is not yet possible through the FTS although changes are under consideration). Recently, DG ECHO has received multi-year funding (from DFID and the AFD) in Mauritania and Ivory Coast. However, in practice, this multi-year approach was not "cascaded" to implementing partners, who still had to work with shorter implementing cycles. As already mentioned above, DG ECHO is less advanced than other donors in this area, such as DFID and SIDA. Some limited developments in this direction were identified as DG ECHO recently launched an internal reflection on multi-year planning and financing. The latter focuses on 1) changing the internal and external mind-set in terms of policy discourse; and 2) changing the programming practice including assessment of cost efficiency and effectiveness due to the award of multi-year grants. Pilot actions in emergency contexts have been recently launched to test the new approach. However, barriers to improvements in this direction still exist as DG ECHO currently receives its own budget on an annual basis.

In the next future, DG ECHO plans to take this work ahead by 1) further determining how multi-year planning and funding can be operationalised in its humanitarian programming; 2) working together with its framework partners on developing best practices in multi-year funding and planning, especially in connection with on-going work on humanitarian-



development nexus, early warning/preparedness and localization agenda; and 3) working together with other donors on developing best practices through case studies/research. Issues to be further considered by DG ECHO in the future include:

- *Examine the contexts in which multi-annual programming and funding might be best designed/implemented (protracted crises<sup>419</sup>, predictable and regular rapid onset events such as hurricane season, regular cholera outbreaks<sup>420</sup> and unpredictable, rapid onset events like earthquakes<sup>421</sup>), as well as consider whether all sectors and themes could be funded multi-annually or not.*
- *Reflect on the need to change the approach to partnerships and to consider what should be done to ensure that partners can indeed manage multi-annual grants (without jeopardising the localisation agenda and the strengthening of smaller and local civil society organisations). This could be linked to the signature of agreements with partners which would cover multiple countries, included under GB work stream 4 above.*
- *Develop appropriate procedures for multi-annual programming and funding, covering all aspects of the programming cycle and further test the procedures through pilots;*
- *Improve coordination with other donors to ensure that all the priority aspects of the response are covered. This might also entail elaborating a multi-annual response plan alongside continuing dialogue and communication through humanitarian coordination mechanisms such as the cluster approach.*

#### **GB work stream 8: Reduce the earmarking of donor contributions**

Flexible funding facilitates swifter response to urgent needs and investment in fragile, potentially volatile situations, emergencies and disaster preparedness, as well as enables response to needs in situations of protracted and neglected conflicts<sup>422</sup>. In this context, the GB called for reducing the degree of earmarking of funds, improving the visibility of such un-earmarked and softly earmarked funding as well as increasing the transparency and regularity of reporting on how un-earmarked funding is allocated.

A step in the direction of more flexible funding was made by the current MFF 2014-2020, which has broadened the EAR<sup>423</sup>, allowing for transferring funds to EU humanitarian aid so it can rapidly respond to unforeseen specific humanitarian aid requirements<sup>424</sup>. The EAR can be called upon to respond to unforeseen events and major crises, financing notably humanitarian, civilian crisis management and protection operations in non-EU countries. If (smaller scale) funding is required at shorter notice, other channels also exist<sup>425</sup>. Additional evidence of DG ECHO's less tightly earmarked funding has been also identified (such as Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), Emergency Response Mechanisms, START Network Anticipation Window, etc.)<sup>426</sup>.

However, despite evidence pointing at greater flexibility in funding, the EU humanitarian aid's level of funding is still currently considered as tightly earmarked<sup>427</sup>. The EU humanitarian aid instrument funds projects, which are defined both in terms of objective, sectors and results as well as geographic scope<sup>428</sup>. In this context, DG ECHO will need to:

- *Consolidate the experience with emergency/more flexible forms of funding, evaluate the effectiveness of such approaches and develop models to facilitate mainstreaming of successful practices;*
- *Launch an internal reflection on whether "soft" earmarking should be introduced into HIPs. This approach is currently used by some Member States, such as Sweden, which finances its partners' strategies rather than specific interventions. Lessons learned from these donors could be gathered and used to stimulate the internal reflection on reducing earmarking.*
- *Test the "soft" earmarking approach through targeted pilots.*

#### **GB work stream 9: Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements**

Reporting requirements have grown over the years for specific and valid reasons including legal requirements associated with accountability and managing risk, to build trust, raise

funds, for diplomatic purposes and to improve quality<sup>429</sup>. However, as showed by a recent study by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC),<sup>430</sup> reporting requirements might also be problematic for implementing organisations. For example, the required formats for financial reporting vary widely among donors, leading to administrative inefficiencies for both donors and implementing partners. In particular, for NGOs that receive support from multiple entities, the patchwork of cost definitions and formats may consume more than one million hours a year, according to NRC estimates. In this context, the GB identified a need to ensure that programmatic reporting is substantive and qualitative while also lean enough to allow for the most efficient use of resources to assist people in need.

The retrospective evaluation also identified some issues with regard to reporting requirements, which lead to inefficiencies for both DG ECHO and framework partners. The latter underlined difficulties in complying with the application and reporting rules of DG ECHO. The DG itself presented its Single Form as “one of the most complex reporting formats”<sup>431</sup>. A step towards addressing these weaknesses was recently made under the Reporting Workstream led by ICVA and Germany, which aims to examine the effectiveness of a common donor-reporting framework. Recent discussions (March 2017) aimed to reach consensus on the outline of a common donor template and launch a pilot exercise. In this context, DG ECHO volunteered to develop a common proposal based on the template developed<sup>432</sup>. In the future, DG ECHO should further seek to coordinate with other donors and agencies with regard to:

- *Standardising document formats, partnership agreements, cost definitions, terminology, and reporting requirements;*
- *Reducing the overall volume of reporting required from partners; and*
- *Consider adhering to and supporting existing initiatives in these areas as feasible*

#### **GB work stream 10: Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors**

This topic was elaborated in section 4.1.1 above.

### **4.2 Part 2: What are the main challenges and opportunities globally in humanitarian aid delivery and how should these be taken on board by DG ECHO at policy and operational levels?**

The subsections below explore the future challenges and opportunities for DG ECHO to deliver effectively humanitarian interventions.

#### **4.2.1 The changing nature of humanitarian interventions**

The scale and frequency of crises that demand international humanitarian response is increasing. The rapid and unsustainable urbanisation, resource scarcities and protracted armed conflicts are only some of the challenges that humanitarian actors face<sup>433</sup>. The subsections below provide some considerations on the shifting nature of humanitarian interventions and on the issues that DG ECHO will need to increasingly take under consideration when designing and planning its humanitarian interventions.

#### ***Aid is increasingly provided to middle/high income countries:***

Humanitarian crises increasingly occur in middle-income countries (MICs)<sup>434</sup>. Those countries typically have large urban populations that are relatively connected and educated as well as structures offering basic public services and communications. Despite this, MICs are still vulnerable to the direct and indirect effects of political conflicts, natural disaster or other crises<sup>435</sup>. Significant commitments were made at the WHS, including on delivering better results for MICs in crisis<sup>436</sup>. Fulfilling these commitments requires donors to change their approach to humanitarian interventions and face specific financing challenges. According to the OECD<sup>437</sup> and other sources<sup>438</sup>, successfully shifting the approach to crisis response in MICs entails:

- Further focusing on building resilience in all parts of society, rather than pure crisis response;

- Working more effectively with country systems. Middle income countries generally have national capacity to lead the humanitarian response, and international humanitarian efforts should collaborate with these national systems (when in line with humanitarian principles) and be carried out in partnership with the national government and civil society organisations;
- Helping development actors to shore up economic and social progress, allowing the full range of development instruments to come into play;
- Further developing cash-based approaches, which were proven to be more appropriate than in-kind assistance in these contexts;
- Further involving the private sector, which can add value to the delivery of interventions (for example, through the delivery of cash-based transfers to affected populations) but also take advantage of private capital for humanitarian response<sup>439</sup>.

Evidence shows that DG ECHO is already considering MICs' specificities in the design of its interventions. For example, the recent guidance to partners to deliver medium to large-scale cash transfers in the framework of 2017 HIPs and Emergency Support Operational Priorities (ESOP) does take into account the importance of cash transfers in MICs. Moreover, when looking at data, DG ECHO's funding to upper middle income increased from 6% of total allocations in 2012 to 44% in 2016<sup>440</sup>. In the future, DG ECHO should further reflect on its involvement with regard to MICs and consider the financial implications of interventions in these countries. In fact, responding to humanitarian crisis in MICs has a higher financial cost as they are more expensive locations than many low-income contexts. In addition, DG ECHO should:

- *Further adapt EU interventions to MICs' specificities. Further efforts could be invested in 1) further examine whether MICs require specific approaches in terms of humanitarian aid and learn from the lessons that have emerged so far from middle-income contexts. In particular, draw lessons (from different humanitarian interventions in MICs) on how interventions should be managed and implemented in the future 2) broadening the scope of programming (e.g. implement actions to address the protection and humanitarian needs of refugees, while also building the resilience of vulnerable people and communities in the refugee hosting countries), further recognising the centrality of national ownership and highlighting the need to strengthen national delivery systems; 3) further engaging with national authorities and actors to coordinate the interventions and improving coherence (when possible and in line with the humanitarian principles); 4) further developing and implementing cash based approaches, when the conditions are favourable (see also GB work stream 3 above); and 5) developing partnerships with the private sector for the delivery of interventions as well as for stimulating private investments that will promote growth and trade in MICs.*

### **Aid is increasingly provided in urbanised contexts**

As the world's population becomes more urban, with growth particularly rapid in developing countries, cities have also become the epicentre of crises. Cities are for example more and more targeted by armed groups as centres of power/economic wealth and attract displaced persons or individuals ruined by a disaster or depleted livelihood. Increasingly, humanitarian needs must be tailored to these areas<sup>441</sup>. Despite the growing research on/importance given to this issue, evidence collected in the context of this evaluation showed that DG ECHOEU response in urbanised areas was not always assessed positively. More specifically, the relevance of interventions in urban areas was still found to be low, mainly due to an overall absence of effective guidance from DG ECHO and, in some instances, to the scarce experience of implementing partners in urban settings<sup>442</sup>. A turning point in this context was marked in 2017, when DG ECHO focussed on implementing the New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN Habitat III Conference in 2016. In implementing this Agenda, DG ECHO further promoted a multi-sector approach to assessments and programming in urban settings, thus enhancing the support to both internal and partner initiatives that improve preparedness and response to urban crises, all with the aim of meeting the complexity of needs in urban settings<sup>443</sup>. However, the present evaluation could not assess the impacts of these recent activities.

While 2017 brought new emphasis on the implementation of interventions in urban contexts, in the near future, DG ECHO's work will have to increasingly consider the following elements:

- *As mentioned above: 1) draw lessons from different humanitarian interventions in urban contexts; 2) further engaging with national authorities and actors; 3) further developing and implementing cash based approaches (see also GB work stream 3 above); and (4) developing partnerships with the private sector for the delivery of interventions as well as for stimulating private investments*
- *In addition: 5) further improving its logistical and technical capacity to deal with the complexity of the challenges, including (but not limited to) the development of technical competences that cover urban water, sanitation and energy services; 6) increasing advocacy of IHL with city authorities and leaders; and 7) further develop strategies and guidance on humanitarian aid delivery in urbanised contexts.*

### **Humanitarian interventions need to increasingly take into account protracted crises**

Conflicts have become more protracted. Currently, studies in this field have shown that there is a mismatch between humanitarian mandates, coordination structures and the long-term strategies needed to respond to protracted crises. Evidence also shows that protracted crises are the biggest driver of spiralling costs in Humanitarian Aid<sup>444</sup>. In this context, the expert panel established in the context of the WHS, called for a much higher proportion of donor budgets to be directed to situations of fragility and protracted emergencies. Evidence gathered in the context of this evaluation showed that DG ECHO has recently invested efforts to: adapt country-specific strategies in the context of protracted crisis<sup>445</sup>; go beyond "saving lives" interventions<sup>446</sup>; and develop LRRD approaches/ exit strategies<sup>447</sup>. However, despite the efforts invested and the positive results, areas for improvement for future actions have also been identified. In the future, DG ECHO will need to further reflect on the following:

- *Commit to multi-annual programming and funding (in line with GB work stream 7), which would ensure a more predictable engagement in protracted situations;*
- *Together with other EU actors (DEVCO, EEAS, etc.) establish a more holistic response to the various dimensions of protracted crises throughout the conflict cycle while preserving the specificity of the humanitarian mandate and principles. More specifically, further increasing the responsiveness, flexibility, coherence and complementarity with other EU instruments in supporting resilience building (which may indirectly also contribute to peace building efforts as well as longer-term development assistance implemented by other DGs) to pave the way towards more stability<sup>448</sup>;*
- *Further addressing the issue of long-term displacement, often associated with protracted crises (in line with the WHS commitments and the CRRF). Solutions should be sought through the establishment of joint objectives and operational guidance together with DEVCO, HOME and in coordination with the EEAS and other international actors<sup>449</sup>.*

#### **4.2.2 New donors**

As the distribution of global power shifts towards a more multipolar world, new donors<sup>450</sup> are becoming more visible players on the humanitarian global stage<sup>451</sup>. Evidence shows that these emerging donors bring added value to the humanitarian system, for example by filling funding gaps<sup>452</sup>, paying special attention to the basics of relief including food provisioning and large-scale disaster response (benefitting from their own experiences with poverty and humanitarian crises)<sup>453</sup>, influencing national authorities especially in countries where humanitarian access is severely restricted<sup>454</sup>, etc. In the next future, it is expected that two developments will further accentuate the importance of emerging donors in the next future: the declining level of humanitarian funding from big donor countries like the US<sup>455</sup>; and 2) the impact of Brexit on the EU humanitarian aid budget<sup>456</sup>.

The retrospective evaluation showed that DG ECHO increasingly engaged in cooperation with non-DAC donors and other regional organisations<sup>457</sup> at high policy level. However, very low levels of engagement between EU and the non-DAC donors were found in the field. In the future, DG ECHO will need to further:

- *Seek consistent engagement with emerging donors in order to ensure coherence in interventions on the ground (by, for example, identifying the priorities and areas of focus for future cooperation with these actors);*
- *Work with emerging donors on the respect of humanitarian principles and IHL, the improvement of performance and quality stand as well as transparency of interventions;*
- *Cooperate with other well-established donors in order to set up a coherent and comprehensive system, which would include and recognise the new donors in the humanitarian aid sector (a first step in this direction could be to initiate discussion on the integration of some of the latter within the GHD).*

#### **4.2.3 Private sector involvement**

The private sector is increasingly recognised as a major player in humanitarian crises, particularly disasters, providing funds, aid materials and technical and professional expertise. Government leaders are likely to increasingly view businesses and business networks as preferred partners – responsible for direct implementation<sup>458</sup>. On their side, business leaders are increasingly seeking systematic and predictable ways to channel in-house capabilities and resources towards humanitarian causes, both in advance, during and in the aftermath of emergencies<sup>459</sup>.

Evidence gathered during this evaluation showed that private firms were closely involved in supporting humanitarian objectives, whether indirectly, by resuming operations in crisis affected areas, or directly by providing cash and in-kind donations of goods and services<sup>460</sup>. The greatest direct contribution from businesses has come in the form of new technologies and other innovations as well as the sharing of technical expertise. Entire elements of humanitarian action, including cash transfers, telecommunications and logistics, have been transformed as businesses have become increasingly involved<sup>461</sup>.

The further involvement of the private sector in humanitarian aid interventions can certainly strengthen response through an injection of disruptive thinking, including business insight and innovation. But coordination is needed to avoid competition, less effective or less principled responses, with more gaps, more duplication, and less learning<sup>462</sup>. This is why DG ECHO will need to further advance its internal discussions on how to best coordinate and take this partnership forward (evidence gathered showed that a reflection is currently already in place). Overall, DG ECHO will need to further assess how humanitarian actions should capitalise on the experience and assets of the private sector, which sectors and interventions could benefit from a strengthened partnership<sup>463</sup>. The assessment should explore possible ways to encourage businesses to provide their relevant skills and capacity for delivering life-saving assistance in the context of EU-funded interventions<sup>464</sup>. More specifically, the following activities might be envisaged by DG ECHO in the future<sup>465</sup>:

- *Build an evidence base to demonstrate the impact public-private initiatives have had on the lives of crisis-affected people;*
- *Share best practices on commercial and pro-bono partnerships (regional and country level) between the humanitarian community and business to illustrate opportunities and provide tangible roadmaps for future collaborations;*
- *Establish and strengthen relationships with private sector business platforms in specific disaster-prone countries in advance of emergencies, in order to engage them more effectively at the time of the crisis and explain to their members how they might be involved in humanitarian response.*

#### **4.3 Part 3: What are the implications of the ECA audit reports on the African Great Lakes region for the EU humanitarian aid activities?**

In June 2016, the ECA published an audit report<sup>466</sup> assessing the effectiveness of EU humanitarian interventions provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region (AGL). While the report concluded that such interventions were overall effectively managed by the Commission and that projects examined delivered satisfactory results, several recommendations for improvement were also put forward.

It was understood and agreed by DG ECHO that the weaknesses and recommendations identified by ECA were not restricted to the AGL region but could have been detected in any other region and/or country in which DG ECHO works<sup>467</sup>. Therefore, DG ECHO decided to set up a Working Group to identify the necessary actions to apply all across EU humanitarian activities to (1) increase transparency in the funding selection procedure, (2) pay further attention to the cost efficiency of the actions, (3) improve monitoring during their implementation, (4) better document the assessment of results achieved, and (5) draw conclusions and lessons learnt on the implementation of HIPs. Table 13 below provides more detailed information on how DG ECHO progressed with regard to addressing the eight recommendations put forward by the ECA.

Table 13. Progress in addressing ECA's recommendations<sup>468</sup>

Recommendations	Description of progress
1. Better documenting and improving the transparency of the selection process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A standard dashboard (to provide evidence that all the relevant criteria and general principles listed in the Technical Annex of the HIPs are assessed) has been put in place across all the operational units to select the requests for funding to be funded by DG ECHO in the context of the HIPs 2017. The new dashboard is now integrated in the HOPE database. Moreover, DG ECHO encouraged the operational units to draft a Note for the File to document the proposal selection process.</li> </ul>
2. More attention paid to proposed project costs and assessment of their reasonableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DG ECHO intends to launch a discussion with INGOs with regard to the assessment of amounts directly transferred to final beneficiaries. Following an agreement on the methodology, the financial information to be presented at proposal stage and at final stage will be broken down in three chapters: 1. Direct costs going directly to beneficiaries – 2. Support Direct costs and 3. 7% Indirect costs.</li> </ul>
3. Including, within the management document for each project, identified issues arising, highlighting further action and follow-up undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FicheOp Guidelines have been issued in April 2016. Mandatory and adapted e-training for Field Experts and Desk Officers is to be prepared on their use and implementation.</li> </ul>
4. Reminding partners of their responsibilities to report comprehensively and in good time and set up a checklist for staff field visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APPEL will send immediate reminders to partners when final reports are delayed.</li> <li>The FicheOp template includes relevant entries with regard to field visits. It is envisaged to organise training sessions in order to promote and ensure the systematic use of FicheOp Guidelines.</li> </ul>
5. Introducing a system of reporting at HIP level outlining the main outputs and outcomes, identifying the main lessons learned and best practices to be applied in subsequent years' HIPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A report per HIP will be prepared once the implementation of the actions has been finished and assessed. The report per HIP should include aggregated information on the contracting amount, partners as well as a summary of lessons learnt. A template to standardise this report is currently under development. These reports will not be associated with targets and/or results and outcomes indicators at HIP level. It should also be noted that the lessons learnt they identify are likely to only be available a couple of years after the year of the HIP given the length of some of the EU humanitarian aid funded actions.</li> </ul>
6. Better designing, structuring and documenting the process of assessing if actions are only partially achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisions already included in the FicheOp Guidelines. The latter should indeed contribute to improve consistency in the level of information contained in the assessment and to establish the required link between the results achieved and the overall conclusion.</li> <li>In addition, a note on procedures for reduction in DG ECHO's financial contribution in case of failed projects has been drafted.</li> </ul>
7. Better justifying additional funding and time extensions granted and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provisions already included in chapter 5 of the FicheOp</li> </ul>

should responding more firmly to all instances of underperformance	<p>8. Better linking efforts in the relief, rehabilitation and development areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The developments linked to this recommendation are described in the retrospective part of this evaluation with regard to the establishment of EUTF, Join Humanitarian &amp; Development Framework, initiatives included in the Joint Communication on forced displacement and development "Lives in dignity", etc.</li> </ul>
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Overall, DG ECHO appears to have progressed significantly on the recommendations, mostly by introducing improvements to procedures, guidelines and templates. However, several of the issues identified at the time by the ECA have again come up in this comprehensive evaluation, including in particular the need to look closer at project costs (see 2. above); the lack of reporting on HIPs (see 5. above) and the need to improve LRRD (see 8. above). As highlighted in this evaluation, more efforts will be required to ensure that these can be successfully implemented.

In addition, aside from the practical challenges associated with the concrete implementation of the ECA recommendations, DG ECHO is also facing a more conceptual challenge linked to the dichotomy between some of the ECA recommendations calling for more rigorous and in some areas detailed reporting and GB work stream number 9 calling for a simplification of reporting requirements. As the latter also calls for the harmonisation of requirements across donors, the "obvious" way forward as presented above is for DG ECHO to closely work with other donors and partners on this agenda and perhaps take the lead in discussions.

## 5 Recommendations

As requested in the terms of reference, this section presents the five key strategic recommendations which have come out of this comprehensive evaluation. Each recommendation is accompanied by a short background setting out the rationale and a series of suggestions on how to operationalise it.

The strategic recommendations target areas where the EU is suggested to introduce improvements in its approach to humanitarian aid and the associated activities. However, it is important to mention that overall, overwhelmingly, evidence points at the EU excellent performance. It is considered to be a strong principled, needs-based donor with some unique features, such as its approach to partnerships, its field network and its role in shaping the humanitarian system. Consultations at all levels showed that stakeholders want DG ECHO very much to continue most of what it has been doing to date, while noting some areas for improvement and necessary changes to reflect contextual and other relevant developments which are affecting humanitarian aid delivery. The evaluation has sought to identify the most important improvements that DG ECHO should considering pursuing.

### 1. DG ECHO should implement a multi-annual strategy and, where possible, multi-annual programming and funding

As part of the upcoming MFF, there would be benefit in DG ECHO developing a multi-annual strategy presenting its overall vision and planned policy and practical approach towards humanitarian aid. At the basis of the strategy there should be a clear Theory of Change which presents the logic of intervention for both the core functions and the policy and advocacy role of the DG. The strategy would be accompanied by a multi-annual programme, setting out the key priorities, by region and by sector, of both the multi-annual and annual cycles, as well as a more concrete work programmes. The strategy should also highlight links to other strategies (e.g. development, resilience, etc.) and those involved in their implementation.

Multi-annual programming and funding of actions can help make humanitarian aid more effective and cost-efficient, as well as more predictable to implementing partners. Responding to longer term humanitarian needs with short-term funding keeps the focus on meeting immediate humanitarian needs, but can prevent a thorough and shared analysis of how to best address the root causes of those needs and how to ensure a transition to a post-recovery phase. It can also prevent the establishment of cooperation between humanitarian action and development aid programming so that the transition can be well timed limiting the

gap between the different funding mechanisms. Moving towards multi-annual programming and funding (i.e. in cycles of 2-3 years) would in some case also recognise a de facto multi-annual approach where the same framework partners and projects have been funded over multiple years by the EU. In this context, DG ECHO should, in line with the GB (work stream 7) and progress already made by other donors in this area, further:

- **Examine the EU current legal, strategic and grant-related procedures** to identify under which conditions such multi-annual programming and funding can already be done<sup>469</sup> and how these procedures might need to be adapted to facilitate the use of multi-annual programming and funding. This might entail, inter alia, modifying the approach to needs assessment to identify geographic (and possibly sectoral) areas suitable for longer-term programming, revising HIP design and development (currently based on annual planning) processes to accommodate multi-annual interventions, developing budgetary options to reflect the new funding approach (as DG ECHO currently receives its own budget on an annual basis), changing procurement rules and procedures, adapting rules on funding to partners<sup>470</sup>, etc. Impacts on DG ECHO staff would also need to be carefully assessed<sup>471</sup>. The review would eventually result in the development of appropriate procedures for multi-annual programming and funding, covering all aspects of the programming cycle. DG ECHO might consider testing the new procedures through pilots – some being already under development. Contractually, it seems that DG ECHO cannot commit funding in a legally binding way over more than 2 years, although some type of commitment could be made to continue projects beyond this period, with caveats setting out that this is based on assumptions around the available budget and the duration, scale and nature of the crisis.
- **Reflect on the type of crisis where multi-annual programming and funding might be best designed/implemented in order to have most impact** (e.g. protracted crises, predictable and regular rapid onset events such as hurricane season, regular cholera outbreaks and unpredictable, rapid onset events like earthquakes), as well as consider whether all sectors and themes could be funded multi-annually or not. The main focus of multi-annual programming and funding should remain on saving lives, but include aspects focussing on coordination with other donors (including development actors) to ensure a transition and DG ECHO's exit;
- **Reflect on the need to change the approach to partnerships** and to consider what should be done to ensure that partners can manage multi-annual grants (without jeopardising the localisation agenda and the strengthening of smaller and local civil society organisations). Partners would need to prepare proposals which set out actions for multiple years, which would need to include more strategic considerations as well as actions aimed at the longer term, such as capacity and relationship building with local partners and where possible national / local authorities, specific connections with development actors<sup>472</sup>, etc. As further discussed below, partnerships could also change in the sense that partners could be granted not only multi-annual funding but possibly also funding covering multiple countries. It is important to bear in mind that only part of the EU humanitarian funding can become multi-annual, which means that there will still be a need for diverse framework partners working along annual cycles;
- **Establish effective coordination with other donors and humanitarian agencies** to ensure that all the priority aspects of the response are covered. DG ECHO could, based on its draft multi-annual strategy and programme, engage in a dialogue, through coordination mechanisms such as the GHD or cluster approach, with other donors and humanitarian agencies to make sure that synergies are maximised and to avoid overlaps and gaps. This could include joint needs assessments. UN OCHA is moving to multi-annual humanitarian response plans which could help in this regard<sup>473</sup>;
- **Assess the effectiveness of multi-annual projects and review in which countries / regions multi-annual funding may be more efficient.**

## 2. DG ECHO should review its partnership approach



### **Engagement with large framework partners**

The evaluation has shown that most of the EU funding is allocated to a relatively limited number of framework partners. Yet, with each of these partners, DG ECHO signs multiple agreements under each HIP, which also implies annually the preparation and processing of multiple proposals and reports, as well as having multiple payment procedures.

There may be scope for DG ECHO, to **move towards a system of 'trusted' or 'strategic' partners**, to reduce not only the administrative burden on both DG ECHO and the respective framework partners, but also to allow for a more linked-up, coherent approach to humanitarian aid, especially if this is accompanied by a move towards multi-annual programming and funding. This could include the following elements:

- Relevant HIPs would be drawn up in close cooperation with the partner and be to a large extent based on the partner's strategy.
- DG ECHO could sign a 'global' agreement with the partner setting out the key actions to be undertaken in each crisis-context as well as the expected results and outcomes.
- The budget would not be earmarked in great detail to allow partners to decide on the most appropriate activities. Reporting would primarily focus on results and outcomes achieved.
- DG ECHO could build on the experience of other donors already working with similar contracts and approaches.

It is stressed that this approach should not apply to all humanitarian funding, but rather focus on the average share which today is already allocated to these partners.

### **Engagement with other framework partners**

The evaluation also showed, on the other hand, that DG ECHO will continue to need its diverse pool of framework partners, including those which are relatively small / medium sized, given their specific geographic presence and/or sectoral or thematic expertise. However, given that a proportion of framework partners did not implement any EU funded actions during the evaluation period, DG ECHO may consider adapting its partner selection and activation process to its multi-annual strategy and programme, to ensure that all the relevant framework partners can be activated at least once during the programming period. This could include a more 'needs-based approach' to attract new partners in those regions and sectors where they are most needed, as well as regular monitoring of the involvement of framework partners.

### **Increasing the involvement of local partners**

In parallel the evaluation also showed a need to **further increase the involvement of local partners** in the EU funded actions in line with the localisation agenda. To realise this, DG ECHO could for example:

- Undertake a horizontal screening to identify in which countries and sectors local partners could step up. DG ECHO could either undertake the screening (e.g. through the field network) or fund this process (e.g. through selected framework partners). Based on the screening, the relevant HIPs could set out whether the political and wider context allows for working with local partners and whether local partners have the capacity or not to implement actions.
- Provide a higher scoring / rating to project proposals which intend to make use of local partners and which have set out a clear set of activities and share of the resources for them.
- Where such cooperation is possible, DG ECHO could include a mandatory provision in grant agreements that part of the funding has to be implemented by local partners. This will be especially relevant for EU funded actions with a strong focus on sustainability (see also below).
- Encourage the local anchorage of its funded actions by, for example, supporting local procurement where the context allows it. This could potentially be included in partnership agreements.
- More systematically recognise the funding of capacity building and training of local

implementing partners as eligible costs and important elements of funded actions in relevant contexts.

- Explore opportunities to fund capacity building and training of local implementing partners through other funding streams (e.g. DEVCO) so as to not divert DG ECHO funding.
- Regular monitoring of the share of humanitarian aid funding which is allocated to local implementing partners.

DG ECHO should emphasise the strong link to sustainability as part of the changes suggested above. It should also seek to agree on implementation strategies around localisation with other Commission services / EU institutions.

### 3. DG ECHO should reinforce its approach towards sustainability through resilience and cooperation

Although humanitarian interventions are not always sustainable due to their nature (i.e. short term) and core mandate (i.e. saving life), the wider context and longer-term goals should also be considered when developing humanitarian interventions, in line with the continuum approach.

DG ECHO has a clear core mandate to: save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises. This suggests that DG ECHO's presence is most crucial in certain contexts and situations. Where feasible, therefore, DG ECHO should withdraw from contexts where these core areas of its mandate no longer require funding, or where they require less and less, however not without there being a clear strategy in place. This strategy should include a defined approach towards sustainability through resilience and LRRD strategies, including a work plan, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, key actions and available funding.

Resilience and LRRD are already embedded in EU interventions, but these should be clearly linked to DG ECHO's sustainability approach and communicated as such. DG ECHO should also recognise more systematically the link between climate change adaptation and resilience across all sectors of intervention. In addition, such strategies should be further strengthened and adopted systematically in the EU funded actions where the context allows, for example through the development of guidelines, specific checks in project proposals, setting aside a share of the budget to relevant activities, etc. The following elements could contribute to reinforcing DG ECHO's longer-term strategy:

- **Multi-annual programming and funding** as recommended above would allow DG ECHO partners to plan and implement resilience activities and prepare their exit / transition strategy. It would also provide more time for DG ECHO to advocate for and connect to development funding.
- Increased **localisation of aid** as recommended above would enhance the engagement of local actors (e.g. NGOs) so that they can continue some of the actions autonomously.
- DG ECHO should further encourage **increased cooperation between framework partners and national / local authorities** – where this is possible and respecting the humanitarian principles – as this would allow these authorities to take ownership of the activities and continue providing the services after the end of the EU funded action.
- The Commission could launch a follow-up study which looks in detail (legal, technical, etc.) at **the use and the limits of different funding streams to realise the nexus**, e.g. humanitarian aid funding, development funding, EUTF, etc. For DG ECHO it would be of interest to have a better understanding of the use of EUTF and their impact on the humanitarian principles, as well as the potential framework partner petitioning towards these funds.

**Cooperation between DG ECHO and development actors** should also be reinforced as per the **humanitarian-development nexus**. This could create opportunities toward transitional funding and programmes, facilitating DG ECHO's exit once the necessary

conditions are in place while still ensuring the needs of the people are met through development funding. Possibly, the new MFF could contain a **'common' envelop** available to both DG ECHO and DEVCO **to finance the nexus**.

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#### **4. The EU should communicate more pro-actively and explicitly the constraints associated with strategic programming and funding decisions towards its staff, including the field network, but also its framework partners and other external stakeholders**

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the EU needs assessment process and resulting budgetary and programming decisions are of high quality, robust and participatory, reflecting the methodological and needs assessment process improvements implemented in recent years – some of which are still ongoing. However, there is a perception amongst DG ECHO's stakeholders that the EU is moving away from its needs-based approach towards a more politicised form of humanitarian aid funding, by placing an, in their eyes, disproportionate emphasis on the EU neighbourhood (in particular the Syria crisis) 'at the cost' of other geographic areas such as Africa, where needs have remained high. On top of this, given the nature of the crisis, there is a negative connotation to the humanitarian aid delivered in the region as it seems to be focussed mostly on preventing people from coming to Europe.

However, to address the perception that its funding decisions are politicised and increase the understanding of the funding choices that have to be made given the resources available for humanitarian aid, the EU should communicate more explicitly and strongly the constraints associated with strategic programming and budgetary decisions, using the following messages:

- The EU funding alone will never be enough to address all the humanitarian needs identified by the field network and perceived by the framework partners around the various humanitarian crises around the world;
- The EU is already a leading humanitarian aid donor and makes the process of its decision-making transparent by publishing the underlying information in the public domain (however, there would be benefit in presenting this in a clearer manner than how it is presented on today).
- The mere activity of determining which regions and countries should have priority in terms of EU funding over others, in situations where the needs levels are the same / similar, is by its nature a policy decision even though fully needs based.

In addition, also linked to the first recommendation above, DG ECHO should clearly communicate where it sits in the wider picture of humanitarian aid and development, to make clear what, according to its mandate, it can and cannot do and also highlighting the role of other stakeholders.

At operational level, this communication could take the following forms and focus:

- DG ECHO should communicate the above messages on its websites (the public site and the partner helpdesk), on the occasion of partner events, as well as through the field network.
- While global budget allocations can only be made once the overall budget for the EU humanitarian aid instrument has been adopted, DG ECHO could decide and communicate earlier on its broad priorities based on the needs assessments and already inform the DG ECHO staff, including the field network, of the broadly expected minimum / maximum amounts that they could expect for the HIPs (or the minimum / maximum share of the total available budget). This would help them providing clear and explicit guidance to the framework partners and give a signal on the level of funding to be expected from the EU in the region. This could also be very useful for other donors, who could integrate this information in their own funding decisions. It should be noted that the situation was already improved in 2017 with a first overview of the funding provided a few months earlier than in previous years.
- Currently, in most regions covered by the EU, framework partners are informed about

the HIPs only after their adoption. In some regions and countries the framework partners are consulted earlier on in the process, resulting in a more transparent process and stronger buy-in in the HIPs. There is therefore scope to use the lessons learned from this approach to inform and put in place a more systematic round of consultation of the framework partners earlier in the process of designing the HIPs across all regions and countries targeted by DG ECHO. This consultation could moreover be used to evaluate the previous HIPs and gather the framework partners' views on possible priorities. Early and systematic consultation could also help to enhance joint appeals and plans.

- Linked to the two points above, there should be more consistency between the messaging of HQ and field, so that expectations around funding allocations are not raised unnecessarily.

## 5. DG ECHO should adapt its management and monitoring systems to make them more suitable to analyse the effectiveness and value for money of its actions

This would respond to various calls to increasingly and better use of existing data to drive effectiveness and value for money in the humanitarian system as a whole (GB), in the EU in general (Better Regulation guidelines) and within DG ECHO. A lot of information is already readily available from DG ECHO, but gaps have been identified (1) in how DG ECHO could use these data to inform its choices and activities; and (2) in DG ECHO's effectiveness assessment framework. However, any adaptations made should also take account of the simplification agenda as well as the GB commitments around greater transparency and the harmonisation of reporting requirements. Concretely this could be done by:

- DG ECHO should further **implement the recommendations as set out in the Study on approaches to assess cost-effectiveness**, in particular those which focus on adapting existing management and monitoring systems and introducing cost-effectiveness analysis in programme analysis. Several of the recommendations below in fact focus on specific elements of these recommendations. However, as mentioned above, implementation should not go against the overall objective of simplification and the GB commitments.
- **DG ECHO should make further efforts to streamline its reporting requirements** and make them more suitable to calculate key indicators such as the value of transfers reaching beneficiaries. In line with the relevant GB commitments, ideally DG ECHO should take the lead, or at least contribute, to the development of common proposal and reporting templates used by all donors, building on the experience gained as part of pilots and task forces. This would include a template for providing budget information in a standard format allowing functional reviews of expenses. As already recommended in the ECA's audit report on the African Great Lakes, DG ECHO should continue its effort to define which financial information should be presented at proposal stage and at final stage and how.
- **DG ECHO should examine more systematically the costs and benefits of its strategic portfolio choices** (e.g. in terms of types of partners, sectors, transfer modalities, consortium approaches, focus on DRR or on LRRD). It would be especially important in the context of determining which regions / sectors could be the subject of multi-annual programming and funding. Where appropriate, DG ECHO could undertake these analytical exercises together with other donors.
- **DG ECHO should set out target indicators for expected results and outcomes at HIP level.** The annual HIPs at country or regional levels do not contain expected results and outcomes of EU funded actions in the different sectors of intervention. As a result and as noted in the ECA's audit report on the African Great Lakes, the overall implementation of the HIPs is not assessed leading to limited record of lessons learnt. Portfolio-level logical frameworks in HIPs would help determine whether budget allocations are commensurate with objectives and whether DG ECHO generates outcomes according to plan. Annual reporting on HIPs would be especially important in

the context of multi-annual programming, as it would allow for adjustments where necessary. The baseline for measuring progress against could be informed by the IAF process and where needed the more specific project baselines. Project level information would be used to feed into the monitoring. The targets should however allow for sufficient flexibility in the light of the sometimes fast-changing contexts (e.g. they could be indicative). Following the ECA's audit report on the African Great Lakes a template to report on the HIPs has been developed for the operational units in Directorate B and C with the objective to provide aggregated information on the contracting amount, partners as well as a summary of lessons learnt but these effort do not include the identification of ex-ante expected results and outcomes at HIP level.

- **DG ECHO should continue to strengthen its framework for assessing the effectiveness of its funded actions**, by consolidating and, where needed, further improving results reporting systems. The recent introduction of standard indicators (output indicators, outcome indicators and key performance indicators) is a step in the right direction.
- **DG ECHO should integrate the assessment of value for money of humanitarian aid actions in its management and monitoring systems**. More guidance to DG ECHO staff and transparency towards partners would be needed regarding the criteria which should consistently be used for instance at project appraisal stage. More attention to this should not mean less flexibility (e.g. in terms of accepting rightful deviations from standard ratios depending on the context). Other approaches taken within the humanitarian system, e.g. the UK's approach which consists of 'payment by result' could also be examined.

## **Annex 0: Résumé analytique**

*(included at the end of this document)*

### **Other annexes**

The annexes listed below are available on the internet website of DG ECHO at the following location: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations/geographic-evaluations\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations/geographic-evaluations_en)

**Annex 1: Cost-effectiveness assessment framework**

**Annex 2: Full list of interviewed stakeholders**

**Annex 3: Methodological notes on the sources and use of the quantitative data**

**Annex 4: Profile of the respondents to the three surveys**

**Annex 5: Meta-evaluation**

**Annex 6: Field reports**

**Annex 7: Rapid evaluations**

**Annex 8: Relevance**

**Annex 9: Coherence**

**Annex 10: EU added value**

**Annex 11: Effectiveness**

**Annex 12: Efficiency**

**Annex 13: Prospective evaluation**

**Annex 14: OPC analysis**

**Annex 15: Proposal for dissemination**

**Annex 16: Terms of reference**

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation EU 2016369. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0369&from=EN>.

<sup>2</sup> See for more information: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en)

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 2016. Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance – Forced Displacement and Development. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication\\_Forced\\_Displacement\\_Development\\_2016.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Development Initiatives, 2017. Global humanitarian assistance report 2017. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Council Regulation EU 2016369. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0369&from=EN>.

<sup>6</sup> Mayne, J. 2015. Useful Theory of Change Models. In: Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, pp. 119-142.

<sup>7</sup> Council Regulation EC 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1996R1257:20090420:EN:PDF>.

<sup>8</sup> Official Journal of the EU, 2008. Joint Declaration: The European Consensus on humanitarian aid. Available at: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01)&from=EN).

<sup>9</sup> Article 30 of the Consensus states: “Without prejudice to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence, the EU commits to ensuring policy coherence, complementarity and effectiveness by using its influence and the full range of tools at its disposal to address the root causes of humanitarian crises”.

<sup>10</sup> The global humanitarian appeal for 2016 is more than USD 20 billion targeting almost 90 million people: four times what it was a decade ago, for more than twice as many people. Source: UNOCHA, 2015. Global Humanitarian Overview 2016. Available at: <http://www.unocha.org/stateofaid>.

<sup>11</sup> Crises are increasingly becoming more frequent and lasting longer. According to statements recently made by the UN, the world is facing its largest humanitarian crisis since 1945. 20 million people face “devastating levels of food insecurity” in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and north-east Nigeria. The total number of displaced people, according to the UNHCR (Global trends 2015), has reached a record level of 65.3 million people at the end of 2015, compared to 59.5 million just 12 months earlier. According to the same report, the duration of the displacements is also on the rise.

<sup>12</sup> ICRC, FICR and Red Cross (AT, BE, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, LU, NL, NO and UK)

<sup>13</sup> DK, ES, FI, IT, NL, NO, SE and UK.

<sup>14</sup> The MPCT mainly consists of the Emergency Social Safety Net Assistance to refugees in Turkey for an amount of EUR 338 million.

<sup>15</sup> MPCT, DRR, EIE, and Child Protection.

<sup>16</sup> Some HIPs indicate as possibly aggravated by natural disasters.

<sup>17</sup> The coherence of DG ECHO's implementation approach with other donors is analysed in section 3.1.1 Coherence.

<sup>18</sup> However, it needs to be borne in mind that the humanitarian appeals are not a triggering factor for the EU decisions on funding.

<sup>19</sup> Currently, the partners receive the HIPs but not for commenting or providing inputs. In the field visit conducted for this evaluation in Tanzania showed that, although the EU Delegation was involved in the development of recent HIPs, the lack of consultation with the framework partners during that process is considered as a weakness. The framework partners are kept informed in case of new developments but they did not have the opportunity to feed into the development of the HIPs. A lack of clarity and transparency about the EU medium-term strategy in the country was also flagged as an issue.

<sup>20</sup> This assessment is made by the field (both country and thematic) and by HQ (desk officers/team leaders) staff and is decided upon at head of unit level.

<sup>21</sup> The vast majority of the stakeholders consulted during the field visits consider that DG ECHO's strategies as defined in the HIPs and the associated technical annexes answer to the most urgent humanitarian needs on the ground. Some framework partners did however question the reasons for broadening the scope of the HIP from DRC only to DRC and the Great Lakes region in 2013. They also considered that some changes in approaches were not consistent over time.

<sup>22</sup> FTS data on appeals needs to be treated with caution as it is comparable only to some extent. Scale of appeals requirements vary for various, influenced by scope of need and planned response, cost of delivering assistance per se. Data can also be inflated voluntarily (appeals often stem out of politicized processes) and sometimes includes development component. This is illustrated in average cost of response per person which varies widely based on data from UNOCHA FTS and UN-coordinated appeals: USD 801 per person for South Sudan, USD 36 per person for Nigeria.

<sup>23</sup> Sudan was amongst the top 10 EU recipients in 2015 and amongst top 20 recipients in 2013, 2014 and 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Occasionally countries affected by large sudden onset natural disasters appear in the top 10 EU funded countries. For example, Philippines ranked 9th for EU funding in 2013 because of the Typhoon Haiyan and the sudden onset character of the disaster explains why the actual needs were not reflected in the IAF table as EU moved quicker than the needs indicators, as needs had obviously not been assessed as high ex-ante, since Philippines was not even part of the IAF exercise; also the high requirements in appeals only appeared in 2014, and the 2013 appeals seems to have been "over-met".

<sup>25</sup> DG ECHO, undated. FCA or Forgotten Crisis Assessment. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/financing\\_decisions/dgecho\\_strategy/fca](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/financing_decisions/dgecho_strategy/fca).

<sup>26</sup> However, it is important to consider the fact that MPCT is not a sector in itself but a transfer modality in several sectors hence the sectoral data is in a sense skewed over the 2012-2016 period.

<sup>27</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011 – 2014).

<sup>28</sup> ICF, 2017. Project mapping.

<sup>29</sup> See the FAO World Hunger Reports since 2012, 2013, 2014: <http://www.fao.org/hunger/previous-editions/en/>

<sup>30</sup> There is no global overview of financing gaps in the sector. However, the Humanitarian Response Platform ([www.humanitarianresponse.info](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info)) publishes Strategic Response Overviews for certain years and certain countries. For 2016, WASH financing requirements were available for South Sudan and Yemen, the two countries receiving a significant share of WASH funding.

<sup>32</sup> EUR 9.3 million out of EUR 68.6 million.

<sup>33</sup> IDMC and NRC, 2016. Global Report on Internal Displacement 2016. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2016/2016-global-report-internal-displacement-IDMC.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Based on World Bank data on number of refugees. This is stock data so figures can include refugee populations which have been in the country since a long time.

<sup>35</sup> Relief Web, 2015. An end in sight: Multi-year planning to meet and reduce humanitarian needs in protracted crises. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/end-sight-multi-year-planning-meet-and-reduce-humanitarian-needs-protracted-crises>

<sup>36</sup> Funding decreased from EUR 6.2 million in 2013, EUR 1.7 million in 2014 to EUR 0.7 million in 2015. - TBC

<sup>37</sup> FTS data indicates for the period 2013-2016 the level of global appeals for humanitarian aid around USD 11,361 million, whereas the global donor contribution was USD 9,176 million.

<sup>38</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/figures/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/figures/index_en.cfm)

<sup>39</sup> In 2015, 10 out of 16 geographical HIPs were regional, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2015\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2015_en)

<sup>40</sup> In 2016, 13 out of 20 geographical HIPs were regional, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2016\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2016_en)

<sup>41</sup> As articulated in the annual General Guidelines on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid.

<sup>42</sup> Particip, 2015. Evaluation of the DG ECHO Actions in Coastal West Africa 2008 – 2014.

<sup>43</sup> For example, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon, the evaluation (Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon) found the annual changes to the HIP's

priorities were considered as “not consistent and create extra work, particularly at the time of call for proposals and CAP preparations”. The evaluation concluded that the EU was not consistent in its annual changes of funding allocations and, more importantly, had not communicated nor defined its thinking to its partners in a clear manner. Similarly, in Syria, the EU funding levels fluctuated significantly over the period 2012-2014 and the lack of predictability was reported to have hampered programming and implementation (ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014)). Similarly, the evaluation of the integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (Particip, 2013. Food security and nutrition: Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (2009-2012)) indicated that “globally, DG ECHO lacks clarity around when it will consider certain responses, for example the use of special food products and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition”. Finally, the food security and nutrition evaluation noted that the design of and the priorities outlined in the HIPs (and therefore the strategic approach to countries and regions) differ across contexts. At least four evaluations also pointed out at an inadequate strategic approach in some sectors with HIPs and other strategic documents insufficiently covering some themes or areas of intervention. An example is provided by education in emergencies (ICF, 2017. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015)). The thematic evaluation indicated that a multi-annual strategy to frame DG ECHO’s and its partners’ activities in both sectors was missing over the evaluation period. As a result, in some contexts, the EU approach to funding Child Protection/ Education in Emergencies was ad hoc i.e. project-based, whereas in others it was more clearly rooted into a specific country / emergency response.

<sup>44</sup> Identified in the meta-evaluation of the EU actions in the 2012-2016 period, see 0.

<sup>45</sup> The partners pointed to the issues of the EU response quality varying depending on the crisis/sector context, DG ECHO paying reduced attention to less visible crises, being limited by duration of the EU funding cycle, affected by lack of clarity and short-term vision.

<sup>46</sup> As highlighted by DG ECHO evaluations of humanitarian aid interventions in Syria (ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014)), Pakistan (EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan), West Africa (Particip, 2015. Evaluation of the DG ECHO Actions in Coastal West Africa 2008 – 2014) and Colombia (ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission’s Humanitarian Activities in Colombia).

<sup>47</sup> As, for example, in Pakistan.

<sup>48</sup> As indicated, for example, by: Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission’s Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; IDS, 2012. Evaluation and review of DG ECHO financed livelihood interventions in humanitarian crises.

<sup>49</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014).

<sup>50</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014).

<sup>51</sup> See also section 3.1.3.3 on the involvement of local actors in the EU humanitarian aid delivery.

<sup>52</sup> The partners pointed out that this was largely aided by DG ECHO’s local knowledge of the field situation, meetings with partners and cluster engagement, and the reflection of national developments and other donor engagement.

<sup>53</sup> The partners pointed out that this depends on the context of the crisis, the sector, and can be limited by DG ECHO’s speed of reaction and lack of consideration of LRRD issues.

<sup>54</sup> Aguaconsult, 2012. Review of existing practices to ensure participation of Disaster-affected communities in Humanitarian aid operations.

<sup>55</sup> See 0, Rapid evaluation on Food security and nutrition.

<sup>56</sup> Partners in this EQ refer to DG ECHO framework partners and local implementing partners. Coherence with the activities of other actors, international donors, Member States and UPCM is assessed in the Coherence section 3.1.1.

<sup>57</sup> The detailed eligibility criteria are presented here: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/become\\_a\\_partner/har\\_fpa/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/become_a_partner/har_fpa/start)

<sup>58</sup> The detailed questions are presented here: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/become\\_a\\_partner/har\\_fpa/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/become_a_partner/har_fpa/start)

<sup>59</sup> Suggestions were to include in the FPA application forms the demonstration of the link to LRRD and DRR; of the work with local partners and the capacity to build local capacity.

<sup>60</sup> Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008)

<sup>61</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013).

<sup>62</sup> Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008)

<sup>63</sup> In the words of one stakeholder, “*They have to work together, have strategy together, be more coherent, and more integrated... and ...guarantee the coordination upfront.*”

<sup>64</sup> Partners pointed to the advantages of local partners in ensuring local access, better engagement with the beneficiaries, local authorities and stakeholders, better knowledge of the local context, as well as building local capacity and ability to respond to crises situations.

<sup>65</sup> Germax, 2013. Working directly with local NGOs: Evaluation of the potential effectiveness and efficiency gains of working directly with local NGOs in the humanitarian interventions of the Commission.

<sup>66</sup> Multiple evaluations: Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s interventions in the occupied Palestinian; ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013); ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014); Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission’s Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (DIPECHO) in Indonesia; Germax, 2013. Working directly with local NGOs: Evaluation of the potential effectiveness and efficiency gains of working directly with local NGOs in the humanitarian interventions of the Commission; ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011 – 2014); Aguaconsult, 2012. Review of existing practices to ensure participation of Disaster-affected communities in Humanitarian aid operations.



- <sup>67</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013).
- <sup>68</sup> Germax, 2013. Working directly with local NGOs: Evaluation of the potential effectiveness and efficiency gains of working directly with local NGOs in the humanitarian interventions of the Commission.
- <sup>69</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011 – 2014).
- <sup>70</sup> Key facts and figures on the field network are provided in Annex 1.
- <sup>71</sup> The partners pointed out that this depends on the context of the crisis, differs by office and DG ECHO personnel involved and limited by resources available to DG ECHO staff.
- <sup>72</sup> Partners pointed out that this is facilitated by regular DG ECHO field staff communication with partners, field network presence and pro-active approach, including regular monitoring.
- <sup>73</sup> Both offices closed at the end of 2016 as a result of the 2015 Field Network Review in agreement with all stakeholders in view of the significant decrease of funding. For Côte d'Ivoire the DG ECHO presence was related to the follow up of external assigned revenue from France.
- <sup>74</sup> Multiple evaluations including: Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding, ADE, 2014. ADE, 2014. Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2008-2012).; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014).
- <sup>75</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014).
- <sup>76</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region
- <sup>77</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013).
- <sup>78</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).
- <sup>79</sup> Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding; and Education in Emergencies evaluation, Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; Particip, 2013. Food security and nutrition: Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (2009-2012).
- <sup>80</sup> Where sectoral expert or global thematic coordinator is yet to be appointed (2017 data).
- <sup>81</sup> In the existing evaluations of the EU interventions in the 2012-2016 period the role of DG ECHO field network was not covered in depth. Some very limited information could be found on the role and functioning of the RSO experts and country TA but not on the relevance of DG ECHO's field network nor on the extent to which they contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU interventions.
- <sup>82</sup> In this respect, the current efforts to develop a tool (based on the EVA model) to assist in analysing the fitness of the field network need to be further supported.
- <sup>83</sup> European Consensus on the Humanitarian Aid (2008); Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/about-echo/legal-framework\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/about-echo/legal-framework_en)
- <sup>84</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/strategy\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/strategy_en)
- <sup>85</sup> European Commission, 2014. Thematic Policy Document n° 7: Health Consolidated Humanitarian Health Guidelines. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health\\_thematic\\_policy\\_document\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf).
- <sup>86</sup> European Commission, 2015. 10 common principles for multi-purpose cash-based assistance to respond to humanitarian needs. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/concept\\_paper\\_common\\_top\\_line\\_principles\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/concept_paper_common_top_line_principles_en.pdf).
- <sup>87</sup> European Commission, 2013. Thematic Policy Document n° 5: Disaster Risk Reduction Increasing resilience by reducing disaster risk in humanitarian action. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/prevention\\_preparedness/DRR\\_thematic\\_policy\\_doc.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/prevention_preparedness/DRR_thematic_policy_doc.pdf).
- <sup>88</sup> Example of General Conditions: European Commission, 2014. Annex II to FPA ICRC: General Conditions. Available at: [http://eu-iofpa.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/general\\_conditions\\_icrc.pdf](http://eu-iofpa.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/general_conditions_icrc.pdf).
- <sup>89</sup> European Commission, 2016. Presentation of DG ECHO field network. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/jobs/experts/ECHO\\_Field\\_Network.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/jobs/experts/ECHO_Field_Network.pdf).
- <sup>90</sup> European Commission, 2016. Presentation of DG ECHO field network. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/jobs/experts/ECHO\\_Field\\_Network.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/jobs/experts/ECHO_Field_Network.pdf).
- <sup>91</sup> Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Action.
- <sup>92</sup> [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/sga\\_en\\_131112.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/sga_en_131112.pdf)
- <sup>93</sup> Nascimento, D., 2015. One step forward, two steps back? Humanitarian Challenges and Dilemmas in Crisis Settings. Available at: <https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/2126>.
- <sup>94</sup> Levine, S. and Sharp, K., 2015. Topic Guide: Anticipating and responding to shocks: livelihoods and humanitarian responses. Available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.12774/eod\\_tg.november2015.levineandsharp](http://dx.doi.org/10.12774/eod_tg.november2015.levineandsharp).
- <sup>95</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).
- <sup>96</sup> This is the literal term used in the respective evaluation
- <sup>97</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis 2012-2014.
- <sup>98</sup> HERE Geneva, 2017. Principled humanitarian assistance of DG ECHO partners in Iraq. Available at: [http://here-geneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/hereiaq\\_final6.pdf](http://here-geneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/hereiaq_final6.pdf).
- <sup>99</sup> UNOCHA, 2007. Oslo Guidelines on the use of foreign military and civil defence assets in disaster relief. Available at: [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OSLO%20Guidelines%20Rev%201.1%20-%20Nov%2007\\_0.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OSLO%20Guidelines%20Rev%201.1%20-%20Nov%2007_0.pdf).

- <sup>100</sup> UNOCHA, 2006. Guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies. Available at: <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/01.%20MCDA%20Guidelines%20March%2003%20Rev1%20Jan06.pdf>.
- <sup>101</sup> UN-CMCoord is a framework that enhances a broad understanding of humanitarian action and guides political and military actors on how best to support that action. It helps to develop context-specific policy based on internationally agreed guidelines, and it establishes humanitarian civil-military coordination structures, ensuring staff members are trained to make that coordination work. Source: UNOCHA, undated. Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord). Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/legacy/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/overview>.
- <sup>102</sup> IASC, 2013. Non-Binding Guidance on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys. Available at: [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Armed%20Escort%20Guidelines%20-%20Final\\_1.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Armed%20Escort%20Guidelines%20-%20Final_1.pdf).
- <sup>103</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).
- <sup>104</sup> As specified in the Single Form guidelines: This section is to be filled in only where and when relevant or when specifically asked by DG ECHO i.e. in those contexts where security is a key element for the success of the Action. If this is the case, the partner has to provide an assessment of the security constraints linked to the Action. Source: DG ECHO, 2016. Single Form Guidelines – June 2016. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/single\\_form\\_guidelines\\_final.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/single_form_guidelines_final.pdf).
- <sup>105</sup> DG ECHO, undated. DG ECHO assessment and appraisal process. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action\\_proposal/assessment\\_and\\_appraisal/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action_proposal/assessment_and_appraisal/start).
- <sup>106</sup> Quality Markers are tools assessing to what extent each funded humanitarian action integrates considerations such as gender and age or resilience. Source: European Commission, 2016. Single Form Guidelines – June 2016. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/single\\_form\\_guidelines\\_final.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/single_form_guidelines_final.pdf).
- <sup>107</sup> European Commission, 2014. GGOPHA 2015. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/strategy\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/accountability/strategy_en).
- <sup>108</sup> It decreased from EUR 6.2 million in 2013, EUR 1.7 million in 2014 to EUR 0.7 million in 2015
- <sup>109</sup> As stated in DG ECHO cash and voucher policy guidelines MPCT contribute to livelihood restoration through revitalisation of the local economy, increase in the volume of trade and number of traders, etc.
- <sup>110</sup> This is mainly due to the fact that the UCPM is request-based and can therefore only be activated following a call for assistance by a country affected by a disaster or crisis. In the context of complex emergencies, where the government might be involved in the crisis, the deployment of civil protection teams could result in exposing relief workers as well as the affected population to attacks from warring parties, and in being denied access to the affected population not only in the current, but also in future emergencies.
- <sup>111</sup> Official Journal of the EU, 2013. Decision 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013D1313&from=DE>.
- <sup>112</sup> ICF, 2017. Interim evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, 2014-2016. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/ucpm\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/ucpm_final_report.pdf).
- <sup>113</sup> ADE, unpublished. Evaluation of the DG ECHO interventions in India and Nepal, 2013-2017.
- <sup>114</sup> European Court of Auditors, 2016. Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective. Available at: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16\\_33/SR\\_DISASTER\\_RESPONSE\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_33/SR_DISASTER_RESPONSE_EN.pdf).
- <sup>115</sup> Council of the EU, 2017. Report from the Maltese Presidency on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection. Available at: [https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/14/43/EU\\_144301/imfname\\_10722008.pdf](https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/14/43/EU_144301/imfname_10722008.pdf).
- <sup>116</sup> Consult this publication for a detailed overview: European parliament, 2017. The budgetary tools for financing the EU external policy. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/572708/IPOL\\_STU%282017%29572708\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/572708/IPOL_STU%282017%29572708_EN.pdf).
- <sup>117</sup> European Parliament. 2012. LRRD: towards more effective aid. Policy briefing. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing\\_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE\\_SP\(2012\)491435\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2012)491435_EN.pdf).
- <sup>118</sup> Thomas Henökl and Christian Webersik, 2013. The EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa. Available at: [http://www.eisa-net.org/be-bruga/eisa/files/events/warsaw2013/JHDF%20paper\\_Henokl\\_Webersik28082013.pdf](http://www.eisa-net.org/be-bruga/eisa/files/events/warsaw2013/JHDF%20paper_Henokl_Webersik28082013.pdf)
- <sup>119</sup> European Commission. 2017. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint\\_communication\\_-\\_a\\_strategic\\_approach\\_to\\_resilience\\_in\\_the\\_eus\\_external\\_action-2017.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint_communication_-_a_strategic_approach_to_resilience_in_the_eus_external_action-2017.pdf)
- <sup>120</sup> European Commission, Communication COM (2016) 234, Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance. Forced Displacement and Development.
- <sup>121</sup> European Commission, 2017. New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). Note to the attention of Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management.
- <sup>122</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.
- <sup>123</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO field network completed from 12 June to 04 August.
- <sup>124</sup> ICF, 2017. Case studies to Mauritania, DRC, Tanzania and Myanmar.
- <sup>125</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.
- <sup>126</sup> ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia.
- <sup>127</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region
- <sup>128</sup> AGIR focuses on a 'Zero Hunger' goal in the next 20 years through four strategic pillars
- <sup>129</sup> Council of the EU, 1996. Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96. Chapter 1. Article 1. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1996R1257:20090420:EN:PDF>

- <sup>130</sup> International Cooperation and Development, 2016. About International Cooperation and Development – DG DEVCO. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/general\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/general_en)
- <sup>131</sup> It is important to underline that the LRRD can be done during the preparation of the national programmes, but very hardly during implementation. Hence the importance of being part of the preparation.
- <sup>132</sup> ECDPM, 2016. Living Apart Together' EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis.
- <sup>133</sup> ECDPM, 2016. Living Apart Together' EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis.
- <sup>134</sup> Ibid, EU Resilience Compendium
- <sup>135</sup> ICF, 2017. Case study Myanmar.
- <sup>136</sup> ICF, 2017. Case Study Democratic Republic of Congo.
- <sup>137</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>138</sup> ECDPM, 2016. Living Apart Together' EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis.
- <sup>139</sup> Also called the Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes or irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa.
- <sup>140</sup> European Commission, 2017. EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet-eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa-2017-09-11\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet-eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa-2017-09-11_en.pdf)
- <sup>141</sup> European Court of Auditors, 2017. Press release. Available at: [http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/INSR17\\_11/INSR\\_BEKOU\\_EN.pdf](http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/INSR17_11/INSR_BEKOU_EN.pdf)
- <sup>142</sup> ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO EVA database, data extracted on 19 April 2017.
- <sup>143</sup> Based on the UNHCR latest statistics 65.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations by the end of 2016. This includes: 40.3 million IDPs, 22.5 million refugees and 2.8 million asylum seekers. This represents an increase of 20 million compared to the end of 2012. Source: UNHCR, 2016. Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2016. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5943e8a34/global-trends-forced-displacement-2016.html>; UNHCR, 2012. Global Trends 2012. [http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/june2013/UNHCR%20GLOBAL%20TRENDS%202012\\_V08\\_web.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/june2013/UNHCR%20GLOBAL%20TRENDS%202012_V08_web.pdf).
- <sup>144</sup> European Commission, 2016. Consultation: Towards a Communication on Forced Displacement and Development. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/consultations/consultation-towards-communication-forced-displacement-and-development\\_fr](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/consultations/consultation-towards-communication-forced-displacement-and-development_fr).
- <sup>145</sup> European Commission, 2015. A European Agenda for Migration. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication\\_on\\_the\\_european\\_agenda\\_on\\_migration\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf).
- <sup>146</sup> European Commission, 2016. Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance – Forced Displacement and Development. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication\\_Forced\\_Displacement\\_Development\\_2016.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf).
- <sup>147</sup> The New York Declaration signed in September 2016 sets out the key elements of the CRRF to be applied to large-scale movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations. The four key objectives of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework are to: (1) Ease pressures on host countries; (2) Enhance refugee self-reliance; (3) Expand third-country solutions; and (3) Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The UNHCR is working with governments and other stakeholders to apply the CRRF in a number of countries – including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Honduras, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania – and through a regional approach to the Somalia situation.
- <sup>148</sup> European Commission, undated. EU Trust Fund for Africa for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eutf\\_general\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eutf_general_final_en.pdf).
- <sup>149</sup> European Commission, 2013. Thematic Policy Document n° 5: Disaster Risk Reduction. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/financing\\_decisions/dipecho/drr\\_thematic\\_policy\\_2013.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/financing_decisions/dipecho/drr_thematic_policy_2013.pdf).
- <sup>150</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com\\_2013\\_227\\_ap\\_crisis\\_prone\\_countries\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf)
- <sup>151</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013).
- <sup>152</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region.
- <sup>153</sup> DG ECHO, 2014. Resilience Marker Assessment Card. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/reference\\_documents/resilience\\_marker\\_guidance.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/reference_documents/resilience_marker_guidance.pdf).
- <sup>154</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1996R1257:20090420:EN:PDF>
- <sup>155</sup> The members of the IASC are the heads or their designated representatives of the UN operational agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, FAO, WHO, UN-HABITAT, OCHA and IOM). In addition, there is a standing invitation to ICRC, IFRC, OHCHR, UNFPA, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs and the World Bank. The NGO consortia ICVA, InterAction and SCHR are also invited on a permanent basis to attend. The IASC is chaired by the ERC. Source: IASC, undated. IASC membership. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc/membership-and-structure>.
- <sup>156</sup> UNOCHA, undated. Funding. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/about-us/funding>.
- <sup>157</sup> IASC, 2003. Revised Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy\\_files/Revised%20HC%20TOR.doc.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/Revised%20HC%20TOR.doc.pdf).
- <sup>158</sup> IASC, 2015. Reference module for cluster coordination at country level. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster\\_coordination\\_reference\\_module\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster_coordination_reference_module_2015_final.pdf).
- <sup>159</sup> IASC, 2015. Ibidem.

<sup>160</sup> This includes organisations and donors in meetings with the COHAFA (the Council Working Group, which met in 2013 18 times, of which 2 times informally), the ODSG (OCHA donor group), the GHD (good humanitarian donorship initiative), meetings on the Transformative Agenda, the emergency directors group as well as (strategic) dialogues with the US, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and DFID. The number also takes account of selected NGOs (being members of the VOICE network).

<sup>161</sup> European Commission, 2013. DG ECHO 2013 Annual Activity Report. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/activity-report-2013-dg-echo\\_june2014\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/activity-report-2013-dg-echo_june2014_en.pdf).

<sup>162</sup> It is important to stress that an interview with DFID is planned the week following the submission of this draft final report. This section will therefore be updated following this interview.

<sup>163</sup> European Council, 2017. Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/working-party-humanitarian-aid-food-aid/>.

<sup>164</sup> The HAC Rules of Procedures are available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology/OpenSaveDoc.cfm?dc\\_id=6726&doc\\_type=application/msword&com\\_code=C24700](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology/OpenSaveDoc.cfm?dc_id=6726&doc_type=application/msword&com_code=C24700)

<sup>165</sup> HAR and Orbie, J. 2008. Europe's Global Role: External Policies of the EU. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

<sup>166</sup> European Commission, 2016. Commission Implementing Decision financing the distribution of dairy products as part of the response to humanitarian crises from the general budget of the EU. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/downloads/Commission\\_Decision\\_Dairy\\_products.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/downloads/Commission_Decision_Dairy_products.pdf).

<sup>167</sup> European Commission, 2015. Explanatory note: External Assigned Revenue. Unpublished.

<sup>168</sup> The total distribution of Member States' contribution is available at: European Council, 2017. Refugee facility for Turkey: Member states agree on details of financing. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/02/03-refugee-facility-for-turkey/>.

<sup>169</sup> Out of the EUR 3 billion allocated to the Facility for 2016-2017, EUR 1.4 billion are allocated to humanitarian aid. By March 2017, EUR 595 million of these EUR 1.4 billion had been allocated. Of this, EUR 551 million had been contracted, through 28 humanitarian projects with 19 partners, covering the response to basic needs, protection, education and health. Out of the EUR 551 million contracted, EUR 411 million had been disbursed by March 2017. More details: European Commission, 2017. First Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/170302\\_facility\\_for\\_refugees\\_in\\_turkey\\_first\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/170302_facility_for_refugees_in_turkey_first_annual_report.pdf).

<sup>170</sup> European Parliament, 2017. The budgetary tools for financing the EU external policy. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/572708/IPOL\\_STU%282017%29572708\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/572708/IPOL_STU%282017%29572708_EN.pdf).

<sup>171</sup> In total 31 temporary contract agent staff were recruited by DG ECHO in 2016 to manage the ExAR allocated by DFID and the Member States. Source: European Commission, 2017. DG ECHO 2016 Annual Activity Report. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/aar-echo-2016\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/aar-echo-2016_en_0.pdf).

<sup>172</sup> Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2016. About GHD. Available at: <https://www.ghdinitiative.org/ghd/gns/about-us/about-ghd.html>.

<sup>173</sup> To date, this cooperation between DG ECHO and World Bank has not started yet. However, both DG ECHO and World Bank are part of the Shelter Centre, which organise events, meetings and training with the participation of NGOs, donors and IFIs such as World Bank.

<sup>174</sup> The OECD Development Assistance Committee became part of the OECD by Ministerial Resolution on 23 July 1961. It is a unique international forum of many of the largest funders of aid, including 30 DAC Members. The full list of members is available here: OECD, 2017. DAC. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/developmentassistancecommittee.htm>.

<sup>175</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual\\_report/2014/ECHO\\_AR2014\\_Annex2\\_PolicyFiches.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2014/ECHO_AR2014_Annex2_PolicyFiches.pdf)

<sup>176</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/consensus/2012\\_Consensus\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/consensus/2012_Consensus_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>177</sup> ShelterCluster.org, 2017. Untitled. Available at: <https://www.sheltercluster.org/global/page/echo-contribution>.

<sup>178</sup> LogisticsCluster.org, undated. The Global Strategic Advisory Group. Available at: <http://www.logcluster.org/strategic-advisory-group>.

<sup>179</sup> Nutrition Cluster, 2017. GNC Partners and Observers for 2017 (updated 31 May 2017). Available at: <http://nutritioncluster.net/download/6525/>.

<sup>180</sup> It is important to stress that respondents had the opportunity to indicate multiple sectors of activity in their responses to the survey.

<sup>181</sup> Multiple evaluations: ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013); Particip, 2013. Food security and nutrition: Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (2009-2012); Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon.

<sup>182</sup> UNOCHA, undated. Who We Are. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/about-us/who-we-are>.

<sup>183</sup> European Commission, Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com\\_2013\\_227\\_ap\\_crisis\\_prone\\_countries\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf).

<sup>184</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (DIPECHO) in Indonesia.

<sup>185</sup> DG ECHO identified close to 50 KRI so far, the latest ones relate to the protection sector and were released in November 2017. The full list is accessible here: DG ECHO, 2017. KRI. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/reference\\_documents/list\\_of\\_kri\\_details\\_en.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/reference_documents/list_of_kri_details_en.pdf).

<sup>186</sup> DG ECHO, 2016. Single Form Guidelines – June 2016. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action\\_proposal/submit\\_in\\_the\\_sf/section4/results/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action_proposal/submit_in_the_sf/section4/results/start).

- <sup>187</sup> DG ECHO identified 13 KOI linked to the specific objectives of each action. They are presented in this document: DG ECHO, undated. KOI. Available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/\\_media/reference\\_documents/list\\_of\\_koi\\_details\\_en.pdf](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/_media/reference_documents/list_of_koi_details_en.pdf).
- <sup>188</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. 2016 Annual Activity Report. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/aar-echo-2016\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/aar-echo-2016_en_0.pdf).
- <sup>189</sup> European Commission, 2016. Strategic Plan 2016-2020 – DG ECHO. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-devco\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-devco_en.pdf).
- <sup>190</sup> ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia; Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015); EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan.
- <sup>191</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).
- <sup>192</sup> WFP, 2017. Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Market Bulletin, Issue No. 3. Available at: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000039744/download/?\\_ga=2.94180888.425643988.1513793576-1498294110.1513793576](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000039744/download/?_ga=2.94180888.425643988.1513793576-1498294110.1513793576).
- <sup>193</sup> Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector.
- <sup>194</sup> DG ECHO, 2015. 2014 Annual Activity Report. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/activity-report-2014-dg-echo\\_august2015\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/activity-report-2014-dg-echo_august2015_en.pdf).
- <sup>195</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of DG ECHO's actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015); Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008); IDS, 2012. Evaluation and review of DG ECHO financed livelihood interventions in humanitarian crises.
- <sup>196</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of DG ECHO's actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015).
- <sup>197</sup> Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>198</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011-2014).
- <sup>199</sup> DG ECHO is currently further working on improving the needs assessment by making it even more data-driven.
- <sup>200</sup> For example, through publication of GOGPHA annual strategies and individual HIPs.
- <sup>201</sup> [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action\\_proposal/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/action_proposal/start)
- <sup>202</sup> In 2015, 10 out of 16 geographical HIPs were regional, see [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2015\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2015_en)
- <sup>203</sup> In 2016, 13 out of 20 geographical HIPs were regional, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2016\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips-2016_en)
- <sup>204</sup> Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines_en)
- <sup>205</sup> These related to expertise in Gender-Based Violence, IT, shelter as well as child protection and education in emergencies.
- <sup>206</sup> The HAC Rules of Procedures are available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology/OpenSaveDoc.cfm?dc\\_id=6726&doc\\_type=application/msword&com\\_code=C24700](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regcomitology/OpenSaveDoc.cfm?dc_id=6726&doc_type=application/msword&com_code=C24700)
- <sup>207</sup> See the EU reports on the implementation of its 100 commitments at WHS, <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/about-us>
- <sup>208</sup> DG ECHO annual report 2014
- <sup>209</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of DG ECHO's actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015).
- <sup>210</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>211</sup> Coe, J. and Majot, J., 2013. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in NGO Advocacy - Findings from Comparative Policy Advocacy MEL Review Project.
- <sup>212</sup> IASC, Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level, revised July 2015. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster\\_coordination\\_reference\\_module\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/cluster_coordination_reference_module_2015_final.pdf).
- <sup>213</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. AGIR. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience/sahel-agir\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience/sahel-agir_en)
- <sup>214</sup> Reportedly approximately 600 people have been trained in protection issues by DG ECHO since 2014
- <sup>215</sup> Particip, 2013. Food security and nutrition: Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (2009-2012); Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>216</sup> Derogations are permitted when visibility activities may harm the implementation of the action, the safety of the staff of the safety of the beneficiaries or local communities.
- <sup>217</sup> DG ECHO visibility website, last update 8 February 2016. Available at: <http://www.echo-visibility.eu/standard-visibility/definitions/>.
- <sup>218</sup> European Commission. 2010. Communication and visibility manual for EU External Actions. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication\\_and\\_visibility\\_manual\\_en\\_0.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication_and_visibility_manual_en_0.pdf).
- <sup>219</sup> WFP, 2014. The Day I Performed at Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Tanzania. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/stories/day-i-performed-nyarugusu-refugee-camp-tanzania>.

- <sup>220</sup> See:  
[https://www.facebook.com/mccrmyanmar/?hc\\_ref=ARQQUBm13irVFxWNvdmsScOdkCqcnSTpy\\_MhnlGVrzsSbzGO6ZzPFisa2PydRmCNDas](https://www.facebook.com/mccrmyanmar/?hc_ref=ARQQUBm13irVFxWNvdmsScOdkCqcnSTpy_MhnlGVrzsSbzGO6ZzPFisa2PydRmCNDas)
- <sup>221</sup> Special Eurobarometer 453, 2017. Humanitarian aid. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/sp453\\_report\\_final\\_may\\_2017.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/sp453_report_final_may_2017.pdf).
- <sup>222</sup> ODI, 2017. From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11588.pdf>
- <sup>223</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011-2014).
- <sup>224</sup> Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008).
- <sup>225</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region
- <sup>226</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011-2014).
- <sup>227</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014); Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon.
- <sup>228</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>229</sup> This will need to be confirmed on larger sample sizes.
- <sup>230</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>231</sup> Development Initiatives, 2017. Global humanitarian assistance report 2017. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>
- <sup>232</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>233</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid evaluation Food. This links to the fact that cash is consistently the more efficient transfer modality to deliver (for implementing partners) but not necessarily the most efficient overall. See also: DFID, 2015. Value for Money of Cash Transfers in Emergencies. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/summary-vfm-cash-in-emergencies-report-final.pdf>
- <sup>234</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid evaluation WASH.
- <sup>235</sup> DG ECHO, 2016. Thematic Policy Document n° 8: Humanitarian Protection Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises
- <sup>236</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid evaluation WASH.
- <sup>237</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report Mauritania.
- <sup>238</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>239</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise: DG ECHO. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo\\_-\\_self-report\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo_-_self-report_0.pdf)
- <sup>240</sup> Council Regulation N (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning Humanitarian Aid, Article 7. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:01996R1257-20031120&from=EN>
- <sup>241</sup> NEAR, 2017. Open letter - Localisation Marker Working Group Definitions Outcome. Available at: [http://www.near.ngo/imgtemp/downloadfile/Open%20Letter%20on%20Localization%20Working%20Group%20Definition%20June%202017%20\\_1498019781.pdf](http://www.near.ngo/imgtemp/downloadfile/Open%20Letter%20on%20Localization%20Working%20Group%20Definition%20June%202017%20_1498019781.pdf) [Consulted on 29 October 2017]
- <sup>242</sup> ODI, 2017. From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11588.pdf>
- <sup>243</sup> Germax, 2013. Working directly with local NGOs: Evaluation of the potential effectiveness and efficiency gains of working directly with local NGOs in the humanitarian interventions of the Commission.
- <sup>244</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Available at : [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo\\_-\\_self-report\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo_-_self-report_0.pdf)
- <sup>245</sup> Development Initiatives, 2017. Global humanitarian assistance report 2017. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>
- <sup>246</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Available at : [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo\\_-\\_self-report\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo_-_self-report_0.pdf)
- <sup>247</sup> DFID, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/dfid\\_-\\_self\\_report\\_.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/dfid_-_self_report_.pdf)
- <sup>248</sup> GPPi, 2017. Independent Grand Bargain Report. Available at: [http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/media/pub/2017/Horvath\\_\\_Steets\\_\\_Ruppert\\_\\_2017\\_\\_Independent\\_Grand\\_Bargain\\_Report.PDF](http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2017/Horvath__Steets__Ruppert__2017__Independent_Grand_Bargain_Report.PDF)
- <sup>249</sup> Valid Evaluation, 2017. The Value for Money of Multi-Year Humanitarian Funding: Emerging Finding. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/value\\_for\\_money\\_of\\_myf\\_and\\_planning\\_-\\_emerging\\_trends\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/value_for_money_of_myf_and_planning_-_emerging_trends_0.pdf)  
See also: OCHA (2017) Evaluation of Multi-Year Planning. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/myp\\_evaluation\\_final\\_report\\_-\\_february\\_2017.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/myp_evaluation_final_report_-_february_2017.pdf) []
- <sup>250</sup> Development Initiatives, 2017. Global humanitarian assistance report 2017. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>
- <sup>251</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid evaluation Food.
- <sup>252</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report Myanmar.
- <sup>253</sup> Myanmar ranks 26th among the recipients of EU humanitarian aid funding in 2016 with EUR 17 million.
- <sup>254</sup> Despite being asked, it seems it is not systematically done. See ECA, 2016. Did the Commission effectively manage the Humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region? Available at: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16\\_15/SR\\_GREAT\\_LAKES\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_15/SR_GREAT_LAKES_EN.pdf)
- <sup>255</sup> ODI, 2017. From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system. Op. Cit

- <sup>256</sup> In general, heading 4 redeployments need the approval of the budgetary authorities. The Commission can only decide unilaterally in case of transfers within titles (capped at 10%) and chapters of the same Heading. Exception is made to the end of year transfer (FR ART26.2 b), whereby the unused funds of titles within H4 can be transferred to the Humanitarian aid budget line in case of a new crisis.
- <sup>257</sup> There would have rationale to accelerate that process in the next MFF.
- <sup>258</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report DRC.
- <sup>259</sup> Partners consulted as part of this evaluation have raised this as an obstacle.
- <sup>260</sup> Ecdpm, 2016. 'Living Apart Together' EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis. Available at: <http://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/DP206-Living-Apart-Together-Medinilla-Herrero-Deneckere-December-2016.pdf>
- <sup>261</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.
- <sup>262</sup> Detailed financial information is however available to DG ECHO staff from the financial statement annex which is submitted together with each Single Form. That information is however not available in standardised manner (currently, partners can submit budgets in their own preferred format as long as it contains required level of detail). This is the main weakness in current reporting. See also: DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo\\_-\\_self-report\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/echo_-_self-report_0.pdf)
- <sup>263</sup> Cost per beneficiary at the action level is however standardly available from the information systems (see 0).
- <sup>264</sup> Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DG ECHO's Humanitarian Aid Actions
- <sup>265</sup> Information systems do evolve and management and monitoring system changes might more readily enable the analysis in the future.
- <sup>266</sup> Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DG ECHO's Humanitarian Aid Actions
- <sup>267</sup> Ratio of the value of transfers to total (administrative and transfer) costs.
- <sup>268</sup> Calculating an alpha ratio calculation is less straight-forward in case of provision of services
- <sup>269</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report, Tanzania. Once the project is being implement, the focus of the scrutiny shifts towards achieving results as long as the financials do not deviate from plans– which is considered to be proportionate.
- <sup>270</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report, Mauritania.
- <sup>271</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August. And ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.
- <sup>272</sup> Some suggestions for questions to be included are already included in the Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DG ECHO's Humanitarian Aid Actions
- <sup>273</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Op. cit.
- <sup>274</sup> BCG, 2017. Unleashing More Time and Money for Humanitarian Aid. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/cost-efficiency-development-unleashing-more-time-and-money-for-humanitarian-aid.aspx>
- <sup>275</sup> Op. cit.
- <sup>276</sup> GPPi, 2017. Harmonizing Donor Reporting. Available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/gaston\\_2017\\_harmonizing\\_donor\\_reporting.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/gaston_2017_harmonizing_donor_reporting.pdf)
- <sup>277</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Op. cit.
- <sup>278</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014); EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan; Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (DIPECHO) in Indonesia.
- <sup>279</sup> Multiple evaluation including: Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region; ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>280</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014).
- <sup>281</sup> Total programme cost divided by the total value of the transfers provided to recipients. A TCTR of 1 means all funding was transferred to beneficiaries. A TCTR above 2 means the costs to deliver a transfer was more than twice the value of the transfer itself.
- <sup>282</sup> Since this ratio is now standardly available from filling the Single Form, more benchmarks will be available to DG ECHO directly through its information system.
- <sup>283</sup> ODI, 2017. From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11588.pdf> [Consulted on 29 October 2017]
- <sup>284</sup> GPPi, 2017. Independent Grand Bargain Report. Available at: [http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/media/pub/2017/Horvath\\_\\_Steets\\_\\_Ruppert\\_\\_2017\\_\\_Independent\\_Grand\\_Bargain\\_Report.PDF](http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2017/Horvath__Steets__Ruppert__2017__Independent_Grand_Bargain_Report.PDF)
- <sup>285</sup> Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DG ECHO's Humanitarian Aid Actions
- <sup>286</sup> EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan; Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region
- <sup>287</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region
- <sup>288</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>289</sup> ICF, 2017. Field report DRC.
- <sup>290</sup> EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan; health interventions evaluation Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon.
- <sup>291</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region; ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia.

- <sup>292</sup> The “Grand Bargain on efficiency” calls for more financial transparency, scaling up the use of cash-based programming and more coordination in its delivery, a reduction in duplication and management costs, more support to national first responders, more harmonised and simplified reporting requirements, less earmarking, more multi-year humanitarian funding, more participation of beneficiaries, and commissioning of functional expenditure reviews.
- <sup>293</sup> See respective rapid evaluations.
- <sup>294</sup> ICF, 2017, Field report Tanzania.
- <sup>295</sup> See list included in Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DG ECHO’s Humanitarian Aid Actions, which mentions the factors quoted above as well.
- <sup>296</sup> See respective rapid evaluations.
- <sup>297</sup> As also confirmed by at least two evaluations: ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013); Aguaconsult, 2012. Review of existing practices to ensure participation of Disaster-affected communities in Humanitarian aid operations.
- <sup>298</sup> ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission’s Humanitarian Activities in Colombia; the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon, ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014); Particip, 2013. Food security and nutrition: Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian context (2009-2012).
- <sup>299</sup> DFID has decided to channel its funding (PHASE programme) to the region through DG ECHO, thus effectively increasing the EU budget for humanitarian aid and providing £139 million between 2014 and 2017 through a multi-year approach. The programme was expected to give DG ECHO a greater opportunity to focus on resilience and prevention
- <sup>300</sup> ICF, 2017. Evaluation of the European Commission’s interventions in the Humanitarian Health sector, (2014-2016).
- <sup>301</sup> ECA, 2017. The Bêkou EU trust fund for the Central African Republic: a hopeful beginning despite some shortcomings. Available at: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR17\\_11/SR\\_BEKOU\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR17_11/SR_BEKOU_EN.pdf)
- <sup>302</sup> Though there are some ad-hoc activities being undertaken in that regard
- <sup>303</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO’s Actions in the field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015).
- <sup>304</sup> European Commission, 2014. Resilience Marker. General Guidance. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience\\_marker\\_guidance\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_marker_guidance_en.pdf)
- <sup>305</sup> The marker is a tool to assess to what extent humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO integrate resilience considerations. It seeks to enhance the quality of humanitarian actions.
- <sup>306</sup> European Commission, 2014. Resilience Marker. General Guidance. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience\\_marker\\_guidance\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/resilience_marker_guidance_en.pdf)
- <sup>307</sup> European Commission, 2015. EU Commissioner Stylianides addresses high-level aid conference in Dubai. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/eu-commissioner-stylianides-addresses-high-level-aid-conference-dubai\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/eu-commissioner-stylianides-addresses-high-level-aid-conference-dubai_en)
- <sup>308</sup> European Parliament, 2012. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: towards more effective aid. Policy briefing. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing\\_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE\\_SP\(2012\)491435\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2012)491435_EN.pdf)
- <sup>309</sup> European Parliament, 2012. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: towards more effective aid. Policy briefing. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing\\_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE\\_SP\(2012\)491435\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2012)491435_EN.pdf)
- <sup>310</sup> DG ECHO, 2012. Management Plan 2013. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/management-plan-2013-dg-echo\\_januari2013\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/management-plan-2013-dg-echo_januari2013_en.pdf)
- <sup>311</sup> European Court of Auditors, 2016. Did the Commission effectively manage the humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region? No.15. Available at: [http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16\\_15/SR\\_GREAT\\_LAKES\\_EN.pdf](http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_15/SR_GREAT_LAKES_EN.pdf)
- <sup>312</sup> European Commission, 2017. New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). Note to the attention of Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management.
- <sup>313</sup> European Commission, 2017. New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). Note to the attention of Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management.
- <sup>314</sup> European Commission. 2017. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU’s external action. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint\\_communication\\_-\\_a\\_strategic\\_approach\\_to\\_resilience\\_in\\_the\\_eus\\_external\\_action-2017.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint_communication_-_a_strategic_approach_to_resilience_in_the_eus_external_action-2017.pdf)
- <sup>315</sup> European Commission, 2017. New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). Note to the attention of Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management.
- <sup>316</sup> European Parliament, 2012. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: towards more effective aid. Policy briefing. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing\\_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE\\_SP\(2012\)491435\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2012)491435_EN.pdf)
- <sup>317</sup> ICF, 2017. Open Public Consultation. Figure A1.13 To what extent do you agree that most humanitarian aid activities / approaches financed by DG ECHO continue even after DG ECHO humanitarian aid funding has ended (e.g. continued by the local community or another donor)? N=38
- <sup>318</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.
- <sup>319</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.
- <sup>320</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.



- <sup>321</sup> ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO HIP, emergency and ad-hoc decisions 2012-2016.
- <sup>322</sup> ICF, 2017. Project mapping.
- <sup>323</sup> ICF, 2017. Case study: Tanzania.
- <sup>324</sup> ADE, unpublished. Evaluation of the DG ECHO interventions in India and Nepal, 2013-2017.
- <sup>325</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO field network completed from 12 June to 04 August.
- <sup>326</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO framework partners completed from 07 June to 04 August.
- <sup>327</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO field network completed from 12 June to 04 August.
- <sup>328</sup> European Commission, 2007. *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf)
- <sup>329</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>330</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid Evaluation: WASH.
- <sup>331</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO field network completed from 12 June to 04 August.
- <sup>332</sup> ICF, 2017. Case study Mauritania and ICF, 2016. Evaluation of the European Commission's interventions in the humanitarian Health sector, 2014-2016.
- <sup>333</sup> ICF, 2017. Analysis of DG ECHO HIP, emergency and ad-hoc decisions 2012-2016.
- <sup>334</sup> ICF, 2017. Case study Mauritania.
- <sup>335</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.
- <sup>336</sup> ICF, 2017. Survey of DG ECHO local implementing partners completed from 07 July to 11 August.
- <sup>337</sup> See European Parliament, 2012. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: towards more effective aid. Policy briefing. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing\\_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE\\_SP\(2012\)491435\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2012/491435/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2012)491435_EN.pdf)
- <sup>338</sup> ICF, 2017. Open Public Consultation. Figure A1.14 To what extent do you agree that most humanitarian aid activities / approaches financed by DG ECHO transition into the next phase of development after DG ECHO humanitarian aid funding has ended? N=38
- <sup>339</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>340</sup> ICF, 2017. Rapid Evaluation: Protection.
- <sup>341</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>342</sup> Interview with DEVCO
- <sup>343</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>344</sup> European Commission (2017). *New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)*. Note to the attention of Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management.
- <sup>345</sup> Pilot countries include:
- <sup>346</sup> ICF, 2017. Meta Evaluation.
- <sup>347</sup> ICF analysis of Data extracted from EVA database on 19 April 2017.
- <sup>348</sup> By definition, a minimum of 15% of DG ECHO initial planned budget needs to be spent in forgotten crises.
- <sup>349</sup> DG ECHO partners helpdesk website, FCA or forgotten crisis assessment, available at: [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/financing\\_decisions/dgecho\\_strategy/fca](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/financing_decisions/dgecho_strategy/fca)
- <sup>350</sup> For all three countries, the IAF score of the overall situation in the 2013-2016 period was 3 (moderate needs), with the exception of Bangladesh and Pakistan receiving score 2 in 2015.
- <sup>351</sup> DG ECHO, 2015. Assessing needs, vulnerability and risk. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/needs-assessments\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/needs-assessments_en)
- <sup>352</sup> Multiple evaluations including: Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (DIPECHO) in Indonesia; Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008); Evaluation of Education in emergencies
- <sup>353</sup> Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (DIPECHO) in Indonesia.
- <sup>354</sup> This was evidenced in six evaluations DG ECHO humanitarian aid actions in the 2012-2016 period.
- <sup>355</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013).
- <sup>356</sup> Evaluation of DG ECHO's action in education in emergencies.
- <sup>357</sup> ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia.
- <sup>358</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).
- <sup>359</sup> Multiple evaluations including: ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014); EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan; ADE, 2014. Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2008-2012); ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014); Channel research, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon; ADE, 2012. Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia; Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015); Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector.
- <sup>360</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014).
- <sup>361</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis 2012-2014.
- <sup>362</sup> Multiple evaluations including: Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008); ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014); EY and Transtec, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO intervention in Pakistan; Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of

Enhanced Response Capacity Funding; ADE, 2014. Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2008-2012).

<sup>363</sup> See: Bailey S., and Harvey, P. 2015. State of evidence on humanitarian cash transfers Background Note for the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9591.pdf>; ODI, 2015. Doing cash differently How cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfer. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9828.pdf>

<sup>364</sup> Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines_en)

<sup>365</sup> This was identified in the interviews with the Member State stakeholders.

<sup>366</sup> Since the entry into force in 2013 of the new EU Financial Regulation (FR), the Commission is also to receive External Assigned Revenue (ExAR) and, based on Article 1(2)(b) of the FR, a few Member States including Austria, Luxembourg and UK have delegated part of their funding to humanitarian aid to DG ECHO.

<sup>367</sup> Multiple evaluations including: Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding; ADE, 2014. Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2008-2012).; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis (2012 – 2014).

<sup>368</sup> Multiple evaluations including: ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014); ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013); Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region, Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015); Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding.; Particip, 2013. Evaluation of the European Commission's Humanitarian Action in the Shelter Sector; Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008).

<sup>369</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's interventions in the Sahel (2010-2014).

<sup>370</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions on Building Resilience in the LAC Region

<sup>371</sup> ICF, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Drought Risk Reduction in the Horn of Africa and DIPECHO Central Asia and South Caucasus (2009 - 2013); Particip, 2012. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Legal Framework for Funding of Humanitarian Actions (FPA 2008).

<sup>372</sup> Particip, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015).

<sup>373</sup> ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the DG ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis 2012-2014.

<sup>374</sup> Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding; and Education in Emergencies evaluation

<sup>375</sup> Particip, 2014. Mid-term evaluation of Enhanced Response Capacity Funding.

<sup>376</sup> However, other donors consulted in the evaluation showed even more flexible approaches to funding and this should be reviewed by DG ECHO. For example, SIDA has established framework agreements which, based on an emergency response, in cases of emergencies can be used in very flexible ways, optimising

<sup>377</sup> More information on core commitments available at <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/resources/world-humanitarian-summit#core-commitments>

<sup>378</sup> More information on the EU individual commitments available at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/european-and-international-cooperation/world-humanitarian-summit/eu-commitments\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/european-and-international-cooperation/world-humanitarian-summit/eu-commitments_en)

<sup>379</sup> This sub-section includes considerations on the following WHS core commitment areas: 1) Political leadership to prevent and end conflict; 2) Leave no one behind: A commitment to address forced displacement; 3) Changing people's lives: From delivering aid to ending needs and 4) Natural disasters and climate change: - Managing risks and crises differently

<sup>380</sup> The guardian, December 2015, Is it time to rethink the divide between humanitarian and development funding?

<sup>381</sup> Future Humanitarian Financing, 2015, Looking Beyond the Crisis

<sup>382</sup> European Commission, 2017. New approach on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).

<sup>383</sup> Idem

<sup>384</sup> A. Medinilla and A. Herrero Cangas, December 2016, Living Apart Together, EU Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Situations of Fragility and Protracted Crisis

<sup>385</sup> ICF, 2017, Rapid evaluation report: cross-cutting theme of protection

<sup>386</sup> ICF, 2017, Rapid evaluation report: cross-cutting theme of advocacy

<sup>387</sup> Coe, J. and Majot, 2013, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in NGO Advocacy - Findings from Comparative Policy Advocacy MEL Review Project.

<sup>388</sup> DG ECHO factsheet, Gender: Different needs, adapted assistance

<sup>389</sup> ICF, 2016. Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015)

<sup>390</sup> As above

<sup>391</sup> WHS, May 2016, Commitments to Action

<sup>392</sup> Liz Steele, January 2016, Making humanitarian aid transparency a reality in 2016

<sup>393</sup> OECD, 2015, Financing in Crisis? Making humanitarian finance fit for the future

<sup>394</sup> Through, inter alia, commissioning an "analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system" as well as a "study on approaches to assess cost-effectiveness of DG ECHO's humanitarian aid actions"

<sup>395</sup> ICVA, March 2017, The Grand Bargain explained: An ICVA briefing paper

<sup>396</sup> Humanitarian Policy Group, April 2016, Time to let go, Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era

<sup>397</sup> As above  
<sup>398</sup> Not included in the Single Form yet  
<sup>399</sup> E.g. the NEAR network and Demac project  
<sup>400</sup> Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible.  
<sup>401</sup> ODI, 2017. From Grand Bargain to beneficiary: An analysis of funding flows through the humanitarian system  
<sup>402</sup> The meta-evaluation showed that local NGOs were still often not sufficiently visible in the chain of humanitarian aid delivery.  
<sup>403</sup> The meta-evaluation identified the need to provide further incentives for weaker, although eligible, partners to “grow within the system”.  
<sup>404</sup> In March 2015, Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash-Based Assistance to respond to Humanitarian Needs were adopted. The latter were developed to guide donors and humanitarian partners on how best to work with multi-purpose assistance and make the link with longer-term resilience building and national social protection systems. More recently (January 2017), DG ECHO issued Guidance to partners on how to implement medium and large-scale cash transfer programmes  
<sup>405</sup> The DG also strengthened outreach to the private sector, calling for its increased engagement in supporting the delivery of cash-based interventions.  
<sup>406</sup> For example, operational support to partners, demonstrated in several contexts including Syria response and response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.  
<sup>407</sup> DG ECHO, 2017, self-reporting on GB work streams  
<sup>408</sup> More details available in: ADE, 2016. Evaluation of the use of different Transfer Modalities in DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions (2011-2014).  
<sup>409</sup> In this context, the GB called for: Reducing the costs and measure the gained efficiencies of delivering assistance with technology (including green) and innovation; Better sharing of partner assessment information as well as data about affected people (see also GB commitment 5 below on improving joint needs assessment); Provision of transparent and comparable cost structure (linked to GB commitment 1); Harmonising of partnership agreements; Reducing duplication of management and other costs through maximising efficiencies in procurement and logistics for commonly required goods and services; and Make joint regular functional monitoring and performance reviews (linked to GB commitment 9 below).  
<sup>410</sup> More information available at: <http://www.unsystem.org/content/harmonization-business-practices-1>  
<sup>411</sup> ICVA, March 2017, the Grand Bargain explained: An ICVA briefing paper  
<sup>412</sup> Inspire consortium, June 2017, Independent Grand Bargain Report  
<sup>413</sup> ICVA, March 2017, the Grand Bargain explained: An ICVA briefing paper  
<sup>414</sup> Evidence shows that main donors (e.g. USAID, World Bank, SIDA) have already relied upon the needs assessments produced by DG ECHO to help decide where and how to fund interventions and what type of practices to support  
<sup>415</sup> DG ECHO, 2017, self-reporting on the GB  
<sup>416</sup> For example, in Pakistan and Cameroon, affected communities were involved in the needs assessments undertaken by partners (data collection) as well as in the design of the projects. In the context of shelter-related interventions, beneficiaries were, in some instances, consulted about transitional and durable shelter designs.  
<sup>417</sup> ICVA, March 2017, the Grand Bargain explained: An ICVA briefing paper  
<sup>418</sup> Development initiatives, 2017, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017  
<sup>419</sup> In such contexts, humanitarian needs will be acute for several years, which make multi-year planning and funding relevant  
<sup>420</sup> Emergency preparedness for crises is a core part of humanitarian action, and can benefit from multi-annual financing, especially through the cost efficiencies that can come about through pre-positioning emergency stocks and equipment. Providing multi-annual finance for preparedness can also facilitate alignment with investments in longer-term measures to reduce risk, and boost resilience  
<sup>421</sup> Large-scale humanitarian crises might require long-term response, and are likely to qualify for multi-year funding  
<sup>422</sup> The Grand Bargain, 2016, A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need  
<sup>423</sup> In addition, the maximum allocation was increased and the carrying over of unused amounts to the following year(s) has been allowed  
<sup>424</sup> The EAR now represents approximately 28% of DG ECHO's total annual allocations  
<sup>425</sup> Including Heading 4 redeployments, DG ECHO operational reserve and Emergency toolbox HIP  
<sup>426</sup> DG ECHO, 2017, self-reporting on progress made on the GB  
<sup>427</sup> Category I - financial contribution directed to a specific project in a specific country  
<sup>428</sup> Not earmarking of budget and activities  
<sup>429</sup> The Grand Bargain, 2016, A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need  
<sup>430</sup> Penoy, Roselli, Skolem, Torpp and Wengen, 2017, Unleashing more time and money for humanitarian aid  
<sup>431</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Grand Bargain annual self-reporting exercise. Op. cit.  
<sup>432</sup> March 2017, Workshop Summary Report: Piloting Harmonized Donor Reporting  
<sup>433</sup> Burkle, Greenough, Martone, 2014, The Changing Face of Humanitarian Crises  
<sup>434</sup> According to the World Bank, MICs are those countries with a Gross National Income per capita of more than USD 1,045 but less than USD12,736  
<sup>435</sup> OECD, guidelines on the WHS, putting policy into practice  
<sup>436</sup> OECD, 2016, Delivering the Grand Bargain and the world humanitarian summit: monitoring and supporting the progress of OECD donors  
<sup>437</sup> OECD, 2015, Financing in Crisis? Making humanitarian finance fit for the future

- <sup>438</sup> Brigitte Rohwerder, April 2016, Humanitarian response in middle-income countries
- <sup>439</sup> Evidence suggests that, in MICs, scarce public resources could be used to catalyse the much larger levels of private capital to finance sustainable investments, which could then reduce humanitarian pressures and promote resilience. From Brigitte Rohwerder, 2016, Humanitarian response in middle-income countries.
- <sup>440</sup> This evolution has to be read in the light of increasing contributions to Syria in recent years.
- <sup>441</sup> Specific needs, inter alia, include: 1) the acute scale of the challenges (infrastructure is complex in large cities and its restoration is often too costly for humanitarian agencies that are geared to more traditional emergency responses); 2) the duration of the challenges (the habitants of cities in Iraq, for example, have been living in a combination of international armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts for decades); 3) the political implications of the operating environment (good relationships with local authorities are crucial in this context); and 4) the challenges associated with the enforcement and application of IHL. From OECD, guidelines on the WHS, putting policy into practice.
- <sup>442</sup> ICF, 2017, Meta evaluation
- <sup>443</sup> DG ECHO, 2016, Management Plan 2017
- <sup>444</sup> High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the United Nations Secretary-General, January 2016, Too important to fail—addressing the humanitarian financing gap
- <sup>445</sup> For example, DG ECHO showed significant adaptability to the specific and evolving context inside Syria and its neighbouring countries. Another interesting example was provided by the Sahel region where DG ECHO adapted (annually) the operational objectives of the HIPs to differences in the humanitarian and political context. A final example of “adaptation” of strategies in the context of protracted is provided by shelter intervention in Haiti, where the EU funded a large range of activities since the earthquake in 2010.
- <sup>446</sup> EU humanitarian aid interventions increasingly went beyond the traditional focus on ‘saving lives’ in urgent crises to also include relief to people affected by longer-lasting crises, rehabilitation and reconstruction work, disaster preparedness, addressing the consequences of population movements, etc. from: European Parliament, 2016, Does the EU have the right instruments to finance assistance in protracted crises and the needs of upper middle income countries?
- <sup>447</sup> In line with the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, DG ECHO provided in ways that were supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development. Evaluation findings showed that DG ECHO, through the years, placed a greater importance on promoting LRRD approaches and defining exit strategies (even if the extent to which the latter were successful in practice was assessed as still patchy/inconsistent across sectors and geographies).
- <sup>448</sup> European Parliament, 2016, Does the EU have the right instruments to finance assistance in protracted crises and the needs of upper middle income countries?
- <sup>449</sup> As above
- <sup>450</sup> Such as China, Brazil, India, Russia, Turkey, South Africa and South Korea, as well as regional organisations such as the United Arab Emirates, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Association of South-East Asian Nations
- <sup>451</sup> The Guardian, April 2016, Time to let go, Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era
- <sup>452</sup> DEVEX, October 2011, The hype over emerging donors
- <sup>453</sup> As above
- <sup>454</sup> ICF, 2017, Meta-evaluation
- <sup>455</sup> With the newly elected President Donald Trump pushing to reduce foreign aid by up to 37%. From: Molli Ferrarello, July 2017, What “America First” means for US foreign aid
- <sup>456</sup> With the UK’s leaving, the EU could lose between 10 % and 13 % of its world aid share, thus losing its role as one of the biggest world’s donors. From: European Parliament, 2017, Possible impacts of Brexit on EU development and humanitarian policies.
- <sup>457</sup> E.g. Turkey, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and some BRIC countries as well as the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- <sup>458</sup> Humanitarian Policy Group, 2016, Time to let go, Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era
- <sup>459</sup> Charlotta Benedek, OCHA, The Changing Humanitarian Landscape and the Role of the Private Sector
- <sup>460</sup> Recent examples include the mobilization of a coalition of more than 48 companies with major assets and operations in West Africa as the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group. Their members have provided direct support through donating funding, personnel, equipment, and through building infrastructure, as well as lending expertise in construction, logistics, and distribution services. Another example is provided by the growing role of MasterCard in facilitating secure and efficient payments to displaced persons, for example in Turkey, Lebanon or Greece.
- <sup>461</sup> OCHA, Partnerships with the private sector
- <sup>462</sup> Charlotta Benedek, OCHA, The Changing Humanitarian Landscape and the Role of the Private Sector
- <sup>463</sup> Evidence shows that logistics, cash based intervention and education in emergencies are areas with good potential to develop further synergies
- <sup>464</sup> A similar reflection was already carried out, in 2014, within the development sector with the adoption of a Communication on a Stronger Role of the Private Sector in Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Countries. The latter provided some considerations on the role of the private sector in fostering development as well as a strategic framework for strengthening the role of the private sector with a view to achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.
- <sup>465</sup> Charlotta Benedek, OCHA, The Changing Humanitarian Landscape and the Role of the Private Sector
- <sup>466</sup> ECA, 2016, Special report no 15/2016: Did the Commission effectively manage the Humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region?

<sup>467</sup> DG ECHO, 2017. Note to DG ECHO management, Action Plan to implement the recommendations issued by the European Court of Auditors on its Special Report "Humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region"

<sup>468</sup> ECHO, 2017. Note to DG ECHO management, interviews with ECHO staff and Commission's reply to the ECA report (included in annex of the ECA report)

<sup>469</sup> Since 2017 Article 2 of DG ECHO's worldwide financial decision states that DG ECHO funded actions may last up to 48 months compared to 24 months in the past but it does not provide details on the conditions linked to these longer term financing.

<sup>470</sup> Pre-financing could be paid in several tranches to ensure that DG ECHO maintains control and the possibility to stop projects when justified without losing the funds.

<sup>471</sup> Setting up initial multi-annual agreements requires more time both on partner and donor side than annual agreements in the beginning because of the complexity of their design. However, savings can be realised in subsequent years. Staff time that is freed up from administering small, repeated grants could be re-allocated to activities such as: increased interaction with partners on humanitarian issues, supporting better context analysis and helping define better project outcomes together with partners and other donors

<sup>472</sup> Partners would have more time to study the local context and develop longer term relationships with the same population groups, leading to more participatory approaches and community-driven design.

<sup>473</sup> See for example: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRC\\_HRP\\_2017.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRC_HRP_2017.pdf)



# **Comprehensive evaluation of the European Union humanitarian aid, 2012-2016**

Executive Summary – FRENCH version

## Résumé analytique

### 1. Objectifs et champ d'application de l'évaluation

Cette évaluation fournit une évaluation globale et indépendante de l'aide humanitaire octroyée par l'Union européenne (UE) au cours de la période 2012-2016. Les objectifs principaux de l'évaluation étaient les suivants :

- évaluer les actions d'aide humanitaire de l'UE, mises en œuvre par l'UE par l'intermédiaire de sa Direction générale pour la protection civile et les opérations d'aide humanitaire européennes (DG ECHO) sur la période 2012-2016, en analysant la manière dont l'UE a exercé son rôle de bailleur de fonds et les résultats obtenus dans différents contextes de crise au cours de la période mentionnée. Cela comprend les cadres d'orientation et de mise en œuvre définis par la DG ECHO pour l'aide humanitaire, ainsi que la provision de cette aide. Cette évaluation globale, externe et indépendante respecte les dispositions relatives à l'évaluation du Règlement concernant l'aide humanitaire (HAR) et du Règlement financier relatif à l'économie, l'efficacité et l'efficience ; et
- fournir des recommandations dans le but d'améliorer les actions et approches futures dans ce domaine. Ces recommandations sont basées sur les enseignements tirés des expériences passées et prennent en compte les récents événements survenus sur la scène internationale (p. ex., le Sommet humanitaire mondial (SHM) et la Grande Négociation (« Grand Bargain ») (GB), les récents rapports de la Cour des comptes européenne (CCE) sur la provision de l'aide humanitaire par l'UE et les défis liés à la provision de cette aide).

L'évaluation couvrait toutes les actions d'aide humanitaire financées par l'UE par l'intermédiaire de la DG ECHO. Le Mécanisme de protection civile (MEPC) de l'UE et l'initiative Volontaires de l'aide de l'UE (VAUE) n'étaient pas concernés par cette évaluation, mais ils ont été pris en compte dans le cadre de l'évaluation de la cohérence. Le nouveau Règlement relatif à la provision d'une aide d'urgence au sein de l'UE<sup>1</sup> n'était pas non plus concerné par cette évaluation.

### 2. Approche méthodologique et validité des résultats de l'évaluation

Quatre approches d'évaluation complémentaires ont été utilisées pour élaborer cette évaluation globale :

- une **méta-évaluation**, qui consistait en une méta-synthèse des 27 évaluations conduites par la DG ECHO au cours de la période d'évaluation ;
- cinq **évaluations rapides** de thèmes et de secteurs spécifiques sélectionnés sur la base de : (1) l'importance financière/stratégique du secteur ou du thème ; et (2) la nécessité de compléter les lacunes existantes dans la base de connaissances. Cette démarche a permis de sélectionner trois secteurs (Sécurité alimentaire et moyens de subsistance, Eau, assainissement et hygiène (désignés par l'acronyme WASH), et Abris et habitat, ainsi que deux thèmes (Plaidoyer et Protection) ;
- une **évaluation rétrospective**, qui a apporté les réponses aux questions d'évaluation définies par la DG ECHO dans les Termes de référence (TdR). Cette évaluation était fondée sur un cadre d'évaluation détaillé, élaboré pour cette étude et étayée par la méta-évaluation, les évaluations rapides et tous les outils de recherche mis en place pendant l'étude ; et

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<sup>1</sup> Règlement UE 2016369 du Conseil. Disponible sur : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0369&from=EN>.

- une **évaluation prospective**, qui a pris en compte les implications de l'évolution du contexte et du secteur de l'aide humanitaire pour les activités de la DG ECHO.

Les approches utilisées pour l'évaluation ont été étayées par un ensemble d'outils de recherche développés et adaptés aux objectifs de cette évaluation afin de recueillir les points de vue et les contributions de toutes les parties prenantes concernées pour les activités d'aide humanitaire de l'UE. Les outils de recherche incluaient :

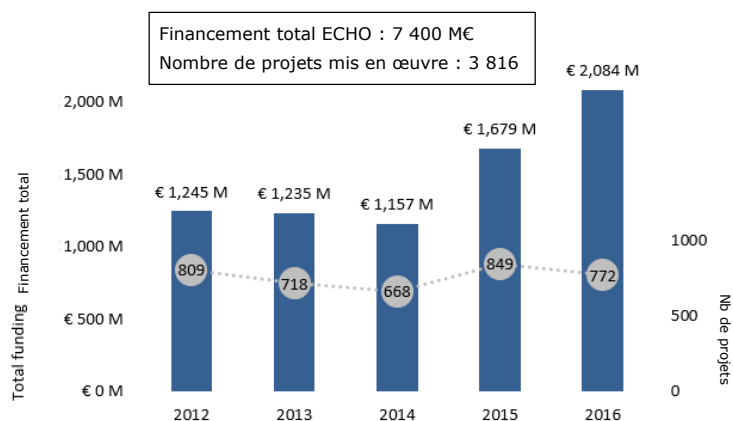
- une large revue de la littérature ;
- la « cartographie » de 183 actions d'aide humanitaire financées par l'UE ;
- 73 entretiens semi-structurés menés à différents stades de l'évaluation et impliquant entre une et quatre personnes interrogées par entretien ;
- trois missions sur le terrain en République démocratique du Congo (RDC), en Tanzanie, en Birmanie et en Mauritanie. Les missions incluaient des entretiens, des groupes de discussion et des visites de projets dans chacun des pays visités ;
- trois études en ligne ciblant : le personnel de terrain de la DG ECHO, les partenaires cadres de la DG ECHO et les partenaires de mise en œuvre locaux ;
- une consultation publique sur le site Web de la Commission Européenne ouverte de juillet à novembre 2017 ; et
- un atelier de validation organisé avec un échantillon représentatif des principaux groupes de parties prenantes de la DG ECHO.

Les approches d'évaluation complémentaires et les outils de recherche ont été utilisés pour améliorer la fiabilité et la validité des données collectées, de même que pour créer la base nécessaire à la vérification croisée, à la corroboration et à la triangulation des résultats de l'évaluation. Les intérêts particuliers des différentes parties prenantes ont été pris en compte dans le but de remédier à une éventuelle partialité et de garantir l'objectivité de l'évaluation.

### 3. Contexte et intervention de l'UE

Au cours de la période d'évaluation, l'UE a financé 3 816 actions individuelles par l'intermédiaire de la DG ECHO pour un montant total de 7 400 millions EUR. Comme l'illustre la Figure 1 ci-dessous, le montant d'aide le plus élevé a été alloué en 2016 (2 084 millions EUR) et le plus faible en 2014 (1 157 millions EUR). Le plus haut financement moyen par action a été enregistré en 2016 (2,7 millions EUR) tandis que le plus bas l'a été en 2012 (1,5 million EUR). En 2016, le montant moyen a été influencé par l'action « Assistance du filet de sécurité sociale d'urgence aux réfugiés en Turquie », action de Transfert monétaire à usages multiples d'une valeur de 338 millions EUR.

Figure 1. Montant total et nombre d'actions d'aide humanitaire financées par l'UE en 2012-2016

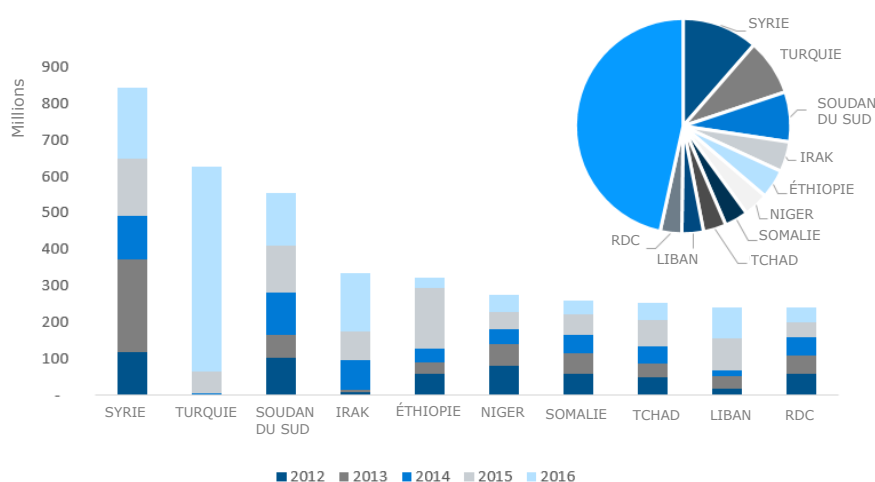




Source : ICF, 2017. Analyse de la base de données EVA de la DG ECHO, données extraites le 18 décembre 2017.

L'UE a financé des actions d'aide humanitaire dans 110 pays durant la période d'évaluation, mais 53,3 % du financement total ont été affectés aux 10 premiers pays bénéficiaires (Figure 2). Les trois premiers pays étaient la Syrie (844 millions EUR ou 11,4 % du financement total), la Turquie (625 millions EUR ou 8,4 %) et le Soudan du Sud (554 millions EUR ou 7,5 %).

Figure 2. Évolution des financements des 10 premiers pays, 2012-2016



Source : ICF, 2017. Analyse de la base de données EVA de la DG ECHO, données extraites le 18 décembre 2017.

La plus forte augmentation du financement en chiffres absolus a été observée au Moyen-Orient (à partir de 2014), alors que le financement n'a cessé de diminuer en Amérique centrale et en Amérique du Sud, aux Caraïbes, en Asie du Sud et dans le Pacifique.

En chiffres absolus, la santé est le seul secteur où le financement de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE a enregistré une augmentation constante tout au long de la période d'évaluation. Malgré une baisse de son budget en 2016, le secteur Sécurité alimentaire et moyens de subsistance est resté le plus financé pendant la période d'évaluation. En 2016, la ligne budgétaire « Transfert monétaire à usages multiples » nouvellement introduite a reçu le deuxième montant le plus élevé (343 millions EUR) suivie par la santé (260 millions EUR) et la protection (248 millions EUR).

Les Décisions de financement (désignés par l'acronyme HIP), présentés annuellement par la DG ECHO pour définir la réponse humanitaire attendue dans une région ou un pays spécifique, donnent une répartition du financement par objectif. Au cours de la période d'évaluation, la majorité du financement a été affectée aux situations d'urgence répondant au premier objectif « Crise d'origine humaine » variant entre 68 et 90 % du financement, selon l'année. Le financement affecté aux situations d'urgence répondant au deuxième objectif « Catastrophes naturelles » a varié entre 8 et 29 %. Le Programme de préparation aux catastrophes du service d'aide humanitaire de la Commission européenne (DIPECHO) a attiré 2 à 3 % des affectations.

#### 4. Principales conclusions de l'évaluation rétrospective

L'évaluation reposait sur 16 questions d'évaluation issues des TdR. Elle était également complétée par trois nouvelles questions d'évaluation définies par l'équipe responsable de l'évaluation. Ces questions étaient structurées autour des cinq principaux critères d'évaluation présentés dans les Directives Européennes pour une

meilleure réglementation<sup>2</sup>, complétées par un critère axé sur la durabilité de l'intervention de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE. Les conclusions liées à chacun de ces critères sont présentées ci-dessous.

Dans l'ensemble, l'évaluation fait état des très bonnes performances de l'UE. Cette dernière est considérée comme un bailleur de fonds qui s'appuie sur les besoins et les principes humanitaires avec des caractéristiques uniques, telles que son approche des partenaires d'implémentation, son réseau de terrain et le rôle qu'elle joue pour faire évoluer le système humanitaire. Des consultations à tous les niveaux ont dévoilé que les parties prenantes souhaitent vivement que la DG ECHO continue la vaste majorité des actions qu'elle a menées jusqu'à présent. Il a été toutefois relevé que certains domaines d'amélioration et changements méritaient d'être envisagés pour refléter les développements contextuels et d'autres développements pertinents ayant une incidence sur la provision de l'aide humanitaire.

## **i. Pertinence**

### ***Mesure dans laquelle les dotations du budget d'aide humanitaire de l'UE correspondaient aux besoins et aux objectifs d'aide humanitaire de l'UE***

Les dotations du budget de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE étaient définies sur la base d'un ensemble d'évaluations des besoins organisé à trois niveaux (l'évaluation des besoins au niveau local dans chaque zone géographique couverte ; l'évaluation des besoins aux niveaux national et régional contribuant aux HIPs ; et l'évaluation des besoins au niveau mondial articulée dans les documents stratégiques annuels). D'après les conclusions de l'évaluation, les dotations budgétaires étaient fondées sur les besoins pendant la période d'évaluation. Toutefois, il a fallu faire des choix, car le financement de la DG ECHO était et sera toujours insuffisant pour couvrir les besoins humanitaires croissants au niveau mondial.

Au cours de la période 2012-2016, les changements des financements alloués aux différentes régions étaient dans l'ensemble justifiés. En revanche, ils auraient pu être mieux communiqués aux parties prenantes de la DG ECHO, aussi bien en interne qu'en externe, y compris aux partenaires cadres et aux autres bailleurs de fonds. Le financement octroyé aux secteurs était dans l'ensemble approprié, mais il n'était pas toujours cohérent. Une approche de financement à plus long terme et plus stratégique aurait été parfois nécessaire afin également de garantir un certain niveau de « prédictibilité » aux partenaires cadres. Globalement, le budget de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE après compensation avec différents renforcements a été considéré comme étant à la hauteur des objectifs de l'UE et des résultats attendus, dans la mesure où il a permis à l'UE de répondre aux besoins humanitaires les plus urgents de manière efficace et efficiente. La DG ECHO a réussi à maximiser l'impact possible avec les moyens disponibles.

L'UE a fait des choix stratégiques clairs pour le financement de certaines régions pendant la période d'évaluation. Elle s'est davantage concentrée sur le Moyen-Orient, l'Afrique du Nord et les pays voisins de l'Europe (c.-à-d., en lien avec les répercussions de la crise syrienne), laissant un financement moindre à certaines régions ayant pourtant des besoins constants. Cette tendance était particulièrement marquée à la fin de la période d'évaluation. Si ces choix étaient justifiés par des évaluations des besoins à différents niveaux, ils reflètent également les choix qui ont dû être faits compte tenu des ressources disponibles. Ces choix ont suscité de vives réactions parmi les principales parties prenantes de la DG ECHO, ce qui a montré la nécessité de mieux communiquer la logique qui leur était associée.

### ***Mesure dans laquelle des stratégies appropriées, globales et adaptées au contexte étaient en place pour répondre aux besoins humanitaires et aux différents défis régionaux, y compris les objectifs à moyen et à plus long termes***

<sup>2</sup> Pour en savoir plus, voir : [https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en)

La réponse apportée en matière d'aide humanitaire par l'UE a été globalement exhaustive, appropriée et rapide compte tenu des besoins identifiés et des contextes opérationnels. Toutefois, ces critères n'étaient pas systématiquement remplis dans les différents contextes géographiques et sectoriels, ce qui laisse une marge d'amélioration pour l'avenir.

Les objectifs à moyen et long termes ont été de plus en plus pris en compte pendant la période d'évaluation. Toutefois, cette prise en compte pourrait être améliorée afin de soutenir le lien entre l'aide humanitaire, sous la forme d'une mesure de réponse rapide dans les situations de crise, et une action de développement à moyen et court termes.

Il est ressorti de l'évaluation que la DG ECHO adaptait ses stratégies aux contextes locaux et aux besoins évolutifs, tout en mettant l'accent sur certains secteurs et thèmes. Le passage des HIPs nationaux à des HIPs régionaux a été jugé approprié, mais il est apparu que cette nouvelle approche régionale pouvait être améliorée, notamment en ce qui concerne l'exécution et la pertinence de ces HIPs pour les régions ayant des contextes nationaux très différents. Ces améliorations permettraient de maximiser les avantages d'une approche multinationale. Les stratégies mises en place par la DG ECHO pour répondre aux besoins régionaux étaient appropriées, exhaustives et adaptées au contexte.

### ***Caractère approprié des partenariats de la DG ECHO***

La DG ECHO a sélectionné des partenaires appropriés compte tenu des besoins humanitaires, de l'expertise et des capacités des partenaires, du groupe de partenaires disponibles et au vu du contexte local. L'évaluation a constaté une concentration plus marquée du financement en faveur de projets à plus grande échelle par l'intermédiaire d'agences de l'ONU (en 2016, cela représentait plus de 50 % du financement de l'UE), ce qui s'explique en partie par les besoins liés à la crise en Syrie. Environ 20 % des partenaires cadres n'ont pas mis en œuvre d'action financée par l'UE pendant la période d'évaluation, dont 44 ONG. La DG ECHO devrait régulièrement évaluer le fonctionnement des partenariats existants et chercher à impliquer de « nouveaux » partenaires, lorsque c'est possible.

L'évaluation a également permis de conclure que l'implication de partenaires locaux dans la mise en œuvre d'activités d'aide humanitaire, qui dépend du contexte opérationnel, peut avoir des conséquences positives, notamment sur l'efficacité et la durabilité des interventions. Il est possible de faire participer davantage les partenaires de mise en œuvre locaux aux actions financées par l'UE. Même si 73 % des partenaires cadres interrogés ont affirmé avoir recours à des partenaires locaux, la nature et l'ampleur de cette implication varient considérablement d'un projet à l'autre. L'évaluation a également permis d'identifier plusieurs possibilités de concrétiser ce point de manière plus systématique, lorsque c'est approprié et possible.

### ***Mesure dans laquelle le réseau de terrain de la DG ECHO a ajouté de la valeur en termes d'efficacité et d'efficience***

Le réseau de terrain de la DG ECHO a fortement contribué à l'efficacité des actions d'aide humanitaire financées par l'UE. Il a notamment participé aux évaluations des besoins au niveau des HIPs et a ainsi rendu plus pertinentes les stratégies de la DG ECHO aux niveaux régional, local et sectoriel.

Le réseau de terrain a globalement apporté un soutien de grande qualité malgré certaines contraintes de capacités et d'autres défis. Les parties prenantes considèrent que le réseau de terrain est une caractéristique unique de la DG ECHO et qu'il lui permet d'être plus efficace et efficiente. La configuration actuelle du réseau de terrain permet à la DG ECHO d'intervenir rapidement lorsque des situations de crise apparaissent et que de nouveaux besoins émergent. La structure de la DG ECHO est adaptée aux objectifs, mais certaines améliorations lui permettraient également d'être

plus pérenne (p. ex., en comblant les lacunes dans le domaine de l'expertise technique).

### ***Mesure dans laquelle les objectifs d'aide humanitaire de l'UE répondent toujours au contexte et aux besoins humanitaires mondiaux***

Les objectifs d'aide humanitaire de l'UE sont très pertinents, car ils répondent aux besoins humanitaires continus au niveau mondial. Dans l'ensemble, les objectifs sont adaptés à l'avenir et conformes aux principes humanitaires. La DG ECHO pourrait mettre davantage l'accent sur ses orientations stratégiques, par exemple son choix de soutenir les pays voisins de l'UE et reconnaître le nombre croissant de crises complexes exigeant un soutien adéquat. En lien avec cela, l'aspect à plus long terme des interventions de l'UE pourrait être également souligné dans ses objectifs.

## **ii. Cohérence**

### ***Cohérence avec les principes humanitaires***

Globalement, les principes d'humanité, de neutralité, d'impartialité et d'indépendance étaient systématiquement pris en compte dans les politiques et les stratégies de la DG ECHO, et dans la grande majorité des actions financées par l'UE. Le Consensus européen sur l'aide humanitaire a clairement défini les principes humanitaires. Les politiques, les stratégies et le cadre de mise en œuvre de la DG ECHO ont apporté des clarifications sur la manière de les mettre en œuvre.

Il n'existait en revanche aucune ligne directrice sur les approches à adopter en cas de difficultés quant au respect des principes humanitaires ou des « tensions » entre eux (p. ex., engagement aux côtés des autorités nationales et locales par rapport aux principes d'indépendance et de neutralité ou respect des principes de neutralité, d'impartialité et d'indépendance par rapport à l'accès humanitaire dans des urgences complexes et d'origine humaine). Et ce, en dépit du fait que tous les bailleurs de fonds, y compris l'UE et ses partenaires cadres, ont parfois du mal à trouver un équilibre entre garantir le respect des principes humanitaires et éviter des répercussions négatives sur le terrain, en particulier pendant des crises complexes. La DG ECHO pourrait donner des conseils sur les « règles d'engagement » ou consulter ses partenaires cadres sur la manière de traiter les « dilemmes » possibles, tout en intégrant ces aspects dans sa stratégie plus globale pour promouvoir une approche basée sur les principes.

### ***Cohérence interne***

Les actions financées par l'UE étaient cohérentes en interne : Il existait un niveau élevé de cohérence entre les actions financées par l'UE dans différents pays et régions. Cette cohérence était principalement garantie par « l'approche portefeuille » adoptée par la DG ECHO et appliquée dans le processus de sélection des projets et fondée sur les connaissances locales du personnel de terrain de la DG ECHO. Au travers de cette approche, les projets étaient d'une part évalués individuellement, et d'autre part appréhendés ensemble dans le cadre d'un portefeuille de projets visant à faire face à une crise particulière ou à répondre à une série de besoins identifiés au niveau national ou régional. La complémentarité entre les différents projets à financer est donc clairement évaluée, lorsque c'est possible. Au cours de la période d'évaluation, la DG ECHO a également assuré la cohérence en préconisant par exemple des projets davantage multisectoriels et intégrés (c.-à-d., des projets avec des activités dans un secteur permettant aussi d'obtenir des résultats dans au moins un autre secteur), avec plus ou moins de succès. Des améliorations restent toutefois possibles, notamment au niveau de la cohérence dans le temps.

Cohérence avec d'autres responsabilités de la DG ECHO : Un cadre juridique et conceptuel clair existe pour assurer la cohérence entre l'aide humanitaire et les activités de protection civile de l'UE. Les synergies se sont améliorées pendant la période d'évaluation, mais il est possible d'aller plus loin afin d'améliorer systématiquement leur complémentarité et leur cohérence sur le terrain (p. ex., en

termes d'engagement auprès du personnel de terrain et des responsables de secteur spécialisés).

#### Cohérence avec d'autres financements externes de l'UE :

- Bien que limité, un certain niveau de coordination entre la DG ECHO et DEVCO existait sur le terrain et au niveau du siège durant la période d'évaluation. Plus spécifiquement, la DG ECHO a tenté d'engager un dialogue avec DEVCO au travers de différentes politiques et un travail de plaidoyer au niveau du siège. La coordination s'est développée au fil des ans, principalement grâce à l'importance grandissante accordée au lien entre l'aide d'urgence, la réhabilitation et le développement (désignés par l'acronyme LRRD) et la résilience. Le pilotage du lien entre l'aide humanitaire et développement dans différents contextes devrait permettre d'améliorer encore la cohérence entre les activités de la DG ECHO et de DEVCO, mais ce lien doit encore être rendu opérationnel. Les Fonds fiduciaire de l'UE constituent également une approche intéressante, qui pourrait permettre d'établir des liens plus constructifs entre les activités humanitaires et de développement. En raison de l'utilisation limitée des Fonds fiduciaire de l'UE dans les contextes humanitaires pendant la période d'évaluation, les éléments collectés pendant l'évaluation ne permettent pas d'évaluer la pertinence et la cohérence de la contribution de la DG ECHO au Fonds fiduciaire par rapport à d'autres actions financées dans le cadre ces mêmes Fonds.
- Faire face aux conséquences des mouvements de population est historiquement l'un des principaux objectifs des interventions d'aide humanitaire de l'UE qui a longtemps suscité des interactions limitées avec d'autres domaines de politique européenne. Étant donné la nature changeante des crises de déplacement et le contexte de la période d'évaluation, la Commission a développé une nouvelle Communication conjointe sur les déplacements forcés et le développement<sup>3</sup> soulignant clairement la nécessité de développer une approche cohérente impliquant tous les acteurs concernés. Elle doit toutefois être rapidement rendue opérationnelle afin de prendre une part active à des initiatives récentes telles que le Cadre de réponse globale pour les réfugiés et les Fonds fiduciaire de l'UE.
- Il existe un cadre politique relativement solide pour intégrer l'adaptation au changement climatique dans les interventions d'aide humanitaire de la DG ECHO, en particulier dans les activités de réduction des risques de catastrophe (RRC). Toutefois, cette démarche n'est pas systématique et une marge d'amélioration a été identifiée.

#### **Cohérence externe**

Cohérence avec les membres de l'UE : Des structures et des mécanismes de coordination existent pour promouvoir la cohérence entre les politiques et les activités d'aide humanitaire des États membres et de l'UE. Ces structures pourraient toutefois être utilisées plus efficacement, tandis que la coopération pourrait être renforcée en ce qui concerne l'affectation des ressources globales et des actions concrètes sur le terrain.

Cohérence avec les autres bailleurs de fonds : Pendant la période d'évaluation, la DG ECHO a renforcé la coopération avec d'autres bailleurs de fonds. Elle a aussi été active à différents niveaux et dans différents forums pour promouvoir la complémentarité et la cohérence entre eux. Aucun obstacle majeur empêchant la coordination entre la DG ECHO et les bailleurs de fonds du Comité d'aide au développement (CAD) n'a été identifié, bien qu'il y ait encore une marge

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<sup>3</sup>Commission européenne, 2016. Vivre dignement : de la dépendance vis-à-vis de l'aide à l'autonomie - Les déplacements forcés et le développement. Disponible sur : [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication\\_Forced\\_Displacement\\_Development\\_2016.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugees-idp/Communication_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf).

d'amélioration. La DG ECHO doit poursuivre son engagement auprès des bailleurs de fonds qui ne font pas partie du CAD au niveau politique et se pencher sur le développement de ces efforts sur le terrain.

Cohérence avec les structures de coordination du Comité permanent inter-organisations (désigné par l'acronyme IASC) : La DG ECHO a renforcé le rôle qu'elle a vis-à-vis des structures de coordination humanitaire au niveau politique et sur le terrain durant la période d'évaluation. La DG ECHO a également encouragé les partenaires cadres à prendre part aux « clusters » nationaux et locaux pertinents (p. ex., par l'intermédiaire de financement et en référant certains clusters dans les lignes directrices politiques de la DG ECHO).

Cohérence avec le Bureau des Nations Unies pour la coordination des activités humanitaires (désigné par l'acronyme UN OCHA) et d'autres agences de l'ONU : Pendant la période d'évaluation, la DG ECHO a clarifié ses objectifs par rapport à sa contribution aux structures de coordination humanitaire et ses relations avec UN OCHA et d'autres agences de l'ONU. La DG ECHO devrait toutefois poursuivre ses efforts en vue de renforcer ses relations avec les agences de l'ONU et si nécessaire, les remettre en question en coopération avec ses partenaires clés.

Cohérence avec les pays bénéficiaires : La DG ECHO fait preuve de prudence concernant son niveau de coopération avec les autorités nationales et locales, compte tenu de la nécessité de préserver les principes humanitaires. Toutefois, tout en reconnaissant ces limites, la DG ECHO doit reconnaître qu'il est nécessaire de développer des approches spécifiques au contexte en impliquant les autorités nationales et locales lorsque c'est possible.

### **iii. Efficacité**

L'UE poursuit deux ensembles d'objectifs humanitaires. Premièrement, les principaux objectifs de l'UE sont de réduire la mortalité, la souffrance et la morbidité, et d'assurer la dignité de vie des populations touchées. Ces objectifs sont atteints par (1) la fourniture d'une réponse d'urgence immédiate/à court terme sous la forme d'une aide vitale, d'une protection et/ou de services de base cruciaux pour les populations touchées par une crise ; et (2) le renforcement de la résilience à moyen et long termes, en assurant la stabilité et en créant un lien avec le développement, et une dépendance réduite vis-à-vis d'une aide (externe) ultérieure.

Au niveau du système, l'un des objectifs stratégiques de l'UE est d'influencer le système humanitaire mondial et la fourniture de l'aide humanitaire par d'autres en vue d'obtenir des résultats plus efficaces. Cela a été réalisé par le biais de plusieurs canaux pendant la période d'évaluation : (1) le rôle de leader/soutien de l'UE dans des initiatives clés (p. ex., Programme pour le changement, Sommet humanitaire mondial, GB) ; (2) le rôle de leader/soutien de l'UE dans des politiques clés (p. ex., éducation en contexte d'urgence, assistance en espèces, protection) ; et (3) plaider à différents niveaux.

Alors qu'il est ressorti de l'évaluation de bons éléments qualitatifs permettant d'évaluer l'efficacité de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE, les éléments quantitatifs, tels que des indicateurs sur les contributions, résultats et les répercussions étaient rares. La DG ECHO s'est dotée d'un cadre de suivi et d'évaluation fiable et solide au niveau des projets, ce qui lui permet de suivre efficacement les projets. Les données collectées ne sont en revanche pas suffisamment analysées et regroupées, ce qui ne permet pas d'identifier systématiquement les bonnes pratiques en matière d'efficacité. Si la DG ECHO a récemment établi un nouveau cadre de suivi et d'évaluation au niveau de la DG, il n'existe pas de cadre pour suivre et évaluer l'efficacité des HIPs. Cette absence de cadre entrave l'évaluation systématique des résultats de la DG ECHO dans une région particulière ou un secteur spécifique.

#### ***Efficacité des actions financées par l'UE***

Malgré le manque d'informations quantitatives regroupées, il ressort des nombreux éléments qualitatifs disponibles que les actions financées par l'UE ont été réellement efficaces. Elles ont contribué de manière positive à sauver des vies, à réduire la morbidité et la souffrance, ainsi qu'à améliorer la dignité de vie des populations victimes de catastrophes.

Le montant du financement affecté aux actions d'aide humanitaire a permis à l'UE d'avoir un véritable impact sur le terrain, en répondant aux besoins d'un nombre important de bénéficiaires dans un grand nombre de régions. Dans des régions où l'UE n'a affecté qu'un financement limité par rapport à son enveloppe globale, l'évaluation a révélé qu'elle pouvait également avoir un impact positif sur le terrain en sélectionnant des projets avec un puissant effet de levier ou multiplicateur.

Les facteurs clés de réussite contribuant à l'efficacité de la DG ECHO identifiés étaient les suivants :

- un processus de sélection de projets robuste qui a abouti à des projets de grande qualité ayant le potentiel de faire la différence sur le terrain ;
- de solides capacités en matière d'assistance technique fournies par le réseau de terrain de la DG ECHO ;
- la rapidité globale des interventions de l'UE, qui a permis aux bénéficiaires de recevoir une aide immédiate et empêcher une aggravation de la situation. La rapidité de la réponse de l'UE au-delà des premières urgences a cependant parfois été considérée comme tardive ; et
- le soutien de l'UE à l'utilisation de modalités et pratiques spécifiques qui ont amélioré l'efficacité des actions financées par l'UE (p. ex., assistance en espèces, implication des communautés locales dans l'évaluation des besoins, utilisation d'un marqueur de l'égalité hommes-femmes).

Les facteurs inhibant l'efficacité des actions financées par l'UE comprenaient :

- la durée fixe et relativement courte du cycle de financement de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE ;
- l'absence d'une stratégie exhaustive prenant en compte les causes profondes des crises, en particulier dans le cas de crises de longue durée et complexes ;
- les variations budgétaires imprévues limitant la prédictibilité de l'aide fournie par l'UE et ayant des répercussions négatives sur les stratégies suivies par les partenaires cadres ;
- le manque de coordination entre les différentes sources de financement de l'UE et des autres pays ; et
- l'expertise et les capacités techniques manquantes ou limitées chez les partenaires cadres, en particulier dans les secteurs de l'abri et de l'habitat et de la santé.

### ***Efficacité des activités de plaidoyer, de coordination et de politique de la DG ECHO***

Pendant la période d'évaluation, la DG ECHO a mis en œuvre un certain nombre de réformes et initiatives internes pour renforcer l'impact et l'efficacité de l'aide humanitaire octroyée. Ces réformes et initiatives comprenaient entre autres : (1) les ajustements continus apportés au processus d'évaluation des besoins humanitaire au niveau mondial (p. ex. INFORME et l'IAF) et au niveau des actions financées ; (2) le passage à des HIPs régionaux par rapport à des HIPs nationaux ; (3) l'élaboration continue de lignes directrices politiques sectorielles ; (4) le renforcement du réseau de terrain ; et (5) l'engagement accru auprès d'autres bailleurs de fonds pour mener des activités communes.

Dans l'ensemble, ces développements ont été utiles et adaptés aux objectifs énoncés. Ils ont été reçus positivement par les parties prenantes de la DG ECHO. Des défis ont également été rencontrés, par exemple, l'impression qu'avaient les parties prenantes que les affectations du financement globales de la DG ECHO n'étaient pas uniquement

basées sur les besoins (bien que, comme cela a été mentionné précédemment, il soit ressorti de l'évaluation que les affectations du budget étaient effectivement basées sur les besoins), la qualité variable des évaluations des besoins au niveau local et l'absence d'une approche stratégique cohésive pour certains HIPs régionaux.

Les lignes directrices sectorielles et thématiques de la DG ECHO reflétaient une approche appropriée dans les secteurs concernés. Elles ont été élaborées conformément aux normes internationales et en étroite concertation avec les partenaires concernés. Le choix des politiques et des directives de la DG ECHO était dans l'ensemble conforme aux besoins identifiés. Toutefois, les preuves de leur utilisation réelle étaient contrastées. Dans certains domaines, la DG ECHO pourrait faire le choix d'« adopter » les politiques et lignes directrices préparées par d'autres bailleurs de fonds ou agences, et éventuellement fournir un « avenant DG ECHO » pour souligner certains aspects au lieu de rédiger ses propres lignes directrices.

Au niveau du système, l'UE a poursuivi ses objectifs en matière de plaidoyer et de politique par le biais de plusieurs canaux :

- rôle de leader/soutien de la DG ECHO dans des initiatives principales (p. ex., Programme pour le changement, Sommet humanitaire mondial, GB) ;
- rôle de leader/soutien de la DG ECHO dans des politiques clés (p. ex., éducation en contexte d'urgence, assistance en espèces, protection) ; et
- plaidoyer à différents niveaux.

Plusieurs expériences réussies ont montré en quoi le rôle de leader de la DG ECHO dans le système global a permis de développer des approches d'aide humanitaire plus efficaces. Par exemple, l'insistance de la DG ECHO sur les « transferts en espèces à usages multiples » a modifié la fourniture de l'aide humanitaire dans certains contextes et secteurs. Dans d'autres cas, l'accent mis par la DG ECHO sur des secteurs et des thèmes spécifiques a attiré l'attention sur ces secteurs ainsi que leur financement (p. ex., l'attention accordée par l'UE à l'éducation en cas d'urgence a entraîné un effet de démonstration et a encouragé d'autres bailleurs de fonds à soutenir ce secteur ; et l'intégration du programme de protection dans la mise en œuvre de l'aide humanitaire).

Les efforts de la DG ECHO en matière de plaidoyer se sont avérés très efficaces durant la période d'évaluation, incluant notamment le plaidoyer en faveur du respect des principes humanitaires ; le lobbying en faveur d'une utilisation plus large et plus efficace des ressources des bailleurs de fonds ; la mise en avant de problèmes nouveaux, changeants et émergents ; ou encore l'attention mise sur la nature changeante des crises humanitaires (p. ex., Soudan ou Syrie). Les activités de plaidoyer sur le terrain étaient individualisées, souples et réactives, et elles reflétaient l'expérience du personnel de terrain de la DG ECHO. Malheureusement, elles n'étaient pas toujours totalement coordonnées. En conséquence, une approche plus stratégique avec des priorités et des actions claires serait bénéfique.

### ***Visibilité des actions financées par l'UE***

Dans l'ensemble, les partenaires cadres ont respecté les exigences de visibilité de la DG ECHO, mais les activités dépassant les exigences minimales ont été plus efficaces pour contribuer à la visibilité de l'UE et la DG ECHO. Certains obstacles, tel que le manque de capacité des partenaires cadre, ont limité l'efficacité des activités de visibilité.

La sensibilisation aux activités de l'UE au sein de l'UE a progressé entre 2012 et 2016 (passant de 68 % à 71 %) et reste élevée malgré une baisse entre 2015 et 2016 (de 76 % à 71 %). La DG ECHO finance des activités pour sensibiliser à ses activités au sein de l'UE par le biais d'un HIP spécifique. Des éléments qualitatifs suggèrent que la sensibilisation aux activités en dehors de l'UE est d'un niveau moyen à élevé.



#### **iv. Efficacité**

##### ***Efficacité en termes de coût de l'UE en tant que bailleur de fonds***

La DG ECHO n'a pas mis en place de processus *ex ante* pour évaluer les coûts et les avantages et le rapport qualité-prix de ses choix stratégiques et de son portefeuille (p. ex., par rapport aux types de partenaires, de secteurs, de modalités de transfert ou concernant l'impact de l'approche en consortium et de l'accent mis sur la RRC ou le LRRD). La DG ECHO a toutefois commandité différentes études sur ces sujets ces dernières années, ce qui témoigne de sa réflexion stratégique sur ses choix. La DG ECHO a notamment publié une étude sur les flux de financement pour disposer d'une vision plus claire des coûts dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement de l'aide, ainsi qu'une évaluation spécifique sur l'utilisation de différentes modalités de transfert.

Il en ressort que la DG ECHO adopte et promeut des innovations et des bonnes pratiques qui permettent d'améliorer l'efficacité en termes de coût. Sur le thème spécifique des transferts d'espèces, par exemple, l'UE est largement reconnue comme un bailleur de fonds majeur qui a ouvert la voie vers la « normalisation » de l'utilisation des transferts en espèces. Ensemble, les transferts en espèces et les coupons représentaient déjà 27 % du financement de l'UE en 2015, alors qu'à titre de référence, il était estimé qu'ils représentaient 8 % de l'aide totale au niveau mondial<sup>4</sup>. Il ressort également que la DG ECHO accepte un niveau de risque dans ses activités afin d'augmenter leur efficacité en termes de coût. La DG ECHO a attribué un financement initial pour de nouvelles initiatives destinées à améliorer l'efficacité en termes de coût (p. ex., dans le secteur WASH, en faveur de l'utilisation de l'énergie solaire pour pomper durablement l'eau). En revanche, il conviendrait d'en faire davantage pour intensifier les idées fructueuses.

Dans certains secteurs, toutefois, notamment en lien avec le programme de localisation et le financement pluriannuel, la DG ECHO montre un « déficit de mise en œuvre », c.-à-d., un manque de changement ou de suivi malgré l'existence d'éléments démontrant l'efficacité de ces types d'approches dans certaines circonstances.

La traçabilité du financement de l'UE (et d'autres bailleurs de fonds) tout au long de la chaîne d'approvisionnement de l'aide devrait également être améliorée. Il n'est par exemple pas simple de calculer la part du financement qui va directement aux bénéficiaires finaux ou aux partenaires de mise en œuvre locaux. Il serait donc important que la DG ECHO mette à niveau son système de suivi financier et de contrôle interne, en coordination avec d'autres bailleurs de fonds.

L'efficacité et l'efficience de l'UE en tant que bailleur de fonds dépendent largement de sa capacité à mobiliser rapidement un financement lorsque des besoins humanitaires se font sentir. En début d'année, la DG ECHO dispose généralement d'un budget insuffisant. Toutefois, tout au long de l'année, plusieurs sources permettent de compléter le budget et de couvrir ainsi les besoins émergents. Ce processus visant à compléter le budget apparaît cependant sub-optimal, car ces compléments répétés sont contraignants au niveau administratif et nuisent à l'efficacité.

##### ***Efficacité en termes de coût des actions financées par l'UE***

Les actions humanitaires financées par l'UE sont dans l'ensemble considérées comme efficaces en termes de coût, mais l'évaluation repose principalement sur des indicateurs qualitatifs et les avis des parties prenantes. La DG ECHO a essayé de fournir des éléments quantitatifs, par exemple en calculant la part d'aide ayant atteint le bénéficiaire final, mais uniquement sur des échantillons plutôt restreints. D'autre part, il manque des points de comparaison avec les autres bailleurs de fonds. Ces efforts doivent être renforcés et rendus systématiques.

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<sup>4</sup> Development Initiatives, 2017. Rapport sur l'aide humanitaire internationale 2017. Disponible sur : <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>.

L'évaluation révèle que l'efficacité en termes de coût est prise en compte tout au long du cycle de projet (p. ex., analyse attentive du budget soumis par les partenaires, mise en avant de solutions efficaces en termes de coût aux partenaires). Les sélections de projets ne sont toutefois généralement pas basées sur des indicateurs quantitatifs (p. ex., seule une faible part des projets fait référence au coût par bénéficiaire ou coût par résultat). La DG ECHO pourrait adopter une approche plus claire pour l'analyse de l'efficacité des projets en termes de coût, par exemple en établissant une liste de contrôle détaillée à utiliser dans le cadre du processus d'évaluation et pendant le suivi des projets. Cela est en partie résolu par les lignes directrices « FicheOp » publiées par la DG ECHO en 2016. L'intégration de l'efficacité en termes de coût dans le cycle de projet de la DG ECHO ne devrait cependant pas se faire au détriment de la flexibilité à accorder aux projets. De plus, une attention particulière doit être octroyée aux nombreux facteurs qui influencent l'efficacité en termes de coût, tels que le type de crise, la géographie, l'accès et les questions de sécurité, le coût de la vie dans le pays, la présence de partenaires de mise en œuvre, la nécessité de recruter du personnel international, le niveau d'innovation du projet, etc. Le fait que la DG ECHO accepte les variations de coûts dans les projets lorsqu'elles sont dûment justifiées par le contexte est actuellement particulièrement apprécié des partenaires cadres.

Dans l'ensemble, il semble que les principaux facteurs influençant l'efficacité en termes de coût sont bien compris, car des listes similaires de facteurs sont identifiées dans différentes sources d'information. Bien que bien connus, les éléments favorables ne sont toutefois pas toujours mis en œuvre et/ou applicables en fonction du contexte (p. ex., transfert en espèces, programmation et financement pluriannuels, localisation). D'autre part, certains obstacles entravant l'efficacité en termes de coût sont des facteurs externes, rendant leur traitement pour la DG ECHO plus difficile (p. ex. cloisonnement des acteurs de la protection, lois nationales rigides limitant la portée des actions pour les partenaires cadres).

Les exigences concernant les rapports de monitoring pourraient constituer un autre domaine d'amélioration. Un point positif est que la DG ECHO s'est dotée d'un formulaire unique et que le même modèle est utilisé tout au long du cycle de projet. Toutefois, les exigences concernant les rapports sont encore considérées comme complexes. En outre, elles ne sont pas harmonisées avec celles d'autres bailleurs de fonds, ce qui nuit à leur efficacité.

## **v. Durabilité**

Dans le contexte du travail de la DG ECHO, la durabilité n'est pas clairement définie et elle est appliquée différemment aux différents aspects de la programmation de la DG ECHO, à savoir la durabilité (1) du financement, (2) des activités mises en œuvre, (3) des résultats immédiats ou (4) des répercussions des actions financées par l'UE. Pour améliorer la durabilité, la DG ECHO a par exemple promu le concept de résilience et a introduit un marqueur de résilience en 2014. En outre, le concept de LRRD figure sur le programme de la DG ECHO depuis des décennies et a évolué avec le temps. Plus récemment, la DG ECHO et DEVCO travaillent ensemble à la mise en œuvre du « lien entre humanitaire et développement » dans 14 pays pilotes.

La DG ECHO a partiellement réussi à mettre en œuvre des interventions durables, bien que seuls des éléments limités attestant de la poursuite des activités et de la durabilité des résultats après la fin du financement de la DG ECHO aient été identifiés. Alors que certains types d'interventions sont par nature « plus durables » (p. ex., déminage ou activités de documentation des réfugiés et des déplacés internes), d'autres ne comptent pas la durabilité en tant qu'objectif (p. ex., distribution alimentaire).

Des mesures pour améliorer encore davantage la durabilité ont été identifiées par les partenaires cadres de la DG ECHO et les partenaires de mise en œuvre locaux, y compris :

- envisager et développer clairement une stratégie de durabilité/résilience à l'étape de la proposition ;
- promouvoir une coordination plus importante entre l'aide humanitaire et le développement ;
- renforcer le rôle des partenaires locaux et encourager la participation des organisations locales pour améliorer la réponse locale dans le temps ;
- impliquer efficacement les bénéficiaires et les communautés locales dans la conception et la distribution de l'aide humanitaire ;
- assurer un financement pluriannuel et une planification à plus long terme ; et
- garantir des niveaux élevés d'appropriation et d'engagement des autorités locales et/ou nationales.

L'évaluation a également identifié plusieurs conditions qui devraient idéalement être en place pour assurer la durabilité de l'aide humanitaire, et donc plusieurs difficultés associées entravant le développement d'une approche cohérente de la durabilité. Certains de ces éléments sont spécifiques au contexte et, dans la plupart des cas, ils échappent au contrôle de la DG ECHO. Il s'agit notamment du cadre juridique ou du paysage politique, alors que d'autres défis sont liés au mandat (c.-à-d., urgence) et au mode opératoire de la DG ECHO. Ils comprennent :

- l'absence de définition officielle de ce que la durabilité implique et comment elle devrait être abordée dans le contexte des actions financées par l'UE ;
- le cycle de programmation et de financement annuel relativement fixe de la DG ECHO ;
- l'axe stratégique limité de la DG ECHO sur des éléments tels que les activités liées aux moyens de subsistance, la préparation aux catastrophes et la RRC ; et
- l'intérêt limité pour veiller à ce que les partenaires cadres s'engagent auprès des partenaires locaux.

Enfin, au cours de la période d'évaluation, la DG ECHO a attaché une plus grande importance à la promotion des approches LRRD et à la définition de stratégies de sortie. Toutefois, la DG ECHO a rencontré des difficultés lorsqu'elle a voulu adopter une approche LRRD cohérente dans les régions et les secteurs qu'elle finance. Alors qu'en théorie le concept semble compris, sa mise en œuvre reste difficile. Des éléments limités attestent d'approches complémentaires et de transferts entre la DG ECHO et DEVCO ou avec d'autres acteurs du développement sur la période d'évaluation. La DG ECHO ne possède pas de cadre opérationnel ou de lignes directrices sur la manière de mettre en œuvre le concept LRRD et les stratégies de sortie/transition. En outre, le manque de coopération entre la DG ECHO et les acteurs du développement est en partie dû aux différences entre les objectifs, les mandats, les cycles de programmation, les principes de base, et les approches et mécanismes de financement des deux types de bailleurs de fonds. Enfin, certaines difficultés sont également inhérentes aux secteurs, contextes et types de crises spécifiques.

## **vi. Valeur ajoutée de l'UE**

### ***Les actions financées par l'UE ont apporté une valeur ajoutée claire sur le terrain***

Cette valeur ajoutée a été principalement assurée par :

- le niveau de financement de l'UE : l'UE a été le deuxième plus important bailleur de fonds au niveau mondial pendant la période d'évaluation, représentant 9 % de l'aide humanitaire internationale. Cela s'est traduit par des résultats tangibles sur le terrain contribuant à sauver des vies ;
- l'intérêt porté par l'UE aux crises oubliées : au cours de la période 2012-2016, 16 % du financement de l'UE a été affecté à ces crises oubliées (catastrophes naturelles ou crises d'origine humaine) par rapport à 12 % pour tous les bailleurs de fonds restants ;

- l'UE a comblé les lacunes dans l'aide humanitaire internationale en répondant aux besoins dans des zones qui étaient difficiles d'accès et en apportant une réponse rapide aux nombreuses nouvelles crises (p. ex., crises en Syrie, au Soudan, au Burundi) ; et
- les secteurs et les thèmes financés par l'UE qui n'étaient pas suffisamment financés par d'autres bailleurs de fonds (p. ex., secteur de la protection, éducation en contexte d'urgence).

### ***La valeur ajoutée de l'UE au niveau du système humanitaire***

Le leadership mondial de l'UE au niveau du système humanitaire a entraîné une forte valeur ajoutée opérationnelle. En soutenant des améliorations opérationnelles, l'UE a rendu la fourniture de l'aide humanitaire plus efficace en termes de coût (p. ex., via les transferts en espèces, l'implication des communautés locales, les évaluations des besoins fondées). L'UE est reconnue par tous comme un « bailleur de fonds de référence » qui préconise une approche fondée sur les principes et les besoins humanitaires. Enfin, l'UE a également contribué à la coordination du secteur humanitaire.

### ***La valeur ajoutée de l'UE pour les États membres.***

Dans le domaine de l'aide humanitaire, l'UE a une valeur ajoutée claire pour les États membres. Cela est assuré par différents canaux, notamment :

- la DG ECHO a bien rempli le rôle de coordination humanitaire et le partage d'informations avec les États membres au niveau du siège, bien qu'une marge d'amélioration ait été identifiée (p. ex., davantage de coordination pour l'affectation du financement). Cela a été rendu possible par l'accès de la DG ECHO à des informations de première main et à l'expertise par l'intermédiaire de son réseau de terrain ;
- la DG ECHO a été un bailleur de fonds très solide et fiable et certains États membres n'ont pas hésité à utiliser certains des processus de la DG ECHO (p. ex., formulaire unique), ouvrant la voie à une plus grande coordination des processus ;
- le mécanisme des « Recettes affectées externes », qui sont des contributions financières des États membres et/ou de pays tiers, y compris leurs agences publiques, entités ou personnes physiques, destinées à certains programmes ou projets d'aide externes financés par le budget de l'UE et gérés par la Commission européenne, a aussi été efficace pendant la période d'évaluation et dispose d'un bon potentiel, mais jusqu'à présent les États membres ont fait preuve d'une volonté limitée d'y prendre part ; et
- les États membres peuvent profiter des solides connaissances opérationnelles et de l'expertise technique de la DG ECHO, que ce soit au niveau du siège ou sur le terrain.

## **5. Principales conclusions de l'évaluation prospective**

### **i. Faire avancer les engagements de l'UE pour le Sommet humanitaire mondial**

L'UE s'est engagée à effectuer d'importants progrès dans chacun des sept domaines d'engagement essentiels mis en avant après le Sommet humanitaire mondial. À cette fin, 100 engagements individuels de l'UE ont été élaborés, présentant de futures actions. Dans l'ensemble, il ressort que l'UE progresse sur tous les engagements du Sommet humanitaire mondial et que les acteurs humanitaires sont dans l'ensemble satisfaits des activités récemment mises en œuvre allant dans cette direction. Cela a également été confirmé par les résultats de la consultation publique, où la majorité des répondants considéraient que la DG ECHO contribue largement aux progrès réalisés par rapport aux engagements humanitaires de l'UE.

## ii. **Mise en œuvre de la Grande Négociation (GB)**

Dans l'ensemble, il ressort de l'évaluation que la DG ECHO progresse sur tous les axes de travail du GB, mais que davantage d'efforts devraient être mise en place, en particulier concernant l'amélioration de la transparence, la mise en œuvre du programme de localisation et la réduction des coûts de gestion et de duplication. La consultation publique a révélé que près des deux tiers des répondants à l'enquête sont d'avis que la DG ECHO devrait montrer l'exemple dans la mise en œuvre du GB. La majorité des personnes ayant répondu à l'enquête étaient également unanimes sur un point : la DG ECHO devrait lancer des initiatives pilotes liées à la mise en œuvre des axes de travail (58 %) et elle devrait user de sa puissance en tant que l'un des plus importants bailleurs de fonds humanitaires pour encourager ses homologues à mettre en œuvre le GB (52 %). Enfin, les résultats de la consultation publique ont également révélé que la DG ECHO devrait renforcer le dialogue avec les cosignataires pour assurer une meilleure synergie entre les axes de travail et assure que la mise en œuvre du GB favorise les complémentarités entre les niveaux mondial, national et local.

## iii. **Futurs défis et opportunités pour la DG ECHO en vue de fournir des interventions humanitaires efficaces**

- La nature changeante des interventions humanitaires : L'échelle et la fréquence des crises qui nécessitent une réponse humanitaire internationale augmentent. L'urbanisation rapide et non-durable, la raréfaction des ressources et les conflits armés de longue durée ne sont que quelques-uns des défis auxquels les acteurs humanitaires font face. La DG ECHO devra par conséquent de plus en plus prendre en compte ces difficultés au moment de la conception et de la planification de ses interventions humanitaires afin de préserver leur pertinence et leur efficacité.
- Émergence de nouveaux bailleurs de fonds : Alors que la répartition du pouvoir mondial s'oriente vers un monde plus multipolaire, de nouveaux bailleurs de fonds deviennent des acteurs plus visibles sur la scène humanitaire internationale. Des éléments révèlent que ces bailleurs de fonds émergents apportent de la valeur ajoutée au système humanitaire, par exemple, en comblant les manques de financement ; en accordant une attention spéciale aux besoins fondamentaux, y compris l'approvisionnement alimentaire, et aux catastrophes de grande échelle (bénéficiant de leurs propres expériences en matière de la pauvreté et de crises humanitaires) ; en influençant les autorités nationales en particulier dans les pays où l'accès humanitaire est fortement restreint. Dans un avenir proche, deux développements devraient renforcer l'importance des bailleurs de fonds émergents : 1) la diminution du financement humanitaire des grands pays bailleurs de fonds tels que les États-Unis ; et 2) l'impact du Brexit sur le budget de l'aide humanitaire de l'UE. L'UE devrait maintenir son engagement auprès des nouveaux bailleurs de fonds au niveau politique et œuvrer à un plus grand engagement sur le terrain.
- Implication du secteur privé : L'implication accrue du secteur privé dans les interventions d'aide humanitaire peut certainement renforcer la réponse apportée grâce à l'apport d'un raisonnement disruptif, notamment des connaissances commerciales et l'innovation. Cependant, une coordination est nécessaire pour éviter la compétition, des réponses moins efficaces ou moins fondées sur les principes humanitaires et avec plus de lacunes, plus de duplication et moins d'apprentissages. C'est la raison pour laquelle la DG ECHO devra faire avancer les discussions en interne sur la manière d'avoir une meilleure coordination et de faire progresser le partenariat avec le secteur privé (les éléments réunis ont révélé qu'une réflexion existe déjà). Dans l'ensemble, la DG ECHO devra évaluer plus précisément comment les actions humanitaires peuvent capitaliser sur l'expérience et les atouts du secteur privé, et quels

secteurs et interventions peuvent bénéficier d'un partenariat plus fort. Cette analyse devra étudier les moyens d'encourager les entreprises à apporter leurs compétences et capacités pertinentes pour fournir une aide vitale dans le contexte des interventions financées par l'UE.

**iv. Conséquences du rapport d'audit de la CCE sur la gestion de l'aide humanitaire dans la région des Grands Lacs africains par la Commission Européenne**

Après la publication du rapport d'audit de la CCE sur la région des Grands lacs africains, la DG ECHO a constitué un groupe de travail pour identifier les actions devant être appliquées à toutes les activités humanitaires de l'UE pour (1) rendre plus transparente la procédure de sélection du financement ; (2) accorder plus d'importance au coût-efficacité des actions ; (3) améliorer le suivi pendant leur mise en œuvre ; (4) mieux documenter l'évaluation des résultats obtenus ; et (5) tirer des conclusions et des enseignements de la mise en œuvre des HIPs.

Dans l'ensemble, la DG ECHO semble avoir considérablement progressé dans le domaine des recommandations, principalement en apportant des améliorations aux procédures, lignes directrices et systèmes de suivi des projets. Toutefois, plusieurs problèmes identifiés à l'époque par la CCE sont réapparus dans cette évaluation globale. Il s'agit notamment de la nécessité d'étudier de plus près les coûts des projets, l'insuffisance des rapports sur les HIPs et la nécessité d'améliorer le LRRD. Comme le fait ressortir cette évaluation, des efforts supplémentaires devront être faits pour que ces problèmes puissent être traités avec succès.

En outre, à part les défis pratiques associés à la mise en œuvre concrète des recommandations de la CCE, la DG ECHO fait également face à un défi plus conceptuel lié à la dichotomie entre certaines des recommandations de la CCE, qui demande des rapports plus rigoureux et dans certains domaines plus détaillés, et le flux de travail du GB numéro 9 qui préconise une simplification des exigences concernant le suivi des projets. Ce dernier demandant également l'harmonisation des exigences entre les bailleurs de fonds. Le moyen « évident » comme indiqué ci-dessus pour que la DG ECHO avance sur ce sujet est qu'elle travaille en étroite collaboration avec d'autres bailleurs de fonds et partenaires sur ce programme afin de définir des objectifs stratégiques et des résultats dont il est possible de rendre compte.

## 6. Recommandations

Les cinq recommandations stratégiques identifiées sur la base des conclusions de cette évaluation globale ciblent des domaines dans lesquels il serait souhaitable que l'UE introduise des améliorations au niveau de son approche de l'aide humanitaire et des activités associées. L'évaluation a cherché à identifier les améliorations les plus importantes que la DG ECHO devrait envisager de poursuivre.

### 1. La DG ECHO devrait mettre en œuvre une stratégie pluriannuelle et, si possible, une programmation et un financement pluriannuels

Dans le cadre du prochain Cadre financier pluriannuel, la DG ECHO aurait intérêt à élaborer une stratégie pluriannuelle présentant sa vision globale et l'approche pratique et politique prévue pour fournir l'aide humanitaire de l'UE. La stratégie devrait reposer sur une théorie du changement claire qui présente la logique de l'intervention pour les fonctions essentielles et le rôle politique et de plaidoyer de la DG. La stratégie devrait s'accompagner d'un programme pluriannuel, définissant les principales priorités, par région et par secteur, des cycles pluriannuels et annuels, ainsi que d'un programme de travail plus concret. La stratégie devrait également mettre en avant les liens avec d'autres stratégies (p. ex., développement, résilience) et celles impliquées dans leur mise en œuvre.

### 2. La DG ECHO devrait revoir son approche des partenariats à la fois avec les partenaires cadres importants et de taille moyenne et avec les partenaires de mise en œuvre locaux

#### ***Engagement auprès des partenaires cadres importants***

Il ressort de l'évaluation que la majorité du financement de la DG ECHO est affectée à un nombre relativement limité de partenaires cadres. Pourtant, avec chacun de ces partenaires, la DG ECHO signe de multiples accords pour chaque HIPs, ce qui implique également de préparer et de traiter chaque année de nombreux rapports de suivi et propositions. Cela impose également d'avoir plusieurs procédures de paiement. Ces procédures créent une charge administrative importante à la fois pour la DG ECHO et pour le personnel des partenaires cadres. La DG ECHO pourrait évoluer et adopter un système avec des partenaires « de confiance » ou « stratégiques ». Cela réduirait non seulement la charge administrative qui pèse sur la DG ECHO et les partenaires cadres respectifs, mais permettrait aussi une approche plus liée et cohérente, en particulier si cela s'accompagne d'un mouvement vers une programmation et un financement pluriannuels.

#### ***Engagement auprès des autres partenaires cadres***

L'évaluation a également montré que, d'autre part, la DG ECHO aura encore besoin de son équipe diversifiée de partenaires cadres, y compris ceux qui sont de taille relativement petite ou moyenne, compte tenu de leur présence géographique spécifique et/ou de leur expertise sectorielle ou thématique. Toutefois, étant donné qu'une proportion de partenaires cadres n'a pas de contrat, la DG ECHO peut envisager **d'adapter sa sélection de partenaires et son processus d'activation** à sa stratégie et sa programmation pluriannuelles. Cela lui permettrait de s'assurer que presque tous les partenaires cadres peuvent être activés au moins une fois pendant la période d'évaluation.

#### ***Accroître l'implication des partenaires locaux***

En parallèle, l'évaluation a également montré qu'il était nécessaire d'accroître l'implication des partenaires locaux dans les actions financées par l'UE en accord avec le programme de localisation. La DG ECHO devrait souligner le lien fort avec la durabilité dans le cadre de ce changement.

### **3. La DG ECHO devrait renforcer son approche de la durabilité par la résilience et la coopération**

Bien que les interventions humanitaires ne soient pas toujours durables en raison de leur nature (c.-à-d., court terme) et de leur mission première (c.-à-d., sauver des vies), le contexte plus large et les objectifs à plus long terme devraient également être pris en compte lors de l'élaboration des interventions humanitaires, conformément à l'approche du contiguum.

La DG ECHO a une mission première claire : sauver et préserver les vies, prévenir et atténuer la souffrance humaine, et préserver l'intégrité et la dignité des populations victimes de catastrophes naturelles et de crises d'origine humaine. Cette mission laisse penser que la présence de la DG ECHO est plus cruciale dans certains contextes et situations. Par conséquent, dans la mesure du possible, la DG ECHO devrait se retirer des contextes où ces éléments fondamentaux de sa mission n'exigent plus de financement, ou des contextes où ils en exigent de moins en moins. Cela devrait s'accompagner d'une stratégie claire. Cette stratégie devrait inclure une approche de la durabilité définie par le biais de la résilience et des stratégies LRRD, notamment un plan de travail, les rôles et les responsabilités des différentes parties prenantes, les principales actions et le financement disponible.

La résilience et le LRRD sont déjà intégrés dans les interventions de l'UE, mais ils devraient être clairement liés à l'approche de la durabilité de la DG ECHO et communiqués en tant que tels. En outre, ces stratégies devraient être renforcées et adoptées plus systématiquement dans les actions financées par l'UE lorsque le contexte le permet, par exemple par l'élaboration de directives, de vérifications spécifiques des propositions de projet, en réservant une part du budget pour des activités pertinentes.

### **4. L'UE devrait communiquer de manière plus proactive et explicite les contraintes associées à la programmation stratégique et aux décisions de financement à son personnel, y compris au réseau de terrain, mais également à ses partenaires cadres et autres parties prenantes externes**

Dans l'ensemble, il ressort de l'évaluation que le processus d'évaluation des besoins de l'UE et les décisions budgétaires et de programmation qui en découlent sont de grande qualité, solides et participatifs, reflétant plusieurs améliorations de la méthodologie et du processus d'évaluation des besoins mis en œuvre ces dernières années, dont certains sont toujours en cours.

Toutefois, pour dissiper l'impression que ses décisions de financement sont politisées et pour améliorer la compréhension des choix de financement qui doivent être faits compte tenu des ressources disponibles pour l'aide humanitaire, l'UE devrait communiquer plus explicitement et fortement les contraintes associées aux décisions budgétaires et de programmation stratégique, à l'aide des messages suivants :

- le seul financement de l'UE ne sera jamais suffisant pour répondre à tous les besoins humanitaires identifiés par le réseau de terrain et perçus par les partenaires cadres autour des différentes crises humanitaires dans le monde ;
- l'UE est déjà un bailleur de fonds d'aide humanitaire majeur. Elle rend le processus de sa prise de décisions transparent en publiant les informations sous-jacentes dans le domaine public (toutefois, elle aurait intérêt à les présenter plus clairement qu'elle ne le fait aujourd'hui) ;
- le choix des régions et pays prioritaires pour le financement de l'UE par rapport à d'autres, dans des situations où les niveaux de besoins sont les mêmes/similaires, est de par sa nature une décision politique même si elle est entièrement fondée sur les besoins.



## **5. La DG ECHO devrait adapter ses systèmes de gestion et de suivi pour qu'ils se prêtent plus à l'analyse de l'efficacité et du rapport qualité-prix de ses actions**

Cela répondrait aux différentes demandes pour que les données existantes soient plus et mieux utilisées dans le but d'intégrer l'efficacité et un rapport qualité-prix dans le système humanitaire dans son ensemble (GB), dans l'UE en général (directives pour une meilleure réglementation) et au sein de la DG ECHO. De nombreuses informations sont déjà disponibles de la part de la DG ECHO, mais des lacunes ont été identifiées (1) dans la manière dont la DG ECHO pourrait utiliser ces données pour étayer ses choix et ses activités ; et (2) dans le cadre de l'évaluation de l'efficacité de la DG ECHO. Toutefois, toute adaptation faite devrait également prendre en compte le programme de simplification ainsi que les engagements du GB en faveur d'une plus grande transparence et de l'harmonisation des exigences concernant les rapports de suivi des projets.



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