TECHNICAL ANNEX

Regional DIPECHO HIP for Southern Africa and Indian Ocean

FINANCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2014/01000 and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

1. CONTACTS
Operational Unit in charge: DG ECHO/B/3
Contact persons at HQ: Flavio Bello - Flavio.Bello@ec.europa.eu
Contact person in the field: Maria Olsen - Maria.Olsen@ec.europa.eu

2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION
Indicative Allocation: EUR 7 000 000
Disaster Preparedness: EUR 7 000 000

3. PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT
3.1. Administrative info
Assessment round 1
a) Indicative amount: up to EUR 7 000 000 (Subject to the availability of payment appropriations. The amount awarded may be lower than the overall indicative amount, or spread over time).
b) Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: All interventions as described in section 3.4 of the HIP.
c) Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2014. Actions will start from 01/01/2014.
d) The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 18 months
e) Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners
f) Information to be provided: Single Form 2014

1 The eligibility date of the action is not linked to the date of receipt of the single form. It is either the eligibility date set in the single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, whatever occurs latest.

2 Single Forms 2014 will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL
3.2 Operational requirements:

3.2.1 Assessment criteria:
The assessment of proposals will look at:

- The compliance with the proposed strategy (HIP) and the operational requirements described in this section.
- Commonly used principles such as: quality of the needs assessment and of the logical framework, relevance of the intervention and coverage, feasibility, applicant's implementation capacity and knowledge of the country/region.
- In case of actions already being implemented on the ground, where DG ECHO is requested to fund a continuation, a visit of the on-going action may be conducted to determine the feasibility and quality of the Action proposed.

3.2.2 Operational guidelines:

3.2.2.1 General Guidelines
In the design of your operation, please take account of ECHO policies and guidelines where appropriate (see below for key documents and principles).

*Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*

*The EU resilience communication and Action Plan*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/resilience/resilience_en.htm

*Gender*

*Food Assistance*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/food_assistance_en.htm

*Nutrition*

*Cash and vouchers*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/sectoral/cash_en.htm

*Protection*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/sectoral/protection_en.htm

*Children in Conflict*

*Emergency medical assistance*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/sectoral/health_en.htm

*Civil–military coordination*
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/sectoral/civil_military_en.htm
A set of overall principles needs to guide every operation supported by ECHO.

**The humanitarian principles** of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and strict adherence to a "do no harm" approach remain paramount.

**The safe and secure provision of aid**: the ability to safely deliver assistance to all areas must be preserved. ECHO requests its partners to include in the project proposal details on how safety and security of staff (including the staff of implementing partners) and assets is being considered as well as an analysis of threats and plans to mitigate and limit exposure to risks. ECHO or its partners can request the suspension of ongoing actions as a result of serious threats to the safety of staff.

**Accountability**: partners remain accountable for their operations, in particular:

- the identification of the beneficiaries and of their needs using, for example, baseline surveys, KAP-surveys, Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) or beneficiary profiling;
- management and monitoring of operations, and having adequate systems in place to facilitate this;
- reporting on activities and outcomes, and the associated capacities to collect and analyse information;
- identification and analysis of logistic and access constraints and risks, and the steps taken to address them.

**Gender-Age Mainstreaming**: Ensuring gender-age mainstreaming is of paramount importance to ECHO, since it is an issue of quality programming. Gender and age matter in humanitarian aid because women, girls, boys, men and elderly women and men are affected by crises in different ways. Thus, the assistance needs to be adapted to their specific needs - otherwise it risks being off-target, failing its objectives or even doing harm to beneficiaries. It is also a matter of compliance with the EU humanitarian mandate and the humanitarian principles, in line with international conventions and commitments. All project proposals/reports must demonstrate integration of gender and age in a coherent manner throughout the Single Form, including in the needs assessment and risk analysis, the logical framework, description of activities and the gender-age marker section.

**Protection Mainstreaming**: Mainstreaming of basic protection principles in traditional assistance programmes is of paramount importance to ECHO. This approach is closely linked to the principle of 'do no harm', and also extends the commitment of safe and equal access to assistance as well as the need for special measures to ensure access for particularly vulnerable groups. All proposals MUST demonstrate integration of these principles, not only in section 5.3. of the Single Form, but also in its substantive sections, i.e. the logical framework, activity descriptions, etc. Protection mainstreaming should, in particular, be reflected in any actions implemented in a displacement
hosting context (be it refugees or IDPs), where considerations on the relationship with host communities are of utmost importance for the protection of the displaced population.

While humanitarian assistance often focuses on community-level interventions, it is important to remember that, in order to fully address many protection issues, it is also necessary to consider the relevance and feasibility of advocacy (structural level) interventions aimed at (a) stopping the violations by perpetrators and/or (b) convincing the duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibilities.

**Do no harm:** Partners should ensure that the context analysis takes into account threats in addition to vulnerabilities and capacities of affected populations. The analysis should bring out both external threats to the target population as well as the coping strategies adopted to counteract the vulnerabilities. The risk equation model provides a useful tool to conduct this analysis. The model stipulates that \[ \text{Risks equals Threats multiplied by Vulnerabilities divided by Capacities}, \] and the way to reduce risks is by reducing the threats and vulnerabilities and increasing the capacities. Depending on the type of threat faced by the population in question, reducing it can be anything from possible/straightforward to impossible/dangerous. In the latter case, one will resort to focusing on vulnerabilities and capacities, but the fact that the analysis has acknowledged the threat will contribute to ensuring that the response subsequently selected does not exacerbate the population’s exposure to the risk.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):**

For targeted DRR interventions, the information in the Single Form should clearly show that:

- all risks have been clearly identified, including their possible interactions;
- the intervention strengthens and promotes the role of the state and non-state actors in disaster reduction and climate change adaptation from national to local levels;
- the measures planned are effective in strengthening the capacity of communities and local authorities to plan and implement local level disaster risk reduction activities in a sustainable way, and have the potential to be replicated in other similar contexts;
- the intervention contributes to improving the mechanisms to coordinate disaster risk reduction programmes and stakeholders at national to local levels;
- the action is designed incorporating the existing good practice in this field;
- the partner has an appropriate monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanism to ensure evidence of the impact of the action and good practice are gathered, and effectively disseminated.

**Strengthening coordination:** Partners should provide specific information on their active engagement in all types of coordination bodies, formal and informal, and where relevant in cluster/sector and inter-cluster/sector coordination: participation in coordination mechanisms at different levels, not only in terms of meetings but also in terms of joint field assessments and engagement in technical groups and joint planning activities. The partners should actively engage with the relevant local authorities and, when feasible and appropriate, stipulate co-ordination in Memoranda of Understanding. When appropriate, partners should endeavour to exchange views on issues of common interest with actors present in the field (e.g. EU, UN, AU missions, etc.). In certain circumstances, coordination and deconfliction with military actors might be necessary. This should be done in a way that does not endanger humanitarian actors or the humanitarian space, and without prejudice to the mandate and responsibilities of the actor concerned.

**Integrated approaches:** Whenever possible, integrated approaches with multi- or cross-sectoral programming of preparedness or response in specific geographical areas are encouraged to
maximize impact, synergies and cost-effectiveness. Partners are requested to provide information on how their actions are integrated with other actors present in the same area.

Resilience

ECHO’s objective is to respond to the acute humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable and exposed people while increasing their resilience in line with EU resilience policy. Where feasible, cost effective, and without compromising humanitarian principles, ECHO support will contribute to longer term strategies to build the capacities of the most vulnerable and address underlying reasons for their vulnerability – to all shocks and stresses.

All ECHO partners are expected to identify opportunities to reduce future risks to vulnerable people and to strengthen livelihoods and capacities. ECHO encourages its partners to develop their contextual risk and vulnerability analysis and to adapt their approach to the type of needs and opportunities identified. This requires partners to strengthen their engagement with government services, development actors and with different sectors. In that regard, ECHO partners should indicate how they will increase ownership and capacity of local actors whenever possible: community mobilization, CSOs, technical dialogue, coordination and gradual transfer of responsibilities to countries' administration or relevant line ministries.

Good coordination and strategic complementarity between humanitarian and development activities (LRRD approach) are essential to the resilience approach.

Community-based approach In all sectors, interventions should adopt, wherever possible and appropriate, a community-based approach in terms of defining viable options to effectively help increasing resilience.. This includes the identification of critical needs as prioritised by the communities, and the transfer of appropriate knowledge and resources.

Response Analysis to Support Modality Selection for all Resource Transfers is mandatory. DG ECHO will support the most effective and efficient modality of providing assistance, whether it be cash, vouchers or in-kind assistance.

3.2.2.2 Specific Guidelines

Designed actions should include:

I. An analysis of the natural disaster context (at the appropriate scale) that generates the following:
   - a typology of the hazard/disaster in evidence,
   - the determination of the range of negative consequences of these hazards (some of which can be termed disasters),
   - an analysis of these negative consequences and a prioritisation of those considered most important by the population(s) at risk,
   - a breakdown of the needs ensuing from these hazards and the identification (prioritisation) of those which can most appropriately be addressed by ECHO.

II. A clearly defined intervention strategy that will ultimately conclude with phase-out and or handover, either to the target community/institution, the appropriate authorities, or an appropriate longer term funding instrument, such that sustainability and replicability of actions undertaken is maximised.
III. A consolidation of best practice component. Documentation and dissemination of the experience gained, as well as development of tools to promote the integration of DRR into wider frameworks, should be included in the design of the proposals. Actions should look at reviewing good practices and methodologies, in order to support the development of consensual joint education and communication products. Applicants are encouraged to use and disseminate already existing and successfully tested information, education and communication materials (IEC), respecting copyrights.

Key recommendations:

I. For the purpose of maximising the Action's impact, DG ECHO will encourage joint initiatives and/or consortia and will generally favour actions which complement each other both at country level and from a regional perspective.

II. When possible and relevant projects should consider joint monitoring, impact assessment or evaluation exercises addressing an area, a topic or sector. Regional level projects should develop a common monitoring and evaluation framework.

III. All projects should contribute to the international, regional and national DRR efforts and priorities identified by governments and non-governmental actors. This will include participation in DRR platforms and coordination.

IV. All approaches should consider integrating the lessons learnt and experiences from recent disasters, including from neighbouring countries, as well as anticipate future threats, with a focus on low-cost, replicable and sustainable options.

V. Applicants should ensure the inclusion of a wider group of stakeholders, including the private sector and charity associations, universities, the media, cultural and ethnic diversity, vulnerable people etc.

VI. Particular attention should be given to the fact that the design of the actions should integrate the specific needs of the population affected by HIV/AIDS (population under ARV therapy, high vulnerability to health risks, households headed by orphans and/or elders, etc…)

VII. Stockpiling of relief items will be limited to enhancing warehousing and logistical skills, stock management and provision of adequate infrastructures. Relief goods for stockpiling might be purchased by local communities or national authorities in order to ensure sustainability.

VIII. Pilot community-based initiatives should be restricted in scope to particularly innovative ideas and/or improved approaches. New pilots could also aim at testing the best performing innovations in a different context. Projects which have already been supported in previous Action Plans, should aim at integration into wider frameworks (local planning, development programmes, dissemination tools, etc.).

IX. Regional projects must have a proven and direct link to the community level. Action aimed at providing technical advice at community and local levels will be positively valued. Other components contributing to the compilation of disaster preparedness tools and indicators; to the raising of awareness on relevant topics and to the dissemination of lessons learned on disaster preparedness will also be considered.

X. New applicants should look at ECHO's support only as a contribution to an established or planned process.
Geographical priorities

I. The 2014 plan prioritizes 5 countries: Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. These countries are considered a priority due to their exposure and the population's vulnerability to natural hazards (Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique rank respectively 4, 5 and 7 in the GFDRR priority countries' list) and/or because large proportions of the population have been recurrently affected by seasonal food insecurity (over the last three years Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe have been severely affected by consecutive floods and drought periods which have had very negative impact in agricultural production).

II. Other areas could be included on the basis of needs and vulnerability assessments. Applicants must, in all cases, thoroughly justify their geographical choice, based on the identified natural hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.

III. For regional projects, activities may take place in one or more of the countries of the region, with priority given to the listed above, as well as in regional centres for aspects related to coordination and advocacy purposes.

IV. Bi-national/cross border projects in bordering areas of countries (e.g. river basin shared by countries) or in thematic areas of common interest (e.g. cyclone early warning systems) are also welcomed.

V. Multi-country actions should have one objective only, with a coherent focus (e.g. geographical, sectoral, on type of hazards and/or type of activities), leading to a coherent set of results. Applicants should ensure that each country component is subject to appropriate management and that the proposal elaborates on the respective tasks and responsibilities of each office involved in the follow-up of the action.

Programme priorities

I. Local disaster management components: targeting local actors in disaster prone areas: early warning systems, mapping and data computerisation, local capacity building, training. Integrated approaches with multi or cross sectoral programming covering the different aspects of the hazard exposure will be encouraged. Partners are requested to provide information on how their actions are integrated with other actors present in the same area.

II. Small-scale infrastructure and services at community level: coaching and capacitating communities in mitigation and prevention works, including purchase of necessary equipment, reinforcing critical infrastructure, operation and maintenance systems.

III. Contributing to the resilience building of vulnerable and hazards exposed communities by support to prevention of land degradation, introduction of conservation agriculture, promotion of improved short cycle seeds, etc. and linking preparedness and mitigation programmes to emerging livelihoods protection and social safety nets schemes.

IV. Capacity-building and support to Disaster Risk Reduction/ Risk Management institutions and mandated actors, in particular to local structures, the Red Cross societies, local non governmental organisations, village disaster management units, and other first line community based responders.

V. Information, Education and Communication, targeting direct and indirect beneficiaries: awareness raising among the general public, education and dissemination.
VI. Advocacy in ensuring that national and local authorities reflect on the needs of vulnerable before and after disaster strikes. Promotion of cyclone and floods resistant construction techniques and formal adaptation of improved construction codes.

All projects submitted must be **coherent with ongoing and planned instruments of EU cooperation and its member states.**

**Sectoral recommendations**

*The primary objective of the actions should be to build preparedness and response capacity in line with the DIPECHO HIP. The following recommendations should be therefore applied in line with this key priorities and the partner should demonstrate how they are linked to the objectives of the HIP.*

**Humanitarian food assistance**

All HFA and Livelihood actions should be compliant with the EU’s Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance (see Policy Compliance - chapter A), the objectives of which are:

- to safeguard the availability of, access to, and consumption of adequate, safe and nutritious food for populations affected by ongoing, firmly forecasted, or recent humanitarian crises, so as to avoid excessive mortality*, acute malnutrition, or other life-threatening effects and consequences;

- to protect livelihoods threatened by recent, ongoing, or imminent crises, minimise damage to food production and marketing systems, and establish conditions to promote the rehabilitation and restoration of self reliance; and

- to strengthen the capacities of the international humanitarian aid system, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of food assistance.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response**

- Humanitarian Food Assistance interventions will be supported to save lives and to protect productive assets as a response to severe, transitory food insecurity due to natural and/or man-made disasters.

- All proposals should incorporate a well articulated response analysis that builds on the needs assessment, and clearly informs the choice of response(s) and modalities as well as the targeting criteria. In particular, the choice of resource transfer modalities (cash, vouchers, in-kind etc.) is expected to be based on a sound analysis for both food assistance and livelihood support. See ECHO’s Guidelines on emergency cash and vouchers - http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/sectoral/cash_en.htm

- Seeds and tools assistance (in-kind or through vouchers) will be considered in response to acute emergencies in which affected communities have lost access to productive assets. Supporting seed security through existing markets will be expected after the acute emergency phase is over.

**Food Security and Livelihoods**

- Building sustainable livelihoods of the most vulnerable households is essential in resilience. An understanding of vulnerability across wealth groups must be clearly articulated together with livelihood profiles and a clear identification of target groups. Livelihood support efforts should be based on a clear response analysis. Improved access to food through upgrading income generation will be considered.
- Proposals to improve food security with clear links to nutrition outcomes will be supported.
- Agricultural inputs (seed etc.) and livestock interventions should aim to strengthen target communities and, where possible, having a positive effect on local markets.
- Partners are requested to mainstream DRR approaches into all activities. Food assistance will be considered in the event of shock(s) impacting on food security. In-kind and/or cash/vouchers can be considered based on a sound response analysis including a market assessment. Resource transfers should be taking into account as far as possible longer-term social protection programmes.

Nutrition

- The decision for funding nutrition interventions will be guided by sound data from surveys, evaluations and other quantitative assessments.
- The main objective of the DG ECHO in the nutrition sector is to reduce the excessive mortality and morbidity caused by critical levels of acute malnutrition.
- The recommended approach to the management of acute malnutrition is the CMAM, including community mobilisation/sensitisation, supplementary feeding program, outpatient feeding program and stabilisation centre.
- The trigger for CMAM programs is the level of acute malnutrition and aggravating factors (see the nutrition policy for thresholds) as measured by nutrition surveys. Interventions could also be funded if there is strong evidence that these thresholds could be soon reached. Rapid screenings with MUAC might also be used, provided a solid methodology is employed and reported.
- Whenever available and up to date, national protocols for the treatment of malnutrition should be followed.
- The main target for CMAM are children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women.
- CMAM services, whenever possible, must be delivered through ministry of health facilities and human resources.
- All projects should also provide a strategy to ensure good coverage of the provided services.
- Training and continuous supervision of Health Staff is always recommended for durability of interventions.
- Other nutrition interventions like IYCF, micronutrient supplementation, nutrition surveillance etc. can be coupled to the treatment of acute malnutrition program if needed, and unless extraordinary situations, will not be funded as stand-alone operations.
- According to the context, integration with other sector response like health, food security and WASH is recommended to improve the overall response quality, effectiveness and contribute toward people’s resilience.

WASH

- All WASH actions should be compliant with the EU’s Communication (see Policy compliance WASH reference document reported in §A of this document);
- Support to the WASH sector should be envisaged as:
  - A strengthening component of others sectors strategies such as Health, Food Security & Nutrition; or
  - An integrated component of Emergency Preparedness and Response or Disaster Risk Reduction strategies;
- Targeted standards for the WASH sectors support are SPHERE standards.
- All WASH actions should result in an improvement of the access of WASH services and knowledge for the targeted populations. Such improvement must be properly monitored with relevant population sample size, sampling frequency and sampling site (household);
- All WASH intervention should maximize the resource & techniques available on site focusing on repair and rehabilitation rather than promoting new facilities. WASH related inputs should be based on solid analysis of status of the existing WASH services and the reason of their defaulting.

**Health**

Generally DG ECHO will examine the following criteria when deciding whether to initiate a health intervention:

- The magnitude and severity of the crisis (level of mortality, morbidity\(^3\), and/or disability has exceeded or will soon exceed commonly accepted emergency thresholds.
- The size of the affected population, as well as the geographical extent of the disaster.
- The capacity of the community and/or of local, national, or regional government authorities to adequately respond; the degree to which DG ECHO and its partners are assured of independent access to the affected population and of the possibility of conducting independent monitoring of DG ECHO-funded interventions.

Health outcomes are dependent on multiple sector interventions. Therefore, a multi-sectoral integrated approach should be encouraged in the situations where this is the most appropriate response, particularly with the WASH, Nutrition, Food Security and Shelter sectors. For example, the role of health early warning and epidemiological surveillance is critical to other life-saving sectors.

As a general rule, health services provided under DG ECHO funding should be free at the point of health care delivery.

DG ECHO supports programmes that seek to restore or to reinforce disrupted essential health services and to provide additional services, as required by circumstances specific to the crisis, on a short-term basis. An early response will typically include a Basic Package of Health Services – a package of interventions designed to meet the most important health needs of all segments of the population at community, primary care and, at times, hospital level.

Those interventions that have the highest potential to save most lives in a timely manner will be given highest priority.

In all humanitarian settings where it intervenes, DG ECHO will support the establishment, if absent, or the strengthening of early warning systems in order to be informed of the occurrence of diseases of epidemic potential at the earliest possible moment, and to be able to support a rapid and effective response.

Health interventions should be designed and implemented whenever possible in a way that allows for the fullest and most rapid recovery of health services and their return to normalcy. This means

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\(^3\) With staggering HIV prevalence in some of the countries of the region, specific attention should be raised during the needs assessment.
that emergency health interventions should facilitate the transition to development through constructive engagement with appropriate funding agencies and implementing partners.

DG ECHO will consider funding activities, including innovative or previously untested approaches, methods or instruments and tools, which are aimed at advancing the evidence base and the quality of practice in the humanitarian health sector.

**Protection**

With respect to the food security and nutrition situation partners should ensure that their context analysis takes into account threats in addition to vulnerabilities and capacities. The analysis should bring out both external threats to the target population as well as the coping strategies adopted to counteract the vulnerabilities. The risk equation model provides a useful tool to conduct this analysis.

The model stipulates that Risks equals Threats multiplied by Vulnerabilities divided by Capacities, and the way to reduce risks is by reducing the threats and vulnerabilities and increasing the capacities. Depending on the type of threat faced by the population in question reducing it can be anything from possible/straightforward to impossible/dangerous. In the latter case one will resort to focusing on vulnerabilities and capacities, but the fact that the analysis has acknowledged the threat will contribute to ensuring that the response subsequently selected does not exacerbate the population’s exposure to the risk.

While humanitarian assistance often focuses on community-level interventions it is important to remember that to fully address many protection issues it is necessary to consider if any advocacy (structural level) interventions to A) Stop the violations by perpetrators and/or B) Convince the duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibilities are relevant and feasible.

**Visibility and communication activities**

**Visibility**

Providing visibility, i.e. branding for the European Commission is not an option, it is a contractual obligation in the context of humanitarian projects financed by the European taxpayer.

The basic visibility rule is that the partner must add the visual identity of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), wherever their own logo is being displayed, in the field or elsewhere.

Please refer to the full legal name of ECHO even if the acronym does not fully fit; ECHO is not an office, even if it is tempting to state that.

Basic visibility also entails highlighting or at least, acknowledging, the European Commission as the donor in media interviews, press releases, or any other opportunity where the partner communicates about an EU funded project.

The Commission recognises that factors such as lack of security or local political sensitivities may curtail public communication activities in some crisis zones. In exceptional cases, it may be necessary to avoid visibility in the field. In such cases, a strategic approach to communication should be agreed with DG ECHO’s country and HQ team.
**Costs**

Partners can allocate 0.5% of the direct eligible costs of an action, with a maximum of € 8 000, to visibility, information and communication. If a partner chooses to only fulfil the basic legal requirement of branding without further communication actions, then the costs in this budget line should reflect that.

It is important to note that stickers, posters or basic branding that could cost the full amount will not be accepted, except without prior approval in cases where items have to be produced elsewhere.

Larger communication actions can also be funded, such as when the partner has communication experience and expertise and is keen to exploit the benefits of more ambitious communication actions and visibility. In this case, be sure to attach a good plan on how you intend to use the funds, who the audience is and how you plan on organising the action. Our HQ team will need to authorise this, when the budget is over the limits stated above.

**Communication**

Communication is an imperative in today’s world where different agendas are competing for less and less resources. The Humanitarian Aid sector is not exempt. Without meaningful communication, the crucial role that humanitarians play in a world full of crises, will easily go unnoticed.

In the context of Southern Africa, there is rapid response to natural disasters and disaster risk reduction. There are many best practices to share and ideas to scale up. For these, it is important to do more meaningful proactive communication actions targeting audiences in Europe.

It is essential for the European taxpayers to know how their money is spent. This can be achieved by engaging the international and the European media outlets. While these actions are legally optional, communication plans featuring visibility i.e. branding only actions only may be rejected if ECHO deems the project to have a high communication potential.

For proactive information and communication linked to projects, appropriate activities should be identified, see the links provided for some ideas.

**Advocacy**

Where feasible, partners should jointly engage in advocacy-oriented communication activities with the objective of increasing the humanitarian space. There are many issues of common concern for ECHO Southern Africa partners, especially in light of the disaster risk reduction and resilience building in the region. To achieve significant results in advocacy, ECHO recommends joint efforts among partners working in the same regions. Communication plans remain flexible and allow such actions to be proposed after the funding is approved.

Partners should include in the final report evidence of their visibility and communication activities.