



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels,
C(2011) XXX final

COMMISSION DECISION

of [...]

**on the financing of DIPECHO humanitarian Action Plans from the 2011 general budget
of the European Union**

(ECHO/DIP/BUD/2011/01000)

COMMISSION DECISION

of [...]

on the financing of DIPECHO humanitarian Action Plans¹ from the 2011 general budget of the European Union

(ECHO/DIP/BUD/2011/01000)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid², and in particular Article 2(f), Article 4 and Article 15(2) and (3) thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision 2001/822/EC of 27 November 2001 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Community ('Overseas Association Decision')³, and in particular Articles 21 and 30 thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) "Disaster Preparedness ECHO" (DIPECHO), the European Commission's disaster preparedness programme in the framework of humanitarian aid applies to the most disaster-prone regions in the world which, due to their topography, geology and climate, are exposed to a variety of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and cyclones, tidal waves/tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, flash floods, forest fires, cold spells and storms. The present Decision covers DIPECHO Action Plans for South America, Caribbean, South Asia and Pacific.
- (2) Local communities are particularly vulnerable to these disasters. The losses these disasters cause are significant both in social and economic terms as people's lives are not only at risk, but they often lose their livelihood and land and might even be displaced.
- (3) The coping capacities of the countries concerned by the Decision are insufficient considering the impact of disasters on the population, aggravated even further by climate change, thus there is a need for international support for preparedness activities, including small-scale mitigation.

¹ "Disaster Preparedness ECHO", the European Commission's disaster preparedness programme in the framework of humanitarian aid, implemented by the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO

² OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1

³ OJ L 314, 30.11.2001, p.1 amended by Appendix 2 to Annex III, OJ L 324, 7.12.2001, p.1

- (4) Experience from the previous DIPECHO Actions Plans implemented in these regions has led to the conclusion that disaster preparedness projects reduce the impact of natural phenomena by better preparing the vulnerable populations in those areas most exposed to natural hazards.
- (5) To reach populations in need, humanitarian aid should be channelled through non-governmental organisations, Member States' Specialised Agencies or international organisations including United Nations (UN) agencies. Therefore the European Commission should implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management.
- (6) Past experience from the previous and ongoing DIPECHO Action Plans implemented in the regions as well as various evaluations and recent multi-stakeholders consultations carried out lead to the conclusion that humanitarian aid actions should be financed by the European Union for a maximum period of 24 months.
- (7) It is estimated that a total amount of EUR 34,300,000 from budget article 23 02 03 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to pursue the objectives set for this Decision, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. Although as a general rule actions funded by this Decision should be co-financed, the Authorising Officer, in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation, may agree to the full financing of actions.
- (8) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002⁴, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002⁵, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union⁶.
- (9) In line with the Commission Communication on streamlining financial rules and accelerating budget implementation to help economic recovery⁷, cumulated changes to specific objectives as well as the increase of the appropriations not exceeding 20 % of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision are considered to be non-substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of the Decision, and may be adopted by the competent Authorising Officer
- (10) Under Article 168(1) (a) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for the purposes of humanitarian aid, within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96.
- (11) In accordance with Article 17(2) and (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996, the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 8 December 2010,

⁴ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1

⁵ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1

⁶ Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

⁷ SEC(2009)477 final of 8.4.2009

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 34,300,000 from budget article 23 02 03 of the 2011 general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2(f) and Article 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

(1) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in South America.

A total of EUR 12,000,000 from budget article 23 02 03 is allocated to this specific objective.

(2) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in the Caribbean.

A total of EUR 8,000,000 from budget article 23 02 03 is allocated to this specific objective.

(3) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in South Asia.

A total of EUR 12,000,000 from budget article 23 02 03 is allocated to this specific objective.

(4) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in the Pacific.

A total of EUR 2,300,000 from budget article 23 02 03 is allocated to this specific objective.

3. The competent Authorising Officer may decide on non-substantial changes in accordance with Article 90.4 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. Accordingly, when required by the changing circumstances, resources may be reallocated between specific objectives up to a maximum of 20% of the amount of the specific objective subject to decrease.

Article 2

1. The period for the implementation of the actions financed under this Decision shall start from 1 January 2011 and shall run for 24 months. Eligible expenditure shall be committed during the implementing period of the Decision.
2. If the implementation of individual actions is suspended owing to force majeure or other exceptional circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account in the implementing period of the Decision in respect of the action suspended.
3. In accordance with the contractual provisions ruling the Agreements financed under this Decision, the Commission may consider eligible those costs arising and incurred after the end of the implementing period of the action which are necessary for its winding-up.

Article 3

1. As a general rule, actions funded by this Decision should be co-financed.

The Authorising Officer, in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules, may agree to the full financing of actions when this will be necessary to achieve the objectives of the actions concerned and with due consideration to the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the availability of other donors and other relevant operational circumstances.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented either by non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96, international organisations or Member States' specialised agencies.
3. The Commission shall implement the budget:

* either by direct centralised management with non-governmental organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) and with Member States' specialised agencies;

* or by joint management with international organisations that are signatories to the FPA or the Financial Administrative Framework Agreement with the UN (FAFA) and which were subject to the four pillar assessment in line with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation

Article 4

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, [...]

For the Commission
[Name]
Member of the Commission



**Humanitarian Aid Decision
23 02 03**

Title: Commission decision on the financing of humanitarian aid operational priorities for DIPECHO Action Plans from the 2011 general budget of the European Union

Budgetary year: 2011

Amount of Decision: EUR 34,300,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/DIP/BUD/2011/01000

Supporting document

1. Humanitarian context and proposed DG ECHO¹ response

The Priorities for Action of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005–2015: "*Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*" together with the European Commission Communication on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of February 2009 to the Council and the European Parliament as the *EU strategy for supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in developing countries*, provide the strategic logic underlying DIPECHO Actions Plans.

The European Commission in its Communication on "*Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*" also expressed its commitment to further promote disaster preparedness by:

- promoting international efforts within the Hyogo Framework for Action to increase coping capacities at local, regional and national level through strategic planning and action;
- mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in humanitarian and development operations and ensure that adequate EU funding is made available for disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities;
- establishing an overall EU policy approach to support action in this area.

Any project which will receive support under this Decision will be developed in the context of existing DRR frameworks and initiatives. They will contribute to existing or planned National DRR Strategies and Policies, including the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for

¹ European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

Action 2005-2015. They will also be implemented in conjunction with the appropriate institutions of national governments at all relevant levels, in particular National Disaster Management structures and line ministries.

1.1 General context

South America and the Caribbean is one of the regions in the world most vulnerable to natural disasters but also the region where inequality is highest, with macro-economic indicators masking the real socio-economic situation of the majority of the population. The region is affected by a range of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanic eruptions. Besides, the impact of climate change is increasingly noticeable with recurrent droughts, floods and cold waves. These sudden and slow onset disasters cause important losses both in economic and social terms. Furthermore, due to the recurrent nature of these disasters, the local population's coping capacity is progressively being reduced, which implies that external assistance is required more often.

In particular, the most dramatic manifestation in **South America** is the *El Niño* event, attributable to warming in the eastern and central Pacific². Floods are very frequent in South American countries, not only due to the *El Niño* phenomenon, but also commonly generated by climatic anomalies. In addition, the region is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes; the most significant registered in 2010 were the catastrophic Haiti earthquake in January and the Chile one in February which was the 5th most powerful recorded on the Richter scale (8.8)³. Other events are linked to the many volcanoes which are still active in the region, and cold waves which increasingly affect certain areas of the region in a recurrent and increasing manner, particularly affecting the Peruvian and Bolivian Highlands. Drought, a slow-onset disaster, also recurrently affects the region (in particular Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, the "Dry Corridor" of Central America). In this region, additional threats such as environmental degradation, inadequate land planning, inappropriate agricultural practices, and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources continue to make thousands of people more vulnerable to natural hazards. This vulnerability is exacerbated by social disparities which are among the highest in the world⁴. South America and the Caribbean is the region of the world with the greatest inequality with respect to income, and with huge disparities in access to education, health, water and electricity and opportunities; although poverty and inequality have decreased recently in some South American countries as result of strong growth and innovative social programmes. Given these socio-economic conditions and vulnerabilities, the losses and destruction generated by natural disasters entail significant negative consequences for the populations concerned.

The **Caribbean** region is also extremely exposed and vulnerable to multiple disasters. In particular, hurricanes, tropical storms and related floods devastated parts of Haiti and Cuba (three hurricanes made landfall in Cuba in less than three months) and also caused significant damage in Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname. Earthquakes are also frequent in certain areas of the region, especially in Haiti, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Trinidad. Besides, the region is affected

² Some experts estimate a high probability of a strong *El Niño* event (comparable to *El Niño* 1982-83) during the 2009-2015 period. The 1997-98 *El Niño* did not generate a high number of casualties but caused significant economic losses in the South American region amounting to USD 7,500,000.

³ Despite the relatively low number of deaths (521 is the official figure), destruction has been enormous; 75% of the Chilean population live in the affected regions. The Government of Chile estimated damage as USD 30bn (while Haiti Earthquake damage was estimated at USD11bn).

⁴ Income Inequality coefficient (GINI) in the world in the 1997 - 2002 shows that Latin America ranks first in terms of inequality with 0.52. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

by slow onset disasters such as droughts. Even though the number of casualties caused by such disasters is lower, damage to livelihoods and cumulative losses have a serious impact on national economies. The physical risk, intensified by climate change, is combined with socioeconomic factors, such as high population density, fast demographic growth, inequality⁵ and great poverty. The combination of these factors results in highly vulnerable communities, with few coping capacities in the event of a disaster.

Asia and the Pacific are prone to a wide range of natural catastrophes: typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts, floods and landslides, which often affect very vulnerable high density populations. Vulnerabilities exist not only in remote areas, often inhabited by ethnic minorities, but also in urban areas. Exposure of the poorest populations has been increasing due to the negative consequences of climate change.

In particular, growing concerns about climate change impact are of particular relevance in the **South Asia** region, which is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, exposed to a variety of hydro-meteorological and geological hazards. In this region the social and political structures, demographic pressures, poor urban planning, fragile nature of settlements, livelihood practices and economic development result in a population highly vulnerable to the more frequent, more intense and unpredictable scale of events. The local communities are highly vulnerable to these disasters and the losses they cause are significant both in social and economic terms as people not only risk their lives but they often lose their livelihoods, land, and may be subject to displacements as a result of natural disasters. The recurrence of disasters, even small scale, leave communities with little time to recover, particularly the most vulnerable populations socially marginalized or living in hard to reach areas.

Also, the **Pacific countries** rank among the highest in the number of casualties and people affected per 100,000. The Pacific region features among the most disaster prone regions in the world in terms of recurrence, severity and scope of hazards, with high exposure to cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, tidal surges, landslides, flash floods, drought, forest fires, volcano eruptions, as well as epidemics⁶. This is compounded by environmental degradation and climate change. Lack of economic diversity, remoteness from major trade and commercial sectors and weak governance frameworks are factors which characterize many of the Pacific island nations and exacerbate their vulnerability to disasters.

1.2 Identified humanitarian needs

Emphasis will be put on the most vulnerable communities and categories of population in areas most exposed to natural hazards and disasters and with less coping capacities. Concrete priorities have been drawn up from extensive consultation processes that are undertaken in the countries and regions covered by this Decision. These consultative meetings involve DRR experts representing DIPECHO partners, relevant national authorities, scientific community, EU Delegations and local and international organisations.

In **South America**, a weak implementation capacity in disaster risk reduction measures is common in most countries particularly at sub national levels. A total of around 1,000,000 potential direct beneficiaries have been identified in the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Taking account of the context and of the levels of risk and coping capacities of local communities in

⁵ Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world. Ten of the 15 countries with the highest levels of inequality are in the region. UNDP: First Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean. 2010. Inequalities are particularly pronounced in Dominican Republic (50), Suriname (52.9), and Haiti (59.5). Human Development Report 2009. GINI coefficients

⁶ Preparedness and response to epidemics are covered by a separate Financing Decision.

disaster prone areas and of institutions involved in disaster risk reduction / disaster management, priority should be given to hydro-meteorological hazards (Floods, drought and extreme temperatures in Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela and in a minor measure in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay) and geophysical hazards (volcanic eruption, earthquakes, tsunami and landslides will be also considered as a priority in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Chile and in a minor measure in Bolivia and Argentina).

In the **Caribbean** region, there is an increasing awareness about the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures; however, local communities in disaster prone areas are still exposed to risk. Economic problems together with short term priorities have led to DRR being considered a second priority. As a consequence, countries are in a situation of permanent potential but foreseeable disaster, but institutions involved in disaster risk reduction / disaster management do not have enough capacities or resources to deal with this, as they do not receive adequate support from their own government. Currently the achievement of DRR goals cannot be expected without international cooperation assistance.

Priority will be given to those communities which are most exposed to natural disasters and have extremely limited coping capacities. The estimated number of direct beneficiaries is approximately 400,000 (based on past Action Plan averages).

The following countries and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) will be targeted: Anguilla (OCT), Antigua and Barbuda, Netherlands Antilles (OCT), Aruba (OCT), Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Cayman Islands (OCT), Turks and Caicos Islands (OCT), British Virgin Islands (OCT), Jamaica, Montserrat (OCT), Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

Four thematic considerations will be prioritized: Floods and hurricanes (all regions), exposure of densely populated urban areas with vulnerable communities (Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica), Earthquakes and Tsunamis (Dominican Republic, Cuba and Haiti) and Drought (Haiti, Eastern Caribbean and Cuba).

In **South Asia**, despite legal frameworks in place and a good understanding amongst governments of the link between disaster preparedness / disaster risk reduction and the impact of natural disasters, governments' capacity to implementing effective DRR programmes that reach the communities and local actors remains weak and fragmented. In view of this, the DIPECHO action plan aims primarily to target the most vulnerable communities and categories of population using bottom-up participatory methods and relevant low cost solutions that can easily be replicated and focus on the areas most exposed to frequent natural hazards and with less coping capacities, with special attention to the remoteness and difficulty of access of the proposed areas of operation.

The DIPECHO action plan will focus on the following countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Although the whole region, with an estimated total population of over 1.6 billion, is prone to natural disasters, not all countries have the same degree of exposure to the common hazards which are hydrological and meteorological (with highest level of occurrence and affecting the highest number of people), geophysical (resulting in the highest level of fatalities) and climatological (to certain extent due to extreme temperatures and drought).

In the **Pacific** region, more efforts also have to be made in preparing communities better for disaster. Despite a good understanding amongst governments of the link between disaster preparedness and impact of disasters, capacity of implementing supporting disaster risk reduction action is weak. The capacity to implement is particularly limited as regards support at sub-national and community level.

While all Pacific Island States have a similar profile in terms of exposure to disaster risk,

there is a varying degree of risk and coping capacity. Those who combine highest risk with low coping capacity are Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Although at slightly varying degree the majority of the region's population must be considered at risk given their exposure to a multitude of natural hazards and the low level of human development of most of the Pacific Island States.

In order to have an impact within the limited resources available, and benefitting from investments made under DG ECHO funded pilot programme, the Action Plan will focus on the most vulnerable local communities in neglected disaster prone areas as well as on institutions involved in disaster risk reduction in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands and possibly Papua New Guinea. With a view to the region's hazard profile it is important that the Action Plan will have to follow a multi-hazard approach encompassing hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods, cyclones, as well as geophysical hazards, i.e. volcanic eruption, earthquakes and tsunamis.

Throughout these regions, the following actions are needed in order to increase the population's resilience and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance in the event of a natural disaster:

- Local disaster management components, targeting local actors in disaster prone areas: early warning system, mapping and data computerization, local capacity-building, training.
- Institutional linkages and advocacy, targeting institutions involved in disaster management/disaster risk reduction, in particular at regional, national and sub-national levels: advocacy, facilitation of coordination, institutional strengthening.
- Information, Education and Communication, targeting direct and indirect beneficiaries: awareness raising among the general public, education and dissemination
- Small scale infrastructure and services, at community level: infrastructure support and mitigation works, reinforcing critical infrastructure, operation and maintenance systems; non structural mitigation activities, and support to specific adaptation initiatives.
- Stock building of emergency relief items, targeting the reinforcement of the response capacity of local actors and institutions in disaster-prone areas with the aim of contributing to ensuring an adequate response to natural disaster by strengthening the response capacity in the early hours and days of a disaster.

In view of this, DG ECHO intends to continue its involvement in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and, when appropriate, DRR measures will also be mainstreamed into the response to natural disaster and man-made crises within the context of the 2011 Decision on the financing of humanitarian aid operational priorities. The DIPECHO programmes together with other country-specific interventions aim to strengthen communities' and institutions' capacity to prepare for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters, and to foster exchange of experiences and tools within the region, with the goal of increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability. These programmes aim at further strengthening communities' preparedness capacity and foster an exchange of experiences within the region.

DG ECHO will continue coordinating with Disaster Risk Reduction programmes run by other services of the European Commission and other donors, in order to identify opportunities for effective LRRD.

DG ECHO will continue to explore innovative DRR initiatives in the regions and to coordinate with DRR programmes run by other services of the European Commission and other donors, in order to identify opportunities for effective LRRD.

1.3 Risk assessment and possible constraints

Most of the activities proposed under DIPECHO have a grassroots level orientation. As such their successful implementation depends on the willingness of the identified communities to cooperate. In addition, Disaster Preparedness projects are dependent on the link that DIPECHO partners establish with local communities and authorities. These two entities have to be involved in the project from its inception to ensure successful implementation. Therefore, it is highly desirable for partners to have had previous experience in disaster preparedness and to be already active in the targeted country/region.

In **South America**, more specifically, the main constraints experienced in the region identified in previous Action Plans are continuous political changes and lack of involvement of authorities which are a major challenge for the continuity/sustainability of DRR actions. In addition, social and/or political instability in some countries could disrupt the projects and result in suspensions.

In the **Caribbean** region, there is a risk that disasters caused by natural phenomena or social/political uprising in Haiti (both types have been experienced in the recent past) could disrupt the projects and result in suspensions.

In **South Asia**, the likelihood that disasters will occur during the implementation of ECHO funded disaster preparedness projects is high. Such events can cause delays in implementation as DIPECHO projects could be halted while partners respond to emergencies.

In the cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan lack of regular access to the targeted communities may be a factor constraining the number of partners able to implement DRR programmes. Following the devastating monsoon floods in Pakistan in August 2010, it is possible that partners will concentrate on handling a large volume of recovery/rehabilitation work at detriment of DP/DRR-focused interventions due to a lack of capacity and at times awareness. However, ECHO continues to advocate for DRR to be integrated in all programmes and the early recovery and rehabilitation stages in Pakistan also offer a window of opportunity for complementary DP/DRR focused actions.

In Bhutan the almost non-existent presence of INGOs and civil society organisations in general is a constraint on the number and scope of projects under DIPECHO, although partners are encouraged to include Bhutan in regional projects if not possible at national level.

In the **Pacific** region, which is also a region with frequent natural hazards, disasters might occur during the implementation of ECHO funded disaster preparedness projects. While in the event of disaster ongoing DIPECHO projects may already prove their life saving effect, delays in further implementation are likely because partners will need to respond to emergencies. Furthermore, in particular in the case of Papua New Guinea there are challenges with respect to security issues and access.

2. Coordination with other donors, institutions and EU Member States

EU humanitarian aid is framed in an overall international approach that brings together a wide diversity of humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and humanitarian NGOs. In this context, the EU shall ensure that its overall contribution to the humanitarian response is effective and appropriate, underpins the international humanitarian effort to deliver aid to people in need and addresses adequately the challenges facing humanitarian actors.

Consistency with other donors' interventions must be ensured, in particular major interventions by EU Member States and International organisations (UN, World Bank) in the field of humanitarian aid and, where relevant, development. EU humanitarian donors have to work together through strengthened EU coordination and best practices with a view to promoting the EU common vision in a flexible and complementary way that reinforces the international efforts and strengthens the overall humanitarian response.

Humanitarian actions must also be implemented consistently with development programmes laid down in Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIPs and funded by other EU instruments (EDF⁷ including the Natural Disaster Facility, DCI⁸, the food security thematic programme and other thematic programmes, Stability instrument, EIDHR⁹ ...), in particular in the context of LRRD.

3. Objectives

Specific objectives of this Decision reflect the main objectives of humanitarian aid interventions, independently of countries and regions falling in the scope of this Decision. Humanitarian actions funded by this Decision must be implemented in pursuance of the following specific objectives:

- (1) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in South America.
- (2) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in the Caribbean.
- (3) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in South Asia.
- (4) To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to

⁷ European Development Fund

⁸ Development Co-operation Instrument

⁹ European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in the Pacific.

4. Articulation with other DIPECHO Action Plans

On 1 January 2011, the following DIPECHO Action Plans adopted by the Commission in 2009 and 2010 will still be in the process of being implemented:

- Seventh DIPECHO Action Plan in the **Caribbean** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2009/03000) started on 1 September 2009 with a duration of 18 months
- First DIPECHO Action Plan in **South Caucasus** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2009/06000) started on 1 March 2010 with a duration of 18 months
- Sixth DIPECHO Action Plan in **Central Asia** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2010/02000) started on 1 April 2010 with a duration of 18 months
- Seventh DIPECHO Action Plan in **South East Asia** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2010/01000) started on 1 May 2010 with a duration of 18 months
- Second DIPECHO Action Plan in the **south-east African and south-west Indian Ocean region** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2010/04000) started on 1 June 2010 with a duration of 18 months
- Seventh DIPECHO Action Plan in **Central America** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2010/03000) started on 1 September 2010 with a duration of 18 months

In addition a decision on the financing of disaster preparedness actions in the **Pacific** (ECHO/DIP/BUD/2009/07000) started on 15 December 2009 with a duration of 18 months.

Decisions ECHO/DIP/BUD/2009/03000 and ECHO/DIP/BUD/2009/07000 overlap respectively by three and five months and a half with this Financing Decision. For partners benefitting from funding both under one of the previous Decisions and under this Decision, contracts financed under this Decision will only start after the previous contract has expired.

5. Criteria for humanitarian aid response

The objective of EU humanitarian aid is to provide a needs-based humanitarian 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. 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 and to natural disasters as needed.

Humanitarian aid response will be provided in pursuance of the following criteria:

Respect of Fundamental humanitarian principles

- The EU is firmly committed to upholding and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. This

principled approach is essential to the acceptance and ability of all EU actors to operate on the ground in often complex political and security contexts.

Needs-based delivery of aid

- Humanitarian aid should be transparently allocated on the basis of identified needs and the degree of vulnerability.
- In responding to humanitarian need particular vulnerabilities must be taken into account. In this context, the EU will pay special attention to women, children, the elderly, sick and disabled people, and to addressing their specific needs. Moreover, protection strategies against sexual and gender based violence must be incorporated in all aspects of humanitarian assistance.

Quality, effectiveness and accountability

- Policies in the different Sectoral areas of humanitarian aid intervention must be adapted to context and to recipients in order to have maximum impact. Sectoral policies focus on areas such as health, nutrition, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, livelihood support and protection, cash, children, civil-military relations and gender. The "do no harm principle" is the minimum requirement underlying such policies and aid approaches, which also means that environmental and other longer-term considerations must be taken into account from the outset even in short-term emergency interventions.
- Qualitative input and performance indicators, cost effectiveness criteria (e.g. overheads in proportion to aid going to recipients) and, as far as possible, a participative approach with local populations at the various stages of the assistance programmes, particularly in protracted crises, are all elements that the EU will consider carefully.
- Accountability to people assisted commits the aid provider to work within a framework of quality standards, principles, policies and guidelines, and promotes training and capacity building activities, ensuring the involvement of those assisted. A quality approach demands a high level of assurance from partners through the application of partner eligibility criteria and performance monitoring during implementation of the operation. Such quality assurances should be achievable by partners, taking into account their size and degree of specialisation.
- Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.

Adaptation to the risk and security environment

- When providing aid, due account should be taken of any potential risks linked to the situation on the ground, the constraints of implementation as well as any possible practical difficulties faced by partners that might delay or impede the implementation of the action. The potential impact of these risks and coping strategies should be dealt with in this context.

6. Duration

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 24 months. Humanitarian actions funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 January 2011. The individual actions funded by this Decision should start or be initiated within the year 2011.

Start Date: 1 January 2011

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to force majeure or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid actions.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the Agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the Action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

7. Evaluation

Under Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid actions financed by the Union in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent actions." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/introduction_en.htm.

8. Management Issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the European Union are implemented:

- by NGOs and the Red Cross National Societies on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA),
- by international organisations that are signatories to the FPA or to the Financial Administrative Framework Agreement with the UN (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation, or
- by Specialised Agencies of the Member States.

These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/partners_en.htm.

Actions will be managed:

- by direct centralised management for NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States and Red Cross National Societies, or
- by joint management for international organisations identified as potential partners for implementing the Decision, within the meaning of Article 3.3 of this Decision.