

## **HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, IRAN AND CENTRAL ASIA**

AMOUNT: EUR 36 500 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2018/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO's partners and to assist them in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

### **0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP**

In view of the expanding conflict, the lack of effective government commitment and the paucity of appropriate proposals, it will not be possible to conduct an effective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programme in Afghanistan. As such the DRR objectives in Afghanistan will no longer be directly pursued and the EUR 1 000 000 allocated to this activity will be de-committed from this HIP.

### **1. CONTEXT**

This Humanitarian Implementation Plan covers Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia. It is intended to address the needs of vulnerable populations affected by the on-going conflict in Afghanistan and its consequences on neighbouring countries. It also includes provisions to improve capacities to prevent and respond to the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

In Afghanistan, the conflict between Government forces and non-state armed groups has intensified. According to a mid-year report from the United Nations, the number of civilians killed and injured during the first six months of 2017 persisted at the same record high levels as last year but with a worsening toll from suicide attacks, and a greater impact on women and children. In the same period, 173 409 people fled their homes due to the conflict, bringing the total number of displaced people to 1.7 million. Forced displacement is reported in 29 out of 34 provinces and 58 per cent of all displaced people are girls and boys under 18. Most of the displaced people have moved to the cities, where social services are struggling to cope, leading to increased vulnerability and suffering. There is a mounting access problem for relief agencies and incidents have occurred where they have been directly targeted. DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) for 2016-17 identified extreme humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be very high. At 7.8, Afghanistan holds one of the highest INFORM (Inform For Risk Management) scores, as well as one of the lowest and downward trending INFORM 'coping capacity' scores.

In view of the current increasing trend in the conflict and the lack of any credible peace process, the humanitarian outlook remains bleak, with needs that are expected to increase. Furthermore, the same conflict and instability is making it equally difficult for development programmes to achieve their objectives, notably to help the Government to

provide a socio-economic environment that persuades Afghans to stay and build a future in Afghanistan.

Afghan refugees represent the third largest refugee group worldwide and the second largest contingent of asylum seekers to the EU. With around 2.1 million Afghans, Pakistan hosts the second largest group of refugees in the world. Of these, only 70% are registered and although some have privately prospered, or now benefit from development initiatives, many, notably the undocumented, remain vulnerable. 629 464 Afghans were repatriated in 2016, in part due to push factors on the Pakistan side, imposing an additional burden on the limited resources and capacities inside Afghanistan. However, following a recent agreement between the UNHCR and Pakistan, legal refugees will be allowed to remain at least until December 2017 and undocumented refugees will be registered. As a result, so far, there has been a reduction in returns to Afghanistan in 2017. Pakistan has also had to contend with millions of its own citizens displaced by internal conflicts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). A reduction in military operations has allowed most of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return to their places of origin. Nonetheless, despite the efforts of the Pakistani Government conditions these areas are reported to be challenging, with much of the infrastructure having been destroyed. Access for humanitarian organisations to affected populations remains complicated with restrictions exacerbated by the continuing backdrop of insecurity, which impedes on independent needs assessments and potential responses, particularly in KP, FATA and Baluchistan. DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2016-17 identified high humanitarian needs in Pakistan.

Iran is hosting about 950 000 registered Afghan refugees but there are estimates mentioning an additional 1.5 to 2 million unregistered refugees. Iran is providing the registered refugees with access to education and to its health insurance schemes, but there are thousands of undocumented refugees that remain vulnerable and in need of assistance. In recent months, Iran has continued to show a willingness to open up its humanitarian space in order to allow further assistance to undocumented refugees, but also in a bid to encourage greater burden sharing from the international community. On the other hand, Iran continues to deport hundreds of thousands of Afghans on a yearly basis, many of them highly vulnerable. DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2016-17 identified high humanitarian needs in Iran.

In previous years, DG ECHO has allocated a significant proportion of its funds to the care and maintenance of the Afghan refugee caseload. However, more recently, thanks to new policies and a closer working relationship, or 'nexus' with development donors, in particular with the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) but also with EUMS and the World Bank, the needs of protracted displaced people, notably in Pakistan, have been increasingly met by host governments and communities supported by development donors. As such, DG ECHO will concentrate on the acute needs of conflict-affected populations, particularly inside Afghanistan.

Much of the region covered by this HIP is subject to recurrent natural disasters and claims some of the highest INFORM indices for natural hazards. In Central Asia and Pakistan, DG ECHO has helped develop programmes to promote Disaster Risk Reduction, which are now being taken on by governments and other donor partners. In

Iran contacts with a view to potential cooperation in DRR are still at an early stage, whereas in Afghanistan the conflict has allowed only limited progress and much still needs to be done. In addition, Pakistan has the third largest caseload (3.3 million) of under-nourished children in the world. This results from underlying structural economic and social problems, and is accentuated by natural disasters and climate change. Even if the government is trying to tackle the underlying causes with the assistance of development donors, there remains a need to promote a national emergency capacity to respond to likely future shocks.

## **2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

### **2.1 Afghanistan**

#### **2.1.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance**

According to the OCHA 2017 needs overview –*‘Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous, and most violent, crisis ridden countries in the world. The continued deepening and geographic spread of the conflict has prompted a 13% increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2017, now 9.3 million.’* The most acute needs concern people who have been displaced or lost services due to conflict.

- Conflict-affected populations: In addition to the 3 489 civilian casualties (1 141 deaths and 2 348 injured) in 2016 recent estimates suggest that over 9 million people have limited or no access to essential health services. Rates of infant and maternal mortality remain amongst the highest in the world at 73/1000 live births and reports of maternal mortality ratio (MMR) rates as high as 417/100 000 in rural parts of the country. Severe food insecurity is on the rise with 1.6 million people severely food insecure.

- Internally Displaced People (IDP): The total caseload of registered IDPs in Afghanistan is around 1.7 million, with a further 173 409 individuals that have become displaced in the first half of 2017. Over 50% of these are children. Also multiple forms of Gender-Based Violence, particularly early and forced marriage, domestic, psychological, and sexual abuses are reported, affecting host and displaced communities alike. Increasing threats and intimidation as well as the destruction of schools have left over 100 000 Afghan children without access to education. Furthermore Afghanistan has the highest level of gender disparity in the primary education in the world, with only 71 girls in primary school for every 100 boys. Research amongst IDPs suggests that only 35% of IDP children are in school versus 57% attending school countrywide.

- Afghan Returnees: Adding to the burden created by IDPs, over 600 000 refugees returned from Pakistan in the latter half of 2016. Current levels of returnees have re-stabilised to pre-July 2016 levels, with 41 812 registered and 73 790 undocumented Afghan refugees and 1 775 deportees returning from Pakistan in the first half of 2017. This is in addition to the 178 507 undocumented Afghan deportees from Iran and approximately 8 000 returnees from the EU (Eurostat 2016). Thus, over half a million people will likely to have returned by the end 2017, with the process set to continue in 2018.

- Pakistani refugees in Afghanistan: Originally displaced, as a result of the conflict and military operations in the North Waziristan Agency of FATA in Pakistan, some 45 000 Pakistani refugees remain displaced in Afghanistan.

- Disaster affected populations: In the first half of 2017, a total of 40 411 people have been affected by natural disasters.

### 2.1.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

- Multi-sector humanitarian needs: The unplanned mass movement of people, due to the insecurity or natural disasters, requires a multi-sector rapid response, which includes the following sectors: food assistance, shelter (winterisation), non-food items (NFIs) and WASH, preferably through assessed and monitored multi-purpose cash transfers. Moreover, an increasing number of IDPs are becoming a ‘protracted’ caseload with a propensity to become permanently established in major urban centres, where the scarce housing and livelihood opportunities and social disorientation add an additional complexity to the needs

- Health and Nutrition: Access to adequate medical assistance, in particular for the war-wounded, is a priority need. Basic health care delivery is required in areas where the provision of health services is disrupted due to conflict. Malnutrition, particularly amongst women and children, is a significant consequence of the crisis, resulting, inter alia, from food insecurity and a lack of adequate access to safe drinking water.

- Protection: Assistance is required for the increasing number of conflict-affected people and for returning refugees. This includes: the provision of psychological first aid to recognize stress factors, addressing Gender-based violence (GBV) and advocacy for the upholding of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

- Logistics: In view of the harsh terrain, the climate and insecurity, much difficulty lies in accessing the affected communities or displaced people. As such air transport particularly for humanitarian personnel is essential,

- Coordination and information management: In order to enhance humanitarian coordination, there is a need for systematic and timely needs assessments, data collection, analysis, presentation, and dissemination both in general and in the specific sectors. In view of the insecurity there is also a need for specialised security assessments and analyses.

## 2.2 Pakistan

### 2.2.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance

In Pakistan, the focus is on refugees, internally displaced people, people affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, and by natural disasters.

Afghan refugees: Around 1 400 000 are registered and documented, whereas there are an estimated 700 000 that are undocumented (the Government of Pakistan (GoP) has promised documentation for 2018). A third are estimated to be vulnerable and in need of some form of assistance. In Pakistan alone 109 963 registered new-borns were added to this number in 2016.

Internally Displaced Persons: The GoP hoped that all IDPs would have returned by the end of 2017. According to OCHA, approximately 45 954 registered families and 0.5 million un-registered TDPs remain displaced by internal conflicts in KP and FATA.

Communities affected by natural disasters/effects of climate: The main effects of the 2015 earthquake have been dealt with or have been taken over by the Government or other donors. Whereas refugees, IDPs, returnees and disaster-affected populations are at times prone to acute shortages of food that require an emergency response, Pakistan also suffers from a deep and chronic problem of stunting amongst its general population that is exacerbated by recurrent climate-induced nutritional shocks.

Children and Youth: Pakistan still has the world's second highest number of out-of-school children. Amongst refugees, 64% of the population is under the age of 24, the majority of whom have received little or no formal education. Access to education in violence affected areas is even more difficult, particularly for girls, as parents fear for their safety both on the way to, and back from, school.

### 2.2.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

- Care and maintenance and repatriation support for refugees: The majority of the 2.1 million remaining refugees in Pakistan rather than living in camps have largely blended into local communities, which now enjoy support from development donors. Despite this, some remain highly vulnerable and require specific assistance for protection, health care or food security. Furthermore as a process of repatriation is underway this requires the maintenance of services specific to that activity

- Internally Displaced People: The most vulnerable of these and their host communities will continue to require multi-sector support. Also and despite genuine efforts by the GoP, many areas of origin still lack basic functioning services (health, WASH and shelter) implying that returnees face vulnerability in their (often devastated) areas of return. However, lack of access has prevented humanitarian agencies from carrying out independent assessments let alone carrying out effective remedial activities.

- Coordination and Advocacy: The complex nature of the different crises in Pakistan requires concerted efforts on coordination and the strict adherence and application of humanitarian principles in the humanitarian response. Access in particular is a permanent challenge for which engagement with relevant authorities needs to be further developed. In view of the on-going transition from emergency to development, strong coordination between the two groups of actors is required.

- Education in Emergencies (EiE): Access to education is required for refugee children (documented and undocumented) and IDPs. However, the provision of support for this will have to be considered in the light of the return process and programmes provided by GoP and development donors.

- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)/Resilience: The progress made in DRR in KP is such that it now requires different actors than DG ECHO. With regards to the challenge of tackling structural malnutrition/stunting, particularly in Sindh and Baluchistan, the Government is tackling this with the support of development donors. There is still though a lack of capacity and systems to deal with the severe acute malnutrition that will continue to occur. The government has thus expressed the need to support the establishment of early warning systems, risk assessment tools and early response mechanisms to deal with the initial effects of disasters through a disaster risk reduction approach.

## **2.3 Iran**

### **2.3.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance**

Iran is currently hosting 951 142 documented Afghan refugees (Amayesh card holders), 620 000 Iranian visa holders (legal economic migrants), and approximately 1.5 to 2 million undocumented Afghans mostly living in peri-urban settings. Around 800 000 Afghans of this caseload are considered to be severely vulnerable and in need of assistance. According to the IOM, 120 133 refugees have returned from Iran to Afghanistan since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, mostly as deportees, many of which are either vulnerable, or unaccompanied minors.

### **2.3.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs**

The most vulnerable of Afghan refugees require assistance in accessing food, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, protection, and education.

Despite the Supreme Leader's decree stating that all children, regardless of nationality, are entitled to access public schools, capacity remains low. Absorbing approximately 600 000 new pupils is clearly a huge challenge that will require every support possible.

Of particular concern is the fate of Afghan deportees. Neither the UNHCR nor the IOM have access to the Iranian side of the border. However, evidence from the Afghanistan side suggests that not only do they arrive unannounced but also often in poor shape, with many single women and unaccompanied minors amongst them. There is thus a need to provide protection according to IHL and help establish a more dignified and better informed transit system at the Iran-Afghan borders.

## **2.4 Central Asia**

### **2.4.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance**

Central Asia is very prone to natural disasters (INFORM score of 4.4), particularly the areas of the TienShan and Pamir Mountains which are more exposed to climate related hazards. Natural hazards are compounded by land degradation and erosion due to damaging traditional agricultural practices and the impact of climate change. In addition, the whole Central Asia region is very seismic. Most big cities are in seismic zones.

### **2.4.2 Description of the most acute humanitarian needs**

The Central Asian republics have made considerable progress in establishing both disaster risk reduction and response measures, ranging from the community level to the central government level. Nonetheless, much work still needs to be done to deepen and broaden both the institutions and the capacity of the personnel and promote regional co-operation.

### **3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

#### **3.1 Afghanistan**

-National / local response and involvement: Despite international assistance the Government of Afghanistan barely has the capacity to meet its most basic economic and social sovereign responsibilities and only has a remit over 54% of the country. It was greatly challenged by the sudden influx of returnees from Pakistan in 2016. Despite creditable intervention policies and action plans, there were significant gaps in their execution. Although less is known about areas not under government control, it is suspected that basic services and emergency response capacities are even less functional. Even if over the years of conflict, Afghan communities have obviously adapted to the hardships, they remain vulnerable to the sudden shocks of natural disasters and conflicts, particularly now that the escalating conflict has eroded their coping mechanisms.

-International response: The bulk of the international response is directed at ‘nation building’ (budget support, elections etc) including the management of migration and military support. Humanitarian support has tended to dwindle over the last years. For instance, only a third of the 2017 Humanitarian response plan (budgeted at USD 550 million) has been funded so far.

-Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity: Even if the humanitarian response has been honed over many years of presence in Afghanistan the current surge in conflict has resulted in a reduction in the number of partners and an overstretching of the capacities of the remainder. Many are at the limit of their operating capacity. The constraints placed on access and the daily operating environment by the conflict is severe. Only the courage, dedication of the staff and the strict respect for security measures have allowed operations to continue to function effectively without the need for remote management. Needless to say that such an environment implies additional operating costs.

-Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions: In view of the massive needs in the region, DG ECHO will prioritise lifesaving activities and in particular in situations where populations cannot access traditional means of assistance due to conflict, disaster or forced displacement.

DG ECHO will maintain focus on response to the most acute humanitarian needs with priority given to new needs arising from the conflict. At the same time, DG ECHO will also support the capacity to respond to critical needs resulting from natural disasters and maintain a strong focus on supporting access to contested and under-served areas. DG ECHO will strive to coordinate its actions with development initiatives and indeed advocate for the needs of vulnerable groups to be incorporated into long-term government policies and activities.

DG ECHO Priority actions in Afghanistan will include:

- Relief assistance for vulnerable internally displaced people (whether affected by conflict or natural disasters) that conforms to the common rationale of the Emergency Response Mechanism, emergency support for the most vulnerable returning refugees not covered by other programmes and any uncovered emergency needs for Pakistani refugees in Afghanistan. This will consist of multi-purpose cash assistance intended to cover the survival minimum expenditure basket for the initial period of displacement. The

assistance will be based on objective assessments and will provide bridging support whilst the beneficiaries find longer-term solutions.

- Basic health care in ('white') areas not covered by government services and access to life-saving medical assistance for civilian war-wounded as well as response to epidemics will be provided where services are disrupted by the conflict
- Nutritional rehabilitation treatment will be provided for women and children in areas where the acute malnutrition rate is above the emergency threshold.
- Protection is an overarching concern to be mainstreamed into all DG ECHO funded actions. This will include measures to counter Gender-based violence and the needs of children in conflict and natural disaster settings. There is also an urgent and pressing need to promote International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and recall the obligations of the parties to the conflict.

DG ECHO will support coordination initiatives in order to promote efficiency of the humanitarian response. Priority will be placed on the practical operational coordination with a focus on the priority sectors of intervention.

DG ECHO will seek to enhance humanitarian support services including dedicated humanitarian air transportation and the provision of safety and security support to NGOs, in order to support and improve the delivery of principled humanitarian aid, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach contested and non-government controlled areas. Contingency planning, including urban contingency planning, should mitigate the effect of conflict on the civilian population.

Education in emergencies could be provided for children excluded from school as a result of a conflict or a disaster. However, this will be secondary to life-saving actions and subject to the availability of funds.

DG ECHO will consider DRR activities that are linked to the mitigation of the effects of natural disasters and to building local and national capacity. Community Based and School Based Disaster Risk Management are possible approaches. DRR intervention will be in line with the national recommendations and involve local governance structures. Priority will be given for interventions mitigating the effect of earthquakes and floods.

### **3.2 Pakistan**

National / local response and involvement: The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has a number of policies and budgets that are directed at the support of host communities and returning IDPs. These are channelled through local authorities, which also use a network of local NGOs. However their coverage and efficiency, especially at targeting the most vulnerable is not considered adequate to meet all needs.

International response: The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has not authorized a Consolidated Appeals as proposed by OCHA, preferring bilateral arrangements. DFID is a major donor to Pakistan and has committed GBP 314 million for 2017-18. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)/The Office of Food for Peace (FFP) have committed USD 64 million. These funds are attributed for the most part to shelter, settlements and WASH.



UNHCR has launched an appeal for USD 127 million and is currently experiencing a shortfall of 85% i.e. USD 109 million. However, the World Bank is developing a programme to support refugee host communities estimated at USD 300 million.

Pakistan has also secured significant funding for nutrition notably in Sindh and Baluchistan from the World Bank and DEVCO.

Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity: Humanitarian space in Pakistan is severely constrained due to security issues and more particularly to the GoP's restrictions on access for the humanitarian community. Provision of MoUs to allow INGOs to operate has been delayed for more than a year. Armed escorts are also imposed in some areas. There is a general lack of respect for humanitarian principles, which requires constant advocacy. DG ECHO will maintain an office in Islamabad in order to promote access, ensure assessments, quality control and monitoring & evaluation and coordination of its response.

Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions  
DG ECHO Priority actions in Pakistan will include:

- A focus on the most acute humanitarian needs of refugees (and returnees), Temporarily Displaced People and those affected by natural disasters.
- Protection interventions. These should ensure a holistic approach with strengthened and effective monitoring, prevention and response to violence, abuse, harassment, extortion and exploitation. DG ECHO will also consider protection actions that facilitate the attainment of durable solutions but will not support activities which may raise concerns about the voluntary, safe and dignified nature of the refugee and IDP return process. Particular attention should be given to ensure the inclusion and access of the most vulnerable, including women, children, elderly, disabled and marginalized groups such as minorities.
- Support for food insecurity and malnutrition. DG ECHO will concentrate its efforts on tackling severe acute malnutrition above emergency levels (as based on solid data) in areas that cannot be supported by Government or development donor programmes. Food assistance will be provided through cash grants where possible and is to be closely linked to efforts to restore or promote livelihoods/resilience.
- WASH interventions. These should adopt a broad community approach to ensure adequate overall coverage of water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion within the targeted communities. Equally, robust engagement with relevant authorities should be ensured from the very onset of the intervention to ensure appropriate levels of sustainability.
- Health care. DG ECHO will only support access to primary health care for vulnerable populations who have lost access due to conflict or natural disasters.
- Shelter assistance. This will be focused on emergency needs and on developing adapted intervention strategies for those living in host communities and for returnees. Whenever appropriate, cash should be favoured in lieu of actual articles in kind. In the current context the establishment of camps is not encouraged but may be considered if the situation warrants them.

- Coordination DG ECHO will continue to support coordination, advocacy, common services and interventions which improve the safety, principled nature and effectiveness of humanitarian action.

DG ECHO's proposed DRR strategy will be to support the Government of Sindh to refine and further develop an early warning system and emergency response mechanism for potential nutritional shocks.

DRR will be mainstreamed in all humanitarian assistance actions, including through advocacy and support to institutions in preparedness activities, by strengthening coordination mechanisms and enhancing the capacities of line departments by engaging DG ECHO partners.

Education in emergencies could be provided for children excluded from school as a result of conflict or disaster; however this will be subject to the availability of funds.

### **3.3 Iran**

National / local response and involvement: Iran has dedicated considerable amounts of its own resources to provide for the Afghan refugee caseload and has a dedicated organisation the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) for managing this issue. Iran recently committed itself to open up the national health insurance scheme to documented Afghan refugees on the same basis as its own citizens. In addition, all children irrespective of their legal status have also recently been permitted to enrol in the national education system.

International response: Only the UN agencies and half a dozen international humanitarian organisations are allowed to operate in Iran. Furthermore, only a handful of donors provide funding (including DE, FI, EE and Japan).

Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity: Traditionally Iran has tightly restricted and controlled humanitarian access. There are very few international partners. More recently the Government of Iran (GoI) has shown signs of opening up the humanitarian space.

Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions: DG ECHO's strategy will be to continue to engage constructively with the Iranian authorities on the issue of refugees. In terms of action, it will provide support to the most vulnerable Afghan refugees, regardless of their status, with food assistance, shelter, health, protection and education interventions. DG ECHO is particularly committed to assist vulnerable Afghan children with otherwise little to no access to education and protection services. It also concerns children who are either out-of-school or at risk of dropping out. Assistance will be provided either through direct Multi-purpose cash transfers or indirectly through capacity building and material support to the relevant services (health and education).

Response mechanisms notably in terms of health, shelter and education should complement and enhance existing efforts rather than establishing separate uncoordinated systems. DG ECHO will also place particular attention on the need for regular monitoring and evaluation.

### 3.4 Central Asia

As highlighted by the Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CESDRR) in Almaty, which is jointly funded by the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Governments, the governments of Central Asia have firmly grasped the relevance and importance of disaster risk reduction. Not only have they evolved the appropriate policies and institutions but they have also increasingly committed the necessary budgets to establish a credible capacity. As such, DG ECHO has decided that its long-standing DIPECHO programme has achieved its objectives and should be phased out. Nonetheless, as existing programmes will run until the end of 2018 a monitoring capacity will be maintained through DG ECHO's regional Asia office. Furthermore, not only will the Commission remain involved in building DRR capacity in the region through its various indicative and thematic programmes managed by DG DEVCO, DG ECHO will also continue to build a strong collaborative relationship between the national and regional DRR bodies of central Asia and our own Emergency Response Crisis Centre (ERCC).

### 3.5 General considerations for all interventions:

Effective coordination is essential. ECHO supports the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda (ITA)** and expects its partners to demonstrate their engagement in implementing its objectives and to actively take part in coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team, clusters and technical working groups).

Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with **visibility** requirements and to acknowledge the funding role of the EU/ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.

All humanitarian interventions funded by DG ECHO must take into consideration, together with other protection concerns, any risk of gender-based violence and develop and implement appropriate strategies to prevent such risks. Moreover, in line with its life-saving mandate, DG ECHO encourages the establishment of quality, comprehensive and safe GBV response services since the onset of emergencies, in line with DG ECHO's 2013 Gender policy<sup>1</sup>.

## 4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

### 4.1 DG ECHO AND THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT 'NEXUS'

In order to realize the most effective use of resources, the EU has multiplied its efforts to promote rationalisation and operational coordination, both within its own institutions and together with other partners, such as the UN and the World Bank. This so called 'nexus' has been most evident in the Afghan context with the evolution in the support being provided to the protracted displaced populations. The first stage has seen considerable work on a joint analysis, with an overriding agreement that the Afghan displacement issue is a regional problem that needs a regional approach. There is also recognition of

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<sup>1</sup> : [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender\\_age\\_marker\\_toolkit.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf);  
[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid_en)

the reality that the long-term Afghan refugee and IDP population has specific needs that must be incorporated into the affected governments' development policies, which in consequence must be provided by the appropriate long-term funding support they require. For instance, in Pakistan, the World Bank will allocate some USD 300 000 000 to support refugee host communities and further USD 75 000 000 to include IDPs into its citizens charter (community support) programme in Afghanistan. DG DEVCO is in the process of implementing two programmes (with an overall value over EUR 300 000 000) supporting returning the displaced across the region notably, and through the support for the creation of livelihoods.

As the 'nexus' process presents new challenges in areas that have not been traditional grounds for development partners, DG ECHO has been actively participating at all levels, from HQ to field, in policy and programmatic dialogues, both to share its knowledge but also to ensure that the 'blending' is optimal and that the most vulnerable are not left by the way-side. However, the Afghan context also highlights that in a conflict, perfect symbiosis is not always fully achievable – conflict often limits the ability of development programmes to deploy and achieve their objectives and humanitarian actors must maintain a distinctive identity and role, if they are to be able to operate across lines. Nonetheless, in so far as the 'nexus' process has allowed DG ECHO to concentrate more of its limited funds on the most urgent needs and given the millions of protracted displaced the chance of a more resilient future, it will continue to be a cornerstone of Commission policy in the region.

## **4.2 OTHER SERVICES/DONOR AVAILABILITY**

### **Afghanistan**

In October 2016 donors reaffirmed their support to Afghanistan by pledging USD 15 billion in development assistance. DG ECHO will continue linking up with development donors' early recovery programmes in order to ensure the longer term resilience of its vulnerable caseloads. However, limited capacity of government agencies, aid diversion, increasingly difficult operating conditions and the lack of access and monitoring have significantly challenged the efficiency and effectiveness of stabilisation and development strategies so far.

A major concern is that the Government and certain development donors may, for political reasons refuse to continue to invest in Taleban controlled areas, which could lead to an exacerbation of needs and an increasing demand on humanitarian funding.

### **Pakistan**

Other donors, such as DEVCO, the World Bank, and EU Member States (in particular the Department for International Development (DFID)), OFDA, and USAID remain key donors in Pakistan and offer opportunities to develop synergies where DG ECHO programmes exist. Notably, the World Bank is interested in eventually incorporating DG ECHO's programme to support the Government of Sindh's emergency nutritional response initiative into its own multi-annual support budget.

## **Iran**

In view of the recent embargoes and restrictions imposed by the Iranians themselves, the number of donors and international development initiatives remains extremely limited. DG ECHO and the UN will nonetheless strive to attract new donors, notably by promoting international platforms whereby the Iranians can highlight their Afghan refugee achievements and remaining issues.

### **4.3 OTHER CONCOMITANT EU INTERVENTIONS**

#### **Afghanistan**

The EU has signed an agreement with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoA) to provide up to EUR 1.4 billion in development assistance over the next seven years.

Under the EU Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020, the focal sectors of intervention are Agriculture and Rural Development, Health, Policing & Rule of Law, and Democratisation & Accountability. Joint DG ECHO and EU Delegation Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) efforts are focused in the areas of disaster risk reduction (DRR), protection and reintegration of refugees (including education in emergencies), food security (monitoring) and health.

#### **Pakistan**

The EU MIP 2014-2020 focuses on three key sectors: i) rural development, ii) education and iii) good governance, human rights and the rule of law. The Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2017 has indicated four main areas of cooperation, which include Sindh Economic growth, Baluchistan education, Sindh education and an allocation for Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF).

In most instances, the EU is doing budgetary support to provincial governments and also supporting the non-state actors and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in promoting human rights, accountability and good governance.

The Sindh Union Council Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) is a EUR 82.13 million project that will continue until 2021. Aid to Uprooted People (AUP), is a EUR 22 million project to be implemented in FATA by KFW and GIZ. In the nutrition sector, there is EUR 60 million for the Programme for Improved Nutrition in Sindh (PINS) with a focus on 10 districts currently covered by SUCCESS and WINS. The EU also supports FAO with EUR 33 million for coordination and operational related initiatives on food security, nutrition, agriculture and land governance. The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) is providing EUR 10 million for a new initiative ‘Support to returnees and their communities in FATA’, which will focus mainly on education, resilience and reforms in FATA.

#### **Iran and region**

Preparations are currently under way for the programming of a EUR 200 000 000 comprehensive regional EU Response programme addressing migration and forced

displacement challenges in Asia and the Middle East that will cover, inter alia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

#### **4.4 EXIT SCENARIOS**

##### **Afghanistan**

Any humanitarian exit scenario would be based on reduced conflict and vulnerability but also on an increased capacity of the government to provide basic services, economic development and livelihoods. In reality, the conflict and humanitarian needs continue to escalate and despite sustained efforts of the international community to support the GoA with stabilisation and economic development, these are not at a level that would allow a phasing out of international humanitarian assistance in the near future.

##### **Pakistan**

DG ECHO is phasing out from Sindh province as the Government of Sindh with the support of development actors (the World Bank and DEVCO) has rolled out a programme to address the nutritional problems. DG ECHO will support a CMAM surge project (Community Management of Acute Malnutrition/under-nutrition) in order to build capacity for preparedness and early action by the local health and emergency structures. The project will explore further opportunities to include contingency and flexibility within the ongoing national and provincial safety nets programme so as to introduce a shock-responsive approach to the existing social protection schemes.

As far as populations displaced by the internal security operations are concerned, those who do not return will be in need of some assistance in 2018 but it is certainly a declining caseload and the return is to be accompanied by the GoP and development donors making it possible for humanitarian actors to phase out. The refugee crisis is unlikely to be resolved in 2018 and whilst the caseload and humanitarian needs in Pakistan is likely to continue to reduce, some needs - particularly regarding protection – will remain.

##### **Iran**

The future of humanitarian needs for Afghans in Iran will largely depend on the situation in Afghanistan and the possibility for refugees to, either return, or be fully integrated into the local Iranian society. In the meantime, discussions are underway with DG DEVCO and EU member states, in the context of the humanitarian-development nexus, in order to blend possible contributions to the longer-term care and maintenance, or integration of refugees and thus allow DG ECHO to phase out of all but the most urgent humanitarian actions in Iran.