**Key messages**

- Making rapid assessments of the specific needs caused by frequent natural disasters, together with our partner organisations.
- Responding effectively and efficiently to the humanitarian needs of those affected by the seasonal storms, floods and droughts.
- Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures in all humanitarian assistance and supporting specific DRR projects to strengthen the resilience of communities regularly affected by natural disasters in Cambodia.

**Humanitarian situation and needs**

**Background**

Cambodia remains a largely agricultural country with a large rural population. Large portions of the population are vulnerable to floods caused by seasonal monsoon rains which can cause widespread destruction of fields and homes. Rural communities also face challenges caused by climate change and deforestation. In 2011, Cambodia and its neighbouring countries were hard hit by widespread flooding. Heavy rainfall inundated 70% of the country, displacing thousands and destroying fields, homes and many people's ways of earning their living.

**Major needs**

The rains and storms that cause floods, landslides and destroy homes and livelihoods, often leave inhabitants in need of food, temporary shelter, clean water and sanitation, primary health care and basic household items.
Funding
The European Commission is presently supporting Cambodian communities recover from the massive flooding in October 2011 which affected some 1.7 million people. Most recently it provided an additional €3.45 million for projects implemented by Oxfam GB, French Red Cross, ACTED, World Vision UK and a consortium of NGOs led by Danish Church Aid. These partners will not only provide basic household items and basic health and hygiene awareness to over 240,000 people in 12 provinces, but will also distribute items such as seeds and small livelihood grants to help the survivors of the floods restart their lives. This is the second intervention by ECHO in response to the floods. Some €2.5 m were made available immediately after the floods bringing the total assistance provided to Cambodia in response to this humanitarian emergency to nearly €6 million. The funding for Cambodia is part of two regional funding decisions totaling €21 million for humanitarian aid to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and the Philippines which have all been affected by the massive floods and powerful typhoons in September/October 2011.

Reducing the impact of natural disasters
Floods and drought are very damaging to people’s livelihoods and to the economy. In rural areas the population largely relies on agriculture. Irregular seasonal rain patterns or recurrent meteorological shocks can cause disaster situations at local level especially when they reoccur over several consecutive years. Deforestation, erosion of the riverbanks and improper land-use and planning are other man-made causes that increase the impact of natural hazards. Disaster preparedness measures are integrated into the humanitarian response, when possible. ECHO believes that a well prepared community can save lives and assets. Under its Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO), ECHO is presently providing some € 1.47 million to two projects in Cambodia, with the aim of reducing risks posed by natural hazards to the most vulnerable populations, as well as to improve local communities’ resilience. Since 1998, DIPECHO has been continuously strengthening local communities’ preparedness for local disasters. This has been done through training local disaster management committees, integrating of disaster risk reduction into local planning, implementing small scale mitigation measures and by setting up of early warning systems. The Programme also prioritises education and public awareness campaigns. In Cambodia, over 43 projects have been funded under DIPECHO, for over € 10 million. These actions have been piloted in the most hazard prone areas of the country.