



# **Combined Evaluation of the European Union's Humanitarian Interventions in Iraq and in the Protection Sector, 2014-2018**

Executive Summary



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## Abstract

This combined, independent evaluation focuses on DG ECHO's humanitarian interventions in Iraq and its humanitarian protection interventions globally from 2014 to 2018; it includes a case study on child protection and education.

There was some variability in the quality of needs analyses in Iraq and globally, with good relevance of programming relative to needs identified and the context including for advocacy, though with questions regarding the decreased funding in 2018. The Iraq response was consistent with DG ECHO's mandate, with weaknesses regarding the nexus. Actions in Iraq and globally were generally coherent with protection policies, with integrated programming somewhat less so with mainstreaming. EU added value included DG ECHO's field presence and collaborative approach. Programming in Iraq and globally generally achieved short-term objectives, with protection mainstreaming somewhat weaker; addressing broader threats and deeper vulnerabilities encountered more challenges. Advocacy in Iraq had multiple areas of success, though could be strengthened further. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness in Iraq were appropriate, with possibilities for building staff capacities and availability. Nexus results were relatively weak despite some successes.

Recommendations focus on strengthening protection programming, advocacy, strategic planning, capacity for assessing efficiency and cost-effectiveness, deliberation around humanitarian principles, and the nexus.

## Executive Summary (English)

### Introduction, evaluation objectives, scope and framework

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations (DG ECHO) engaged Transtec to conduct the *Combined Evaluation of the European Union's Humanitarian Interventions in Iraq and in the Protection Sector, 2014-2018*.

The independent evaluation covered the period 2014-2018, and had a twofold objective: 1) a retrospective assessment of DG ECHO's humanitarian interventions in Iraq, with a prospective purpose of contributing to shaping the EU's future approach in the country; and, 2) a retrospective assessment of the EU-funded actions and engagement in the area of humanitarian protection at 2 levels:

Globally: A portfolio analysis of funded actions with consideration also given to existing DG ECHO evaluations and studies;

Iraq: An assessment of DG ECHO's protection actions (both targeted and mainstreamed) including advocacy/humanitarian diplomacy activities, illustrated by a case study of DG ECHO's protection activities in Iraq.

The global protection portfolio analysis component of the evaluation was complementary to the primary Iraq-focused component. There was also a case study on child protection and education in Iraq and two shorter case studies, on detention in Iraq and DG ECHO's integrated response in Iraq.

The evaluation framework flowed from the evaluative questions and judgment criterion of the evaluation matrix. The evaluation criteria as specified in the Terms of Reference (TOR) were relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability/connectedness.

### Approach and Methodology

The overall approach for the assignment involved a multi-level mixed methods approach, informed by contribution analysis. The total number of DG ECHO actions for the evaluation was: global protection (excluding Iraq), 871 actions; Iraq protection, 57 actions; and, Iraq other humanitarian, 71 actions. From this, the team sampled as follows: 25 global protection (excluding Iraq) actions, 13 Iraq protection actions, and 14 Iraq other humanitarian actions.

In line with the mixed-methods approach, the methodology involved qualitative and quantitative data focusing on the sampled actions and more broadly. Qualitative data included: document review, interviews (a total of 148 people were interviewed), Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries, and observations during the field visits in Iraq (to Qayyarah Airstrip and Jeddah IDP camps, a former field hospital in Mosul, an emergency hospital in Dahuk, and two detention facilities, one in Erbil and the other in Baghdad). Quantitative data included: a survey of DG ECHO staff (54 respondents) and implementing partners (202 respondents), as well as further data from DG ECHO's HOPE database. Data was triangulated and analysed including with strong contextual

analysis. Data analysis involved using the qualitative analysis software NVivo, with data coded in line with the evaluation matrix's sub-questions. Further, a workshop was conducted with the evaluation steering committee following the submission of the draft report, to examine the findings in more detail and feed into the final report.

Limitations of the evaluation included that many individuals with direct knowledge of the actions from the earlier years of the evaluation period were often no longer in-post or contactable, which was mitigated by adopting a broad focus in the interviews on IP programming with available interviewees; the security situation in Iraq which necessitated cancelling several planned field visits; and, that mainstreaming of protection for the global component of the evaluation was not a focus given that the actions chosen to focus upon by the steering committee were those defined as protection actions in DG ECHO's database.

Overall, the quality of the various data sources was good, particularly for the Iraq component due to the evaluation team focusing its efforts there. The evaluation team thus has good confidence in the validity of the evaluation results.

### **Protection at DG ECHO**

The concept of protection is embedded in DG ECHO's mandate and detailed in the Funding Guidelines on Humanitarian Protection released in 2009 and the "Thematic Policy Document n° 8 Humanitarian Protection Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises", released in May 2016. These underline that the principal objective for the European Commission in humanitarian protection is to prevent, reduce/mitigate and respond to the risks and consequences of violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for persons, groups and communities in the context of humanitarian crises. This is to be done through two main approaches: targeted actions (including integrated and standalone programming) and mainstreaming (protection as a cross-cutting theme). A third approach is capacity building, aimed at supporting the development of capacities within the humanitarian system to appropriately address protection in humanitarian crises.

### **Findings**

In line with the evaluation's dual focus, the findings treat the Iraq and global components together for evaluation questions that focus on both. They are organised by the evaluation criteria, along with an initial overall finding on protection vis-à-vis the evaluation.

### **INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING OF PROTECTION**

**Finding 1:** There is significant convergence between DG ECHO and its partners on what constitutes humanitarian protection, yet there is also some degree of variation. One aspect of the variation is that more specialised organisations have a narrower definition than organisations with protection-specific mandates. A more significant aspect is at the level of practice, where we see often quite

significant variation in understandings within organisations, and between international and local implementing partners. Overall, this poses challenges in evaluating protection since it is not a homogeneous concept where everybody means exactly the same thing when they use the same term.

## RELEVANCE

**Finding 2:** Analysis of the full population of global and Iraq actions shows that all included a needs analysis. Analysis of sampled actions (Iraq and global) showed a variety of appropriate assessment methods being used, with beneficiaries in general well consulted. In places where consultations with beneficiaries were not conducted or judged to be weaker, the difficult context was often the reason. There was variation in the quality of the needs analyses for Iraq and global protection actions in that while some of the most relevant needs and especially protection needs were considered, vulnerable sub-groups were not always well identified where it would have been appropriate to do so. Needs analyses were also sometimes conducted on a sector-by-sector basis with the protection linkages between sectors unclear, and some needs analyses were generic and high level. To partially address these various issues, DG ECHO has delivered some capacity-building on protection.

**Finding 3:** Overall, DG ECHO programming was well designed to take into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable, and particularly related to protection. There was also good evidence of IPs engaging beneficiaries during project implementation. But efforts to take long-term development objectives into account where possible – as specifically called for in the relevant policy documents – were in general weak. Yet humanitarian programming can sometimes be designed to address its primary goal of providing a needs-based emergency response while *also* considering more complex needs. As a result of the broad portfolio of work that DG ECHO's programming often targets, programming in Iraq and globally was somewhat fragmented and did not address all of the components of the needs identified. There was also a risk of having poor continuity because the programming frequently shifted to follow new needs. This mode of operation can be appropriate; but it can potentially be harmful if some categories of protection work are discontinued.

**Finding 4:** The Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) have strong contextual analysis, with modifications to ensure ongoing relevance based on shifts in the context and the needs analyses including identification of gaps. The HIPs were overall effective at articulating the humanitarian response including constraints faced, and were strongly aligned with OCHA's humanitarian response plans. One area in the HIPs that gave rise to some disagreement was regarding the characterisation of the situation in 2018. In that year, the HIP to some extent provided a justification for the organisational-level decision to draw down DG ECHO funding in Iraq; and while DG ECHO's funding levels were largely in line with INFORM data (as detailed in finding 6), this draw down did not reflect the true nature of the context according to many IP interviewees. Important to underline is that DG ECHO respondents had the opposite point of view. Ultimately, this question is related to the lack of clarity around the nexus and

the exact point at which humanitarian areas of responsibilities end. From a process perspective, a generally strong approach for developing the HIPs was noted. There is also clear congruence between the actions funded and the HIPs, with thematic and areas of focus aligning with particular areas of need.

**Finding 5:** DG ECHO's Iraq HIPs document the current context and the changes in the context, critical areas of need and areas of work including what types of actions would be approved for funding – they thus articulate a broad strategic direction for the work. DG ECHO had other strategic planning documents, but to the knowledge of the evaluation team, there was no national strategic document that specifically showed how the activities from the portfolio of actions would lead to the outcomes and impact sought. Further, strategic objectives – 'results' – articulated in the HIPs were at a high level and did not constitute clear targets. In saying this, there were also generally good logical linkages between DG ECHO's activities, outputs, intended outcomes and impacts in Iraq. This is evidence of the more detailed strategic planning that in practice occurred between Iraq team members including the desk officer at DG ECHO HQ in Brussels. Such an approach can be effective; but it is time consuming and depends upon strong team coherence as well as leadership, conditions that are not always extant.

**Finding 6:** DG ECHO allocates funding globally based on a two-phase, country-level need analysis framework. Statistical evidence shows that DG ECHO in practice prioritises protection funding in line with the needs it identifies. But the data also demonstrates that DG ECHO does not have a purely needs-based prioritisation of countries for protection funding, with for example the Middle East and sometimes Africa and Europe receiving higher levels of funding and crises in Asia and Latin America receiving relatively lower levels of funding in absolute terms.

**Finding 7:** DG ECHO's protection advocacy in Iraq involved encouraging the authorities to adhere to international law and guiding the work of implementing partners in line with priority areas of work, foci that were taken up by the 2017 and 2018 advocacy logframes. The logframes also focus on issues such as freedom of movement, accessing basic assistance, violence in new locations, access to vulnerable populations, and targeting of medical infrastructure. The documents identify key actors to target and activities to undertake, and the advocacy activities are in line with the priority areas. Overall, the advocacy on protection in Iraq was relevant to needs and was well-articulated though particularly from 2017 with the adoption of a logframe approach.

## COHERENCE

**Finding 8:** The assistance, relief and protection provided in Iraq targeted the needs of the most vulnerable, in line with the Humanitarian Aid Regulation. Actions were also in general well-coordinated and aligned with the wider humanitarian response. Sampled actions were in line with the humanitarian principles, though the response to the Mosul crisis, while in line with the principles, saw DG ECHO weight the principles differently than some other key actors. In discussions about that response, DG ECHO argued that IPs who

refused to operate at the front lines were being overly risk-averse and were insufficiently prioritising the principle of humanity. Such an approach has the effect of delegitimising the other organisation's position and thus undermines the process of decision-making, which underlines the need to have effective decision-making processes and guidelines in place to make decisions around the principles during the challenging circumstances when saving lives is at stake. Finally, nearly all of the actions in the samples were coherent with relevant thematic and sector policies, and were in line with the principles outlined in the relevant DG ECHO thematic policies such as those on Gender, WASH and protection.

**Finding 9:** DG ECHO undertook a variety of measures to encourage coordination of humanitarian and development interventions in Iraq, including through IP reporting requirements in the Single Form and through discussions with IP representatives. DG ECHO also undertook meetings, joint missions and workshops, and did some work on a recovery framework. This level of attention and the added role of MADAD as a bridging mechanism would seem to have positioned Iraq as a strong candidate for the nexus to succeed; but interviewees said that the nexus had not worked well. Reasons include that few development actors were present in the country; that there are other priority countries for development actors; because development and humanitarian actors have different goals and priorities; due to poor coordination of priority areas of work; and because of the often-extant political instability that makes nexus bridging challenging.

**Finding 10:** DG ECHO's humanitarian protection actions globally and actions in Iraq were generally in line with its 2009 funding guidelines and 2016 policy on protection. Overall, survey respondents said that DG ECHO appropriately applied the approaches to humanitarian protection as outlined in its protection policy, including through targeted and mainstreamed actions, but interviews showed that the subtleties of the distinction between mainstreaming and targeted actions are not widely understood among IPs. There is also clear evidence of implementing partners of global and Iraq actions adopting the targeted approach, both stand-alone and integrated. As regards integrated programming, actions are often designed with relatively limited programming linkages between sectors, which lessens their quality. There are also many actions that incorporate protection mainstreaming yet it was overall not systematically incorporated into the Iraq and global sampled actions including due to sometimes weak capacities and understandings.

## **EU ADDED VALUE**

**Finding 11:** EU Added Value analysis shows in Iraq and globally a strong field presence in contexts where the security environment allows, which supports better contextual analysis and modifications of actions as well as more pertinent calls for new actions. There is also strong partnering with IPs including because TAs have latitude for decision-making that makes modifications easier and thus helps to better meet needs. DG ECHO is also seen as open to funding in locations where other funders would not work, and as a reference donor on

protection including influencing some IPs to further incorporate it into their programming. As regards innovation in protection, interview evidence suggests that DG ECHO does not foster significant new approaches, although this is less true in some contexts such as in Iraq. A further element of EU added value is related to DG ECHO's responsiveness to shifting needs and an overall responsive stance in terms of approving and modifying actions.

**Finding 12:** The added value of DG ECHO's protection advocacy in Iraq and globally is related to its strong field presence where the context allows, which gave it information and legitimacy to more effectively push its advocacy priorities. Also important is its partnership approach with partners and some degree of innovation in its advocacy work; perceptions of its neutrality by virtue of how EU member states' national priorities are seen as coalescing around a more neutral approach; and, its multiple levels of engagement on advocacy, including supporting its partners in conducting advocacy, doing advocacy itself, and discussing/coordinating advocacy messaging with other key EU actors.

## EFFECTIVENESS

**Finding 13:** The most direct way to measure the extent to which DG ECHO achieved its objectives in Iraq is through the actions that it funded, since those actions were in line with the objectives in the various strategic documents. Data on Key Outcome Indicators (KOI) for the entire Iraq portfolio shows a relatively sustained rate of targets reached from 2014 and 2018, with KOI targets largely met to the same extent across locations in the country. Protection and other humanitarian actions both met approximately the same percentage of KOIs. However, protection stands out as the only thematic area where over half of the actions failed to meet *all* of their KOI target, linked to the fact that protection actions generally have more KOIs than other humanitarian actions. Overall, there is clear evidence of movement toward the achievement of DG ECHO's objectives in Iraq.

**Finding 14:** KRIs for protection introduced in 2017 were in general seen as useful tools for measuring output level results by implementing partners, who also value the flexibility to select the most appropriate KRIs themselves. One issue that did emerge among some IPs is that they tend to classify their protection results as "other" to allow them to use custom KRIs only, though this is not endorsed by DG ECHO. DG ECHO has been testing a protection-specific Key Outcome Indicator (KOI) since 2017; it is generally seen positively, though guidance is needed in how to use it including in different cultural contexts and between individuals. As well, there are a number of more "systemic changes" on protection that are important intermediate outcomes and reflect innovative aspects of actions that DG ECHO has funded, but these are not currently integrated in existing indicators.

**Finding 15:** Based on qualitative analysis, several areas of DG ECHO's work in Iraq programming worked well while others were seen as less strong. Cash programming was highlighted as an area of success, while the health response

and the integrated response were seen as strong because of their efficiencies and ability to adjust rapidly. The flexibility of DG ECHO's funding was also a strength, as was the rapid response mechanism due to the information that it gathered and rapidly disseminated. Respondents also singled out DG ECHO's support to the cluster and to OCHA as improving the quality of the response. Protection was highlighted as a strength of the Mosul response, including due to the mix of actions funded. Detention was also felt to be an important area of protection work funded. Yet there was a sense that local organisations were weaker or more variable in the quality of their protection work. Other areas of weakness included protection mainstreaming, the response to gender-based violence and child protection, and referrals for health actions.

**Finding 16:** Beneficiary satisfaction in Iraq as reported by implementing partners was overall good, with areas requiring adjustments appropriately dealt with. Survey data shows that the majority of IPs in Iraq were highly confident that their DG ECHO-funded actions provided tangible benefits for the most vulnerable. FGDs and small group interviews including with beneficiaries as well as with IPs found a similar level of satisfaction. Yet accountability to the local population was generally weak in action reporting, which will likely be addressed with the protection mainstreaming KOI piloted since 2017.

**Finding 17:** In general, there is evidence of DG ECHO undertaking direct advocacy in Iraq in all of the areas of focus described in finding 7, though this data is not systematically recorded in a manner that would make possible a complete assessment. This includes advocacy with the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center, field level advocacy to improve access, and working through the EEAS as well as with high level missions from DG ECHO HQ in Brussels. There is also good evidence of IPs whose actions had advocacy components undertaking advocacy directly with government actors, within the cluster system as well as through such mechanisms as the NGO Coordination Committee Iraq-based Advocacy Working Group. The advocacy gap that emerges is related to the advocacy plan since while the 2017 and 2018 logframes are a good start in laying out the activity areas, the targets for the activities and the indicators, they do not make clear how the plan will be implemented and monitored. In particular, there is no plan for follow-up and thus if advocacy targets are being met.

**Finding 18:** DG ECHO's specific objectives in humanitarian protection are to address protection threats and to reduce protection vulnerabilities as well as build protection capacities for those affected by humanitarian crises, and to strengthen the capacity of the international humanitarian aid system to reduce protection risks in humanitarian crises. As regards threats, DG ECHO's implementing partners were successful in many instances in mitigating immediate protection threats in Iraq and globally, though were not usually successful in sustainably reducing broader protection threats. Addressing protection threats was usually done through integrated actions that combined core protection activities. As regards vulnerabilities, stand-alone and integrated protection programming addressed protection vulnerabilities of target

populations in Iraq and globally. However, DG ECHO's implementing partners are often weak at outlining how they aim to target the most vulnerable. DG ECHO's implementing partners in general successfully mainstream the most basic protection elements for addressing vulnerabilities; however, there was no section in the action documentation templates, at least until the 2017 pilot protection mainstreaming KOI, where IPs had to detail how they had mainstreamed protection – this led to variability in how clearly it was articulated. Most partners directly engaging with beneficiaries included protection referral systems, though the effectiveness of these was difficult to determine due to weaknesses in reporting and weak follow-up. Capacity building to increase self-protection capacities was also an important element in many sampled actions reviewed. Finally, nearly all IPs strengthened the protection capacities of their staff and volunteers as well as partner organisations, while DG ECHO conducted and emphasized capacity building on assessing protection risks and making referrals.

**Finding 19:** Quantitative assessment of the total population of protection actions globally including in Iraq found that close to 75 per cent of all protection KRIs were reached between 2014 and 2018. But only about 45 per cent of protection results successfully met *all* their KRI targets. IPs were in general cautious about what could be accomplished, which some DG ECHO interviewees said was so that they can be surer of achieving them. Where IPs' actions did not succeed in meeting targets, it was often because the indicators and targets were capturing outcome-level results. Regarding regional trends in fully achieving KRI targets, Africa was slightly below average while Europe (including Turkey) and Latin America were significantly above average. Looking at the two largest recipients of protection funding, in Turkey less than a third of protection results had achieved all of their KRI targets, while nearly two thirds had in Greece.

## EFFICIENCY

**Finding 20:** Efficiency was overall good in the Iraq samples of actions, with budgets and plans quite often modified appropriately. Timeliness was sometimes a challenge, and there was relatively good coordination with other key actors so as to improve efficient implementation. DG ECHO championed cash as an efficient transfer modality. Staff turnover was flagged as an efficiency issue during the height of the Mosul crisis, while staffing changes caused several organisations to fluctuate in the efficiency and quality of their work. The cost-effectiveness of the Iraq projects sample analysed was overall good given the context and range of activities, with budget variations justifiable and in general well accounted for. The context did lead to some higher than expected security and implementation costs, some delays, and contributed to underspending for some actions. The proportion of budgets spent on support costs was overall reasonable, while overhead costs were good according to interviewees.

**Finding 21:** DG ECHO efforts to ensure cost-effectiveness of Iraq actions throughout the project cycle were variable. DG ECHO survey respondents found

that it had ensured funds were used efficiently and cost effectively to achieve results; IP respondents found that DG ECHO-funded activities were appropriately efficient and/or cost effective given relevant factors; but NGO respondents were more cautious. Interviews made clear that the selection process for partner proposals was strongly needs driven, but efficiency and cost effectiveness was less important than other factors. While DG ECHO staff were strong at field monitoring, they were weaker at financial tracking of actions. And while some appropriate assessment tools were used, there were also gaps as a result of the process being insufficiently systematized; some DG ECHO interviewees also said that capacities were in some cases low. Importantly, the workload for TAs and desk officers forces them to prioritise some areas of work over others with cost-effectiveness being given less weight overall.

**Finding 22:** There were strong synergies between DG ECHO's overall budget in Iraq and the evolving context, particularly from 2014 to 2016. The budget decreased significantly in 2017 and 2018, yet there were significant humanitarian needs and protection concerns for IDPs and returnees. This gave rise to some concerns regarding the appropriateness of the overall budget for 2017-18 in relation to the assessed needs in the HIPs. The proportions of the total budget allocated to each thematic area was generally well aligned with needs. As regards protection, the funding was generally in line with needs in the HIPs, though it is not clear whether the steep decline in 2018 was fully appropriate. The distribution between protection subsectors was in general appropriate given needs, though for some interviewees, insufficient funding was given to GBV. Balancing of costs vs effectiveness and timeliness were in general appropriate if quite variable depending on the context and type of programming. But overall, the costs were appropriate given the results targeted.

## **SUSTAINABILITY/CONNECTEDNESS**

**Finding 23:** Results overall were weak in terms of sustainability/connectedness both in Iraq and in global protection. Survey respondents only slightly agreed that gains since 2014 could be sustained, while interviewees were overall negative about how the nexus is working. The samples as well as interviews showed significant variation in sustainability/connectedness, including in terms of clearly articulating an exit strategy. In protection, ensuring sustainability was found to be difficult especially because possibilities for implementing self-protection are limited, and because governments may not have the resources and/or the same objectives as humanitarian protection actors. The integration of refugee and IDP needs into national systems was overall quite weak. As regards Iraq, interviewees highlighted the positive role of MADAD as a bridging mechanism that helped to smooth over the gaps between humanitarian and development actors. As regards global humanitarian protection, DG ECHO provided capacity-building and facilitated the gradual transition of activities to relevant state authorities in some contexts. DG ECHO also at times advocated for governments to include social inclusion and social protection programmes in funding agreements. In contexts where state authorities do not have the

resources to take over protection actions, there were several examples of good operational coordination between DG DEVCO and DG ECHO. Yet overall, the global humanitarian protection actions reviewed had relatively poor sustainability. This underlines that, as in Iraq, DG ECHO was weak in achieving sustainable results.

## Conclusions

### INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING OF PROTECTION

**Conclusion 1:** There is variation in understandings of protection within the humanitarian sector, which has implications for the consistency of its implementation and underlines the importance of deconstructing what partners understand by protection and protection-related capacity building.

Linked to findings 1, 2 and 10 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

### RELEVANCE

**Conclusion 2:** Needs analyses are overall appropriate though with some degree of variability in their completeness. Programming was well-designed to respond to the needs identified, though its relevance could be honed by focusing upon further improving the needs analyses, better considering long-term development objectives when possible, and by continuing to assess protection funding allocations relative to needs identified in particular countries.

Linked to findings 2, 3, 6 and 7 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

**Conclusion 3:** DG ECHO's strategy in Iraq was relevant to the context, including as a result of strong planning between team members; yet having a national level strategic planning document similar to an intervention logic would reinforce this process.

Linked to findings 4 and 5 (Iraq)

### COHERENCE

**Conclusion 4:** DG ECHO's response in Iraq was coherent with its mandate. Yet its approach to deliberating about the humanitarian principles in the Mosul response risks weakening the basis for strong future decision-making about them. Coordination around the humanitarian-development nexus in Iraq was weak, linked to the absence of a shared understanding of what it means in practice, a clear implementation strategy and stronger organisational commitment to making it work.

Linked to findings 8 and 9 (Iraq)

**Conclusion 5:** DG ECHO's protection response in Iraq and globally was coherent with its protection policies, though there were weaknesses as regards mainstreaming and integrated protection.

Linked to finding 10 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

## EU ADDED VALUE

**Conclusion 6:** The EU added value of DG ECHO in Iraq and globally was related to its field presence, its relationships with partners, its responsiveness, to some extent its innovation and proactivity, and its encouragement of protection. As regards protection advocacy, the added value was linked to its expert knowledge, perceptions of its being more needs driven than other actors, and the multiple levels of its advocacy work which helped to ensure coherence of the advocacy messaging.

Linked to findings 11 and 12 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

## EFFECTIVENESS

**Conclusion 7:** DG ECHO's objectives in Iraq were largely achieved via its various actions, with protection actions slightly less successful overall. Areas of success included cash and health programming, the integrated response to the Mosul crisis and the rapid response mechanism; areas of weakness were related to protection mainstreaming and local partners' protection work. Beneficiaries were relatively satisfied with the Iraq response's activities. The protection KRIs and KOI are generally well received.

Linked to findings 13, 14, 15 and 16 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

**Conclusion 8:** DG ECHO's Iraq advocacy work was in line with its strategic priorities and involved both direct advocacy primarily focused on adherence to international law and access as well as indirect advocacy through its partners. While the logframes from 2017 and 2018 represent a good start in advocacy planning, there are opportunities to build upon them going forward including by reducing the areas of focus as well as by developing an implementation and monitoring plan.

Linked to finding 17 (Iraq)

**Conclusion 9:** DG ECHO's actions contributed to reducing immediate protection threats though were weaker at addressing broader protection threats. Vulnerabilities were generally well targeted including through protection referrals, though with weaknesses as regards targeting vulnerable sub-groups and protection mainstreaming. Capacity building was an important area in many actions including building organisational capacity by IPs, though the quality of this was difficult to fully assess; DG ECHO also built protection capacity by conducting training workshops.

Linked to finding 18 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

**Conclusion 10:** Protection actions both globally and in Iraq achieved about three-quarters of their protection KRIs, with UN IPs slightly less successful than others, Europe and Latin America actions slightly more successful and Africa

actions slightly less successful, and no notable trends as regards particular protection thematic areas. There was a sense however that IPs are often cautious in estimating targets, which makes success more likely.

Linked to finding 19 (global humanitarian protection including Iraq)

## **EFFICIENCY**

**Conclusion 11:** Efficiency and cost effectiveness were generally appropriate in Iraq, with variations in budgets well justified and plans appropriately modified though with some timing issues, higher than anticipated security costs and some underspending all linked to the context. Efforts to ensure cost effectiveness throughout the project cycle were sometimes weak, partly due to low capacities but particularly the high workload levels for DG ECHO staff.

Linked to findings 20 and 21 (Iraq)

**Conclusion 12:** Budgets were overall in line with needs for Iraq, though with questions about whether the drawdown in DG ECHO's budget in 2017-18 was appropriate given the nature and seriousness of needs at the time. Costs were well balanced with effectiveness and timeliness overall.

Linked to finding 22 (Iraq)

## **SUSTAINABILITY/CONNECTEDNESS**

**Conclusion 13:** There was weak evidence of sustainable results in Iraq and for humanitarian protection globally, primarily related to questions about how to implement the nexus in practice. In Iraq, health, WASH and education actions were relatively stronger while protection was relatively weaker; globally, successes included capacity building of authorities as well as social protection programming.

Linked to finding 23 (Iraq and global humanitarian protection)

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Build upon protection work by continuing with capacity building measures and direct support to partners, providing further guidance to partners, pushing for stronger protection reporting, and improving the classification of actions in the HOPE database.

**Recommendation 2:** Use the Iraq advocacy work as a starting point for further refining the advocacy approach, by building upon the 2017 and 2018 logframes and adding a clear implementation plan with monitoring so as to maximize advocacy results.

**Recommendation 3:** Develop country-level strategic documents with clear outputs, outcomes and impacts aimed at and use these in the planning and monitoring process so as to improve strategic planning and thus programming.

**Recommendation 4:** Develop/enhance guidelines on tools and approaches for assessing actions' efficiency and cost effectiveness, provide training to staff, and ensure that staff have sufficient time to undertake these activities.

**Recommendation 5:** Put in place a system to deal with future challenges related to the humanitarian principles in emergencies by building upon the draft framework document. This would include developing internal decision-making processes as well as practical guidelines and training of staff.

**Recommendation 6:** Strengthen strategic planning around the nexus through a shared process of more practically defining it and specifying how it should be implemented in practice including specifically within the EU system, and emphasise its importance in the success of actions and as an area of focus for staff.