Evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis 2012-2014

Final Report
June 2016

This evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation Sector of the Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection – ECHO (European Commission)

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<tr>
<td>3RP</td>
<td>Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACAPS</td>
<td>Assessment Capacities Project</td>
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<td>AFAD</td>
<td>Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority</td>
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<td>ALNAP</td>
<td>Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance</td>
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<td>AOG</td>
<td>Armed Opposition Groups</td>
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<td>ATM</td>
<td>Automated Teller Machine</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPRM</td>
<td>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</td>
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<td>COHAFA</td>
<td>The Council working group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCI</td>
<td>Development Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<td>DEVCO</td>
<td>European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DG</td>
<td>Directorate-General</td>
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<td>DGMM</td>
<td>Directorate General of Migration Management</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>The Danish Refugee Council</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>The European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department</td>
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<td>EEAS</td>
<td>European External Action Service</td>
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<td>ENI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Instrument</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</td>
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<td>EQ</td>
<td>Evaluation Question</td>
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<td>ETF</td>
<td>European Training Foundation</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>European Union Delegation</td>
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<td>EUMS</td>
<td>European Union Member State</td>
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<td>FAFA</td>
<td>Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement</td>
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<td>Framework Partnership Agreement</td>
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<td>FTS</td>
<td>UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service</td>
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<td>GAM</td>
<td>Global Acute Malnutrition</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GHD</td>
<td>Good Humanitarian Donorship</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>HA</td>
<td>Humanitarian Aid</td>
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<td>HCR</td>
<td>High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>HCT</td>
<td>Humanitarian Country Team</td>
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<td>HH</td>
<td>HouseHold</td>
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<td>HIP</td>
<td>Humanitarian Implementation Plan</td>
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<td>HOPE</td>
<td>Humanitarian Office Programme Environment</td>
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<td>Headquarters</td>
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<td>IAF</td>
<td>Integrated Analysis Framework</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Interagencies Standing Committee</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IcSP</td>
<td>Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<td>IHL</td>
<td>International Humanitarian Law</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>INSO</td>
<td>International NGO Safety Organisation</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument of Pre-Accession</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
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<td>JC</td>
<td>Judgement Criteria</td>
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<td>JHDF</td>
<td>Joint Humanitarian Development Framework</td>
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<td>KRG</td>
<td>Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq</td>
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<td>KRI</td>
<td>Kurdistan Region of Iraq</td>
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<td>LRRD</td>
<td>Linking relief and Resilience and Development</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Middle-Income Country</td>
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<td>MPCT</td>
<td>Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review</td>
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<td>NEAR</td>
<td>Directorate-General of Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations</td>
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<td>NFI</td>
<td>Non-Food Items</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NRC</td>
<td>Norwegian Refugee Council</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid</td>
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<td>ODI</td>
<td>Overseas Development Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>RCM</td>
<td>Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement</td>
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<td>RM</td>
<td>Remote Management</td>
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<td>SAM</td>
<td>Severe Acute Malnutrition</td>
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<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual or Gender Based Violence</td>
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<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Syria Needs Analysis Project</td>
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<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standard Operating Procedure</td>
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<td>SSCL</td>
<td>Safety Security Committee Lebanon</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>TPID</td>
<td>Temporary Protection Identification Document</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>UN Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>UN High Committee for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children Fund</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>VASyR</td>
<td>Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water Sanitation Health</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>UN World Food Programme</td>
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Abstract

This report provides an overall independent evaluation of ECHO’s response to the Syrian crisis over the period of 2012-2014, covering Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey. The evaluation draws on a range of different sources of evidence including project data, interviews, field trips and a literature review.

The evaluation concludes that ECHO was successful in translating a substantial allocation of funds into improved living conditions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations inside Syria through a rapid response across five countries, in both camp and non-camp settings. Detailed conclusions are made concerning the speed and coverage of ECHO’s funding; the adaptability of its response to the unique features of this crisis; the contribution that ECHO made to coordination, advocacy and the link between relief, rehabilitation and development; and on dealing with the protracted nature of the crisis.

A set of five strategic recommendations are made for the future response of ECHO to the crisis in Syria, concerning the provision of funding allocations in the medium-term; the further adaptation of the response to the specific context; the conduct of coordination activities; dialogue with national authorities; and the building of greater synergies with EU Delegations and EC funding instruments.
Executive Summary

The evaluation subject and objectives

This evaluation provides an overall independent assessment of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey for the period 2012-2014. It covers ECHO-funded operations in these five countries and answers a set of 18 evaluation questions defined by the European Commission, which serve as a basis to reaching useful conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation is geared to a wide range of stakeholders, including ECHO Headquarters (HQ) and country level staff, national and regional stakeholders, participating implementing partners, and other humanitarian and development donors and agencies. It has both a retrospective and prospective dimension, aiming at assessing past support, but also at providing recommendations with a view to improving the performance of ECHO operations in the future.

Methodology

The evaluation used a three-phase approach including inception, data collection and synthesis phases. The analysis was structured around five country case studies, one for Syria, and one for each of the border countries covered. At the end of each phase, the related deliverable was reviewed and approved by the evaluation steering group.

The data collection phase included both desk and field work covering the 18 evaluation questions defined in the evaluation terms of reference. The team conducted visits to each of the countries covered, except in Syria, for which field work was covered through extensive interviews in Amman on the ECHO support provided in Syria and telephone interviews with ECHO partners operating inside Syria both in Damascus and areas controlled by armed opposition groups. Overall the team interviewed 122 stakeholders (face-to-face and over the telephone), including representatives from European Commission (EC) headquarters, ECHO field offices, EU Delegations, Members State representatives, UN Agencies, national and local authorities, international and local NGOs, and beneficiaries. This included also on-site visits. The team reviewed 287 documents, including policy and strategy documents, evaluations and or studies, and a more general literature review. The country level information is gathered in country notes that are annexed to this report.

The team compiled and triangulated data during the synthesis phase, so as to provide consolidated answers to the evaluations questions. Information gaps were completed using additional telephone interviews with ECHO partner offices in the region. The consolidated cross-checked findings served as a basis to formulate the conclusions and recommendations, which are presented in this summary.
Conclusions

Overall statement on ECHO’s response

ECHO allocated significant funds in response to the Syrian crisis. It contributed to the improvement of living conditions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations inside Syria through a rapid response across five countries, in both camp and non-camp settings. ECHO also made important contributions to the setting-up of the infrastructure required for a large scale humanitarian response during 2012 and 2013. This included building partner capacity and presence in the region, developing needs assessment approaches and information tools and systems, and establishing coordination mechanisms at a regional level.

Among the donors, ECHO was one with a very strong regional presence. This enabled it to provide its partners with close support and advice on the basis of a well-informed understanding of the operational context in which they worked. ECHO also showed significant adaptability to the specific and evolving context inside Syria and its neighbouring countries.

Moving beyond the initial phases of the crisis will require significant attention in order to adapt to its protracted nature. Overlapping priorities emerge in this context, including the need for continued emergency response for those directly affected by the conflict and longer-term needs of displaced and host populations alike. ECHO will need to continue adapting its response to meet this evolving context, as well as ensuring good coordination with those actors best able to respond to longer-term needs.

On speed and coverage of the funding

In the first phase of the crisis between 2012 and end of 2013, ECHO made a considerable and important investment in the rapid scale-up of humanitarian aid operations in Syria and its neighbouring countries, which contributed to improved living conditions for affected populations.

In 2012, in response to the outbreak of the crisis, ECHO immediately increased its funding to €156m. This was raised again to €357m in 2013; an increase of 129%. This rapid scale-up of funding allowed ECHO to contribute to the crisis response on two fronts. Firstly, it provided a cross-sectoral and multi-country response both in camp and non-camp settings. This assistance was found to be well targeted to the right beneficiaries and in line with the priority needs in the region, taking into account the contributions of other actors.

Secondly, ECHO made important contributions to the setting-up of large-scale humanitarian aid operations in countries where humanitarian capacities and expertise were either not present or not adequate to address the rapidly growing crisis. This phase of the crisis involved the opening up of country offices for several ECHO partners, the expansion of UN and NGO teams, the setting up of needs assessment approaches and information tools and systems, the definition of programmes and strategies, and the development of coordination mechanisms.
mechanisms. These processes has a considerable positive influence on the early stages of the crisis.

**Over the full evaluation period of 2012-2014, ECHO was the fourth largest international donor to the Syrian crisis. But the scale and geographical scope of the crisis challenged ECHO’s ability to provide a transparently needs-based response.**

Over 2012-2014, ECHO was the fourth largest international donor to the Syrian crisis, contributing 8% of the total humanitarian contribution over this period. Its funding allocations per country varied considerably however, from €18 per refugee in Turkey to €237 in Jordan, without clear link to the humanitarian needs. Country allocations per refugee are inevitably impacted by many factors, including the cost of delivery in each country, the varying degrees of engagement of host countries and presence of other donors. This is of particular importance in the case of Turkey, where the government did not press international donors to intervene until 2015. Nevertheless, the link between these determining factors and the size of ECHO’s response was not always clear.

The global response has not kept pace with the escalating humanitarian needs. UN appeals remained under-funded, forcing, inter alia, the World Food Programme (WFP) to suspend a food vouchers programme serving 1.7 million Syrian refugees in December 2014. Likewise, inside Syria, the number of people in need has grown at six times the rate of the global international humanitarian response from 2011 to January 2015.

**ECHO’s funding levels fluctuated significantly over the period 2012-2014 without a clear link to changing humanitarian needs. The lack of predictability hampered programming and implementation.**

ECHO’s funding allocations fluctuated over time, with the global amount (€163m) falling back in 2014 to a level similar to the one of 2012, representing a decrease of about 50%. This applied to all the countries individually (with decreases always above 50%), except for Turkey, where there was a slight increase.

Although in some cases the evaluation could link the evolution of funding allocations to the evolution of needs, globally the linkage to needs were not clear. ECHO conducted annual analyses of needs using the Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) but this did not include an estimate of the level of resources required and there was no clear methodology to link IAF findings to the final budget level. Nor is the budget directly linked to the UN appeals process and response plans. Accordingly, some evolutions are difficult to explain, such as the budget contraction in 2014, in a context of continuing rises in refugee numbers.

ECHO did seek to mitigate the impact of these fluctuations on its programming partners. Firstly, by using contributions in 2013 to cover the first quarter of their partners’ operations in 2014 (and, in some cases, the entire first semester). And secondly, by privileging support to international NGOs (INGOs) in 2014 to ensure that, where possible, their assistance was not disrupted (as opposed to UN agencies which have stronger cash flows).
Whilst the overall perspective has been to increase ECHO funds to the region since 2012, the fluctuations between annual allocations have been criticised both by ECHO representatives and partners, who underlined the difficulty of dealing with the lack of predictability of the funding. In neighbouring countries in particular, the reductions between 2013 and 2014 forced ECHO to focus on only the most direct emergency needs, and to significantly cut the number of supported partners. This made it harder for partners to address the resilience of refugee households in the context of an increasingly protracted crisis.

**On adapting the response to unique features of the crisis**

The Syrian crisis presents the international humanitarian community with a unique combination of challenges and opportunities, stemming from a variety of factors: security risks; urban settings; an unprecedented scale; and the fact that the crisis concerns middle-income countries, with notably a different type of host government interaction. ECHO sought to tailor its response to these specificities.

**ECHO was innovative in supporting the large scale use of unconditional cash transfers to meet refugee needs in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria.**

ECHO supported the provision of unconditional cash transfers to meet the basic needs of refugees arriving in some of Syria’s neighbouring countries. The use of this modality proved an efficient and effective way to deliver aid in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria, where the financial systems and electronic transfer mechanisms are well developed, and the markets can supply many of the diverse goods and services required. Despite strong ECHO attempts to unify the delivery of a single cash transfer to refugees, parallel systems persisted in several countries – with UNHCR providing unconditional cash transfers alongside WFP food vouchers. Nevertheless it was and is clear that not all needs could be met through cash transfers. Consequently, projects to deliver complementary goods and services, rightly remained in place.

**ECHO's support for remote management operations inside Syria enabled it to reach people in need inside areas controlled by armed opposition groups whilst mitigating the associated risks.**

ECHO helped to build the capacity of several partners to conduct operations through local partners inside areas of Syria controlled by armed opposition groups (AOGs). By developing and sharing guidelines on remote management, as well as conducting training workshops and amending monitoring requirements, ECHO was able to support operations inside AOG-controlled areas whilst mitigating the associated risks. This in turn allowed ECHO to maintain its independence by ensuring delivery of humanitarian aid in both AOG- and government-held regions of Syria.

The humanitarian community is still learning how to adapt to urban crises, and the degree of adaptation to urban contexts varied considerably between ECHO-funded operations. The absence of a visible urban strategy looks to have hampered efforts to
ensure common standards are met across the portfolio or to capitalise on lessons learned from previous programmes.

In 2016, the humanitarian community as a whole is still at the steep-end of the learning curve regarding urban response. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that ECHO did not have a clearly developed strategy or set of funding guidelines for urban response during the evaluation period. Nevertheless, the absence of a strategic approach looks to have hampered efforts to ensure common standards are met across the portfolio or to capitalise on lessons learned from previous programmes.

Whilst some ECHO partners did provide examples of innovative responses to the specific challenges facing displaced populations and host communities in urban settings, the degree of adaptation to the urban nature of the crisis varied considerably between ECHO-funded projects. Particular problems were observed regarding the engagement of municipal authorities in design and implementation – a critical area of best practice emerging from the literature on urban response.

**ECHO’s use of multi-country contracts facilitated the rapid scale-up of contracts in the early phase response, but hampered timely implementation of ECHO-funded operations from 2014 onwards.**

ECHO introduced multi-country contracts during the rapid scale-up of contract volumes in 2013. This reduced the administrative burden on ECHO desk staff and arguably sped up the contracting at a time when significant effort was required to scale-up the capacity for humanitarian action in the region. But as time went on, the use of multi-country contracts hampered timely implementation of ECHO-funded operations, creating unnecessary transaction costs and unwieldy administrative procedures. In addition, no real synergies were possible between country sub-components, which were by necessity implemented as separate contracts forced into one administrative dossier. The divergence in contexts between countries in the region meant that it was impractical for partners to implement single contracts across four or five different countries. Moreover, the combination of multi-country contracts and single-country desks within ECHO complicated the chains of command and increased ECHO response times for contract signature and modification requests. It further created a problem of accountability, with the signatory being held accountable for operations across the whole region whilst only actually following operations in one country. For these reasons, ECHO understandably reverted to country-specific contracts for 2015-2016.

**ECHO engaged with authorities in host countries, but was in a difficult position to deal with these authorities, which hampered its capacity to build a partnership with them to enhance the response to the crisis.**

There are several examples of ECHO and its partners engaging (for instance through advocacy) with authorities of partner countries and local structures with a view to facilitate the provision and coordination of support; to provide support to host populations; and to help host countries to provide support to refugees.
In some cases this engagement led to the expected results; in others not. Overall, several difficulties hampered ECHO’s capacity to build a partnership with the authorities of the hosting countries:

- The host countries are all middle income countries, some of which with a solid capacity to deal themselves with refugees, and with sometimes specific policies (like the necessity to direct a share of the support to vulnerable host populations, even when there was no evidence that they were the most in need) that were difficult to deal with;
- The burden on the host countries was enormous, with very high levels of refugees to host, and with political repercussions on the willingness of host governments to host refugees.

This led to missed opportunities in terms of synergies between ECHO and Government support, and in terms of ECHO’s capacity to influence host Governments who are key providers of assistance.

**On coordination, advocacy and linking relief, rehabilitation and development**

ECHO invested significant resources in high-level, regional coordination, the success of which was hampered by external factors. The decision to redirect resources towards more achievable targets was made too late. ECHO did however have greater success in supporting technical level coordination, through working groups and project-level information sharing.

- Strategy-level coordination was hampered by the ambiguity between UNHCR’s and OCHA’s mandates in a Level 3 crisis that includes an intertwined set of refugee, IDP and host community populations. In some instances this led to complicated coordination structures and loss of potentially useful information-share. ECHO rightly identified this as a problem and sought to tackle it through advocacy towards the UN agencies in Amman and other countries. But ultimately, the inter-agency tensions remained, and UNHCR’s success in leading coordination efforts has remained uneven across the countries affected.
- Moreover, ECHO’s efforts to encourage a coordinated regional response plan further complicated the task of improving inter-agency coordination. The time and resource investments in this endeavour were high, and the return limited.
- Coordination between host governments and international humanitarian agencies was more problematic. In Turkey, notably, coordination between NGOs and the national and local governments was weak. This hampered coordination of the response for non-camp refugees and limited the potential for developing medium and long term response plans. ECHO had limited impact on improving NGO-government coordination, and appears to have had little traction in the coordination processes that exist between the government and UN agencies.
- At the technical level, ECHO contributed to coordination platforms and working groups in the neighbouring countries and at the regional level, which helped partners to increase project-level coordination.
ECHO was recognized as a significant player in advocacy at a range of levels. But results were mixed, with notable difficulties regarding advocacy towards host governments.

ECHO dedicated substantial efforts to advocacy initiatives at different levels of the organization (including the Commissioner level), on a wide variety of subjects (access, support to under-served areas, etc.), and targeting different audiences (UN, host governments, etc.). Stakeholders appreciated this role and ECHO had successes in this respect, but there were also examples of a less constructive dialogue between ECHO and host country governments, for instance on policy stances such as the exclusion of livelihood activities and inclusion of host community support in Jordan.

ECHO, EEAS and NEAR sought to build a strategic burden-share to tackle a crisis that simultaneously presents short- and long-term needs. But results at the operational level remain uneven, and the higher level obstacles to tackling refugee livelihoods remain.

The Syrian crisis evolved from a short-term displacement crisis into a protracted one. It now presents humanitarian donors with a broad spectrum of challenges, including both short-term and long-term needs simultaneously.

ECHO and the other EU institutions sought to build the framework for a strategic burden-share in the response: inter-service meetings aimed to establish the boundaries and objectives of the different EU funding instruments at play in the region; ECHO and the Delegations established Joint Humanitarian and Development Frameworks (JHDFs): the MADAD Trust Fund was created to allow European Commission and Member State contributions to be channelled together to tackle the intersection between humanitarian and development needs.

But the fruits of these strategic efforts have not had sufficient time to be seen at the operational level. Whilst some instances of coordination and burden-sharing between financing mechanisms were observed, notably in Turkey, in other cases they were lacking.

On dealing with the protracted nature of the crisis

ECHO has not yet adapted a strategy level focus on the protracted nature of the crisis, despite some progress in this respect.
In 2016, the Syrian crisis entered its sixth year. The UN-backed political negotiations have yielded a cessation of violence, but the future of the conflict remains very difficult to predict. The response should therefore be equipped to handle the specific needs of a protracted refugee crisis, as well as the challenge of providing assistance inside Syria as and when possible. This situation creates needs on multiple fronts: i) tackling the ongoing emergency needs of directly affected populations; ii) building their long-term resilience and self-help capacity; iii) ensuring that host communities receive enough support to handle the long-term pressures on them. As a result, clarity on the burden-share between ECHO, other EU institutions, Member States and other actors is vital.
ECHO made some progress towards this goal over the period 2012-2014, for instance through the attention paid to the interplay between humanitarian funds and development resources. The Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks, established at a country-level, have the potential to help clarify the burden-share between ECHO and other EU institutions, but over the period 2012-2014, this process remained in its infancy. ECHO worked also closely with other funding EU instruments to build a more integrated response to the crisis (for instance through the Instrument for Pre Accession in Turkey).

But weaknesses remained in this area, notably regarding the engagement of local authorities and host governments to allow refugees the right to work (ECHO and the EU Delegations have had limited impact on the policies of host governments with respect to refugee livelihoods); the predictability of ECHO funding levels for the Syrian crisis (cf. above); and the ability to support the resilience of populations inside AOG-controlled areas of Syria (the restriction of support to directly life-saving assistance for instance has been questioned by many partners).

Recommendations

The evaluation makes a total of 5 recommendations for the future response of ECHO to the Syrian crisis. Each of the recommendations are directed towards DG ECHO, although several require interaction with third parties to work together in order to improve the overall response.

DG ECHO should provide, and/or advocate for the provision of, adequate and predictable resources to respond to the humanitarian needs of those affected by the Syrian crisis (R.1).

The contributions of ECHO and other humanitarian donors have decreased sharply in 2014 and 2015, whilst at the same time the number of refugees has risen sharply. This has led to significant underfunding of UN appeals and cuts in assistance to affected populations. There have been calls for a significant revision of the international aid architecture in the Syria regional response, in order to address a future in which refugee populations are expected to stay high for the medium term. In this context, it is recommended that ECHO considers the following actions to facilitate adequate humanitarian funding in the Syria crisis:

a) Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs that have been visibly identified by ECHO through a transparent triangulation of available needs assessments including, but not limited to, the UN-led Strategic Response Plan.

b) Actively seek additional voluntary contributions from EU member states to ensure that adequate funding for Syria does not adversely affect ECHO’s ability to meet needs in other humanitarian crises.

c) Make the best use of limited resources, ECHO should explore options for achieving cost efficiency savings through the provision of more predictable funding to core response agencies.
d) Continue to work with other EC funding instruments to identify opportunities for complementary development financing of interventions to reduce the pressure on humanitarian resources – without compromising humanitarian principles.

Further adapt the ECHO programme to respond to the specific context of the Syrian crisis (R.2).

- Given the protracted nature of the conflict, ECHO should consider relaxing the current limitation in the remote management guidelines to limit interventions to life-saving activities. ECHO partners have now established close connections with local partners who have demonstrated their capacity to provide principled humanitarian aid in inside Syria. ECHO should consider funding livelihood support projects through remote management protocols where suitably justified (R2.1).
- Given the huge protection needs associate with the Syria crisis, and the importance of ECHO in supporting this sector, it is recommended that ECHO should further prioritize the funding of protection related activities. This should include dialogue and capacity building with implementing partners to ensure protection support can be delivered in a timely fashion. (R2.2).
- In a context of continuing violence and instability inside Syria further refugee outflows may be anticipated. ECHO should put in place a strong and flexible capacity to respond to the needs of new refugee caseloads (R2.3).
- ECHO should further promote the use of coordinated unconditional cash transfers to meet basic needs at scale. ECHO supported unconditional cash transfers in Lebanon and Jordan that covered a range of refugee needs in neighboring countries. Multi-purpose cash transfers proved both efficient and effective in meeting a basket of basic needs in the context of highly urbanized host countries with functional markets and banking systems. (R2.4)

Focus on country level coordination and contracting arrangements, augmented by carefully prioritized elements of regional coordination (R.3).

The value of the regional coordination structures has been limited and regional contracting inefficient. It is therefore recommended that ECHO reduces funding of regional coordination activities and focuses on coordination between various cross-border operation and operations inside Syria; considers investing in strengthening the capacity of UNHCR to discharge its responsibility for country level humanitarian coordination through an Emergency Response Capacity grant at the central level; phases out multi-country contracts and replaces them with single-country contracts.

Increase direct dialogue with the national authorities in the countries hosting refugees (R.4).

It is recommended that ECHO systematically seeks to strengthen its relationships with host governments in the region through regular liaison meetings with national counterparts during the missions of ECHO civil servants, supplemented by periodic meetings with Field Experts. These meetings should notably be used to discuss related to advocacy for humanitarian
space, improved coordination between ECHO partners and Government, the needs based approach etc.

**Build greater synergies with EU Delegations and other EC funding instruments (R.5).**

ECHO has made progress in building links to other funding streams, especially at the Brussels level. With a view to favour a closer integration, it is recommended to: i) strengthen the participation of ECHO in joint planning processes with the EU Delegations; ii) Build on best practices of integrated programming; build towards potential exit strategies for ECHO.
Résumé exécutif

Sujet et objectifs de l’évaluation


Méthodologie

L’évaluation a suivi une approche en trois phases : le lancement, la collecte de données et la synthèse. L’analyse est structurée autour de cinq études de cas pour la Syrie et une pour chacun des pays frontaliers couverts. À la fin de chaque phase, tous les livrables ont été examinés et approuvés par le comité de pilotage de l’évaluation.


L’équipe a compilé et triangulé les données pendant la phase de synthèse, afin d’apporter des réponses consolidées aux questions d’évaluations. Des entretiens téléphoniques supplémentaires avec les bureaux partenaires d’ECHO dans la région ont permis de pallier les informations manquantes. Les résultats consolidés et recoupés ont servi de base pour formuler les conclusions et les recommandations présentées dans le présent résumé.
Conclusions

Appréciation globale de la réponse d'ECHO

ECHO a alloué des fonds importants en réponse à la crise syrienne. Son action a contribué à l’amélioration des conditions de vie des réfugiés, des personnes déplacées à l’intérieur de leur propre pays et d’autres populations à l’intérieur de la Syrie grâce à une réponse rapide dans cinq pays, dans et hors des camps de réfugiés. ECHO a également contribué de façon importante à la mise en place des infrastructures nécessaires pour une intervention humanitaire à grande échelle en 2012 et 2013. Ceci englobe le renforcement des capacités et de la présence des partenaires dans la région ; le développement d’approches d’évaluation des besoins et d’outils et systèmes d'information ; et la mise en place de mécanismes de coordination au niveau régional.

Parmi les bailleurs, ECHO avait une très forte présence régionale. Ceci lui a permis de fournir à ses partenaires un appui et des conseils fondés sur une bonne compréhension du contexte opérationnel dans lequel ils ont travaillé. ECHO a également montré une importante capacité d’adaptation au contexte spécifique et en évolution en Syrie et dans les pays voisins.

Au regard du caractère prolongé de la crise, beaucoup d’attention sera nécessaire pour en dépasser les premières phases. Dans ce contexte, différentes priorités se chevauchant émergent, notamment le besoin continu d’intervention d’urgence pour les personnes directement touchées par le conflit et les besoins à plus long terme des personnes déplacées et des populations qui les accueillent. ECHO devra continuer à adapter sa réponse à ce contexte changeant, en plus d’assurer une bonne coordination avec les acteurs les mieux à même de répondre aux besoins de long terme.

Vitesse et couverture du financement

Durant la première phase de la crise, entre 2012 et fin 2013, ECHO a consenti un investissement considérable et important dans l’intensification rapide des opérations d’aide humanitaire en Syrie et dans les pays voisins, qui a contribué à l’amélioration des conditions de vie des populations touchées.


Deuxièmement, ECHO a contribué de manière significative à la mise en place d’opérations d’aide humanitaire à grande échelle dans les pays où les capacités humanitaires et l’expertise étaient absentes ou insuffisantes pour répondre au développement rapide de la crise. Cette phase de la crise a vu l’ouverture de bureaux nationaux pour plusieurs partenaires d'ECHO,
l’élargissement des équipes de l’ONU et des ONG, la mise en place d’approches d’évaluation des besoins et de systèmes et outils d’information, la définition de programmes et de stratégies et le développement de mécanismes de coordination. Ces processus ont eu une influence positive considérable lors des premiers stades de la crise.

Durant l’ensemble de la période d’évaluation, de 2012 à 2014, ECHO a été le quatrième plus important bailleur international dans la crise syrienne. Mais à cause de l’ampleur et de la portée géographique de la crise, ECHO a éprouvé des difficultés à fournir une réaction transparente fondée sur les besoins.

Entre 2012 et 2014, ECHO a été le quatrième plus grand bailleur dans la crise syrienne, contribuant à 8 % de l’aide humanitaire totale au cours de cette période. Ses affectations de fonds par pays ont varié considérablement, de 18 € par réfugié en Turquie jusqu’à 237 € en Jordanie, sans lien évident avec les besoins humanitaires. Les allocations par pays et par réfugié subissent inévitablement l’impact de nombreux facteurs : les frais de livraison dans chaque pays, les divers degrés d’engagement des pays d’accueil et la présence d’autres bailleurs de fonds. Ceci est particulièrement important dans le cas de la Turquie, où le gouvernement n’a pas incité les bailleurs internationaux à intervenir jusqu’en 2015. Néanmoins, le lien entre ces facteurs déterminants et le volume de la contribution d’ECHO n’a pas toujours été clair.

La réaction mondiale n’a pas suivi le rythme de l’évolution des besoins humanitaires. Les appels de l’ONU sont restés sous-financés, ce qui a forcé, entre autres, le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) à suspendre un programme de bons alimentaires desservant 1,7 million de réfugiés syriens en décembre 2014. De même, à l’intérieur de la Syrie, le nombre de personnes dans le besoin a augmenté six fois plus vite que la réaction humanitaire internationale entre 2011 et janvier 2015.


Les affectations de fonds d’ECHO ont fluctué au fil du temps, le montant global (163 millions d’euros) retombant en 2014 à un niveau similaire à celui de 2012, soit une diminution d’environ 50 %. Ceci s’applique à tous les pays individuellement (avec une diminution de plus de 50 % dans chaque cas), à l’exception de la Turquie, où il y a eu une légère augmentation.

Même si, dans certains cas, l’évaluation a pu lier l’évolution des dotations à celle des besoins de financement, les liens avec les besoins à l’échelle mondiale n’étaient pas clairs. ECHO a analysé les besoins annuels en utilisant le cadre d’analyse intégré (CAI) mais cela ne comportait pas d’estimation du niveau des ressources requises et il n’y avait aucune méthodologie claire pour lier les conclusions du CAI au niveau du budget final. Le budget n’est pas non plus directement lié aux processus d’appels des Nations Unies ni aux plans de réponse à la crise. En conséquence, certaines évolutions sont difficiles à expliquer, comme la contraction budgétaire de 2014, dans un contexte d’augmentation du nombre de réfugiés.
ECHO a effectivement cherché à atténuer les effets de ces fluctuations sur ses partenaires de programmation. Tout d’abord, en utilisant des contributions en 2013 pour couvrir les opérations des partenaires au premier trimestre en 2014 (et, dans certains cas, l’ensemble du premier semestre). Et deuxièmement, en privilégiant l’appui aux organisations non gouvernementales internationales (ONGI) en 2014 pour faire en sorte que, dans la mesure du possible, leur appui ne soit pas interrompu (par opposition aux agences de l’ONU qui ont des flux de trésorerie plus importants).

Tandis que la vision d’ensemble a été d’augmenter les fonds d’ECHO dans la région depuis 2012, les fluctuations des affectations annuelles ont été critiquées par les représentants d’ECHO et des partenaires, qui ont souligné la difficulté de traiter le manque de prévisibilité du financement. Dans les pays voisins de la Syrie, en particulier, les réductions entre 2013 et 2014 ont forcé ECHO à se concentrer uniquement sur les besoins d’urgence plus directs et à réduire de manière significative le nombre de partenaires pris en charge. Pour les partenaires, cela rend plus difficile le renforcement de la résilience des familles de réfugiés, dans le contexte d’une crise de plus en plus longue.

Adaptation de la réaction aux caractéristiques uniques de la crise

La crise syrienne met la communauté humanitaire internationale devant une combinaison unique de défis et d’opportunités, en raison de plusieurs facteurs : risques pour la sécurité ; milieu urbain ; une échelle sans précédent ; le fait que la crise concerne des pays à revenu intermédiaire, impliquant des interactions d’un type différent avec le gouvernement des pays d’accueil. ECHO a cherché à adapter sa réponse à ces spécificités.

ECHO a innové en soutenant l’utilisation à grande échelle des transferts de fonds inconditionnels pour répondre aux besoins des réfugiés dans des pays à revenu intermédiaire en grande partie urbanisés, limitrophes de la Syrie.

ÉCHO a favorisé des transferts de fonds inconditionnels pour répondre aux besoins fondamentaux des réfugiés arrivés dans certains des pays voisins de la Syrie. L’utilisation de cette modalité s’est avérée un moyen efficace d’acheminer l’aide dans les pays à revenu intermédiaire largement urbanisés limitrophes de la Syrie, où les systèmes financiers et les mécanismes de transfert électronique sont bien développés et où les marchés peuvent fournir une grande partie des divers produits et services requis. Malgré les tentatives d’ECHO visant à unifier un transfert en espèces unique aux réfugiés, des systèmes parallèles ont persisté dans plusieurs pays, le HCR offrant des transferts de fonds inconditionnels en parallèle aux bons de nourriture du PAM. Néanmoins, il est clair que les transferts en espèces n’ont pas permis de couvrir tous les besoins. Par conséquent, des projets visant à offrir des produits complémentaires et des services restent en vigueur, à juste titre.

L’appui d’ECHO aux opérations de gestion à distance à l’intérieur de la Syrie a permis d’atteindre des personnes dans le besoin à l’intérieur des zones contrôlées par les groupes d’opposants armés, tout en atténuant les risques connexes.

ECHO a contribué à renforcer les capacités de plusieurs partenaires pour mener des opérations par l’intermédiaire de partenaires locaux dans les zones de la Syrie contrôlées par
des groupes d’opposants armés (GOA). En développant et en partageant des lignes directrices sur la gestion à distance, en organisant des ateliers de formation et en modifiant les exigences de surveillance, ECHO a pu soutenir des opérations à l’intérieur des zones contrôlées par les GOA tout en atténuant les risques connexes. Cela a permis à ECHO de maintenir son indépendance, en assurant une prestation d’aide humanitaire dans les régions aux mains des GOA ou sous le contrôle du gouvernement syrien.

La communauté humanitaire est toujours en train d’apprendre à s’adapter aux crises en milieu urbain et le degré d’adaptation aux contextes urbains a considérablement varié parmi les opérations financées par ECHO. L’absence d’une stratégie urbaine visible semble avoir entravé les efforts pour respecter des normes communes dans l’ensemble du portefeuille ou pour tirer des enseignements des programmes antérieurs.


Alors que certains partenaires d’ECHO ont fourni des exemples de réponses innovantes aux défis spécifiques auxquels sont confrontés les populations déplacées et les communautés d’accueil en milieu urbain, le degré d’adaptation à la nature urbaine de la crise a varié considérablement entre les projets financés par ECHO. Des problèmes particuliers ont été observés concernant l’engagement des autorités municipales dans la conception et la mise en œuvre des actions – un secteur crucial des bonnes pratiques, émanant de la littérature sur l’intervention en milieu urbain.

L’utilisation par ECHO de contrats multi-pays a facilité l’intensification rapide des contrats lors de la phase initiale de sa réponse, mais a entravé la mise en œuvre rapide des opérations financées par ECHO en 2014.

ECHO a introduit des contrats multi-pays pendant l’intensification rapide des volumes des contrats en 2013. Cela a réduit le fardeau administratif du personnel des bureaux d’ECHO et a sans doute accéléré la passation de marchés à une époque où des efforts considérables étaient nécessaires pour intensifier la capacité d’action humanitaire dans la région. Mais au fil du temps, l’utilisation de contrats multi-pays a nui à la mise en œuvre rapide des opérations financées par ECHO, en créant des coûts de transaction inutiles et des procédures administratives lourdes. En outre, aucune synergie réelle n’était possible entre les sous-composantes de chaque pays ; lesquelles ont été mises en œuvre comme des contrats distincts, rassemblés dans un même dossier administratif. La divergence des contextes entre les pays de la région signifiait qu’il était impossible pour les partenaires d’établir des contrats uniques dans quatre ou cinq pays différents. En outre, la combinaison de contrats multi-pays et des offices nationaux d’ECHO a compliqué les chaînes de commandement et a augmenté le temps de réponse d’ECHO aux demandes de passation et de modification de contrat. De
plus, ceci a créé un problème de responsabilité, le signataire étant tenu responsable des opérations dans l'ensemble de la région tout en ne suivant réellement les opérations que dans un seul pays. Pour toutes ces raisons, ECHO est naturellement revenu à des contrats spécifiques par pays pour 2015-2016.

**ECHO a contacté les autorités des pays d'accueil, mais était dans une position difficile pour négocier avec ces autorités, ce qui a entravé sa capacité à établir un partenariat avec elles afin d'améliorer la réponse à la crise.**

Il existe plusieurs exemples où ECHO et ses partenaires ont contacté les autorités des pays partenaires et les structures locales (par exemple à travers la sensibilisation) en vue de faciliter la fourniture et la coordination de l'aide, pour soutenir les populations d'accueil et pour aider les pays d'accueil à fournir un soutien aux réfugiés.

Dans certains cas, cet engagement a produit les résultats escomptés, mais pas toujours. Globalement, plusieurs difficultés ont entravé la capacité d'ECHO à établir un partenariat avec les autorités des pays d'accueil :

- Les pays d'accueil sont tous des pays à revenu intermédiaire, certains d'entre eux avec une solide capacité à s'occuper eux-mêmes des réfugiés et avec parfois des politiques spécifiques difficiles à traiter (comme la nécessité d'orienter une part de l'appui aux populations vulnérables, même lorsqu'il n'y avait aucune preuve qu'elles étaient le plus dans le besoin);

- La charge pesant sur les pays d'accueil était énorme, avec des niveaux très élevés de réfugiés et des répercussions politiques sur la volonté des gouvernements à accueillir les réfugiés.

Ceci a conduit à des occasions manquées en termes de synergies entre le soutien d'ECHO et les gouvernements et en termes de capacité d'ECHO à influencer les gouvernements des pays d'accueil, qui sont les principaux fournisseurs d'aide.

**Coordination, mobilisation et lien entre aide d'urgence, redressement et développement**

**ECHO a investi des ressources importantes avec une coordination régionale de haut niveau, dont le succès a été entravé par des facteurs externes. La décision de réorienter les ressources vers des objectifs plus réalisables a été prise trop tard. ECHO a cependant eu plus de succès en soutenant la coordination au niveau technique, par le biais de groupes de travail et le partage des informations au niveau du projet.**

- La coordination au niveau stratégique a été entravée par l'ambiguïté entre les mandats du HCR et de l'OCHA en cas de crise de niveau 3, qui comprend un entrelacs de populations de réfugiés, des personnes déplacées et de populations d'accueil. Dans certains cas, cela a conduit à des structures de coordination complexes et à la perte du partage des informations potentiellement utiles. ECHO a identifié cela comme un problème, à juste titre, et a cherché à y remédier par le biais d'une sensibilisation auprès des agences de l'ONU à Amman et dans d'autres pays. Mais en fin de compte, les
tensions entre les organismes ont subsistées, et le succès du HCR dans la gestion des efforts de coordination est resté inégal dans les pays concernés.

- En outre, les efforts d’ECHO pour promouvoir un plan d’intervention régionale coordonné a encore compliqué la tâche visant à améliorer la coordination entre les institutions. Les investissements en temps et en ressources dans cet effort ont été élevés et le rendement s’est avéré limité.

- La coordination entre les gouvernements des pays d’accueil et les organismes humanitaires internationaux a été plus problématique. En Turquie, notamment, la coordination entre les ONG et les gouvernements nationaux et locaux a été faible. Ceci a entravé la coordination de la réponse hors des camps de réfugiés et a limité le potentiel de développement des plans d’intervention à moyen et à long terme. ECHO a eu un impact limité sur l’amélioration de la coordination entre les ONG et le gouvernement et semble avoir eu peu de poids dans les processus de coordination existant entre le gouvernement et les agences de l’ONU.

- Au niveau technique, ECHO a contribué à des plates-formes de coordination et de groupes de travail dans les pays voisins et au niveau régional, ce qui a aidé les partenaires à renforcer la coordination au niveau du projet.

**ECHO a été reconnu comme un acteur important dans la mobilisation à différents niveaux. Mais les résultats ont été mitigés, avec des difficultés notables concernant les actions de plaidoyer auprès des gouvernements des pays d’accueil.**

ECHO a consacré des efforts considérables aux initiatives de plaidoyer, à différents niveaux de l’organisation (y compris au niveau du commissaire), sur une grande variété de sujets (accès, appui aux zones mal desservies, etc.) et ciblant des publics différents (Nations Unies, gouvernements des pays d’accueil, etc.) Les parties prenantes ont apprécié ce rôle et ECHO a enregistré des succès à cet égard, mais il y a aussi des exemples de dialogue moins constructif entre les gouvernements des pays d’accueil et ECHO, par exemple sur des politiques comme l’exclusion des activités de subsistance et l’inclusion d’un soutien aux communautés d’accueil en Jordanie.

**ECHO, le SEAE et NEAR ont cherché à répartir stratégiquement le fardeau pour faire face à une crise qui présente simultanément des besoins à court et à long terme. Mais les résultats sur le plan opérationnel restent inégaux et il subsiste des obstacles de niveau plus élevé concernant les moyens de subsistance des réfugiés.**

La crise syrienne a commencé comme une crise à court terme de déplacement de personnes mais a fini par s’installer dans la durée. Elle pose maintenant un large éventail de défis aux bailleurs de fonds humanitaires, notamment la simultanéité des besoins à court et à long terme.

ECHO et les autres institutions de l’UE ont cherché à créer un cadre pour une répartition stratégique du fardeau de la réponse à la crise : des réunions interservices qui visaient à établir les limites et les objectifs des différents instruments de l’UE à l’œuvre dans la région ; ECHO et les Délégations ont établi des cadres de développement humanitaire communs (CDHC) : le Fonds MADAD a été créé pour permettre la canalisation des contributions de la
Commission européenne et des États membres pour traiter les besoins humanitaires et de développement.

Mais ces efforts stratégiques n’ont pas eu assez de temps pour porter leurs fruits au niveau opérationnel. Certains exemples de coordination et de répartition des tâches entre les mécanismes de financement ont été observés, notamment en Turquie, mais pas dans d’autres cas.

**Faire face à la nature prolongée de la crise**

**ECHO n’a pas encore développé une réponse stratégique au prolongement de la crise, malgré certains progrès à cet égard.**

En 2016, la crise syrienne est entrée dans sa sixième année. Les négociations politiques soutenues par l’ONU ont donné lieu à un arrêt de la violence, mais l’avenir du conflit reste très difficile à prédire. La réponse doit donc être adéquate pour les besoins spécifiques d’une crise de réfugiés prolongée, et pour fournir une assistance à l’intérieur de la Syrie quand cela s’avère possible. Cette situation crée des besoins sur de multiples fronts : i) traiter les besoins urgents des populations directement concernées ; ii) développer leur résilience à long terme et la capacité d’entraide ; iii) s’assurer que les communautés d’accueil reçoivent suffisamment d’appui pour gérer les pressions à long terme. Dès lors, il faut une clarté quant à la répartition des tâches entre ECHO, les autres institutions de l’UE, les États membres et les autres acteurs.

ECHO a accompli certains progrès en vue de cet objectif en 2012-2014, notamment par le biais de l’attention accordée à l’interaction entre les fonds humanitaires et les ressources de développement. Les cadres de développement humanitaire communs, établis au niveau national, sont susceptibles d’aider à clarifier la répartition des tâches entre ECHO et les autres institutions de l’UE, mais, en 2012-2014, ce processus est resté embryonnaire. Par ailleurs, ECHO travaille étroitement avec les autres instruments de financement communautaires pour développer une réponse plus intégrée à la crise (par exemple par le biais de l’instrument de pré-adhésion en Turquie).

Mais des faiblesses demeurent dans ce domaine, notamment en ce qui concerne l’engagement des autorités locales et des gouvernements des pays d’accueil pour donner aux réfugiés le droit au travail (ECHO et les délégations de l’UE ont eu un impact limité sur les politiques des gouvernements des pays d’accueil en ce qui concerne les moyens de subsistance des réfugiés) ; la prévisibilité des niveaux de financement d’ECHO pour la crise syrienne (Cf. plus haut) ; la capacité à soutenir la résilience des populations à l’intérieur des zones contrôlées par les GOA en Syrie (par exemple, de nombreux partenaires s’interrogent sur le bien-fondé de la restriction de l’appui aux opérations d’aide immédiate et directe de survie).
Recommandations

L’évaluation propose 5 recommandations pour la suite de la réponse d’ECHO à la crise syrienne. Chacune des recommandations s’adresse à la DG ECHO, bien que plusieurs nécessitent une interaction avec des tierces parties pour travailler ensemble afin d’améliorer la réaction globale.

La DG ECHO doit fournir et/ou soutenir la fourniture de ressources adéquates et prévisibles pour répondre aux besoins humanitaires des personnes touchées par la crise syrienne (R.1).

Les contributions d’ECHO et d’autres bailleurs de fonds humanitaires ont diminué fortement en 2014 et 2015, alors que, dans le même temps, le nombre de réfugiés a considérablement augmenté. Ceci a conduit à un sous-financement important des appels des Nations Unies et à des réductions de l’aide aux populations touchées. Il y a eu des appels pour une révision importante de l’architecture de l’aide internationale dans la réponse régionale à la crise, afin de traiter une situation où les populations réfugiées vont rester nombreuses à moyen terme. Dans ce contexte, il est recommandé qu’ECHO considère les actions suivantes pour faciliter un financement humanitaire adéquat pour la crise en Syrie :

   a) Affecter un financement humanitaire proportionnel aux besoins manifestement identifiés par ECHO à travers un recoupement transparent des évaluations des besoins, y compris, entre autres, le Plan d’intervention stratégique sous l’égide de l’ONU.

   b) Rechercher activement des contributions volontaires supplémentaires des États membres afin de garantir que les fonds pour la Syrie ne portent pas atteinte à la capacité d’ECHO à répondre à d’autres crises humanitaires.

   c) Pour faire le meilleur usage de ressources limitées, ECHO devrait examiner les possibilités d’augmenter son efficience, à travers un financement plus prévisible pour les principaux organismes d’intervention.

   d) Continuer à travailler avec les autres instruments de financement de la CE en vue d’identifier les opportunités de financement complémentaire de développement pour réduire la pression sur les ressources humanitaires, sans compromettre les principes humanitaires.

Adapter davantage le programme d’ECHO pour répondre au contexte spécifique de la crise syrienne (R.2).

- Compte tenu du caractère prolongé du conflit, ECHO devrait envisager d’alléger la limitation actuelle, dictée par les lignes directrices de la gestion à distance, qui limite les interventions à celles destinées à sauver des vies. Les partenaires d’ECHO ont maintenant établi des liens étroits avec des partenaires locaux qui ont démontré leur capacité à fournir une aide humanitaire raisonnée à l’intérieur de la Syrie. ECHO devrait envisager le financement de projets de soutien des moyens d’existence grâce à des protocoles de gestion à distance lorsque cela s’avère justifié (R2.1).
Compte tenu des énormes besoins de protection dans le cadre de la crise en Syrie, et de l'importance d'ECHO dans l'appui à ce secteur, il est recommandé qu'ECHO accorde une plus grande priorité au financement des activités liées à la protection. Ceci devrait inclure le dialogue et le renforcement des capacités avec les partenaires afin que le soutien à la protection puisse être apporté dans les délais d'exécution (R2.2).

Dans un contexte de violence et d'instabilité en Syrie, on peut s'attendre à de nouveaux flux de réfugiés. ECHO devrait mettre en place une capacité à la fois souple et solide pour répondre aux besoins des nouveaux flux de réfugiés (R2.3).

ECHO devrait promouvoir davantage l'utilisation des transferts en espèces inconditionnels pour répondre aux besoins essentiels des réfugiés. ECHO a soutenu les transferts en espèces inconditionnels coordonnés au Liban et en Jordanie, et ceux-ci couvrent un éventail de besoins des réfugiés dans les pays voisins. L'usage des transferts multiples s'est avéré efficient et efficace pour répondre à un ensemble de besoins fondamentaux dans le contexte d’un pays d’accueil fortement urbanisé avec des marchés et des systèmes bancaires fonctionnels (R2.4).

Se focaliser sur la coordination au niveau du pays et sur les arrangements contractuels, complétée par des éléments de coordination régionale soigneusement priorités (R.3).

La valeur des structures régionales de coordination a été limitée et la passation de contrats régionaux a été inefficace. Par conséquent, il est recommandé qu'ECHO réduise le financement des activités de coordination régionale et mette l’accent sur la coordination entre les différentes opérations transfrontalières et les opérations à l’intérieur de la Syrie ; qu’ECHO considère investir dans le renforcement de la capacité du HCR à dégager sa responsabilité de coordination humanitaire au niveau du pays à travers une subvention pour une réponse d’urgence au niveau central ; qu’ECHO élimine les contrat multinationaux et les remplace par des contrats nationaux.

Renforcer le dialogue direct avec les autorités nationales dans les pays d’accueil des réfugiés (R.4).

Il est recommandé qu’ECHO cherche systématiquement à renforcer ses relations avec les gouvernements des pays d’accueil dans la région, par le biais de réunions régulières de liaison avec leurs homologues nationaux au cours des missions des fonctionnaires d’ECHO, complétées par des réunions périodiques avec les experts sur le terrain. Ces réunions devraient notamment servir à discuter de sujets relatifs au plaidoyer pour l’espace humanitaire, l’amélioration de la coordination entre le gouvernement et les partenaires d’ECHO, l’approche basée sur les besoins, etc.

Établir des synergies plus importantes avec les délégations de l'UE et les autres instruments de financement (R.5).

ECHO a réalisé des progrès dans la création de liens avec d’autres sources de financement, en particulier au niveau de Bruxelles. Pour favoriser une intégration plus étroite, il est recommandé de : i) renforcer la participation d’ECHO dans les processus de planification conjointe avec les délégations de l’UE ; ii) développer les meilleures pratiques de programmation intégrée ; iii) établir progressivement des stratégies de sortie potentielle pour ECHO.
Zusammenfassung

Evaluierungsgegenstand und Ziele


Methodik


Während der Synthese hat das Team Daten zusammengestellt und trianguliert, um konsolidierte Antworten auf die Evaluierungsfragen liefern zu können. Informationslücken wurden mit Hilfe zusätzlicher Telefon-Interviews mit ECHO-Partner-Büros in der Region geschlossen. Die konsolidierten und mehrfach geprüften Ergebnisse dienten als Grundlage,
um die in der vorliegenden Zusammenfassung dargelegten Folgerungen und Empfehlungen zu formulieren.

**Folgerungen**

**Gesamt-Statement zur Reaktion der ECHO**


Über die Anfangsphasen der Krise hinauszugehen, erfordert besondere Aufmerksamkeit, um sich an ihre lang anhaltende Dauer anzupassen. In diesem Kontext treten einander überschneidende Prioritäten auf. Hierzu zählt die Notwendigkeit einer ständigen Notfallreaktion für die Bedürfnisse der direkt vom Konflikt betroffenen Vertriebenen und ebenso für die längerfristigen Bedürfnisse der Vertriebenen wie auch für die Bedürfnisse der Aufnahmegemeinschaften. Die ECHO wird ihre Reaktion adaptieren müssen, um sich an diesen in Weiterentwicklung befindlichen Kontext anzupassen und eine gute Koordination mit denjenigen Akteuren zu gewährleisten, die bestmöglich in der Lage sind, längerfristige Bedürfnisse zu erfüllen.

**Über Geschwindigkeit und Deckung der Finanzmittel**

Während der ersten Phase der Krise zwischen 2012 und 2013 hat die ECHO eine beträchtliche und umfangreiche Investition in den raschen Aufbau der humanitären Hilfsmaßnahmen in Syrien und seinen Nachbarländern getätigt, was zu besseren Lebensbedingungen für die betroffenen Bevölkerungsgruppen führte.

Im Jahre 2012 erhöhte die ECHO als Reaktion auf die Krise unverzüglich ihre Finanzmittel auf € 156 Mio. Diese wurden 2013 erneut auf € 357 Mio. erhöht, was einer Steigerung von 129 % entspricht. Diese rasche Erhöhung der Finanzmittel versetzte die ECHO in die Lage, an zwei Fronten zur Krisenbewältigung beizutragen. Zum Ersten stellte sie eine sektor- und
länderübergreifende Hilfe sowohl innerhalb als auch außerhalb der Lager bereit. Es zeigte sich, dass diese Hilfe auf die richtigen Empfänger ausgerichtet war, den prioritären Bedürfnissen in der Region entsprach und dabei die Beiträge anderer Akteure berücksichtigte.


Im Laufe des gesamten Evaluierungszeitraums von 2012 bis 2014 war die ECHO der viertgrößte internationale Geber im Rahmen der Syrienkrise. Das Ausmaß und die geografische Reichweite der Krise haben jedoch die Fähigkeit der ECHO herausgefordert, eine transparente und bedürfnisorientierte Reaktion zu leisten.


Die globale Reaktion hat mit den eskalierenden humanitären Bedürfnissen nicht Schritt gehalten. Die Appelle der UN blieben unterfinanziert, was unter anderem dazu führte, dass das Welternährungsprogramm (World Food Programme, WFP) ein Programm mit Essensmarken aussetzte, das im Dezember 2014 1,7 Millionen syrische Flüchtlinge versorgte. Auch in Syria die Anzahl der bedürftigen Menschen von 2011 bis Januar 2015 sechs Mal schneller gewachsen als die weltweite humanitäre Hilfe.


Die finanziellen Zuweisungen der ECHO schwankten im Laufe der Zeit, so dass der Gesamtbetrag (€ 163 Mio.) im Jahre 2014 auf einen Wert ähnlich dem von 2012 zurückfiel,
was einer Verringerung um ca. 50 % entspricht. Dies gilt jeweils für alle Länder (immer mit Verringerungen um über 50 %), außer bei der Türkei, wo es eine leichte Steigerung gab.


Zur Anpassung der Reaktion auf einzigartige Merkmale der Krise

Die Syrienkrise stellt die internationale humanitäre Gemeinschaft vor eine einzigartige Kombination von Herausforderungen und Gelegenheiten, die von zahlreichen Faktoren herrühren: Sicherheitsrisiken, urbane Gegebenheiten, ein beispielloses Ausmaß und die Tatsache, dass die Krise Länder mit mittlerem Einkommen betrifft, die auch noch eine sehr unterschiedliche Interaktion der Regierungen in den Aufnahmelandern aufweisen. Die ECHO hat versucht, ihre Reaktion an diese Besonderheiten anzupassen.

Die ECHO war innovativ bei der Unterstützung der umfangreichen Nutzung bedingungsloser Bargeldtransfers zur Erfüllung der Bedürfnisse der Flüchtlinge in den weitgehend urbanisierten Ländern mit mittlerem Einkommen, die an Syrien angrenzen.

Die ECHO hat die Bereitstellung bedingungsloser Bargeldtransfers unterstützt, um die Grundbedürfnisse der in einigen der Grenzländer Syriens eintreffenden Flüchtlinge zu

Die Unterstützung der ECHO für entfernte Management-Maßnahmen innerhalb Syriens versetzten sie in die Lage, bedürftige Menschen in Gebieten zu erreichen, die von bewaffneten Gruppen der Opposition kontrolliert wurden, während sie die damit verbundenen Risiken minderte.

Die ECHO half, die Kapazitäten mehrerer Partner aufzubauen, um über lokale Partner in unter der Kontrolle bewaffneter Oppositionsgruppen (AOGs) stehenden Gebieten in Syrien Maßnahmen durchführen zu können. Durch die Entwicklung und Verbreitung von Richtlinien zum entfernten Management und die Durchführung von Schulungen sowie die Verbesserung der Überwachungsanforderungen war die ECHO in der Lage, Operationen innerhalb von AOG-kontrollierten Gebieten zu unterstützen und gleichzeitig die damit verbundenen Risiken zu lindern. Dies wiederum versetzte die ECHO in die Lage, ihre Unabhängigkeit aufrecht zu erhalten, indem sie die Erbringung humanitärer Hilfe sowohl in von AOG als auch von der Regierung kontrollierten Regionen Syriens gewährleistet.

Die humanitäre Gemeinschaft lernt gegenwärtig immer noch, wie man sich an urbane Krisen anpasst, und der Grad der Anpassung an urbane Kontexte schwankte beträchtlich zwischen den von der ECHO finanzierten Operationen. Das Fehlen einer sichtbaren urbanen Strategie scheint die Anstrengungen behindert zu haben, gemeinsame Standards im gesamten Portfolio zu erfüllen oder aus vorherigen Programmen Erlerntes umzusetzen.

Im Jahre 2016 befindet sich die gesamte humanitäre Gemeinschaft hinsichtlich der urbanen Reaktionen immer noch im steil ansteigenden Bereich der Lernkurve. In diesem Zusammenhang überrascht es vielleicht nicht, dass die ECHO während des Evaluierungszeitraums nicht über eine klar entwickelte Strategie oder eine Reihe von Finanzierungsrichtlinien für urbane Hilfsmaßnahmen verfügte. Dennoch scheint das Fehlen einer strategischen Herangehensweise die Anstrengungen behindert zu haben, dass gemeinsame Standards im gesamten Portfolio erfüllt werden oder aus vorherigen Programmen Erlerntes umgesetzt wird.

Zwar haben einige ECHO-Partner Beispiele für innovative Reaktionen auf die besonderen Herausforderungen angesichts von Flüchtlings- und Aufnahmegemeinschaften in urbanen Umgebungen geboten, doch schwankte der Grad der Anpassung an die urbanen Eigenschaften der Krise bei den von der ECHO-finanzierten Projekten. Besondere Probleme zeigten sich hinsichtlich des Engagements kommunaler Behörden bei Gestaltung
Die Verwendung von Mehrländerverträgen durch die ECHO erleichterte die rasche Steigerung von Verträgen während der frühen Reaktionsphase, behinderte jedoch ab 2014 die pünktliche Implementierung ECHO-finanzierten Maßnahmen.


Die ECHO hat sich bei den Behörden in den Aufnahmeländern engagiert, war jedoch bei der Verhandlung mit diesen Behörden in einer schwierigen Position, was ihre Fähigkeit behinderte, eine Partnerschaft mit ihnen aufzubauen und so das Krisenmanagement zu verbessern.

Es gibt zahlreiche Beispiele, dass die ECHO und ihre Partner sich (beispielsweise durch Anwaltschaft) für Behörden von Partnerländern und lokale Strukturen mit dem Ziel engagiert haben, die Bereitstellung und Koordination von Unterstützung für Aufnahmegemeinschaften zu erleichtern und Aufnahmeländer zu unterstützen, um Flüchtlingen Hilfe zu bieten.

In manchen Fällen führte dieses Engagement zu den erwarteten Ergebnissen – in anderen nicht. Insgesamt haben diverse Schwierigkeiten die Fähigkeit der ECHO, eine Partnerschaft mit den Behörden der Aufnahmeländer aufzubauen, behindert.

- Bei allen Aufnahmeländern handelt es sich um Länder mit mittlerem Einkommen, von denen einige über eine stabile Fähigkeit verfügen, den Umgang mit den Flüchtlingen und mit einigen besonderen Herausforderungen selbst zu regeln (z. B. der Notwendigkeit, einen Teil der Unterstützung für schutzbedürftige Aufnahmegemeinschaften zu verwenden, auch wenn es keine Anzeichen gab, dass diese am bedürftigsten waren), mit denen schwer umzugehen war;
Die Belastung der Aufnahmeländer war aufgrund der sehr hohen Zahl der aufzunehmenden Flüchtlinge und der Auswirkungen auf die Bereitschaft der aufnehmenden Regierungen zur Aufnahme von Flüchtlingen enorm hoch.

Dies führte dazu, dass man Gelegenheiten zu Synergien zwischen ECHO und staatlicher Unterstützung verstreichen ließ, auch hinsichtlich der Fähigkeit der ECHO, Einfluss auf die aufnehmenden Regierungen zu auszuüben, die schließlich die wesentlichen Bereitsteller von Unterstützung sind.

Über Koordination, Anwaltschaft und die Verbindung von Entlastung, Rehabilitation und Entwicklung


- Darüber hinaus haben die Anstrengungen der ECHO, einen koordinierten regionalen Reaktionsplan zu fördern, die Aufgabe, die Koordination zwischen den Ämtern zu verbessern, erschwert. Die Investitionen von Zeit und Ressourcen in dieses Bestreben waren hoch und der Erfolg nur begrenzt.

- Die Koordination zwischen den aufnehmenden Regierungen und den internationalen humanitären Ämtern war noch problematischer. Besonders in der Türkei war die Koordination zwischen NGOs und nationalen und lokalen Regierungen schwach. Dies behinderte die Koordination der Maßnahmen für nicht in Flüchtlingslagern befindliche Flüchtlinge und beschränkte das Potential für die Entwicklung mittel- und langfristiger Reaktionspläne. Die ECHO hatte nur beschränkten Einfluss auf die Verbesserung der Koordination zwischen NGOs und Regierung und scheint beim Koordinationsprozess zwischen Regierung und UN-Behörden nur geringe Wirkung gehabt zu haben.

- Auf technischer Ebene hat die ECHO zu Koordinationsplattformen und Arbeitsgruppen in den Nachbarländern und auf regionaler Ebene beigetragen, was den Partnern half, die Koordination auf Projektebene zu verbessern.


ECHO, EEAS und NEAR versuchten, eine strategische Lastenteilung aufzubauen, um eine Krise anzugehen, die gleichzeitig kurz- und langfristige Bedürfnisse beinhaltet. Die Ergebnisse auf operativer Ebene bleiben jedoch ungleichmäßig und die Hindernisse auf höherer Ebene, die Lebensgrundlagen für Flüchtlinge anzugehen, bestehen fort.

Die Syrienkrise hat sich von einer kurzfristigen Vertreibungskrise zu einer langwierigen Krise entwickelt. Sie stellt nun humanitäre Geber vor ein breites Spektrum von Herausforderungen, die sowohl kurz- als auch langfristige Bedürfnisse umfassen.

Als Reaktion darauf waren ECHO und die übrigen Institutionen der EU bestrebt, den Rahmen für eine strategische Lastenteilung aufzubauen: Meetings der Abteilungen sollten die Grenzen und Ziele der verschiedenen in der Region eingebrachten Finanzierungsinstrumente der EU feststellen; die ECHO und die Delegationen richteten gemeinsame humanitäre und Entwicklungsrahmen (JHDFs) ein: Der MADAD-Trust-Fond wurde geschaffen, damit die Beiträge der Europäischen Kommission und der Mitgliedstaaten zusammengeführt werden konnten, um so die Schnittmenge zwischen humanitären und Entwicklungsbedürfnissen anzugehen.


Zum Umgang mit der Langwierigkeit der Krise

Die ECHO hat, abgesehen von gewissen diesbezüglichen Fortschritten, noch keinen Fokus auf Strategieebene bezüglich der Langwierigkeit der Krise beschlossen.

Im Jahr 2016 erreichte die Syrienkrise ihr sechsten Jahr. Die von den UN gestützten Verhandlungen haben zu einer Beendigung der Gewalt geführt, doch die Zukunft des Konfliktes ist weiterhin nur schwer vorhersehbar. Aus diesem Grunde sollten die Maßnahmen so gestaltet sein, dass die ECHO in der Lage ist, den besonderen Bedürfnissen einer anhaltenden Flüchtlingskrise wie auch der Herausforderung innerhalb Syriens zu


In diesem Bereich jedoch blieben Schwachpunkte bestehen, insbesondere hinsichtlich des Engagements lokaler Behörden und Aufnahmeregierungen, Flüchtlingen das Recht auf Arbeit zu gewähren (ECHO und die EU-Delegationen hatten nur eingeschränkten Einfluss auf die Politik der Regierungen von Aufnahmeländern bezüglich der Lebensumstände der Flüchtlinge), ebenso hinsichtlich der Vorhersehbarkeit der ECHO-Finanzierungsebenen für die Syrienkrise (s. oben) und der Fähigkeit, die Resilienz von Bevölkerungsgruppen innerhalb der AOG-kontrollierten Gebiete Syriens zu unterstützen (die Einschränkung der Unterstützung für direkt lebensrettende Hilfe wurde beispielsweise von vielen Partnern in Frage gestellt).

**Empfehlungen**

Die Evaluierung kommt insgesamt zu 5 Empfehlungen für die künftigen Reaktionen der ECHO auf die Syrienkrise. Sämtliche Empfehlungen werden an die GD ECHO geleitet, wenngleich einige davon Interaktionen mit Dritten erfordern, um die Zusammenarbeit zu sichern und so die Gesamtreaktion zu verbessern.

**Die GD ECHO sollte adäquate und planbare Ressourcen für die Reaktion auf die humanitären Bedürfnisse der von der Syrienkrise betroffenen Menschen bereitstellen und/oder für deren Bereitstellung eintreten (R.1).**

sich auf eine Zukunft vorzubereiten, in der die Zahl der Flüchtlingsgesellschaften mittelfristig hoch bleiben wird. In diesem Zusammenhang wird empfohlen, dass die ECHO die folgenden Maßnahmen in Betracht zieht, um eine adäquate humanitäre Finanzierung in der Syrienkrise zu erleichtern:

a) Gewährung einer humanitären Finanzierung proportional zu dem von der ECHO mittels einer transparenten Triangulation verfügbarer Bedarfsanalysen erkannten Bedarf einschließlich, unter anderem, des UN-geführten strategischen Reaktionsplans.

Die ECHO sollte die folgenden Maßnahmen in Betracht ziehen, um eine adäquate humanitäre Finanzierung zu erleichtern:

e) Gewährung einer humanitären Finanzierung proportional zu dem von der ECHO mittels einer transparenten Triangulation verfügbarer Bedarfsanalyse erkannten Bedarf einschließlich, unter anderem, des UN-geführten strategischen Reaktionsplans.

f) Aktive Suche nach zusätzlichen freiwilligen Beiträgen der EU-Mitgliedsstaaten, um zu gewährleisten, dass die angemessene Finanzierung für Syrien sich nicht negativ auf die Fähigkeit der ECHO auswirkt, in anderen humanitären Krisen Bedürfnisse erfüllen zu können.

g) Damit die begrenzten Ressourcen bestmöglich genutzt werden können, sollte die ECHO die Möglichkeit erforschen, kostengünstige Einsparungen mittels der Bereitstellung einer besser vorhersehbaren Finanzierung für Haupt-Agenturen für Notfallmaßnahmen zu untersuchen.

h) Weiterhin mit anderen EG-Finanzierungsinstrumenten zusammenarbeiten, um Möglichkeiten für ergänzende Entwicklungsinvestitionen für Interventionen aufzufinden, so dass der Druck auf humanitäre Ressourcen verringert wird – ohne bei den humanitären Grundsätzen Kompromisse einzugehen.

**ECHO-Programm weiter anpassen, um auf den besonderen Kontext der Syrienkrise zu reagieren (R.2).**


- Angesichts des großen Schutzbedarfs in Zusammenhang mit der Syrienkrise und der Bedeutung der ECHO bei der Unterstützung dieses Sektors wird empfohlen, dass die ECHO die Finanzierung von Tätigkeiten im Zusammenhang mit Schutzmaßnahmen
weiterhin prioritär behandelt. Dies sollte den Aufbau von Dialogen und Kapazitäten mit der Implementierung von Partnern einschließen, um zu gewährleisten, dass der Schutz zeitnah erbracht werden kann. (R2.2).

- Angesichts der fortbestehenden Gewalt und Instabilität innerhalb Syriens kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass es weitere Auswanderungen von Flüchtlingen geben wird. Die ECHO sollte eine starke und flexible Fähigkeit vorsehen, um auf die Bedürfnisse neuer Flüchtlingsfallzahlen zu reagieren (R2.3).

- Die ECHO sollte weiterhin die Nutzung koordinierter bedingungsloser Geldtransfers fördern, um die Grundbedürfnisse erfüllen zu können. Die ECHO hat bedingungslose Geldtransfers in den Libanon und nach Jordanien unterstützt, mit denen zahlreiche Bedürfnisse von Flüchtlingen in Nachbarländern gedeckt wurden. Vielseitig verwendbare Geldtransfers haben sich bezüglich der Deckung von zahlreichen Basisbedürfnissen in stark urbanisierten Aufnahmeländern mit funktionierenden Märkten und Banksystemen sowohl als effizient wie auch als effektiv erwiesen. (R2.4)

Konzentration auf die Koordination auf Landesebene und auf Vergabevereinbarungen, ergänzt um sorgfältig priorisierte Elemente der regionalen Koordination (R.3).

Der Wert der regionalen Koordinationsstrukturen war beschränkt und die regionalen Vergaben waren ineffizient. Aus diesem Grund wird empfohlen, dass die ECHO die Finanzierung regionaler Koordinationsaktivitäten einschränkt und sich auf die Koordination zwischen verschiedenen grenzüberschreitenden Maßnahmen und auf Maßnahmen innerhalb Syriens konzentriert, die Investition in die Stärkung der Kapazität des UNHCR in Betracht zieht, um ihre Verantwortung für humanitäre Koordination auf Landesebene über Zuschüsse für eine Soforthilfestruktur auf zentraler Ebene zu entlasten. Mehrländerverträge sollten abgebaut und diese durch Ein-Land-Verträge ersetzt werden.

Verstärkung des direkten Dialogs mit den nationalen Behörden in den Ländern, die Flüchtlinge aufnehmen (R.4).

Es wird empfohlen, dass die ECHO systematisch versucht, ihr Verhältnis zu aufnehmenden Regierungen in der Region zu stärken, indem sie während der Missionen der ECHO-Beamten regelmäßige Verbindungstreffen mit nationalen Amtskollegen einrichtet, die von regelmäßigen Meetings mit vor Ort befindlichen Fachleuten ergänzt werden. Diese Meetings sollten insbesondere dazu genutzt werden, Diskussionen zu führen im Zusammenhang mit der Förderung humanitären Raums, der besseren Koordination zwischen den ECHO-Partnern und der Regierung, der bedürfnisorientierten Vorgehensweise usw.
Aufbau größerer Synergien mit EU-Delegationen und anderer Finanzierungsinstrumente der EG (R.5).

Die ECHO hat beim Aufbau von Verbindungen zu anderen Finanzierungsquellen Fortschritte gemacht, insbesondere auf Brüsseler Ebene. Im Hinblick auf eine stärkere Integration wird Folgendes empfohlen: i) Stärkung der Beteiligung der ECHO in gemeinsame Planungsprozesse mit den EU-Delegationen, ii) Einrichtung der besten Vorgehensweisen für die integrierte Programmierung; Aufbau in Richtung potentieller Ausstiegsstrategien für die ECHO.
1. Introduction

This is the Final Report of the Evaluation of the ECHO Response to the Syrian Crisis, commissioned by the Evaluation Sector of the Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

This introduction is divided in two parts:
- A brief introduction on the subject, scope, and purpose of the evaluation;
- A presentation of the report.

1.1 Evaluation subject, purpose and scope

As shown in Figure 1, the evaluation subject is the relevance (including coherence, connectedness and EU added value), effectiveness (including impact), efficiency (including cost-effectiveness), and sustainability of ECHO’s response to the Syrian crisis from 2012-2014.

Figure 1 – Evaluation subject, purpose and scope:

The evaluation purpose is threefold:
- **Retrospective**: to provide accountability for the large portfolio of funds channelled through ECHO in response to the Syrian crisis over the evaluation period;
• **Real-time:** to provide feedback to country desk officers for immediate use as the crisis continues to develop in 2015;

• **Forward-looking:** to provide concrete recommendations for improving the performance of ECHO-funded operations in the region, in light of the emerging threats and challenges that donors will face in the coming years.

The evaluation is geared to a wide range of stakeholders, including ECHO HQ and country level staff. Its forward-looking recommendations may be beneficial to other evaluation stakeholders (notably national and regional stakeholders, and other humanitarian donors and agencies). The evaluation’s overall recommendations may be of particular value in the light of ECHO’s 2015 Mid-Term Review (MTR) and the design of ECHO’s 2016 Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP).

The scope of the evaluation covers ECHO-funded operations in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey over the period 2012-2014. It should in this respect provide answers to the set of 18 evaluations questions provided in the TOR. Where useful, it should also draw lessons on the different sectors in which support was. It excludes any operations concerning other crises in those countries during the same period, e.g., Palestinian refugees in Lebanon or Jordan, or Iraqi IDPs covered by DG ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Iraq 2012-2014.

### 1.2 The final report

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the work carried out, the evaluation findings per evaluation question, the conclusions drawn from these findings and the recommendations for the future. It is structured in 6 sections:

• **Section 1, introduction:** outlines the evaluation purpose, scope and the structure of the final report.

• **Section 2, evaluation context:** presents a snapshot of the Syrian crisis and of DG ECHO’s response.

• **Section 3, methodological approach:** presents the evaluation phases, evaluation questions, the challenges of the evaluation and the data collection tools used.

• **Section 4, findings per evaluation question:** provides answers to the different evaluation questions.

• **Section 5, conclusions:** presents the conclusion drawn from the evaluation questions.

• **Section 6, recommendations:** presents the recommendations for the future drawn from the conclusions.

The final report also includes four annexes:

• **Annex 1 – Evaluation terms of reference**

• **Annex 2 – Evaluation Inventory**

• **Annex 3 – Country reports**

• **Annex 4 – Bibliography**
2. Evaluation context

2.1 Regional context: a worsening humanitarian crisis

Over the evaluation period 2012-2014, the humanitarian crisis worsened for the Syrian populations inside and outside the country. Inside Syria, as of 31 March 2015, over 200,000 people had been killed and 1 million injured. Human rights violations occurred in a context of insecurity and disregard of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law.1

Humanitarian access was impeded by the use of siege tactics by multiple conflict actors, of indiscriminate bombardment and refusal of humanitarian access, and the presence of multiple extremist groups willing to target and kidnap humanitarian workers. The number of people living in areas that are difficult or impossible for aid agencies to reach rose to 2.5 million in 2013 and then doubled again to 4.8 million at the start of 2015.2 In 2014, UN inter-agency convoys reached only 1.1 million beneficiaries in the worst affected areas, a drop of almost 1.8 million from 2013.3 Likewise, over the period between February and June 2014, there was a 96% reduction in the amount of food and agriculture aid received by people in areas that are difficult or impossible to reach.4

Against this backdrop, displacement continued to grow. The total number of displaced persons, including both internally displaced persons and refugees in other countries, experienced rapid growth over the evaluation period and shows no signs of reducing in the near future:

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As described in the following sections, the evolution of refugee flows into each of the neighbouring countries has varied as a factor of shifting areas of fighting and changes in border policies. But in all countries, the largest growth took place in the end of 2012 and first half of 2013, during which period the international humanitarian response was scaled-up significantly.

**The prospects for safe return to Syria remain limited at this stage.** Consequently, Syrian refugees continue to depend on the assistance provided by host countries and the international humanitarian community. As the following section outlines, the context and aid delivery parameters vary significantly between each country and between both camp and non-camp settings.

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5 Figures unavailable for the number of IDPs prior to October 2012.
2.2 Country contexts

The Syrian crisis is taking place in a region of middle-income countries with a high rate of urbanization and a long history of turbulence.

Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey are all middle income countries with a GNI per capita of over US$1,045. Of the five countries, Syria has the lowest income levels and remains the only lower middle income country among them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Income level</th>
<th>GNI per capita (current US$)*</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>Urban population (%)</th>
<th>Population under 15 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>6,320</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Upper Middle</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
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<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>10,840</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Atlas Method. All figures for 2014, except Syrian Arab Republic, for which GNI is only available for 2007

All five countries have young, relatively urbanised populations. Each of the four neighbouring countries have higher levels of urbanisation than Syria itself, averaging 78% of the population in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices, compared to 57% inside Syria. The populations of all five countries are young, with an average of one third of the population under the age of 15 in 2014.

Political instability and insecurity has been a recurring feature of the region. Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have all undergone civil conflict or occupation by foreign forces in the recent past. Turkey and Jordan are stable in comparison, both falling well outside the 50 most fragile states worldwide in 2015. Nevertheless, Turkey has seen internal conflict related to the rights of its Kurdish ethnic minority, whilst Jordan hosts over 2 million registered Palestinian refugees – constituting just under a third of its total population.

Despite these common factors, the country contexts faced by conflict-affected Syrians differs significantly between each of the five countries under the evaluation scope, as detailed below.

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8 UNRWA figure as of July 2014, accessed on 23rd September 2015 [http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan](http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan)
Syria

People in need:

As of the end of the evaluation period, in December 2014, a total of 12.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria. This represents a twelvefold increase since the start of the crisis in 2011. Of the 12.2 million in need, over 7.5 million were internally displaced, and 4.8 million were in hard to reach areas.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) grew throughout the evaluation period in response to the ongoing severity of the complex, multi-sided and fast-moving conflict. But the greatest growth in IDP numbers were seen over the first two years of the evaluation period, 2012-2013, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 2 – Evolution of Internally Displaced Persons inside Syria (Jan 2012-2015)

Internally Displaced Persons inside Syria

(Evaluation period: 2012-2014)

Humanitarian needs and response parameters:

Needs assessments inside Syria vary considerably between organisations, but OCHA estimates for December 2014 suggest that:

- 9.8 million people were considered food insecure.
- The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate was 7.2% across 13 governorates covered by a series of rapid nutrition assessments in July 2014; whilst the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate was registered at 2.3% in the same assessment.
- 11.6 million were in urgent need of access to clean water.
- Only 43% of Syria’s hospitals remain fully functional.
- 25% of Syria’s schools have been damaged, destroyed or used as collective shelters or other non-educational purposes.
- 1.6 million people are in need of shelter, with 1.2 million houses damaged or destroyed.
Human rights violations have continued to occur in a context of insecurity and disregard of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law.9

The ability of humanitarian actors to respond to these needs has been severely constrained by the crisis:

- Humanitarian access has been impeded by the use of siege tactics, indiscriminate bombardment and the presence of multiple extremist groups willing to target and kidnap humanitarian workers.
- Staff of most major donor organisations and most expatriates have been impeded from entering Syria legally through the imposition of visa restrictions.
- The conduct of cross-border humanitarian operations in areas not controlled by the government of Syria was initially hampered by the position of the Government of Syria.

**Kurdistan Region of Iraq**

**Refugee population**

The total population of registered Syrian refugees inside Iraq saw rapid growth between August 2012 and March 2013. Thereafter, numbers continued to grow with varying rapidity, decreasing slightly from January 2014 to August 2014, and then increasing again with an influx from Kobane starting August through to January 2015.

**Figure 3 – Evolution of Syrian refugees in Iraq (Jan 2012 – 2015)**

![Graph showing the evolution of Syrian refugees in Iraq from January 2012 to January 2015](image)

Source: ADE on the basis of UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, data extracted on 3 December 2015.

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Figures taken at end of November 2014 show that, of the 230,000 refugees registered then, 42% (88,286) were registered in camp, and 58% (144,201) were hosted in the community. Those in camp have been accommodated across camps spread across Domiz, Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah. The demographic breakdown varied between camp and non-camp settings, with women making up the largest share of refugees in camp settings, and men making up the largest share in non-camp settings.

**Security and access constraints**

The security and access context in Iraq was complicated following the fall of Mosul to the so-called Islamic State in June 2014 and the ongoing conflict in Central Iraq, which has displaced 2 million Iraqis. The influx of IDPs into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has increased the competition for resources and placed increased strain on the host government when responding to the Syrian refugee’s needs. The so-called Islamic State’s takeover of the Al Obayidi camp in Anbar province has made this camp inaccessible for UNHCR and international humanitarian agencies, although some assistance is still provided to the 1,900 refugees accommodated there by national NGOs.

**Host government policy**

The KRI government has provided significant support to the Syrian refugees since the crises began in 2012. It has, for instance, paid infrastructure costs for camps in Erbil governorate and contributed to health and education costs for Syrian refugees. The government has also granted residency permits that include the right to work and freedom of movement.

Border policy has impacted refugee access to KRI over the evaluation period. The year 2014 saw the closure of the Peshk harbour border crossing and irregular admission and entry restrictions have been observed. But likewise the opening of a new entry point at Ibrahim Khalid (Zakho district) during the period of the so-called Islamic State attacks on the Kobane district allows the entrance of 13,000 refugees into KRI over a period of two weeks in 2014.

Arrests and detention of refugees for irregular entry or illegal movement has continued, and the Government of Iraq has increasingly linked their concern for border violations to their concern for terrorist activities inside of Iraq.

**Jordan**

**Refugee population**

Over 600,000 Syrian refugees were registered by UNHCR in Jordan over the evaluation period. The flow of refugees increased dramatically in 2013 (see figure below), with more than 1,800 arriving each day in early 2013, and then began flattening out in 2014, with 33 or fewer arriving each day between October and December 2014.

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
Figure 4 – Evolution of Syrian refugees in Jordan (Jan 2012 – Jan 2015)\textsuperscript{14}

Of the total 646,700 refugees registered with the Jordanian Ministry of Interior as of October 2014, the largest group are women (23.5\%), with 20.7\% adult males. 85\% (550,000) are living in non-camp settings in urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{15} The highest concentrations are in Northern and central Jordan (Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa governorates). The largest camp population is in Za’atari, with more than 80,000 people in October 2014. Azraq is the second largest camp hosting 13,700 in October 2014.

**Host government policy**

Over the evaluation period, Jordan has hosted 646,700 Syrian refugees, amounting to 10\% of its pre-crisis population. This has impacted Jordan’s fiscal position and driven up demand for basic commodities while contributing to rising inflation.\textsuperscript{16}

Pre-crisis unemployment levels in Jordan, was already persistently above 12\%.\textsuperscript{17} Syrian refugees, like all non-Jordanians, require a work permit in order to gain employment. But the process for Syrian refugees to obtain a work permit has been criticised as slow and opaque.


\textsuperscript{15} Government of Jordan’s official figures as of 18 October, 2014.


\textsuperscript{17} Kingdom of Jordan (2015) Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis, p. 18.
by international organisations. This has contributed to gradual exhausting of refugee assets and the increased use of negative coping mechanisms.

The Government of Jordan’s border policy has included sporadic closures of border crossing points with Syria. Until mid-2013, the Jordanian government permitted entry to Syrians across its informal border crossings with Syria. Most Syrians crossed through western entry points from Da’raa, near Tal Shihab, Hayat and Al Naseeb. But in mid-2013, the Jordanian government closed these informal western crossing points to all Syrians except the war-wounded and exceptional cases. Since then, crossing points have been closed between Ramtha and Da’raa (by the Jordanian and Syrian governments) and Jordan has barred entry at Amman’s Queen Alia International Airport to Syrians without Jordanian residency permits or special exceptions.

The closure of these crossing and entry points has forced Syrians fleeing to Jordan to pass through dangerous areas of Syria in order to reach the remaining eastern border crossings. There have, moreover, been cases of refugees being brought into Jordanian territory from eastern crossing points “screened at the Government of Jordan registration center, and then immediately deported to Syria without being registered”.

**Lebanon**

**Refugee population**

Over 1 million Syrian refugees have been registered by UNHCR inside Lebanon over the 2012-2014 period. With a pre-crisis population of approximately 4 million, the end of the evaluation period (1 January 2012 – 31 December 2014) saw Lebanon hosting the largest *per capita* refugee population in the world, at more than one quarter of the country’s population.

The following figure presents the evolution of registered refugees over the evaluation period. The registration rate increased significantly in the first quarter of January 2013 and maintained a near constant level until the end of 2014. Since then, registered numbers of refugees have flattened. On 6 May 2015, UNHCR Lebanon temporarily suspended new registrations in accordance with the instructions of the Government of Lebanon.

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Figure 5 – Evolution of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (Jan. 2012 - Jan. 2015)

Host government policy

The Government of Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, and has not signed the 1967 Convention. It does not apply term “refugee” to Syrians that have entered Lebanon after fleeing their country. Instead, the Government of Lebanon refers to such individuals as “displaced”.

The Government of Lebanon has been reluctant to open formal refugee camps for Syrians inside Lebanon. As a consequence, refugees are dispersed throughout urban and peri-urban host communities across the country. The majority are located in the Syria-adjacent Beqaa Valley (481,189) and in Beirut (346,125), followed by the north (286,882) and south Lebanon (140,255) regions.\(^{23}\)

Until the final quarter of 2014, the Lebanese government operated an open border policy with Syria. In December 2014, the Government of Lebanon introduced entry requirements for those seeking entry from Syria. As a consequence, those seeking entry were required to provide evidence that they fall into one of nine eligible categories or that they are sponsored by a Lebanese citizen. Furthermore, the policy allowed Lebanon to revoke refugee status from those who violate Lebanese laws, their conditions of entry, or those who repeatedly travel between Lebanon and Syria.\(^{24}\)

\(^{23}\) ECHO (2015) ‘Syria Crisis ECHO Factsheet April 2015’

\(^{24}\) ECHO (2014) ‘Briefing update on ECHO’s operations in LEBANON’.
Turkey

Refugee population

Over 2 million Syrian refugees have been registered in Turkey since the start of the crisis in 2011. The evolution of refugee numbers shows a different progression to that of Lebanon, Jordan or Iraq. Whilst number of refugees entering the latter countries increased sharply in early 2013, in Turkey, the number grew steadily throughout 2013 and 2014, and then increasingly sharply at the end of the evaluation period (December 2014 onwards). This may in part be due to the changing conflict dynamics across Northern Syria over that period.

As of end-2014, the largest concentrations of refugees have been reported in the south (Adana, Hatay, Osmaniye, and Gaziantep) and south east (Adiyaman, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Mardin, Sanliurfa) of Turkey\(^{25}\). However, increasing numbers are understood to be dispersing to the large urban centres, including Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, in search of employment opportunities. Approximately 265,000 refugees are housed in 25 government-run refugee camps\(^{26}\), but the vast majority live outside camps in urban and peri-urban areas.

**Figure 6 – Registered Syrian refugees in Turkey (Dec. 2011- Dec. 2014)**

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**Host government policy**

Since the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Turkey has provided a high standard response for refugees and declared a temporary protection regime. As of end-2014, Turkey had constructed 22 camps (with three more completed in 2015) and ensured non-refoulement for the 1.6 million refugees in its territory. The camps have been set up and run by the Turkish Government’s own Disaster and Emergency Management Agency.

In 2014, Turkey implemented a new policy framework governing its response to refugees in its territory. This new framework was bounded by two key legislative developments:

- Firstly, the entry into force in April 2014 of the country’s first asylum legislation (the Law on foreigners and International Protection) which provided for the establishment of a specialized institution (the General Directorate for Migration Management (DGMM) within the Ministry of Interior) to manage protection and migration-related matters; and
- Secondly, the adoption of a Temporary Protection Regulation in October 2014, which foresaw the issuance of a TP Identification Document (TPID).

Under this policy framework, each newly registered refugee in Turkey should be issued with a TPID, and the most vulnerable groups are expected to be identified by the DGMM and then prioritized for in-camp accommodation. The TPID should then provide each refugee, in-camp or outside, with access to public services including health and education. This includes free access to primary and emergency healthcare and access to secondary and tertiary healthcare at the same fee-rate as Turkish citizens. The TPID should also provide access to certain sectors of the labour market and to social assistance.

As a result of this new policy framework, registration is critical to ensuring full access to services for refugees in Turkey. As of October 2014, when the TPID was introduced, there were a total of 620,000 unregistered Syrian refugees in Turkey (out of 1.6 million total).

### 2.3 ECHO’s response

The following section presents the overview of ECHO funding in response to the Syrian crisis. It is based on the Evaluation Inventory presented in Annex II, which constitutes the full inventory of ECHO-funded contracts within the evaluation scope. Annex II also provides details of the methods used to construct the Evaluation Inventory.

This section covers 4 aspects of ECHO’s response:

- Geographical distribution of ECHO funds
- Sector breakdown of ECHO-funded operations across the region
- Overview of funds per sector and partner for each country
- Evolution of amounts contracted over the evaluation period

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The geographical distribution of ECHO funds is presented in figure 7:

**Figure 7 – Geographical distribution of ECHO funds 2012-2014**

![Geographical distribution of ECHO funds](image)

*Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database*

ECHO contracted €676 million from HIPs in response to the Syrian crisis from 2012-2014. The largest share of these funds has been allocated to Syria (45%), with Lebanon and Jordan together making up a further 46% of the total funds.

The total €676 million covered a wide range of aid sectors. Figure 8 shows the sector breakdown of ECHO’s funding across the region:

**Figure 8 – Sector breakdown of ECHO-funded operations 2012-2014**

![Sector breakdown of ECHO-funded operations](image)

*Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database*

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30 The figure shows the amount contracted in each country, including allocations under both single and multi-country projects. Thus, the total for Lebanon is equal to the sum of (the sum of the amounts contracted for all single-country projects in Lebanon) and (the sum of the amounts allocated to Lebanon under multi-country programmes). See the Evaluation Inventory in Annex II for the details of amounts given to each country under multi-country operations.
The largest share of ECHO’s funds were channelled towards shelter (35%). Food and multi-sector interventions together represented 41% of ECHO funding.

The heterogeneity of the response across the region is visible when looking at the sectoral breakdown per country (figures 9 to 13). Whilst shelter and food are in the top three sectors funded for every country, as might be expected, the prevalence and relative priority of protection, multi-sector, health and WASH sectors varies significantly between countries.

On the other hand, the selection of implementing partners (figures 9 to 13) shows a degree of similarity across countries, with the largest organisations featuring in the top 10 implementing organisations in each country.

**Figure 9 – Sector breakdown and partner distribution of ECHO-funded operations in Syria 2012-2014**

**Figure 10 – Sector breakdown and partner distribution of ECHO-funded operations in Lebanon 2012-2014**

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**ECHO funding per sector – Syria**

- Protection (€5.45m)
- Coordination (€2m)
- Water/sanitation (€34.6m)
- Health and Medical (€39.1m)
- Multi-sector (€56.2m)
- Shelter (€69.6m)

Total: €304.7m

**Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Syria**

- WFP
- ICRC
- UNHCR
- WHO
- UNICEF
- DRC
- UNRWA
- IFRC
- IOM
- ACTED

€210.4m (69% of total commitment in Syria)

**ECHO funding per sector – Lebanon**

- Protection (€6.4m)
- Water/sanitation (€6.9m)
- Health and Medical (€11.1m)
- Food (€17.6m)
- Multi-sector (€35.9m)
- Shelter (€88.8m)

Total: €169m

**Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Lebanon**

- UNHCR
- DRC
- WFP
- HI
- NRC
- SC
- Save The Children
- MEDAR
- PG-ABB
- DRC (REF. COUNCIL)

€137.6m (81% of total commitment in Lebanon)
Figure 11 – Sector breakdown and partner distribution of ECHO-funded operations in Jordan 2012-2014

ECHO funding per sector – Jordan

- Food ($23.1m): 38%
- Water/sanitation ($20.9m): 15%
- Multi-sector ($20m): 14%
- Health and medical ($15.1m): 11%
- Shelter ($54m): 6%
- Protection ($6.55m): 3%

Total: $141.8m

Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Jordan

- UNHCR
- WFP
- UNICEF
- NRC
- IFRC
- HI
- ACTED
- UNFPA
- MCS
- SC

Top up ($116m) (82% of total commitment in Jordan)

Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database & UN Financial Tracking Service extraction in May 2015

Figure 12 – Sector breakdown and partner distribution of ECHO-funded operations in Turkey 2012-2014

ECHO funding per sector – Turkey

- Food ($13m): 39%
- Shelter ($10.9m): 33%
- Multi-sector ($6.55m): 20%
- Health and medical ($1.6m): 6%
- Protection ($1.3m): 3%

Total: $33.4m

Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Turkey

- WFP
- IOM
- IFRC
- DRC
- UNHCR
- DRC (REF. COUNCIL)
- MDM
- CARE
- PIN / GAA
- IMC

Top up ($33.2m) (99% of total commitment in Turkey)

Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database & UN Financial Tracking Service extraction in May 2015
Figure 13 – Sector breakdown and partner distribution of ECHO-funded operations in Iraq 2012-2014

Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database & UN Financial Tracking Service extraction in May 2015

Finally, the evolution of contracted funds over the evaluation period (based on the year of the HIP under which the funding was contracted) shows a significant increase in 2013. Country rankings remain the same over the period, except for Iraq and Turkey in 2014.

Figure 14 – Evolution of ECHO-funded operations across the region 2012-2014

Source: ADE on the basis of ECHO HOPE database
3. Methodological approach

This section presents the overall methodological approach for this evaluation, as well as a note on the challenges met. This includes the following elements, addressed in separate subsections below:

- Evaluation phases;
- Evaluation questions;
- Data collection;
- Limitations of the analysis.

3.1 Evaluation phases

As foreseen by the ToR, the evaluation was conducted in *three main phases* (desk, field and synthesis). Each phase had its own activities and deliverables.

The following Figure summarizes the activities carried out in each phase, the deliverables produced and the interaction with the Steering Committee and Reference Group.

*Figure 15 – Evaluation Phases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inception</th>
<th>Desk study</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kick-off meeting</td>
<td>• Interview guides &amp; templates</td>
<td>• 4 country missions</td>
<td>• Cross-checking and filling of information gaps</td>
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<td>• Exploratory interviews</td>
<td>• Overall documentary analysis</td>
<td>• Field debriefings</td>
<td>• Responses to EQs</td>
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<td>• Funding mapping</td>
<td>• Case study analysis</td>
<td>• Surveys (ECHO &amp; partners)</td>
<td>• Conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• EQ/JC/Indicators</td>
<td>• Preliminary responses to EQs</td>
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<td>• Recommendations</td>
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<td>• Approach for field phase</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverables</strong></td>
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<td>• Field Report</td>
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<td>• Seminar</td>
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SC: Steering Committee meeting; S: Dissemination Seminar
3.2 Evaluation questions

The ToR defined a set of 18 questions to be answered by the evaluation. The main subjects of these questions are listed in table 3.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Evaluation question topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>EQ 1</td>
<td>On consistency with the 23 Principles and GHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 2</td>
<td>On consulting local and regional communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 3</td>
<td>On taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 4</td>
<td>On taking account the host populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 5</td>
<td>On adapting the approach to shifting needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 6</td>
<td>On the EU added value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 7</td>
<td>On taking into account the specific challenges of Urban settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 8</td>
<td>On taking into account Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 9</td>
<td>On the success of Remote Management and on the use of guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 10</td>
<td>On the success of Cash and Vouchers and the use of context analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 11</td>
<td>On the appropriateness of the size of the budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 12</td>
<td>On the appropriateness of monitoring systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 13</td>
<td>On the experience with consortia and with a multi-country approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 14</td>
<td>On the coordination of ECHO actions with other actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 15</td>
<td>On the mainstreaming of LRRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 16</td>
<td>On the successfullness of LRRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 17</td>
<td>On taking into account the security situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ 18</td>
<td>On the effectiveness of Humanitarian Advocacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These questions can be grouped in seven themes:

- **Overarching question**: EQ 1;
- **Design and answering needs**: EQs 2 to 6 all can be grouped under issues that relate mainly to design and relevance (with some specificities for EQ 6 on value added);
- **Specific thematics**: EQs 7 to 10 all relate to effectiveness with respect to specific issues or themes, even if they also examine also their design and hence relevance aspects;
- **Management and efficiency**: EQs 11 to 13 can all be linked to efficiency issues, even if effectiveness is also at stake here;
- **Coordination**: EQ 14 concerns very specifically coordination with different actors;
- **LRRD**: EQs 15 and 16 concern LRRD and thus sustainability of support, but also the issue of coherence and complementarity;
- **Specific items**: EQs 17 and 18 concern two specific items: the security situation and humanitarian advocacy.
3.3 Data collection

The evaluation has been structured around five country case studies, one for each of the neighbouring countries. These case studies encompassed both desk and field work. The team visited each of the neighbouring countries. No field visit to Syria was organised, but the team conducted extensive interviews in Amman on the ECHO support provided in Syria and telephone interviews with ECHO partners operating inside Syria both inside Damascus and through local partner organisations in areas controlled by armed opposition groups.

The results are gathered in country notes that are annexed to this report. Each note has a similar structure, with six sections: i) introduction; ii) the specific context of the country; iii) an overview of ECHO’s support in the country; iv) key findings with respect to the evaluation questions; v) other relevant findings for the evaluation; vi) some lessons learned.

The information collected for the country case studies was furthermore completed by information collected at a more general level (i.e. not necessarily country specific), on the basis of both documentary sources and interviews conducted. Once all data had been collected and cross-checked in the synthesis phase, information gaps were identified and filled using additional telephone interviews with ECHO partner offices in the region.

Figure 16 below provides an overview of the data collection tools used for the evaluation, allowing for a cross-checking of information gathered from different sources. The evaluation team interviewed a total of 122 stakeholders and reviewed 287 documents.

Figure 16 – Data collection tools

Cross-checking of multiple information sources

- Final partner telephone interviews
- Agency reports and evaluations review
- Policy/Strategy document review
- ECHO aid inventory
- Literature review
- Follow-up telephone interviews
- Face-to-face interviews (Bxls)
- Field visits (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon & Turkey)
Stakeholders met included representatives from the EC headquarters, the ECHO field offices, the EU Delegations, Member States, UN Agencies, Local Authorities, International NGOs, local NGOs, and beneficiaries. The documents reviewed are presented in Annex 4.

### 3.4 Limitation of the analysis

This evaluation has been confronted by a number of challenges, which the team had identified by the start of the evaluation, and which were, together with the means to mitigate them, discussed with the Steering Committee.

Despite mitigating measures, a number of limitations of the exercise remain, as is the case in each evaluation. The team deemed it important to highlight these:

- A first challenge is that this evaluation concerns an **on-going crisis and response**, even if the temporal scope concerns the period 2012-2014. The team has tried to deal with this by constantly remaining abreast of the evolution of the crisis and the response of the international community. To the extent possible, it has also tried to take relevant elements occurring in 2015 into account in the proposed recommendations.

- The **scope for this evaluation was also particularly wide and ambitious**. The ToR requested the evaluation to respond to a set of 18 evaluation questions. Not only is this a high number of questions, but some of these questions would call for a very wide and comprehensive analysis in their own right. In addition the evaluation needed to work on the five countries concerned, trying to take into account the specificities of each of them. Furthermore there was a request to combine a retrospective assessment with a real-time and forward looking dimension, and to pay attention to specific sector issues. The team has dealt with this complexity mainly in two ways:
  - First by structuring the evaluation exercise to a large extent around five comprehensive country studies, so as to better understand the specificities of each context;
  - Second by making sure it was possible to address usefully the evaluation questions with the means foreseen. This involved grouping the questions by themes where possible (e.g. bringing together questions on relevance, or the two questions on LRRD). Furthermore, the team made sure it addressed the issues of the evaluation questions at strategy level.

- The **security situation** was also a specific challenge in this evaluation. The team has gone to each of the neighbouring countries, but for security reasons it did not conduct a visit to Syria. This was compensated to the extent possible by gathering information on Syria from face-to-face interviews with ECHO headquarters, ECHO’s Amman office, and telephone interviews with ECHO partners operating inside Syria (including both those based inside Damascus and those operating through local partners in areas controlled by armed opposition groups).

- Due to the limited time available in the field, the Turkey field mission was also unable to cover cross-border operations conducted from Gazientep. The team therefore conducted telephone interviews of ECHO partners responsible for remote management operations from Turkey (and Iraq) in order to investigate this issue.
4. Answers to Evaluation Questions

This section presents the findings for each evaluation question.

The team has addressed some of the 18 evaluations questions defined in the Terms of Reference jointly, where this was deemed useful given the close linkages between the issues raised by the questions. This concerns question 2 to 4, all related to relevance and targeting issues, and the questions 15 and 16, both on LRRD.

The finding are made on the basis of the data collection outlined in section 3, and form the basis of the conclusions of section 5.

**EQ 1 – Consistency with the 23 Principles and GHD**

**To what extent is the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis consistent with the 23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship?**

This is an overarching evaluation question. It aims at verifying whether ECHO has observed the broad range of issues represented by the 23 “Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship”, endorsed in 2003 by the European Union and other donors. As this is an overarching questions, it regularly refers to the other evaluation questions.

**EQs 1 – Consistency with the 23 Principles and GHD – Answer Box**

Globally, ECHO has a robust system of procedures in place that ensure consistency with the broad spirit of the GHD initiative. This has resulted in need-based funding decisions at project level, leading to the widespread appreciation of ECHO as a principles humanitarian donor. However, at strategic level, ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plans for the Syrian crisis over the period 2012-2014 do not explicitly refer to the 23 GHD Principles. Some principles are covered, with specific requirements placed on ECHO partners to meet the principles of impartiality (GHD Principle 2) and to encourage consistency with LRRD norms (GHD Principle 9). But the majority of the GHD Principles are not referred to in ECHO’s strategic papers guiding its response to the crisis.

Moreover, questions have been raised about the proportionality of the global funding allocations made by ECHO to the Syrian crisis over the evaluation period. A rapid scaling-up of funds over 2012-2013 was followed by a 50% cut in allocations for 2014 (and cuts continue into 2015). The link between these steep fluctuations in funding and the level of IDP and refugee needs remains unclear.
Did ECHO deploy specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syrian crisis?

ECHO strategy papers for the Syrian crisis response over 2012-2014 do not make an explicit attempt to ensure consistency with the 23 principles of good humanitarian practice (GHD). Reference to individual GHD principles in their own right, moreover, was patchy:

- Requirements were included to ensure partners demonstrate their commitment to impartiality when acting inside Syria (GHD Principle 2) and encourage consistency with LRRD norms (GHD Principle 9).
- Awareness of the IHL violations inside Syria was demonstrated in each of the ECHO HIPs for the Syrian crisis, but without explicitly including requirements from partners to respect and promote IHL (GHD Principle 4).

Nevertheless, ECHO already has in place a range of systems and procedures to ensure consistency with the 23 principles, including:

- Learning and accountability mechanisms to support effective and efficient implementation of humanitarian aid (GHD Principles 21-23).
- At project-level, a funding system that requires partners to provide thorough needs assessments when making funding proposals, backed up by technically competent staff able to assess the validity of partner appraisals and make funding decisions accordingly (GHD Principle 6).
- At strategy-level, global crisis funding allocations that linked to an Integrated Analysis Framework that, to a certain extent, is backed by needs assessment (although the clarity of the link from needs to global funding levels has also been questioned in this crisis. See EQ11 in this regard) (GHD Principle 12).

Were there specific examples of where the Syrian response was (or was not) in line with the 23 Principles?

The evaluators identified several examples of how ECHO’s support has been in good alignment with the GHD principles:

- Broadly speaking, ECHO was widely perceived as a principled donor, in terms of supporting the four humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence (GHD Principle 2). NGO stakeholders cited ECHO’s willingness to work wherever there are needs, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or territory. This point is corroborated by the evaluation inventory, which shows that ECHO’s support concerned the protection of Syrian civilians in all areas and covered a wide range of sectors (provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, etc.).
- The strategic decision to support the delivery of humanitarian aid to AOG-controlled areas of Syria from 2013 onwards – in addition to continuing operations inside government-held zones – was widely seen as a critical element in implementing needs-based, impartial aid (GHD Principle 2). The needs of Syrians in AOG-controlled areas are, in many cases, severe. The difficulty of reaching such populations created a gap in the international response in many areas of North West Syria in particular. ECHO’s

approach to working with its partners on remote management guidelines and standards helped to ensure that it could assist those in need even in some of the hardest-to-reach areas. Moreover, ECHO specifically sought to work with its partners to ensure that the use of local partners to deliver aid inside Syria did not impinge upon the provision of principled humanitarian aid.

- ECHO has invested significant resources in supporting the role of the UN system in the Syrian crisis response (in line with GHD Principle 10). Efforts were made by ECHO’s regional office and headquarters to enhance the regional coordination of the response through the UN system. Whilst difficulties remain in this regard (outlined in more detail in EQ 14), ECHO’s efforts were appreciated by UN agencies. At single country level, ECHO also contributed to the establishment of a broad-based coordination platform in Lebanon, led by UNHCR, which included non UNHCR-financing partners as well as its direct partners. Several stakeholders noted that this platform, once established, helped to improve coordination of the response in the country.

Questions can be asked about the proportionality of the global funding allocations made by ECHO to the Syrian crisis over the evaluation period:

- ECHO rapidly scaling-up funding over 2012-2013. Starting from limited funding for the crisis in 2011, ECHO quickly scaled up to €156m in 2012, and then increased again by 129% to €357m in 2013. This increase followed the significant increases in refugee caseloads in neighbouring countries and the increasing needs of IDPs inside Syria (see EQ 5 on this point).
- But, as outlined in EQ5 and 11, in 2014 ECHO cut funding by over 50% to €163m, despite continuing growth in refugee numbers in neighbouring countries. ECHO representatives highlighted that a significant part of the 2014 funds was front-loading for 2014 and that many 2013 contracts were extended until the end of June 2015. The 2015 HIP maintains this level at €164m (but again here also ECHO representatives explained that the final allocation at the end of 2015 was more than the double).
- Many partners observed that these fluctuations were had to predict on the basis of the needs assessments in the field (see EQ11 for further details in this regard). This created difficulties for partners in terms of planning and implementation. But in addition it raised questions about the extent to which ECHO’s funding allocations were guided by needs assessment and insulated from political pressure.
EQs 2 to 4 – Issues related to relevance and targeting: consulting local communities and taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable and of host populations

To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, the elderly and disabled people? (EQ 3)

To what extent have local communities been consulted in the design, implementation and monitoring of ECHO-funded projects? (EQ2)

To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests? (EQ 4)

These Evaluation Questions are grouped as they all relate to relevance and targeting issues, addressing three dimensions:

- The targeting of groups with particular vulnerabilities (cf. the first article of Commission Regulation 1257/96);
- The importance of consulting with local communities, to understand and better take into account their needs and concerns, and to foster project ownership by these communities;
- Addressing the specific needs of host populations when receiving refugees.

EQs 2 to 4 – On relevance and targeting – Answer Box

Several elements indicate that ECHO’s overall commitment to addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups was translated into action. About 40% of ECHO-supported projects targeted specific groups. This concerned in particular women and children, and to a lesser extent elderly or disabled people. ECHO’s deployed efforts to reach the most vulnerable in general (beyond specific categories) are also reflected in its support, with around 50% of projects geared to that objective. ECHO was confronted with specific challenges in this respect, notably (i) the difficulty of identifying the most vulnerable and the costs related to them; and (ii) the fact that the specific requirements or dispositions of the authorities of host countries hampered identification of or access to the most vulnerable. With the decrease in HA resources, the call for a stronger focus on the most vulnerable became stronger.

In terms of relations with the hosting countries, ECHO has a commitment to ensure that its partners consult local and regional communities. There are several examples of ECHO partners engaging with local structures, but there are also indications that such consultation was not successful in some cases or was even lacking, so that it is difficult to determine to what extent such consultation took place adequately or allowed better addressing of needs and enhanced ownership of the support by local authorities.

We have grouped together questions 2-4 to better structure the findings.
That said, ECHO made sure that a substantial part of its support was geared to host communities. This concerned both projects (about 30% of the projects (in number of projects and amounts concerned) it supported were related to this goal) and specific advocacy initiatives. This took place in a context in which the pressure on host communities was very high, with local authorities differing strongly in their capacity to deal with refugees.

**On targeting groups with particular vulnerabilities (EQ 3)**

As regards the issue of the needs of the most vulnerable, one should distinguish between:

- people vulnerable to specific threats under specific conditions, who may for instance be refugees in in a “no-man’s land” in border areas, who have not yet been registered or who have lost their papers;
- specific categories of vulnerable people, namely: women, children, the elderly and disabled people.

Several elements indicate that **ECHO’s overall commitment to addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups is reflected in its support**:

- ECHO has supported different partners specialized in working with specific vulnerable groups, notably children (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children), disabled people (e.g. Handicap International); it also supported projects with other partners, targeting specific vulnerable groups (e.g. on gender-based violence);
- more specifically, as shown in table 3 below 41% of the projects and 47% of the funding related to projects that tackled at least one of the categories mentioned above, this concerned mostly women/gender and children; whereas disabled and elderly people were much less targeted;
- stakeholders met underlined that ECHO, notably vis-à-vis its partners, is one of the donors that press for support for these vulnerable groups;

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33 We have dropped here the structuring in Judgment Criteria, and have structured the text alongside the three Evaluation Questions to facilitate reading.

34 To determine how many of the projects targeted specific categories of vulnerable people, we screened the single forms of all projects financed by ECHO over the period 2012-2014. When the specific objectives or indicators defined for this project related to one of the categories, we counted the project among those targeting such a category. Of the funds given by ECHO to projects with at least one objective concerning most vulnerable people, around 40% went to projects targeting - among others - children.
Table 3 – Share of ECHO funded projects targeting vulnerable groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># projects</th>
<th>Funding (€ M)</th>
<th>Share of projects targeting at least</th>
<th>Share of funding of those projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total inventory</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>679.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>185.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>273.8</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects mentioning at least 1 of the 4 categories</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>316.2</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most vulnerable people</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>365.4</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADE based on ECHO

Similarly, ECHO aimed more generally at gearing its support to “the most vulnerable people”. As shown in table 2.1 above, this concerns 58% of the projects and 54% of funding. It is also illustrated by specific initiatives such as the 2013 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (V4SyR), which was fully funded by ECHO. This comprehensive assessment was conducted by WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF, and aimed at enabling “humanitarian stakeholders to improve their programming and to target assistance to the most vulnerable”. Widely appreciated, it is supposed to remain a reference document which has been updated in 2014 and 2015. In Jordan, ECHO supported the Vulnerability Assessment Framework, as well as a related baseline survey in 2015.

There are however also examples where such targeting did not really take place. In Turkey, for instance, there was no formal comprehensive needs assessment of the urban-based Syrian population (see below for more details of the reasons). The establishment of a Directorate-General of Migration Management (May 2015) is expected to bring improvements in this respect. The lack of assessment prevented geographical targeting, but NGOs were still targeting at local level on the basis of need and vulnerability.

However such targeting of the most vulnerable among those in need was challenged or influenced by different factors, notably:

- the difficulty of identifying the most vulnerable and the costs related to them:
  - stakeholders stressed that specific circumstances make it hard to identify the most vulnerable, for example in Lebanon where refugees are not in camps but dispersed; another factor is that some refugees do not wish to be identified;
  - it was also stated that such identification is a labour-intensive process with high costs; for instance the above-mentioned V4SyR, funded by ECHO, was criticized in this respect. Lack of coordination in targeting exercises was also highlighted.

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36 UNHCR, Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). Baseline survey, 2015. The VAF team has worked under the oversight of the VAF Steering Committee, led by UNHCR and composed of ACTED, CARE, DRC, Handicap International, PU-AMI, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO, ECHO and BPRM.
• specific requirements or attitudes of the authorities of hosting countries made it difficult to focus on the most vulnerable, viz.:
  - the Jordan Government systematically required 30% of NGO resources dedicated to the plight of vulnerable Jordanians, whereas many stakeholders underlined that Syrian refugees are far more vulnerable;
  - stakeholders explained that the Government of Turkey was reluctant to allow agencies to collect data on needs and vulnerabilities, and that initiatives were at a standstill;
• the impact of the decrease in resources for HA to Syrian refugees: as shown in the inventory, funding decreased between 2013 and 2014, whereas the number of refugees increased; some stakeholders explained that this created pressure to target more, but that such targeting was then driven more by resource availability than by need, while others explained that there was no relation between both.

On consulting local communities (EQ 2)

There is a certain commitment of ECHO to ensure that its partners consult local communities when providing support. But it is not clear to what extent such consultation was sufficient or how far it allowed better tackling of the needs and enhancing of ownership of support by local authorities; indeed, findings suggest otherwise, viz.:

• There are several examples of ECHO partners engaging with local structures, rooted in the communities; in Syria, for instance, needs assessments for cross-border operations were based on interviews with local councils and actors, and moreover local partners were using hotlines to help with the needs assessments. In Turkey FPA partners have offices at local level that facilitate interaction with communities, and partners often reported consulting with local village heads (mukhtars) to help identify beneficiaries.
  - But there are also indications that consultation was not as successful in some cases, or even simply lacking; in Jordan, for instance, interviewees suggested that the question of the impact of the crisis on local municipalities and the issue of donor exit strategies had not been sufficiently addressed (see EQs15-16 below). To some extent such lack of consultation is a recurrent finding of humanitarian aid, where the emergency creates pressure for rapid response with little time for consultation.

Stakeholders explained that beyond the formal requirements, and although it took place on some occasions, there was no structured and systematic approach to consultation with local authorities in host countries. Embedding such an approach, whilst theoretically preferable, would nevertheless have been difficult in the context of a quickly evolving refugee emergency.37

37 The challenges of local authority consultation in the Syria refugee response have been highlighted in, inter alia, Oxfam Italia (2014) The Partnership with Local Authorities in Responding to Humanitarian Crisis: The case of Lebanon.
On taking account of the needs of the host populations (EQ 4)

As illustrated by box below, **the pressure on Syria’s neighbouring countries from the arrival of refugees is extremely high in all countries, viz.**:

- As shown in Table 2.2 below, the total share of refugees in the total population is very high, especially in Jordan and Lebanon where it reached 8.5% and 20% respectively by the end of 2014.
- But one should also look at the absolute figures, which are for instance the highest in Turkey, which hosted at the end of 2014 close to 1.6 million Syrian refugees.
- Similarly refugees are not equally spread across the territory, especially in Turkey and Iraq. In Turkey refugees are all very close to the border area with Syria, which means that the pressure in this region is extremely high; table 2.3 provides an estimate of the population of some key cities and of refugees in that area, and on this basis the number of refugees would be closer to 10% of the local population (in some border towns it is even estimated at around 50%). A similar exercise in Iraq shows that refugees represent close to 4% of the people in the area.
- Finally, the figures in table 4 concerns registered refugees, that is they do not take into account unregistered refugees.

**Table 4 – Number of registered refugees per country as share of the total population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># Refugees</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Refugees/population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>234,196</td>
<td>35,273,293</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>623,112</td>
<td>7,416,083</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1,147,494</td>
<td>5,612,096</td>
<td>20.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,557,899</td>
<td>77,523,788</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>138,381</td>
<td>89,579,670</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ADE, based on UNHCR, UN World population prospects*

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38 Different instances have made estimates about the number of unregistered refugees. An UNHCR survey found for instance for Lebanon that by mid-2015 the proportion of unregistered individuals in households surveyed was around 4%, and estimated therefore that at the national level approximately 40,000 Syrian individuals were not registered (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, *Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*, 2015). For Jordan, a Handicap International/Help Age survey estimated that 3.6% of refugees in the countries were not registered (Handicap International, Help Age, *Hidden victims of the Syrian crisis: disabled, injured and older refugees*).

39 The refugee/population figures given here do not take into account the distribution within countries. In the case of Iraq, where the Syrian refugees are concentrated in Iraqi Kurdistan, this changes the density significantly, with Syrian refugees making up approximately 4% of the population of KRI. Likewise in Turkey, where approximately 10% of the population in the region bordering Syria are Syrian refugees.
Table 5 – Estimate of the number of refugees compared to the local population in the Turkish border area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th># in-camp refugees</th>
<th># non-camp refugees</th>
<th>Total refugees</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>In-camp refugees / population</th>
<th>Non-camp refugees / population</th>
<th>Total refugees / population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilis</td>
<td>37,578</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>86,578</td>
<td>128,781</td>
<td>29.18</td>
<td>38.05</td>
<td>67.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>33,070</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>253,070</td>
<td>1,889,466</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>13.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanliurfa</td>
<td>79,665</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>249,665</td>
<td>1,845,667</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>13.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>14,735</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>204,735</td>
<td>1,519,836</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>13.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardin</td>
<td>2,858</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>72,858</td>
<td>788,996</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>9.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmaniye</td>
<td>7,597</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>19,597</td>
<td>506,807</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahramanmaraş</td>
<td>17,215</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>61,215</td>
<td>1,089,038</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>5.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adiyaman</td>
<td>9,854</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>12,354</td>
<td>597,835</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>11,124</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>61,124</td>
<td>2,165,595</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>213,696</strong></td>
<td><strong>807,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,021,196</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,532,021</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** ADE based on Turkish Statistical Institute and ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies)

Box 1 – Pressure on host communities

The arrival of Syrian refugees has created a lot of pressure on the host populations of Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey; especially in the regions and governorates receiving the largest numbers of refugees per capita. This pressure impacted upon several sectors, as illustrated hereafter:

- In terms of **housing**, Jordan witnessed an increased demand that “has pushed up rents up to 300% in some areas”\(^{40}\). In Turkey, cities close to the border are also dealing with this issue. Kahramanmaraş, for instance, faced similar problems such as “a staggering 150% increase in rental prices […] and the fact that landlords attempt to get rid of Turkish tenants to rent places to Syrians are common problems”\(^{41}\). Even though no quantification of this phenomenon was given, the KRG recognizes facing the same problem in cities with major refugee influx. In the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, which hosts an important number of Syrian refugees, rents have risen by as much as 200% over a six month period in 2012. Similarly in one district of Beirut, which hosts many refugees, an increase of 400% was reported. In the latter case, one should be careful to link this entirely to the crisis. Indeed, as noted by a UN report, “the affordable housing crisis in Lebanon predates the arrival of Syrian refugees and some of the impediments for the production of affordable housing […] stem from an already prohibitively expensive housing market where property values are exorbitant due, in large part, to unfettered speculation and the absence of affordable housing policies”\(^{42}\).

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\(^{41}\) ORSAM, TESEV, Effects of the Syrian refugees on Turkey, Orsam report n°195, January 2015.

\(^{42}\) UNHCR, UN-Habitat, Housing, Land and Property issues in Lebanon. Implications of the Syrian refugee crisis, August 2014.
With regard to employment, several sources indicate that, even though the presence of international agencies creates jobs, the availability of cheap Syrian workers and the loss of trade with Syria make it harder for unskilled people of host communities to find work. This increases the vulnerability of the poorest members of the host communities. In the Turkish province of Sanliurfa, for instance, the unemployment rate rose from 8.0% in 2011 to 16.3% in 2013, while the national unemployment rate went from 9.8% in 2011 to 9.7% in 2013. In the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), the World Bank found that the poverty rate had more than doubled, going from 3.8% in 2012 to 8.1% in 2014. According to an UNDP/ODI report, the economies of the neighbouring countries are also deteriorating due to increased government expenditures and increased budget deficit. In Jordan, agricultural exports to Syria decreased by 25% and GDP growth, which was on average 6.6% in the 2000-2008 period, went down to 2.7% in 2012.

Furthermore, the refugee influx has led to a significant strain on health care clinics. Turkish hospitals in border provinces are stretched to capacity as Syrian refugees receive 30% to 40% of the services they offer. In Lebanon, due to the massive refugee influx, increased caseloads of at least 50% were reported in 2012, which are accompanied by deficiencies in the supply of drugs and vaccines, shortages in doctors and specialists such as dentists, gynaecologists. Furthermore, even though additional medical support is usually provided, it is not the case for administrative and operational support, “leading to significant strain on the ability of clinics to effectively manage the increased numbers of patients.” Added to that, resources usually allocated to poor Lebanese have been diverted towards supporting refugees, creating more tensions between the refugees and the local communities. Indeed, according to a World Bank report, as Syrian border hospitals are overcrowded, “Lebanese have to travel longer distances to seek care in alternative facilities, and incur higher costs especially when they shift their care to the private sector.”

The refugee influx is also at the origins of an increase in water and energy supply and in solid waste, burdening even more municipal budgets. In Lebanon, the Ministry of Energy and water estimates that Syrian refugees have contributed to a 28% increase in water demand and waste water generation, Jordan being now the second water-poorest country in the world. Consequently, due to overcrowding and the lack of proper sanitary conditions (limited access to safe water, substandard housing), the prevalence and risk of diseases has increased: the incidence rate of infectious diseases like, among others, measles, hepatitis A, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections have risen in Jordan and Lebanon (9 measles cases reported in 2011 in Lebanon against 1,456 cases in 2013), while Iraq had to deal with a cholera outbreak.

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43 Some other evolutions have also been observed: Turkey has been delivering goods such as food, cement and first-aid products to NGOs and areas under Syrian opposition control. For instance, the province of Gaziantep’s export revenue increased by more than 70% and Sanliurfa, whose exports had dipped from $148.3 million in 2011 to $110 million in 2012, raised to $153.7 million in 2013.

44 World Bank, The Kurdistan Region of Iraq : assessing the economic and social impact of the Syrian conflict and ISIS, April 2015.


47 ORSAM, TESEV, Effects of the Syrian refugees on Turkey, Orsam report n°195, January 2015.


outbreak in September 2015 and polio, which had disappeared years ago, was detected anew in Turkey.

- The drastic increase in number of students enrolled at schools is affecting the quality of education for all children with the return of double-shifts in schools. In 2013, 41% of Jordan’s schools were overcrowded, against 36% in 2011. There is also a widespread perception that Syrian children are receiving more support for education, accentuating tensions between refugees and host populations.\(^{51}\) The poorest members of host communities becoming more vulnerable, the drop-out rates of poor students and the risk of child exploitation and child-trafficking have increased, as noted by.

As explained hereafter, host countries and regions differed in their capacity to handle the refugees, \(\textit{viz.}\):

- in Iraq 95% of Syrian refugees reside in the Kurdish Region, with consequently, as stated above, much pressure on this region;
- in Jordan: the majority of refugees live outside the camps with the greatest share living in Amman and the Northern governorates. The Jordanian government has shown considerable willingness to host Syrian refugees and remains open to the assistance provided by the international community, although access to healthcare outside of camps is dependent upon documentation only available at a cost.\(^{52}\) The government also requires all NGOs providing assistance to Syrian refugees to ensure that 30% of their assistance goes to the host communities.
- in Lebanon the pressure is very high, the Syrian refugees representing more than 20% of total residents in the country, not even counting the Palestinian refugees; this leads to deterioration in services to the Lebanese population, with overcrowded schools, over-exploited water resources, etc..
- in Turkey, despite the very high number of refugees, there was originally no real demand from the Government for support; later the position changed and the Government even complained about the lack of support for its response.

In this context, several elements indicate that the EU was well aware of the importance of supporting the host populations and has taken initiatives in this respect, \(\textit{viz.}\):

- first, the importance of the issue is clearly acknowledged in ECHO’s general strategy documents, and also in its Syria-specific documents, notably the HIPs of the different countries, and the Single Forms;
- second, ECHO has taken several initiatives to support host populations: as shown in Table 6 below, 58% of ECHO-funded programmes concerned host populations (representing 54% of funding).

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\(^{51}\) A world vision report quotes a Lebanese national in this respect: “Syrian children gets everything for free, their bags, books transportation, registration is paid, but Lebanese have to pay for everything”. World Vision Lebanon, WV UK, Under pressure: the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on host communities in Lebanon, July 2013.

The approaches varied by country:
- in Iraq the choice was to ensure that these issues would be part of the engagement of DCI rather than under ECHO;
- in Jordan there was the need to gear 30% of donor support to host populations. Several stakeholders interviewed (from ECHO but also from NGO) explained that this was something they were probably not able to change;
- in Lebanon there was a combined advocacy role with both the Delegation and other donors, to ensure that the concerns identified were covered by other EU instruments.
- in Turkey ECHO’s strategy consisted mainly of advocating to the Delegation provision of support to host populations in sectors impacted by a refugee influx, in combination with specific projects that targeted host populations.

It is not clear to what extent these initiatives can be considered successful and sufficient.

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Table 6 – Share of ECHO-funded projects linked to host populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># projects</th>
<th>Funding (€ M)</th>
<th>Share of projects targeting at least:</th>
<th>Share of funding of those projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total inventory</td>
<td>37,578</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>86,578</td>
<td>128,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host population</td>
<td>33,070</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>253,070</td>
<td>1,889,466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADE based on ECHO

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53 Figures represent the number of projects with host populations referred to in target beneficiary groups as specified in project singleforms.
EQs 5 – Adapting the approach to shifting needs

A) To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?

This Evaluation Question covers three dimensions:

- first it aims at understanding to what extent ECHO and its partners have been sufficiently flexible in their approach, so as to ensure they could react to the evolving crisis and related needs of the region;
- the second part is linked to the first and aims at understanding whether ECHO and partners have effectively revised their approaches;
- the third part concerns modifications needed for the future; as this necessitates more recommendations, it is tackled globally in the recommendations section.

EQs 5 – Adapting the approach – Answer Box

Partly as a result of the setting-up work conducted in the initial crisis phase, ECHO developed a range tools to ensure that its approaches could be adapted to the shifting needs of the regions where support was provided. To remain informed of the changes, ECHO could rely on its partners, its presence in coordination mechanisms, its links with the donor community, the assessments that it co-financed, and so forth. It also applied budgetary mechanisms that favoured flexibility based on regular and frequent dialogue with its partners.

Several elements indicate that ECHO has also made effective efforts to adapt its approach, and pressed partners to do so, so as to better address gaps. For instance ECHO has been able to rapidly mobilise large amounts of funds in response to the increases in the influx of refugees in the different countries. Moreover a closer examination of ECHO’s strategy in the different countries shows that it has been able to adapt to changing situations and needs (for instance, by (i) introducing specific programmes such as the newcomers programme, (ii) by devising its strategy based on the (changing) approach of the host country, as was the case in Turkey, and (iii) by shifting towards the use of multi-purpose cash transfers to assist refugees in meeting the full basket of their basic needs rather than focusing only on sector-specific support.

To what extent did ECHO and its partners have a strategy to adapt to shifting needs of the region?

ECHO invested heavily during the 2012-2013 period in both setting up and expanding a large-scale humanitarian response to the Syria crisis. This involved only in scaling up ECHO’s own resources but also in supporting the organization of large-scale operations in countries where humanitarian capacities and expertise were either not present or inadequate to address a rapidly growing humanitarian crisis.
As a result of the work conducted in this initial crisis phase, ECHO developed a range of tools to ensure that its approaches could be adapted to the shifting needs of the regions where support was provided, viz.:

- the permanent offices of ECHO and of some of its partners allowed better understanding of field realities and changes in them; ECHO was also involved in coordination mechanisms with other donors, which was also a valuable source of information;
- needs assessments were financed by ECHO (see for instance the Vulnerability Assessments in Lebanon and Jordan);
- several partners mentioned that ECHO applied mechanisms that favoured flexibility. For instance in each budget line there is flexibility in 10% of the budget which allows partners to adjust their programmes without going through burdensome processes (normally an oral consultation followed by written confirmation is enough).

While numerous instruments scrutinize the situation inside Syria and monitor situational changes, the process of ensuring a quality flow of information that would facilitate adaptability of projects and the donor-partner dialogue that could sustain it remained a permanent challenge. ECHO had to rely on its capacity to triangulate different sources.

To what extent did ECHO and its partners effectively adapt their approaches to the shifting needs in the region, while being innovative?

Several elements, developed below, indicate that ECHO has made efforts to adapt its approach, and push its partners to do so, which allowed them to better address gaps.

A first element is that ECHO has been able to mobilise funds very rapidly in response to the crisis (i.e. between 2012 and 2013). This is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below. It shows that for the four neighbouring countries, ECHO has been able to rapidly increase funding in response to an increase of refugees, with a decrease in funding in 2014 except for Turkey. This issue is further discussed under EQ 11.
In each of the countries concerned, there are clear examples of ECHO adapting its approach to shifting needs, viz.:

- **In Iraq**, ECHO has revised its approach further to the sudden influx of 56,000 refugees, and the subsequent influx of 500 a day as of 15 August 2013. ECHO closely monitored the situation and engaged in intensive dialogue with other partners, including UNHCR. It provided a key role in addressing the concerns of WASH and shelter among newly arrived refugees in 2013 and in pushing for a coordinated, multi-actor, long-term approach to urban and non-camp refugees in KRI.

- **In Jordan**, ECHO funding has adapted to the rapid growth of refugee numbers in 2013 (with 1,800 arriving every day and an increase of 100,000 to 550,000 refugees during that year), followed by a flattening-out in 2014. Support targeted both camp and non-camp settings. As a strong increase in the flow of refugees entering Jordan was foreseen, UNHCR and the GoJ decided to proactively plan for a second large-scale camp to avoid the slow camp establishment process that marked the creation of Za’atari camp. ECHO supported the construction and maintenance of a field hospital in the Azraq camp, with a capacity to shelter more than 100,000 refugees.

- **In Lebanon** the Newcomers programme was specifically set up following the influx of new refugees. This programme, which consisted in providing basic support to all the new
refugees - wherever they entered and with a similar package regardless of the aid delivered - is a good example of adapting to a continuously-evolving situation.

- ECHO’s strategy in response to the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people has evolved significantly over the period under review, in response both to changing situations and to an enhanced understanding of the situation and of the needs and capacities of its partners. Globally ECHO aimed to provide support both inside and outside government-controlled areas, but it had to refine its approach in dialogue with its partners, in view of the difficulties of deploying aid agencies and delivering meaningful humanitarian aid. Three key directions were identified: (i) more focus on pure humanitarian aid (health, life saving aid provision, protection); (ii) identification of how to improve access; and (iii) creation of conditions for better targeting. The answer to EQ 9 also shows how ECHO has responded to security challenges through its remote management approach.

- In Turkey also, ECHO clearly adapted to a changing situation:
  - provision of HA in Turkey was originally not high on the ECHO agenda:
    - initially a larger number of refugees were concentrated in Jordan and Lebanon;
    - the GoT had considerable ability to respond, and the presence of the refugees was not seen as such a threat to the stability of the State;
    - AFAD controlled the response in conjunction with the Turkish Red Cross. They were unwilling to accept conditions on donations, notably with respect to monitoring and transparency;
  - with the subsequent large growth of refugee numbers in the country (see also Figure 5.1), it became apparent that there was no quick solution and the GoT became more open to international assistance and even actively sought help;
  - ECHO adapted to this evolving situation through two major strategic shifts:
    - shifting the focus of support from the GoT-run camps to the urban refugee population; the proportion of camp-based support dropped by a third each year, to one-third of the total by 2014;
    - identifying new geographic priorities, which led notably to an increase in support to the influx of refugees into the “far east”.

Stakeholders in the different countries have confirmed this ability to adapt, and have not provided specific examples that point to a lack of flexibility. In Turkey, for instance, where the constant and unpredictable influx of refugees from Syria created a frequent need to programme adjustments, stakeholders noted that ECHO was an extremely flexible donor in supporting these requests. The TAs were regularly in touch with the programmes to keep abreast of changes in the context. Changes were often agreed verbally and informally through a phone call – and confirmed later through formal amendments. NGO partners active in Syria, underlined that working in Syria was extremely difficult given the frequently changing context, which often meant that project implementation was delayed by external factors affecting access. These same partners noted that ECHO was very flexible in accommodating such changes, more so than other donors. A key reason for cited for this flexibility was the quality and presence of field staff in the region, and the depth of understanding that ECHO field TAs had of the changing context and key actors inside Syria.
To what extent did ECHO and its partners introduce specific innovations in adapting their approaches?

There are some examples of innovations:

- In Jordan, for instance, for UNHCR and WFP food programmes supported by ECHO, the targeted provision of food vouchers to camp-based refugees, through a system of supermarkets offering a wide range of food and non-food items at a fixed price, is an interesting innovation. But the absence of ATM distribution systems in camps does not yet allow real unconditional cash transfers. Cash assistance to those outside the camps and host communities is done through a sophisticated and innovative system involving biometric measures (iris scan in particular), and the distribution of ATM cards.

- In Syria, with a view to ensuring that ECHO-supported cross-border operations are cost-effective, respect key aspects of due diligence, and limit the risks of negative effects, ECHO partners developed a multitude of tools and made innovative use of existing technologies (notably Facebook, WhatsApp, and also geo-referenced photos and videos (as proof of realization of activities).
EQ 6 – EU added value

What has shown to be the EU added value of the actions examined (i.e. the added value of EU intervention, compared to leaving the initiative to other actors)?

This Evaluation Question aims at examining the types of added value ECHO has provided when intervening in the specific context of the Syrian crisis. More specifically it aims at assessing to what extent ECHO employed a specific approach and took specific initiatives to ensure it could provide added value. It also aims at assessing to what extent ECHO has been considered as providing specific types of added value in the context of the Syrian crisis.

EQ 6 – EU added value – Answer Box

Several elements suggest that ECHO has provided significant added value in the context of the Syrian crisis. Over the period evaluated, the added value recognised by partners mostly concerned ECHO’s field presence and staff expertise, its flexibility and capacity to adapt its approach to the changing context (EQ 5), and its proactiveness in the coordination of both donors and partners (EQ 14). In terms of coordination ECHO’s set-up, with coordination at Brussels level and whole-of-Syria coordination, allowed global oversight of the needs arising from the crisis, which is unusual. The evaluation also found evidence of ECHO’s added value in advocacy towards other donors and UN agencies, and in promoting good humanitarian principles. However stakeholders often considered that, despite significant efforts (in particular in contributing to the elaboration of the JHDF and being involved in discussion on Syria at Brussels and field levels, ECHO did not fully materialize its potential added value, for instance in terms of capacity to connect with other funding streams in the Delegations. Nevertheless, ECHO has contributed to ensuring the EU delegations were as much as possible mobilized on supporting the absorption capacity of host countries and their capacity to mitigate the impact of the refugee crisis on their own citizens.

Specific initiatives taken by ECHO to ensure it could provide added value

- **ECHO’s strategic decisions have provided opportunities for added value as compared to other donors.** In Lebanon, for instance, ECHO was the first humanitarian donor to open a permanent office at the beginning of the Syrian crisis. Its field presence then contributed to increase its ability to adapt its approach to the needs and their dynamics. Specifically the field presence allowed ECHO to engage early in field assessments, and thus to understand realities and identify gaps. However there is no evidence, either from interviews or strategic documents, that the strategy of being present on the field at the very beginning of the crisis was driven by an opportunity to create added value in terms of flexibility and adaptability to the context, or in terms of gap-filling, for instance.

- **ECHO has taken the opportunity to become informed of interventions by key donors, partners, and other EU services.** During preparation of the HIPs, ECHO
consulted the main actors (including those not financed by ECHO) in order to be able to understand their approaches and adjust its own response accordingly. ECHO also conducted close dialogue with Delegations (sometimes at the very beginning of the crisis such as in Lebanon), to work towards a coordinated strategy. Similarly, partners interviewed explained that ECHO built their interventions on interaction with other stakeholders in the field, which allowed ECHO to gather first-hand information. In this sense some interviewees explained that ECHO was “better informed” and more “field led” than many other donors.

- **ECHO has been proactive in donor coordination, with a view to avoiding or mitigating duplication of effort.** Over the evaluation period ECHO has taken action in different ways in this regard. ECHO has for instance managed to maintain close relationships with Delegations to maximize synergies and avoid overlaps. ECHO has also contributed to the creation of coordination mechanisms, and has sought to stay aware of activities planned or implemented by different actors through participation in these mechanisms. Regarding its partners, ECHO has pushed for a better coordination through, for instance, requesting partners to outline their engagement in coordination. (See the response to EQ 14, below, for further details of ECHO’s coordination activities.)

**Specific types of ECHO added value in the context of the Syrian crisis**

Stakeholders consider that ECHO has provided distinct added value as compared to other donors in terms of:

- **Field presence and expertise:** owing to their strong in-house capacity, ECHO representatives have been able to conduct dialogue and provide useful and high-quality monitoring feedback to partner staff. The ability of ECHO’s TA to move more easily in the field than many other donor representatives has also been highlighted, for instance in Lebanon. ECHO’s extensive coverage and feet-on-the-ground approach has led to a great capacity to adapt to new emerging needs, for example the influx of approximatively 200,000 people fleeing to Turkey from Kobane. This field presence and expertise was highlighted by many interviewees as a strong VA. They also underlined in this respect the regular exchanges and good communication they had with ECHO representatives.

- **A very operational donor with a good understanding of the realities in the field:** linked to the above, there was a broad consensus among interviewees that ECHO proved itself as a partner that was very much operation oriented, not bureaucratic, with high quality TA, who provided often good technical advice. In the same line, they explained that ECHO staff were very knowledgeable of the humanitarian world, with a good understanding of the constraints of implementing projects on the ground, open for discussion, and supportive to find solutions when problems arise.

- **Advocacy (cf. EQ 18):** the strong involvement of ECHO in debates in which it can have a voice, for instance the coordination debate and, to some extent, the definition of host country government response, was perceived by partners as a key added value of ECHO. This has been highlighted notably in Jordan. Furthermore ECHO’s reputation as one of the few principled donors helped ECHO to engage host country governments on issues such as protection. Further findings on advocacy are included under EQ18.
- **Coordination (cf. EQ 14):** the capacity of ECHO to participate in different coordination mechanisms, at donor level as well as operational level, has been seen as an added value by its partners. Feedback to EU Member States at the COHAFA has often been seen as useful. ECHO’s set up, with coordination at Brussels level and whole-of-Syria coordination, has been a critical element in its added value, as it made possible global oversight of the needs arising from the crisis. Over the evaluation period ECHO has also had the capacity to play an instrumental role in terms of coordinating and liaising with other donors and partners. One interviewee explained that “ECHO wishes to put everybody on the same line, making sure they work for the same cause”. EQ14 addresses how ECHO has been successful in coordinating its operations with the main actors in the context of the Syrian crisis.

- **Filling the gap:** the role of ECHO as a gap-filler has been recognized notably in Jordan and in Turkey, where ECHO has filled gaps by providing assistance in areas where no other actors have been present (e.g. Sirnak).

- **Flexibility (cf. EQ 5):** many interlocutors have mentioned that ECHO was flexible and easier in terms of funding requests as compared to other donors. They underlined that ECHO was very responsive, rapidly adapted to changing needs, etc. The flexibility of ECHO in adapting to the changing context of the crisis is addressed in the above EQ5.

- **Promoting good humanitarian practice:** over the evaluation period ECHO has been involved in various debates relating to humanitarian practices. In Syria for instance, ECHO has significantly contributed to make aid inside Syria more transparent and accountable, through significant efforts in improving remote-control mechanisms and related reporting. In Lebanon ECHO’s role in various debates, such as those on cash as a transfer modality and on the one-card, has been perceived by its partners as creative and fostering innovation. ECHO has also engaged with UN agencies on driving the cost-efficiency agenda and other quality-related issues, including a focus on better targeting which is seen as critical in a context where funds have to be ‘rationed’. More generally, several interviewees described ECHO as very much guided by humanitarian principles and needs based approaches.

- **However such emphasis on better targeting was not always perceived as positive or fully materialized by the stakeholders.** Indeed, ECHO has sometimes been perceived to be intrusive when trying to influence agencies during topical discussion or geographical orientation. This was highlighted notably by interlocutors in Iraq and in Jordan, where it was mentioned that ECHO sought to direct partners to some degree. In Lebanon, some partners perceived that ECHO had fuelled the debate on the coordination mandate between OCHA and UNHCR, which took the partners time and energy. In terms of materialization of value-added, the capacity of ECHO to connect with other funding streams in the Delegations is regarded as not fully explored. Yet both HQ and field interviews underlined the fact that the process is still in its infancy and that much remains to be done for this added value to fully materialize.
**EQ 7 – Urban Settings**

To what extent have the specific challenges of urban settings been taken into account in the design and implementation of ECHO-funded projects, both for refugees and host populations? To what extent have projects implemented in urban settings been successful? What particular challenges have been faced and what lessons have been learned?

The evaluation question seeks to understand the extent to which ECHO-funded projects have taken account of and adapted to specific challenges related to the fact that most of the affected areas and populations have urban or peri-urban characteristics. Cities in Syria have been the primary battlefields during the last few years. In neighbouring countries, the impact of the Syrian conflict has largely consisted in flow of refugees in or around cities. In Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey Syrian refugees have significantly increased the urban population of some cities. This has had a range of economic and social impacts, including an increased demand for housing, jobs and health services.⁵⁴

**EQ 7 – Urban Settings – Answer Box**

ECHO does not have clearly developed approaches for providing aid in urban contexts, and the humanitarian community as a whole is still developing good practice in this area. ECHO’s strategic response to the Syria crisis did not provide much guidance for partners seeking to adapt to urban challenges or seize the opportunities that they present. Many ECHO-funded proposals made brief mention of challenges to their projects resulting from delivery in an urban context, but in most cases it was more about learning-by-doing than conscious design.

Despite the absence of an overarching strategic approach to urban response, some ECHO partners developed specific approaches to tackle urban challenges on a case-by-case basis. But key challenges remain regarding engagement with municipal authorities and the development of an “urban approach” to capitalise on the growing lessons learned on this issue rather than simply reacting to obstacles as they arise.

Did ECHO and its partner agencies employ a specific approach to embed urban issues within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis?

The humanitarian community as a whole is still in the early phases of developing guidelines and best practice for providing humanitarian aid in urban settings. Neither ECHO nor its partners have clearly developed approaches for providing aid in urban contexts. ECHO’s strategic response to the Syria crisis did not provide much guidance for partners seeking to adapt to urban challenges or seize the opportunities that they present.

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⁵⁴ See, for example, UNHCR (2013) Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing – Background papers for the High Level Segment. UNHCR.
The evaluation period 2012-2014 saw a considerable growth in attention across the international humanitarian community towards the challenges that increased global urbanization presents for humanitarian aid response:

- UNHCR’s first ‘Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas’ was published only 3 years prior to the evaluation period, in 2009. The IASC published its first action plan for meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas as recently as 2011, whilst the ICRC published its first collection of lessons learned regarding urban response to protracted conflict in 2015.
- In the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, IRC and ALNAP (inter alia) have both published early attempts at lessons learned in this area. But importantly, as ALNAP (2014) notes, “this will be a steep learning curve…currently, urban humanitarian response appears to be a topic with many unanswered questions, and where many lessons have not been tested in a wide variety of contexts.”
- Much of the learning in this area has been informed by the results of the Syria response itself. This is somewhat natural given the high urbanization of the region and the fact that a sizeable majority of the refugee population resides in non-camp settings, often (though not exclusively) dispersed across in urban and peri-urban areas. Nevertheless, assessment of ECHO’s strategic response to the urban challenge in the Syria crisis needs to be made against the background of this early-phase learning cycle.
- Some key lessons have started to emerge on this issue over recent years, including:
  - the importance of local/municipal authority engagement in any response;
  - the difficulty of profiling needs in urban contexts and of distinguishing between displaced populations and the urban poor;
  - the difficulty of distinguishing between short-term response and longer-term development and resilience-building activities;
  - the potential for using “area-based” approaches that address cross-sectoral needs of a displaced population and host community in a distinct geographical zone;
  - the potential for using cash-based programming in urban areas and working with local markets and private-sector initiatives;
  - the importance of “urbanizing” sectoral interventions to meet the specific needs arising from urban settings re. shelter, WASH, protection and health programming.

ECHO’s global policy guidelines do not include specific consideration of the challenges of urban response:

- Given the international policy context outlined above, it is perhaps not surprising that ECHO does not currently have a global policy approach towards the provision of humanitarian aid in urban contexts. This contrasts to the case of protection where, as explained under EQ8 of this report, clear guidelines exist governing ECHO’s funding approach to protection issues.
- It is noteworthy, therefore, that ECHO staff interviewed by the evaluation team argued that there is a clear need for an urban policy within ECHO. Stakeholders cited the need

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for clear and coherent strategic response to the range of challenges presented by urban response. This view is also reflected by ECHO strategy papers for the Syria response, which pointed to the need for a long-term strategy – coordinated with other partners – to tackle the challenge posed by large and ongoing urban refugee populations (e.g. ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91000, p.21).

Urban challenges were not systematically integrated in the ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) for the Syria crisis:

- ECHO’s HIPs over the period 2012-2014 demonstrate awareness of the scale of the urban refugee crisis in countries neighbouring Syria. But consideration of specific urban response challenges (or opportunities) is very limited. Key issues covered by the HIPs include the extent of urban violence inside Syria, the difficulty of profiling and registering urban refugees, and the increased burden placed by urban refugee populations on host country public services. But the HIPs make no mention of many of the most widely recognised challenges to providing aid in urban contexts (see list above) nor do they explicitly encourage partners to “urbanise” sectoral programming or to engage with local markets or municipal plans.

- Finally, despite the scale and extent of the urban challenge in this crisis, the ECHO responses and expected results envisaged in the HIPs do not systematically consider the needs of the displaced in urban areas, nor provide any strategic guidance on approaches to tackle the challenges of providing aid in this context.

ECHO partners were not aware of ECHO taking a strategic approach towards urban response:

- ECHO-funded partners operating in urban contexts in countries neighbouring Syria were not aware of ECHO’s strategic approach to urban policy. This contrasts with other issues such as cash-based programming and, latterly, remote management modalities, for which most partners were well aware of ECHO’s policy position.

- Those partners that did actively adapt their programming to the urban context stated that they received limited guidance or consultation on this point from ECHO. The format of the ECHO funding proposal system (based on the single form) to some extent presented an obstacle to an in-depth discussion of how a partner has tailored their response to the urban context. But partners also cited a lack of discussion of this point with ECHO field staff and monitoring missions.

- Review of partner single forms confirmed that only limited discussion of how projects would be tailored to the urban context was provided by partners in their funding proposals.
Did the design of ECHO-funded projects identify the major challenges that exist in urban settings in order to design interventions appropriate to these specific situations?

Many ECHO-funded proposals made brief mention of challenges to their projects resulting from delivery in an urban context, but in most cases it was more about learning-by-doing than conscious design:

- Many partners made reference to urban challenges in project designs, although the depth of analysis varied considerably between projects. Of the 40 project proposals reviewed by the evaluation team (which covered all four neighbouring countries and Syria), 28 included some consideration of urban challenges in the needs assessment.
- Examples of urban challenges identified already at the design stage include: the scale of the urban refugee population and the difficulty of registering and profiling refugees living in urban areas; shelter and winterisation challenges for refugees dispersed across urban environments and using substandard housing and other forms of informal shelter; gaps in protection referral mechanisms for refugees living in urban areas; lack of access to basic services for unregistered displaced persons.
- But only rarely did ECHO partners operating in urban settings identify engagement with municipal authorities and institutions as an area of priority. This runs contrary to lessons learned in the evolving literature on this subject (see above). Field interviews by the evaluation team suggested that this created a lack of understanding on the part of municipal actors regarding the activities of many of ECHO’s partners in the field. This has the potential to create difficulties when partners seek to move towards transition away from provision of services in the future.
- However, regardless of whether or not ECHO partners had pre-identified urban challenges in their proposals, most partners did identify such challenges iteratively throughout implementation. This suggests that, in line with the absence of global strategies on this issue outlined above, partners were undergoing a learning process during the evaluation period.

Throughout implementation, were ECHO-funded projects able to tackle the specific challenges of urban response and coordinate properly with local authorities, urban services and institutions (municipalities), in line with the good practices elaborated by the sector?

Despite the absence of an overarching strategic approach to urban response, and the fact that the humanitarian sector as a whole was still at the early-phase of the learning process on this issue during the evaluation period, many ECHO partners developed specific approaches to tackle urban challenges on a case-by-case basis:

- The use of unconditional cash transfers to meet the basic needs of refugees arriving in some of Syria’s neighbouring countries proved to be effective in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria. Banking systems and electronic transfer mechanisms are well established in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and the Kurdish Region of Iraq, and markets are able to supply a diversity of goods and services to meet the most basic needs of refugees at efficient prices. Many ECHO partners used this modality to
provide cash amounts indexed against a minimum expenditure basket, thereby allowing refugees to purchase goods and services across a range of sectors.

- Establishment of community centres for outreach, referral, community cohesion and follow-up: some partners sought to establish community spaces for both refugees and host community members. This introduced an element of the area-based approach highlighted in the urban response literature cited above. Community centres allowed ECHO partners to follow up casework for individual refugees and family units, establish a referral mechanisms for protection concerns, assist with registration and documentation issues, and improve social cohesion by bringing both refugee and host communities together.

- Rehabilitation of urban housing units: some ECHO partners in both Jordan and Lebanon conducted rehabilitation work on unfinished or substandard housing units in order to increase shelter supply. In some cases, this work was carried out to complete unfinished privately-owned properties, in exchange for a period of low or zero rent for refugee families. If carried out on a larger scale, this type of project has the potential to reduce the pressure on housing demand that large urban refugee populations can create. It should be noted that these projects proved difficult to implement in some cases, particularly regarding negotiation with property owners regarding rental prices and tenancy periods.

- One persistent weakness in the urban response was the limited engagement with municipal institutions and authorities. Of the 33 projects in neighbouring countries reviewed by the evaluation team, only 7 partnered with municipal authorities. Whilst some partners actively sought municipal engagement, including on issues of targeting and profiling in some instances, many had only very limited engagement. One municipal authority in Jordan, visited by the evaluation team, argued that they had very limited input to the activities of ECHO partners in their district, creating a sense of disconnect regarding the needs of host communities and limited scope for transition towards community ownership of projects in the future.
EQ 8 – Protection

How and to what extent has protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?

Syria’s humanitarian crisis is often described as the largest protection-related crisis in the world. Atrocities have been committed on a large scale, with more than 200,000 people killed between the start of the conflict in 2011 and August 2015. IHL violations are committed by all sides, including the use of sieges as a weapon of war, indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas, targeting of schools, hospitals, water networks and places of worship; and the protection needs of refugee populations have been large. In that context ECHO made significant efforts to support financially and through advocacy the mandated and non-mandated agencies in response to the numerous protection challenges.

The evaluation question seeks to understand the extent to which ECHO-funded projects have taken account of protection needs and been effective in meeting them. The crisis has created multiple protection concerns. The most severe concerns were present inside Syria, where access restricts the provision of protection services to the most vulnerable, and in neighbouring countries, where specific concerns persist.

EQ 8 – Protection – Answer Box

ECHO has a clearly defined approach to both funding protection activities and embedding protection as a cross-cutting issue, as outlined in its global policy framework and strategy papers for the Syria response 2012-2014. ECHO partners consistently appreciate the degree of engagement and guidance provided by ECHO field staff on questions of protection risks both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. Many partners rate ECHO as having been one of the most engaged donors on this issue – particularly towards the end of the evaluation period and beyond (2014-2016).

Review of ECHO-funded operations over the period demonstrates that ECHO’s own protection funding guidelines have been respected by the funding decisions made. Moreover, project proposals have, on the whole, provided reasonably detailed assessments of protection risks for the target population, although disaggregation by population sector remains limited.

However, only limited funding amounts have been channeled towards protection-specific activities over the period. This must be understood in terms of the limited capacity of ECHO partners to provide protection-specific programmes, most notably during the first phase of the crisis over the evaluation period 2012-2014. In response, ECHO field staff have encouraged and supported partners to embed protection in their programmes, whilst supporting partners who integrate protection as a cross-cutting issue in activities targeting other areas of need. Whilst many examples exist of successful ECHO-funded projects that specifically targeted protection needs (including registration and access to documentation in neighbouring countries, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence), only limited examples of concrete protection activities have been found relating to activities that treated protection as a cross-cutting theme.

59 ICRC, UNHCR, UNWRA, UNICEF.
60 UNFPA, DRC, NRC, IRC; etc.
Did ECHO employ a specific approach to funding protection activities and embedding protection concerns within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis?

*ECHO has a clearly defined approach to both funding protection activities and embedding protection as a cross-cutting issue, as outlined in its global policy framework, Humanitarian Implementation Plans for the Syria response over the period 2012-2014, and guidance provided to partners from ECHO field staff.*

ECHO’s global policy framework outlines a specific approach to funding protection activities and embedding protection concerns across ECHO-funded operations:

- ECHO (2009) Humanitarian Protection Funding Guidelines (hereafter, the “Protection Funding Guidelines”) outlines ECHO’s approach to funding protection activities worldwide. The following table outlines the what, who and how of ECHO’s approach to protection:

**Box 2 – ECHO Protection Funding Guidelines – What, Who and How**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of activity funded:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-structural activities (i.e. excluding long-term capacity building of institutions) aimed at reducing the risk for and mitigating the impact on individuals or groups of human-generated violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse. In practice, this means that ECHO “may finance responsive as well as remedial actions, but will, in principle, exclude the environment-building actions.” (ECHO (2009), p. 6).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of partner:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only those partners with added value and recognized experience in protection:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ ICRC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ UNHCR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ UNICEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Other specialized partners (UN agencies, RCM, NGOs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic conditions for effective protection programming:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only those activities that satisfy the following criteria should be funded:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Prior conduct of in-depth context analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Assurance of proper resourcing with experience staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Involvement of the community’s own self-protection mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Adoption of clear and conscious protection strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Review of ECHO-funded project proposals demonstrates that these conditions were largely fulfilled by ECHO’s protection activities over the evaluation period:
  - Partners submitting proposals for protection-specific activities invariably included an assessment of protection needs in the project needs assessment. The needs assessments were moreover largely in line with ECHO’s own assessment of

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*61 ECHO (2009) Humanitarian Protection: DG ECHO’s funding guidelines. ECHO.*
EVALUATION OF ECHO’S RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

- Protection needs per country per year (see HIP analysis below) and aligned to needs outlined under UN response plans.
- ECHO funded protection-oriented activities primarily through UN agencies, ICRC and INGOs with previous experience of conducting protection activities, significant staff resources and either their own protection strategies/SOPs (e.g. ICRC) or demonstrated alignment with strategies of key actors in-country, such as UNHCR.
- The majority of ECHO partners that conducted protection activities took reasonable account of community self-protection mechanisms in the design of their protection activities. Although this was not systematically the case in projects reviewed by the evaluation team.

- In addition to outlining the conditions under which ECHO funds protection-specific activities, and in accordance with commitments of EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid to the “do no harm” principle, the ECHO Protection Funding Guidelines also require that ECHO partners “do everything possible, within their capacities, to mitigate the effects of and prevent abuses and mainstream protection concerns in each of their actions”.

In the Syria response, ECHO’s HIPs provided partners with strategic direction and encouragement to embed protection concerns:

- ECHO partners interviewed (remotely) inside Syria and also in neighbouring countries noted the clear and growing emphasis on protection needs in ECHO’s HIPs towards the end of the evaluation period and extending into 2015 and 2016.
- Each of the HIPs for Syria over the period 2012-2014 (and moreover 2015) presented country-specific protection needs and proposed appropriate areas of intervention for ECHO-funded operations in response. The following table synthesizes the coverage of protection needs and responses in the HIPs over the evaluation period (2012-2014) and moreover in 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIPs</th>
<th>Protection risks identified</th>
<th>Proposed ECHO response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-2014</td>
<td>Host community tensions</td>
<td>ECHO monitoring tensions with host communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People with specific vulnerabilities</td>
<td>Protection of most vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>GBV activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictive border controls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015*</td>
<td>Restrictive border controls</td>
<td>Support to registration capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect of Refugee Law,</td>
<td>Counseling and legal services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>registration and legal status</td>
<td>Protection of most vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SGBV and child protection</td>
<td>SGBV activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 Namely the discharged wounded, women, elderly, people with disabilities and children.
65 2015 lies outside the scope of the evaluation, but is included in this table to demonstrate the adaptation of ECHO to the evolving crisis.
**EVALUATION OF ECHO'S RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014**

**HIPs | Protection risks identified | Proposed ECHO response**
--- | --- | ---
**Jordan**
2012-2014 | ▪ Respect of Refugee Law for Palestinians from Syria  
▪ GBV, child labour and early marriage | ▪ Protection of people fleeing Syria, including Palestinians  
▪ Psychosocial support for children  
▪ Prevention and assistance to victims of GBV
2015 | ▪ Access to documentation and freedom of movement  
▪ Early marriage and child labour  
▪ SGBV | ▪ Access to documentation and freedom of movement  
▪ SGBV

**Iraq**
2012-2014 | ▪ Restrictive border controls | ▪ TA to support camp management, registration, returns and protection

**Turkey**
2012-2014 | ▪ Restrictive border controls  
▪ Registration and legal status  
▪ GBV  
▪ Negative coping strategies | ▪ TA to support camp management, registration, returns and protection  
▪ Documentation of urban refugee needs
2015 | ▪ Safe access to Turkish territory  
▪ Psychological trauma  
▪ SGBV  
▪ Early marriage, child labour  
▪ Unaccompanied children | ▪ ECHO advocacy for comprehensive registration and protection system  
▪ Support for out-of-camp community-based protection systems

**Syria**
2012-2014 | ▪ IHL and human rights violations  
▪ Psychological trauma  
▪ Access to humanitarian assistance  
▪ SGBV | ▪ Protection of civilians affected by conflict, the sick and wounded  
▪ Protection of medical missions  
▪ IHL advocacy  
▪ Assistance to victims of GBV  
▪ Mental health and psychosocial services
2015 | ▪ IHL and human rights violations  
▪ Access to humanitarian assistance | ▪ Access to humanitarian assistance

**ECHO field staff encouraged and supported partners to embed protection in their programmes:**
- Interviews with ECHO partners (both mandated organisations such as UNHCR and non-mandated INGOs) inside Syria and in neighbouring countries confirmed a high level of appreciation for the strategic guidance that ECHO TAs provided regarding protection concerns for the refugee population. The continuing support for protection activities in 2015 and 2016 funding cycles was also noted as a strength of ECHO’s approach.
- Partners cited the strength of engagement with ECHO TAs and the ECHO global protection advisor, who frequently encouraged them to integrate protection concerns as a cross-cutting issue in their interventions, or provided guidance and support regarding
EVALUATION OF ECHO’S RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

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protection-specific activities that fell under the scope of the areas of country-specific protection concerns outlined in the HIPs (see table above).

- ECHO partners based inside Syria in particular highlighted the strength of ECHO’s engagement on protection. Examples of successful integration of protection concerns in line with ECHO encouragement included:
  - The integration of protection when allocating families to shared-housing units: by insisting that ECHO partners ensure, insofar as possible, that family groups are able to stay together in temporary housing, ECHO helped to reduce the protection risks for internally displaced persons.
  - Nuancing the targeting approach in conflict zones: ECHO worked with its partners to develop context-sensitive targeting approaches. This encouraged partners to take account of local dynamics within conflict zones in order to avoid doing harm, and helped ensure protection of vulnerable groups by targeting distributions on the elderly or female-headed households.
  - Improving protection referral mechanisms of partners that conduct non-protection oriented activities, including local partners conducting cross-border operations inside Syria.

Did the design of ECHO-funded projects identify and address the major protection risks present for people in need?

The majority of ECHO-funded projects identified major protection risks in their needs analysis, but only very few sought to address these needs as a principle objective. A large number of ECHO-funded projects sought to tackle protection as a cross-cutting issue, but with only limited concrete action during implementation.

Most ECHO-funded projects identified the major protection risks present in each country, with broad alignment to the priority protection needs identified by ECHO, UN and donor-funded analyses, but limited disaggregation by population segment:

- Review of the SingleForms for ECHO-funded operations from 2012-2014 shows good coverage of protection concerns in their needs assessments: 27 out of the 40 project needs assessments reviewed by the evaluation team included explicit consideration of protection needs. This included protection-oriented activities, those that mainstreamed protection in other areas, and those that did not conduct protection-related activities.
- Partners did identify a range of different protection needs (including, e.g. SGBV, protection of children, application of refugee law), with an appropriate degree of variance in frequency between countries. Notably, the needs identified were broadly in line with those noted in ECHO’s HIPs and UN response plans and partner-funded studies.66
- Protection needs were not systematically disambiguated between population segments (e.g. the elderly, disabled, children). Whilst the SingleForm now requires all partners to identify target groups by population segment, only some proposals explicitly broke down protection concerns on this basis.
- Most of the ECHO-funded programmes implemented inside Syria are based on an assessment of the situation of the Syrian population at large and of the dangers that all Syrians face. Most of these programmes attempt to respond to the threats faced, but the

66 See, for example, NRC (2016) Drivers of Despair: refugee protection failures in Jordan and Lebanon. NRC.
nature of the ongoing warfare inside Syria limits the amount that can be done in the area of security and safety of beneficiaries.

- All ECHO SingleForms include a specific section requiring partners to explain the extent to which protection (as well as other areas) will be mainstreamed in their project. Partners have on the whole completed this section with only brief remarks.

Protection needs were addressed as a primary objective by a comparatively small share of ECHO-funded operations:
- As a primary objective, protection was the second smallest area of intervention for ECHO over 2012-2014, second only to coordination.

**Figure 18 – Sector breakdown of ECHO-funded operations 2012-2014**

- Likewise, at project level, only 5% (2 out of the 40) project designs reviewed by the evaluation team sought to tackle protection needs as a principle objective.
- Examples of activities conducted by partners specifically targeting protection as a principle objective included:
  - Providing sexual and gender-based violence support and prevention mechanisms through INGOs such as IRC in Jordan and other neighbouring countries.
  - Helping refugees obtain official documentation in neighbouring countries: In Lebanon and Jordan, for instance, authorities increased restrictions on entry visas and residency permits over the evaluation period. In Jordan, ECHO funded UNHCR’s work to develop innovative approaches such as biometric registration, in order to overcome the registration backlog. ECHO also funded DRC to address barriers to documentation for refugees in the context of the Government of Jordan’s policy shift to providing healthcare only for registered refugees. In Lebanon, UNHCR and to a lesser extent ICRC have, with ECHO support,

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67 See section 2.4 on ECHO’s response to the crisis.
provided undocumented refugees with legal assistance and contact whilst in custody.

A significant number of ECHO-funded activities included protection activities as a cross-cutting theme, but with only limited concrete changes to programming being seen on the ground:

- Approximately half (21) of the 40 ECHO-funded SingleForms reviewed by the evaluation team included protection-related activities and/or intended results. The majority of these were included primarily as cross-cutting issues, with only 9 projects out of the 40 having protection-related objectives as such. Examples of partners integrating protection concerns as a cross-cutting issue include WFP in Turkey seeking to avoid food distributions to large crowds and provided doorstep delivery for disabled persons.
- However, verified instances of projects integrating protection concerns as a cross-cutting issue during implementation are limited. Notably, some ECHO field staff felt that partners often identified protection risks at the project design stage, and made commitments to address them as a cross-cutting issue, but made no concrete changes during implementation to address these risks. This view was supported by the evaluation team’s findings from field visits to neighbouring countries.
- ECHO’s own mission to Syria in November 2014 concluded that there was a need to increase the focus on protection inside Syria including by: taking a more proactive approach to protection (both on the ground and at advocacy level); increasing the focus on protection and safety of aid workers; addressing issues such as access to neighbouring countries, restrictive internal policies and forced repatriation.
EQ 9 – Remote Management

In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?

Within ECHO, remote management is defined as “an operational approach used to provide relief in situations where humanitarian access to disaster-affected populations is limited”, which typically involves transfer of operational responsibilities from international agencies to national or local partners. (European Commission, Instruction note for ECHO staff on Remote Management, 2013). Remote management carries several risks, and is treated by ECHO as a last resort. But ECHO’s own guidance documents and good practice are designed to help mitigate these risks. This Evaluation Question aims to assess the extent to which ECHO has followed its own guidance documents when funding remotely managed operations inside Syria, and the extent to which it was successful in mitigating the key risks.

EQ 9 – Remote Management – Answer Box

ECHO’s decision to support remote management operations inside AOG-controlled areas of Syria, whilst simultaneously acting to mitigate the risks of doing so, enabled it to provide effective life-saving assistance to some of the most vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas. Taken in tandem with ECHO’s assistance inside government-held areas, its engagement with remote management operations allowed ECHO to provide impartial and needs-based assistance under difficult circumstances.

The ECHO Note on remote management is still seen by many partners as leading the policy agenda on this issue. A review of ECHO-funded operations inside Syria suggests that the Instruction Note has been widely followed by all partners. Some actors, however, question the continuing wisdom of the Note’s restriction of remote management operations to direct life-saving aid, particularly in the context of a protracted crisis in areas where direct management remains impossible. Many activities undertaken are often more of a “life protection” than a “direct life-saving” nature.

As regards the success of ECHO’s approach to mitigating the risks of remote management, the indications are that a combination of risk mitigation measures put in place by both ECHO and its partners has succeeded in minimising the potential risks. This includes ensuring security for local partners, maintaining quality, relevant aid, and compliance with humanitarian principles.

Did ECHO apply its own Instruction Note on Remote Management when funding remote management operations?

The Instruction Note for ECHO staff on Remote Management affirms ECHO’s willingness to engage in Remote Management as a last resort. It is still seen by many partners as leading the policy agenda on this issue, viz.:

- ECHO finalised its Instruction Note for ECHO staff on Remote Management in early 2013, prior to signature of the majority of ECHO-funded cross-border operations inside
Syria. ECHO partners viewed the Note as being at the forefront of donor policy guidance on this issue.

- The Instruction Note outlines ECHO’s policy on the use of remote management (RM) as a last resort and provided guidance on when and how to conduct RM operations and what pitfalls to avoid. In particular it provides seven criteria to be met by a project proposal before ECHO staff can consider funding a remote management operation:
  1. **Access constraints** must be such that they preclude direct management
  2. **Acceptance-building** measures must be included where possible; the action must focus on life-saving action
  3. **Life-saving aid**: the operation must focus on the delivery of life-saving aid
  4. **Security**: it must be possible for the operation to be implemented without risking the lives of implementing staff
  5. **Needs assessment**: the source must be credible
  6. **Staff capacity**: local staff must be adequately qualified and
  7. **Monitoring**: arrangements must be adapted to remote management.

- ECHO partners highly appreciated the Instruction Note, and the process of its development:
  - Telephone interviews with partners conducting remote management operations cited the collaborative process of the Instruction Note’s development as particularly helpful in terms of understanding ECHO’s policy direction on remote management;
  - Partners cited the Instruction Note itself as a useful addition to their own policy approaches on this issue, as well as highlighting broad-based agreement with the approach taken therein.

**Review of ECHO-funded operations inside Syria suggests that the Instruction Note has been widely followed:**

- There was a high level of familiarity with the Instruction Note amongst ECHO partners. Telephone interviews indicate that ECHO partners operating inside Syria are very familiar with the Instruction Note, its content and principles. All partners confirmed that ECHO’s dissemination of the Instruction Note in 2013 had been well-received, with several stating that this was the first clear policy guidance they had received from a major donor on this issue.
- All those partners interviewed who conducted remote management operations saw the Note as a key reference point during the project design phase. Partners also reaffirmed that ECHO staff required each proposal to demonstrate alignment with the principles of the Note before agreeing funding.
- ECHO-funded cross-border operations inside Syria showed strong alignment with the Instruction Note guidance, *viz.:
  1. **Access constraints**: all remote management operations reviewed were conducted in areas where access constraints precluded direct management, most prominently, in north-western Syria. In some cases in north-eastern Syria, for example, ECHO partners were able to demonstrate the safety of operating cross-border operations from Iraq using a direct management modality and local presence in Kurdish-held zones.
2. **Acceptance-building measures**: integration of acceptance-building measures were seen in several instances. Most often this was based around the selection of local partners with legitimate authority within the community to deliver assistance.

4. **Security**: specific measures were taken by ECHO partners to ensure the security of local staff delivering aid inside Syria. Such measures included the conduct of security briefings and training of local staff, an emphasis on the primacy of security for aid workers, and the allocation of resources for emergency evacuation or medical assistance.

5. **Needs assessments**: efforts to increase the robustness of needs assessments focused on triangulation of data from secondary and primary sources, including traders, refugees in neighbouring countries, and beneficiary feedback mechanisms.

6. **Staff capacity**: several ECHO partners conducted training sessions for new local partners, covering *inter alia* the conduct of principled humanitarian aid. While no examples of ECHO partners seconding staff to local partner organisations were observed, one instance was seen of an ECHO partner housing the staff of a local organisation in their own offices in neighbouring countries, allowing closer cooperation and capitalisation opportunities.

7. **Monitoring**: monitoring mechanisms were adapted according to ECHO’s amendment of its monitoring requirements for remote management operations (see EQ 12, below).

In the context of an ongoing protracted crisis inside Syria, the restriction of support to life-saving aid requires flexible application:

- The ECHO Guidelines’ restriction of remote management operations to direct life-saving aid was questioned by several ECHO partners conducting operations inside Syria. In reality, ECHO partners provided a mixture of life-saving and “life-sustaining” activities, such as medium-term food storage and distribution services in areas such as Aleppo.
- In addition to this, many ECHO partners noted that, in addition to their ECHO-funded operations, they are simultaneously providing livelihoods and resilience programmes through remote management modalities with funding from other donors. The need for such operations in some areas of Syria is clear, given the protracted nature of the crisis.
- As the crisis continues in 2016 and beyond, some partners encouraged flexibility in the future. Whilst the security risks associated with remote management are real, and the mitigation measures outlined below continue to be necessary, the long-term effects of restricting aid to directly life-saving activities are not negligible.

**Were the potential risks of remote management successfully mitigated?**

**ECHO’s support to remote management operations inside Syria proved an effective and much-needed response to the security risks present in AOG-controlled areas of Syria:**

- The remote management operations funded by ECHO were largely successful in providing life-saving assistance to those in need. The information from ECHO partner beneficiary feedback mechanisms suggest that the delivery of assistance and the targeting of beneficiaries was both impartial and effective.
Both ECHO partners and other donors argued that ECHO’s use of remote management allowed ECHO to provide impartial humanitarian assistance by operating inside AOG-controlled areas, whilst mitigating the risks of doing so (see below). The decision to provide assistance in this way allowed ECHO to operate in hard-to-reach areas of Syria, thereby providing a needs-based humanitarian response in difficult circumstances.

ECHO identified the key potential risks of conducting remote management operations, viz.:

- **Security risk transfers**: the transfer of security risks from international to local staff in low security contexts.
- **Low quality/relevance of operations**: the risk that remotely-managed operations do not meet the same quality standards as directly-managed operations, owing to the inherent difficulty of managing operations from remote locations.
- **Non-compliance with humanitarian principles or impartial needs assessments**: the risk that local partners, potentially new to humanitarian action, may not deliver aid in accordance with the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. This is of particular importance in the conduct of needs assessments by local partners when ECHO’s direct contracting partner is unable to verify needs assessments through direct observation on location.
- **The “remote management trap”**: the risk that, once remote management is adopted, it becomes difficult to reverse the process and revert to direct management when the circumstances allow it.

Both ECHO and its partners undertook a range of measures to mitigate these risks. The following table outlines the principle measures undertaken:
Table 8 – Remote management risk mitigation measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>ECHO mitigation measures</th>
<th>Partner mitigation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security risk transfer</td>
<td>▪ Inclusion of local staff risks in monitoring requirements</td>
<td>▪ Close cooperation and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Clarity on security protocol</td>
<td>▪ Evaluation capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low quality/relevance</td>
<td>▪ Specific monitoring requirements for RM operations (see EQ12)</td>
<td>▪ Local partner selection and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Partner selection, training, pools</td>
<td>▪ Beneficiary feedback (hotlines, social media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian principles / impartial needs assessments</td>
<td>▪ Inclusion of specific criteria on impartiality of needs assessments in the Instruction Note on Remote Management.</td>
<td>▪ Triangulation of partner needs assessments with primary sources (IDPs, traders, beneficiaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM Trap</td>
<td>▪ Specific actions taken to ensure that ECHO and its partners retain the capacity to revert to direct management when context permits.</td>
<td>▪ No action. Not viewed as relevant in Syria by ECHO partners. Syrian NGOs have a different view and regard this issue with greater concern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security considerations have made it impossible for the evaluators to directly assess the extent to which these risks have been mitigated on the ground in Syria. As a proxy, telephone interviews with ECHO partners conducting operations inside Syria were carried out during the data collection phase. The results of these interviews indicate that the combination of ECHO and ECHO partner measures has been broadly successful:

- **Security risk transfer**: no significant security incidents were reported affecting local partner staff inside Syria over the period 2012-2014.

- **Low quality/relevance**: the primary concerns have been around the quality of monitoring reports on operations conducted using remote management, although telephone interviews suggest that this has improved over the evaluation period. But ECHO partners did not view the relevance of operations or overall quality of implementation as particularly problematic for the remote management operations conducted.

- **Humanitarian principles / impartial needs assessments**: overall ECHO partners reported that their local implementing partners had respected humanitarian principles in the delivery of aid. One example was cited of a local partner travelling with military personnel during delivery, but the feedback mechanisms were such that the ECHO partner was able to identify and tackle the problem immediately.

- **Remote management trap**: none of the ECHO partners interviewed in this evaluation saw this as a relevant risk in the Syrian context. The ongoing security concerns preclude expatriate presence in large parts of Northern Syria and are expected to do so for the foreseeable future. It is therefore not a situation in which switching back to direct management looks possible. Moreover, for some Syrian organisations operating as local partners for international organisations, the fear is not that ECHO partners will become trapped in a remote management approach. But rather that they will in fact downgrade the role of local partners as soon as the security situation improves, thereby casting aside the bank of experience built up by these local partners from operating in very dangerous contexts.
EQ 10 – Use of Cash and Vouchers

In cases of use of Cash and Vouchers, to what extent has this been based on a proper analysis of the context, and how successful has it been?

This question seeks to understand the extent to which the choice of transfer modalities – at both strategic and operational levels – was grounded in a contextual analysis. Specific attention is placed on the use of vouchers and cash transfers. Second, the question calls for an evaluation of the effectiveness of cash transfers and vouchers in the context of the Syrian crisis.

EQ 10 – Use of Cash and Vouchers – Answer Box

The ECHO strategy for Syria presented in the HIPs considers the use of a range of transfer modalities. A core element is the goal of establishing a coordinated approach to Multi-Purpose Cash Transfers. However the strategy is nuanced according to the context of each country. This transfer modality strategy in the Syria response is supported by general evidence on the effectiveness of cash transfers and a local analysis of context.

However, the ECHO strategy for addressing system-level constraints on the use of cash transfers is poorly developed; in particular field-level and HQ-level approaches are insufficiently articulated. ECHO strategies in the region also fail to examine the potential synergies and linkages of humanitarian cash transfers to national social transfer systems.

At operational level most partners comply with the over-arching ECHO policy by supporting funding applications with a context analysis justifying the proposed transfer modality. However, there is a perception that ECHO is strongly ‘pro cash’ – rather than ‘modality neutral’ – and may not be sufficiently open to arguments for alternative transfer modalities.

The evidence suggest that – where feasible and appropriate – ECHO-funded cash transfers are generally a more efficient and effective transfer mechanism than vouchers or in-kind. Vouchers are generally perceived as less effective than cash transfers, but preferable to in-kind distributions. Based on collective experience there has been a gradual convergence towards the use of cash transfers over time in the region. But ultimately effectiveness depends more than the choice of modality, and critically on the quality of project design and implementation.

Did the ECHO strategy for Syria consider the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities?

The ECHO HIPs make specific mention of the scope for using a range of transfer modalities nuanced according to the context.

- The HIPs promote a trend in ECHO support from in-kind transfers to vouchers and then cash transfers, nuanced to the differing contexts and needs. The 2013 HIP recommends ‘exploring the use of transfers’ in Lebanon and ‘an important cash
component’ in Jordan, where the environment is most conducive to the use of cash. The 2014 HIP makes stronger references to the use of cash including ‘an evolution of this approach to include all commodities (food and non-food) in a system which could be articulated around cash’ in Lebanon.

- In Turkey and Iraq the HIP concentrates on use of vouchers. This is in line with the constraints imposed by Government policy in Turkey (although this is slowly being relaxed and agencies are now moving towards exploring the use of cash transfers for urban refugees) and the limited financial infrastructure in Iraq.
- For responses inside Syria the HIPs stress the need to manage risks ‘Partners that opt to implement “cash transfer” modalities should present a detailed description of market capacities and risk management/control approaches to be implemented in both government and non-government held areas’.

The transfer modality strategy in the Syrian response is supported by general evidence on the effectiveness of cash transfers and a local context analysis, viz.

- The Syrian crisis is taking place in a middle-income region with relatively sophisticated economies and high levels of urbanization. Consumption patterns have been based on cash for decades. Subject to local market analysis (e.g. impact of cash aid on inflation, quantity and quality of commodities available, etc.), the provision of humanitarian aid through cash and vouchers is clearly one option available to donors in the region.
- The goal of moving towards increased use of coordinated cash transfers is broadly in line with evidence on the efficiency and effectiveness gains of cash transfers vis-à-vis both vouchers and in-kind transfers (see following section), as well as the beneficiary preferences transmitted to the team during the course of the evaluation.
- Cash transfers are appropriately referenced in the HIPs as potentially relevant for meeting needs in a range of sectors including shelter, NFIs, winterization kits, food assistance and WASH.
- The use of cash transfers is presented in the HIPS as part of the overall response strategy alongside in-kind transfers and vouchers. All stakeholders agree on the need for maintaining the capacity to deliver a variety of (complementary) transfer modalities according to the needs and local context.

The ECHO strategy for addressing system level constraints on the use of cash transfers is poorly developed, with weak articulation between field and HQ level advocacy efforts

- A range of significant policy, institutional, infrastructural and technical constraints inhibit wider uptake of cash transfers. This includes host government policy, partner mandates, limited access to markets and financial services, and greater donor alignment. These constraints are particularly acute with regard to the introduction of a Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer (MPCT).
- While the ECHO strategy focuses on encouraging partners to use cash transfers, there is limited strategic analysis and planning for directly addressing the constraints which inhibit greater roll-out of cash transfers. For example most UN agencies respond to clearly-defined sectoral mandates which do not align easily with the use of unconditional cash grants. UN agencies noted that in the absence of a parallel global dialogue and coherent donor positioning, it was hard to capitalize on the opportunities offered by ECHO to expand cash programming.
- ECHO is aligned with DFID on the greater use of cash transfers, but other donors maintain policy reservations on widespread use of cash transfers. Without broad donor agreement it will be hard to realize the use of MPCTs on a large scale.

ECHO’s has made some movement towards linking cash transfers with national social transfer systems, but no concrete changes in ECHO’s strategy were visible over the evaluation period
- A number of development agencies (including the EU) are exploring the potential for responding to the protracted needs of refugees through national social transfer systems in countries such as Turkey and Jordan. While there are significant challenges to realizing this goal, it also very attractive as a potential ‘exit strategy’ for humanitarian aid in the region.
- There are clear opportunities for aligning humanitarian cash transfers (especially MPCTs) with national systems – for example in determining eligibility thresholds, transfer amounts and distribution mechanisms.
- ECHO has sought to engage on this issue with EU Delegations, implementing partners and government agencies in Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. But interviews with ECHO partners suggest that they have not been actively encouraged to pursue this option by ECHO, and ECHO’s HIPs over 2012-2014 provide no guidance to partners on this point.

Does the appraisal of ECHO actions take account of an appropriate analysis of the context?

Most partners comply with the overarching ECHO policy by supporting funding applications with a context analysis justifying the proposed transfer modality
- ECHO’s approach to using cash and voucher transfer modalities is presented in its ‘Thematic Policy Document No. 3’. The requirement is that “all modalities of humanitarian assistance be systematically analysed and compared so that ECHO can support partners in responding to identified needs in the most appropriate way according to the context”. In operational terms this entails a needs analysis, a market analysis and a response analysis for selecting a transfer modality.
- Partners at field level were generally aware of this requirement, usually through dialogue with the ECHO TA rather than directly from the policy document. Most Single Form applications reviewed included some form of context or response analysis in their proposals, including an analysis of needs and markets.

Partners in several countries perceived that ECHO was strongly ‘pro cash’ – rather than ‘modality neutral’
- In some countries including Lebanon and Jordan there was a strong perception that ECHO strongly favoured funding key sectoral responses through cash transfers. This was judged to override arguments presented in the partners’ applications, with ECHO in effect pre-determining what they are open to funding.
- There is an apparent tension as to whether the choice of transfer modality should occur at the strategic (national) level or within individual funding applications. In the Syrian
context greater emphasis is being placed on the strategic analysis, as compared to normal ECHO practice.

- Partner opinion on this stance was divided. Many agencies, especially ‘pro-cash’ larger NGOs saw this as a welcome stand countering the inertia of key agencies and forcing a change in programming models. Some agencies felt that such a technical decision should fall within their remit, not ECHO’s. Other agencies appreciated the technical justification for the ECHO position but in the absence of adapted mandates feared they would be effectively excluded from funding opportunities in the medium term.

**Have ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations been effective in the Syria context?**

Where feasible and appropriate cash transfers are generally a more efficient and effective transfer mechanism than vouchers or in-kind, and there has been a general convergence towards the use of cash transfers over time.

- Cash transfers have capitalized on the use of electronic distribution platforms in the region. They have very low administrative costs – for example in Jordan 90% of the ECHO funds to UNHCR directly reach beneficiaries in the form of cash. Biometric distribution platforms – while not exclusively associated with cash transfers – have dramatically reduced fraud.
- Where ‘choice’ and ‘dignity’ are seen as objectives in their own right then cash transfers are automatically seen as more effective than alternative transfer mechanisms. For urban refugees in a middle-income context with diverse needs, cash transfers were widely viewed as the most efficient and effective option as they allow beneficiaries to exercise control over what they use the money for.
- Cash transfers are also recognized to have multiplier effects on local economies. These are hard to quantify but good evidence has been gathered, e.g. on the impact on local markets and job creation in Lebanon and Turkey.  

- Potential cost savings have been suggested from the consolidation of several sectoral responses into a single MPCT with economies of scale including consolidated assessments (instead of duplication of one assessment for food, one for education, one for shelter, etc.) and delivery costs. However, genuine MPCTs have yet to be rolled out in any of the affected countries and these savings remain largely hypothetical.
- In some situations there is no feasible alternative to the use of cash transfers, e.g. meeting the shelter needs of urban refugees in Jordan and Lebanon; although other complementary initiatives can increase supply – and dampen inflationary impacts – cash transfers are the primary means of meeting the key shelter needs of out-of-camp refugees.

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69 E.g. in Jordan and Lebanon UNHCR led cash transfers principally designed to address shelter needs are delivered alongside WFP food vouchers
Vouchers are generally perceived as less effective than cash transfers, but preferable to in-kind distributions

- Cash and vouchers are different modalities with different characteristics and levels of effectiveness. Many partners erroneously view cash-denominated vouchers as equivalent to cash transfers.
- Vouchers can share many of the advantages of cash transfers with the high efficiency associated with electronic vouchers and secondary multiplier effects on local markets. However, evidence from the field suggests that the limited choice afforded by vouchers results in less competitive prices in the contracted shops, and significant resale at discounted values by beneficiaries needing income to meet other needs.
- The costs associated with the transport, storage and leakage of in-kind commodities (e.g. food) generally make this the least effective option. The cost savings of using WFP vouchers as compared to providing hot meals in Turkish camps is estimated at 30%. Several NGOs indicated that the management costs associated with in-kind transfers made them a clearly less-favoured option.
- However some stakeholder argued that vouchers and in-kind transfers were more effective when judged against a narrow sectoral objective. The limited nature of these transfers made it easier to target specific outcomes and control the quality of goods and services provided.

Ultimately effectiveness depends on more than the choice of modality, critically the quality of project design and implementation

- Several stakeholders pointed out that effectiveness depends on far more than the choice of modality and much depends on the quality of management. Firstly, there is the requirement to target accurately; effectiveness depends on getting resources to those in need. Second, effectiveness depends heavily on the amount of the transfer, not just the form in which it comes. This is particularly pertinent as the strategic shift to using MPCTs has occurred in conjunction with falling aid budgets, meaning that a lower proportion of needs can be met.
EQ 11 – Budget allocation

Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?

This question focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of ECHO’s response to the Syrian crisis. It seeks to measure the extent to which:

- funding was appropriate to ECHO’s target objectives;
- implementation measures were optimally efficient to achieving those objectives.

**EQ 11 – Budget allocation – Answer Box**

The appropriateness and proportionality of the ECHO budget was questioned by the evaluation findings. The link between the ECHO funding decisions and beneficiary needs in Syria is opaque and appears to have been sensitive to political influence. ECHO’s budget contributions are not linked to UN appeals process and response plans, whilst global funding of UN appeals has not kept pace with the growth in the number of people in need. The Syria context also highlights challenges in determining an appropriate budget share for ECHO, given the large, but weakly coordinated, contributions from non-traditional humanitarian donors and Governments of middle-income host countries.

ECHO has generally provided a logical rationale for the sub-allocation of funds to the countries within the region – with the possible exception of Turkey’s low share of the burden, the ECHO Syria team has used a relatively small budget to promote an ambitious set of strategic objectives and exert larger-than-expected influence on the overall response. In part this has been achieved through good collaboration with other EU funding instruments to allow more targeted use of the humanitarian budget.

ECHO has limited ability to appraise, monitor or evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the funded measures, making it hard to draw conclusions on the cost-effective of ECHO-funded activities. There is some qualitative evidence that ECHO has improved the cost-efficiency of its operations at project level – principally through the increased use of cash transfers – but further cost savings could potentially be made, especially with more attention to system-level innovations.

**Was the ECHO budget allocation process in response to the Syrian crisis appropriate and proportionate?**

The link between the ECHO funding decisions and beneficiary needs is opaque

- As a humanitarian donor ECHO is committed to funding on the basis of need. As stated in the EU humanitarian consensus ‘The objective of EU humanitarian aid is to provide a needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity wherever the need arises if governments and local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act’.
Inside Syria, global funding of the international humanitarian response has not kept pace with the growth in needs. Indeed, OCHA estimates that humanitarian needs inside Syria have grown at six times the pace of funding since the crisis began:

**Figure 19 – Global funding against people in need inside Syria**

![Figure 19](chart.png)


Likewise, ECHO funding allocations per country varied considerably, without clear link to the humanitarian needs:

**Table 8 – ECHO country allocations 2012-2014 per refugee/IDP received**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Allocations (€m)</th>
<th># Refugees (m)</th>
<th>Allocations / Refugee (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria (IDPs)</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Country allocations per refugee can be impacted by many factors, including the cost of delivery in each country, the varying degrees of engagement of host countries and presence of other donors. Nevertheless, the link between these determining factors and

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70 To allow comparison to ECHO funding over 2012-2014, refugee numbers are here taken from UNHCR statistics as of December 2014. These figures have changed over the course of 2015. Source: Evaluation Inventory based on ECHO HOPE database; UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, data extracted on 5 May 2015; UN OCHA Syria Humanitarian Bulletin January 2015.
the size of ECHO’s response was not always clear, with notably shortfalls cited in Turkey.

- ECHO budget allocations are not directly linked to the UN appeals process and response plans. As an input to setting the annual budget ECHO gathers data on needs at crisis level through the Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF). This document also includes additional information on other relevant factors affecting the capacity to respond, including contributions from other donors, access constraints and the absorptive capacity of ECHO partners. This process does not ask for a field-level estimate (from either the desk or TA) of the level of resources required.

- However, there is no clear methodology for linking the IAF findings to the final budget level. The impression of ECHO staff consulted is that the IAF helps to determine whether the budget allocation should go up or down, but not to set the actual budget figure.

The Syrian crisis has highlighted new challenges in determining an appropriate budget share for ECHO

- ECHO has maintained a fairly consistent burden share compared to other official humanitarian donors in response to the Syrian crisis. The OCHA FTS data (which is not always easily reconcilable with ECHO’s own internal reporting) suggests that the ECHO contribution\(^{71}\) to the Syrian crisis constitutes around 11% of total humanitarian contributions. This is broadly in line with ECHO’s estimated burden share which typically falls in the 10-15% range in other humanitarian crises.

- The Syrian crisis has been characterized by large – and according to OCHA poorly reported - contributions from ‘non-traditional’ donors, especially the Gulf States. The lack of coordination channels with these new donors presents ECHO with a challenge in calibrating its own contributions appropriately.

- A separate feature of the Syrian crisis has been the very large contributions made by the countries hosting the Syrian refugees. Turkey estimates its own contribution since 2012 to exceed US$5 billion (although no breakdown is given to substantiate this figure). ECHO – along with other international donors – has struggled to determine how to assess the appropriate role of an international humanitarian donor in a context of capacitated MICs, and consequently much of the financial burden has been left on Governments in the region.

The ECHO budget allocation process lacks predictability and appears subject to political influence

- Overall, the budget allocation has fluctuated considerably over the years and is poorly correlated with refugee numbers or needs. There was a rapid increase in funding in 2013 which ECHO staff reported as challenging to programme. This pattern is understood to reflect the early significant political interest of the EC in the Syrian crisis response. There followed a rapid contraction of the ECHO budget in 2014, despite a continuing rise in refugee numbers, which was seen as insufficient by ECHO field staff.

- The fluctuations in annual budget allocations were also criticized as inappropriate by partners. The Syrian crisis has become a protracted crisis implying the need for

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\(^{71}\) The contribution from other EU instruments to the Syria response is additional to this.
predictable funding. Partners are constrained in their ability to plan for a longer-term response – and ultimately beneficiaries are subject to inconsistent and unpredictable oscillations in the level of support they receive.

**Did ECHO calibrate its objectives to the available funding?**

ECHO has generally provided a logical rationale in how it has allocated funds to the countries within the region

- For the ECHO Syria team the budgeting decisions have been around the most appropriate use of the available resources allocated by senior management for the response. With the HIP process largely based on analysis of all available information and a dialogue with partners and other donors, it is the evaluation’s view that most key decisions have been based on appropriate criteria (seriousness of need, including their life-saving nature or dignity securing/protection ensuring effects, presence of experienced partners knowing the field) and consideration of the best available information at the time of the decision. The fact that there is a “reserve” with the “top up system” allows to respond to situations that could not be foreseen earlier.

- A fair rationale was used to explain the allocation of HIP resources between the different countries. This is understood to include consideration of the numbers of people in need, the depth of their needs and the funding gaps, given other potential sources of financing. The largest share of the funding is devoted to the Syria response which is almost entirely reliant on humanitarian financing, as compared with neighbouring countries in which host Government financing and complementary streams of donor development financing can be drawn on.

- One possible anomaly appears to be the relatively low level of funding allocated to Turkey – despite its hosting the largest number of refugees. This is largely based on a presumption regarding the capacity of the Turkish State to manage the crisis. However, the evidence is that the needs of the out-of-camp refugees – the great majority of the caseload – remain largely unmet. ECHO’s burden share in Turkey of 4% of international aid\(^{72}\) falls far below the share in other countries in the region.

**ECHO has used a relatively small budget to promote an ambitious set of strategic objectives**

- ECHO has sought to use its limited resources to focus on areas of comparative advantage. For example, in general the ECHO resources have been used to focus on the needs of out-of-camp refugees. ECHO’s in-country presence and partnerships with NGOs have given it an advantage in this area as compared to other donors. ECHO has played an important role in ensuring that the overall response did not remain overly focused on the camps.

- ECHO has been at the forefront of pressing for introduction of Multi-Purpose Cash Transfers (MPCT). These objectives have pushed the debate forward both in the region and at international level. However it is also apparent that ECHO alone was unable to sufficiently influence the decision-making of large UN agencies – for example through

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\(^{72}\) OCHA FTS data for 2012-14 - other donors report providing approx. USD 570m. Separately the Turkish state estimates it has provided USD 5 billion.
financing MPCTs on a substantial scale. This highlights the need for stronger donor coordination and joint strategies on key issues.

**ECHO has effectively collaborated with other EU instruments in the region to complement the limited humanitarian budget**

- Close collaboration was made with the EU Delegations in Jordan and Turkey to synergize the use of humanitarian and development resources. This allowed the limited humanitarian resources to be directed to meeting the most pressing needs, where there were no alternative funding sources.
- Development resources were used in areas such as support for national social services that could benefit both refugees and host communities, such as education and health. Examples were found of good integrated planning, for example ECHO used Children of Peace funding to kick start education initiatives which were then taken on in the medium term by other less agile EU instruments.
- However, the integration of humanitarian and development instruments in the Syria response did highlight several potential concerns, including the extent to which development resources may be used in cases where humanitarian resources would be more appropriate. For example, the EU Syria Trust Fund is being used to finance WFP operations and the IcSP to fund protection activities in Turkey. It could be argued that it would have been more appropriate to explore voluntary humanitarian contributions by EUMS to ECHO as a way of meeting these core humanitarian needs.

**Were ECHO-funded activities cost-effective?**

**ECHO has a limited quantitative ability to appraise, monitor or evaluate the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the funded actions**

- ECHO does not have a standard approach to cost-efficiency analysis and partners are not required to calculate efficiency ratios as part of the Single Form applications or monitoring reports. At the end of the evaluation period the ECHO Syria team did develop their own ‘dashboard’ that includes comparative cost-efficiency analysis of the different projects being appraised for funding under the HIP. However this has not yet been institutionalized at either field or corporate level.
- Cost-effectiveness analysis depends on a robust measurement of results or outcomes. Implementing partners are held accountable for reporting on outcome-level results using standardized Key Results Indicators (KRIs) across the different sectors. There are question as to the robustness and comparability of these indicators; the accountability of partners in using these KRIs was weak but has improved with the introduction of the new 2014 Single Form.
- Overall there is little evidence that monitoring and financial reports were used to analyses cost-effectiveness and inform future strategy.
There is some evidence that ECHO has improved the cost-efficiency of its operations but further gains could still be made

- Findings on the cost-effectiveness of ECHO operations drew primarily rely on subjective opinions. There is a degree of consensus that the shift from in-kind transfers to vouchers and cash transfers offers significant efficiency gains. However WFP still argues that in-kind transfers are the most cost-efficient given waivers on import tax on food items. As noted earlier these gains are largely being realized at project level – there is as yet little evidence of MPCTs leading to system-level savings through greater coordination of assessments and delivery costs.

- There are suggestions that cost-efficiency could be improved through ECHO reconsidering its approach to:
  - longer-term, predictable funding in a protracted crisis (DFID studies point to significant savings through using longer-term contracts of up to three years for emergency response);
  - reconsideration of targeting procedures (ECHO is encouraging strict targeting of beneficiaries to ‘ration’ the use of limited funds – but these targeting exercises incur considerable costs); and
  - consideration of direct funding of national NGOs (current all funds pass through FPA or FAFA partners who require a 7% overhead charge, although several NGOs based in these MICs have an evident capacity for direct implementation).
EQ 12 – Monitoring Systems

Were appropriate monitoring systems in place to support sound management of ECHO operations?

Monitoring of operations conducted in emergency settings throws up particular challenges not present in other contexts, including for example increased insecurity and uncertainty for the key stakeholders (including donor, partner and beneficiary sides), restricted access, absence of baseline data, and rapid changes in personnel. Donor and partner monitoring systems are therefore required to meet each of these challenges whilst ensuring robust and reliable data is observed in line with monitoring objectives.

This question seeks to understand the extent to which ECHO simultaneously established its own monitoring system and supported its partners in setting up its own by making available the appropriate resources to meet the challenges highlighted above, and thus to underpin the sound management of ECHO-supported operations. This is of particular importance in the Syrian context, where remote management of operations inside Syria places additional restrictions on access to key stakeholders, while simultaneously emphasising an increased need for monitoring data to ensure accountability.

EQ 12 – Monitoring Systems – Answer Box

Outside Syria coverage of project monitoring by ECHO field staff has been reasonable given the rapid and significant upscaling of the contract volume in 2013, with two-thirds of all completed projects covered by at least one monitoring mission by ECHO field or headquarters staff. Direct monitoring by partners followed in most instances the general rules applied to ECHO-supported operations. It is worth noting that partner-led innovations on post-distribution monitoring, such as the use of eVouchers to monitor potential cases of fraud, have also been observed. Within Syria the picture is rather different. No direct monitoring by ECHO staff was possible until recently when a few exceptional visits could take place. As project monitoring inside Syria has faced understandable obstacles, ECHO facilitated adaptation of the monitoring framework to fit the specific context of remote management, including a greater focus on aid diversion.

But concerns have nevertheless been raised about the quality of monitoring missions and the availability of data from ECHO partners. In particular data on results achieved was less systematically collected, with weaknesses observed in the monitoring of project results. Broader learning mechanisms, including evaluation, have been weaker; and opportunities remain for greater lesson-learning from ECHO’s experience in this crisis.

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73 IFRC (2011), ‘Project/programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guide’, p.27.
Did ECHO undertake specific actions to ensure the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms?

- ECHO-funded projects are subject to a range of different monitoring mechanisms tracking performance and results. Mechanisms range from partner-led project monitoring during implementation, intermittent monitoring missions conducted by ECHO Technical Assistants and national field officers in-country, post-distribution monitoring, visits from ECHO regional office staff, headquarters missions to the field, and strategic evaluations and oversight from other EU institutions such as the European Parliament.

- Outside Syria, coverage of project monitoring by ECHO field staff has been reasonable, in the context of rapid and significant increases in contract volume. 64% of the 83 projects in the evaluation inventory which have reached final report stage were covered by at least one monitoring mission from ECHO field or headquarters staff.

- Some concern have been raised about the quality of monitoring missions and availability of data from ECHO partners. Concerns were raised within ECHO and among partner organisations in this regard. Contributory factors cited include:
  - security restrictions for monitoring operations inside Syria;
  - the difficulty of conducting monitoring operations across multi-country projects, which were often operating on different timescales between countries, or reporting to multiple country desk and field officers within ECHO;
  - the limited availability of ECHO staff to analyse data provided by partners during the rapid scaling-up of contract volumes in the 2012-2013 period.

- Review of the monitoring reports for ECHO-funded projects in the evaluation inventory revealed variance in their quality. Some projects were subject to comprehensive monitoring assessments while others were either completed without any monitoring reports being filed, or else were visited by monitoring teams with only partial coverage of the project’s components and countries of operation. In particular availability of data on achievement of results was cited as a concern in many monitoring reports.

- ECHO partners viewed monitoring visits from ECHO TAs as useful tools for performance management, while ECHO’s broader monitoring mechanisms were less well-received:
  - Partner feedback suggests that monitoring missions conducted by ECHO’s field technical advisors were generally quite highly appreciated by project staff. ECHO staff feedback to project teams was perceived as timely and operational, and as one important part of the ongoing close relationship that many partners value with ECHO field teams.
  - On the other hand, most partners argued that ECHO’s broader monitoring mechanisms were over-burdensome, viz.:
    - UN agencies working through multi-donor arrangements reported that ECHO’s monitoring and reporting requirements were a poor fit for their programming structures;
    - NGO partners argued that they received too many visits from ECHO headquarters, the staff of which were less able to provide operational feedback of use to partners during the implementation phase;
all partners concurred that ECHO’s reporting structure was rather heavy and labour-intensive, contrary to the push for simplicity embodied by, among others, the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative.

- Broader learning mechanisms, including evaluation, have been weaker. Few projects have conducted external evaluations, and data on project results and impact remain very weak – especially within Syria. Some partners, funded with ECHO resources, have conducted studies on key thematic issues in the context of the Syrian crisis (e.g. NRC (2014) A Precarious Existence: the Shelter situation of Refugees from Syria in Neighbouring Countries). But this remains the exception rather than the rule, and opportunities for learning from ECHO’s experience in this crisis could be more systematically pursued, whilst taking account of the need to avoid duplicating assessments and evaluations already available in the public domain.

Did ECHO tailor monitoring mechanisms to the specific needs of remote management?

- ECHO specifically amended its project monitoring mechanisms to meet the context of operations conducted through remote management. ECHO introduced a specific amendment to all contracts with a component inside Syria. The amendment introduced monthly (later adapted to quarterly) reporting requirements and an additional focus on aid diversion, security risks to local staff, and other factors. Several partners observed that the initial monthly reporting was too heavy – and were concerned that ECHO staff did not have the resources to absorb this quantity of information.
- ECHO partners operating inside Syria were asked to provide comprehensive data on the number of monitoring missions conducted and the monitoring capacity of their organisations. While appreciated by some ECHO partners, notably NGOs working with new local partners, these requirements were regarded as too bureaucratic by several larger partner organisations.
- Telephone interviews with ECHO partners and a review in 2014 of project documentation from cross-border operations show broad adaptation of partner monitoring systems in line with the requirements of Article 8 of the contract

Did ECHO partners monitor their operations and ensure data and findings were available for ECHO’s use in a timely manner?

- As described under JC 12.1 above, global monitoring coverage of ECHO-funded projects in response in the countries affected by the Syrian crisis and surrounding Syria was relatively good. This is less the case within Syria.
- Some concerns were raised within monitoring reports regarding timely availability of data from partners, particularly regarding achievement of results by project sub-component.
- Several examples were seen of innovative post-distribution monitoring tools being used by ECHO partners. Electronic vouchers used in camp settings in Jordan and non-camp settings in Turkey allowed ECHO partners to conduct real time monitoring of expenditure patterns and, in some cases, to guard against potential fraud (e.g. by tracking large numbers of vouchers being redeemed within a short space of time).
EQ 13 – Consortia and Multi-Country Approaches

What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?

This question seeks to understand the extent to which ECHO’s use of consortia and multi-country approaches was efficient. This is of particular importance in the context of a regional crisis such as Syria, with significant numbers of people in need across multiple countries. The definitions of consortia and multi-country approaches are given below:

Consortia approaches: ECHO-funded grant agreements allow for consortia of several FPA partners to work together under one consortium agreement for a given programme of action. Under such an arrangement one FPA partner signs the Specific Grant Agreement and acts as consortium leader, while others take part in implementation.

Multi-country approaches: ECHO HIPs over the period 2013-2014 covered humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis across multiple countries (Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan). This allowed partners to target beneficiaries in a range of beneficiary countries in a single operation. Such arrangements have specific implications for the evaluation of an operation’s effectiveness and efficiency, including a greater number of implementation organisations and a further intended benefit as regards efficiency gains.

EQ 13 – Consortia and Multi-Country Approaches – Answer Box

Only a limited number of consortia were formed by ECHO partners during the evaluation period. Partners typically viewed consortia arrangements as lacking added-value in the context of the Syrian response, with the potential coordination benefits outweighed by the administrative costs for the partners. In contrast, multi-country contracts with single agencies became the default contracting modality for ECHO during the evaluation period. This was in part motivated by the need to reduce the administrative burden on ECHO desk officers at a time of limited staff resources and a rapid scaling-up of contract volumes. However, the evidence suggests that the expected donor-side efficiency gains did not materialise, in part due to a mismatch between the multi-country contract structure and the single-country staffing structure within ECHO at headquarters (desk officers) and field level (TA). Moreover the evidence suggests that multi-country contracts created obstacles to timely implementation, and the potential efficiency gains of multi-country contracts through cross-country capitalisation and budget reallocations did not materialise.

To what extent did ECHO partners work in consortia and through a multi-country approach?

- Only very few partners took the opportunity to form consortia for ECHO contracts over the evaluation period. Interviews with partners over the period suggest that the principle reasons for this included:
  - Contract size: the fit between ECHO contract size and principle funding partners was considered good, such that ECHO contracts did not present their partners with a challenge in terms of absorption capacity. Some ECHO partners formed consortia...
for other donors over the same period, but mainly where those donors (e.g. DFID) provided larger grants than the partners in question were used to handling alone.

- **Limited perceived added-value:** partners cited increased agency coordination and intra-agency capacity building as the major point of potential added-value from consortia formations. But intra-agency capacity building was not felt to be a useful added-value for the INGOs operating in neighbouring countries, all of whom have significant capacity and years of experience with ECHO and other major donors. Likewise partners argued that coordination could be sufficiently managed without forming consortia – despite some of the coordination challenges witnessed by the evaluation team in e.g. the Lebanon cash response (see EQ14 below).

- **Administrative burden:** partners cited the added administrative burden of forming and managing a formal consortium as a deterring factor, particularly for the lead agencies. This was to some extent vindicated by the difficulties observed in the case of the Red Cross consortium that managed the field hospital in Azraq camp in Jordan. Led by the Finnish Red Cross, the consortium initially included 10 partners, most of which had left the consortium by June 2014.

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- **Multi-country contracts constituted the majority of ECHO’s funding portfolio over the period 2012-2014.** But the majority of partners spoken to by the evaluation team reported that their operations, whilst multi-country at contract level, were managed as several individual country-level operations, with only very limited examples of inter-country lessons learning and budget transfers on the part of partners themselves (see below).

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**Did ECHO undertake specific actions to ensure multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources?**

- **The use of multi-country contracts was in part motivated by the need to reduce the administrative burden on ECHO desk officers at a time of limited staff resources and a rapid scaling-up of contract volumes, viz.:**
  - This coincided with the rapid scaling-up of funding allocations for the Syrian crisis throughout the 2012-2013 period (see EQs 5 and 11 on this point), which increased pressure on the contracting team inside ECHO headquarters;
  - Using multi-country contracts allowed ECHO to allocate substantial resources across multiple countries of operation, thereby reducing the total number of contracts required to cover the crisis across the region. In this sense there was reasonable expectation of greater contracting efficiency at donor level.

- **However, the evidence suggests that the expected donor-side efficiency gains did not materialise, viz.:**
  - Both ECHO staff and partners cited a mismatch between the multi-country contract structure and the single-country staffing structure within ECHO headquarters, which led to the perception among partners of long or confused chains of command on the donor side;
  - ECHO staff, at both headquarters and field levels, observed an increased administrative burden on the donor side. The need for each country desk officer to sign off on each multi-country contract, and on each subsequent modification request, placed an additional coordination burden on ECHO staff.
Moreover, the evidence suggests that multi-country contracts created obstacles to timely implementation.
- ECHO partners observed delays in contract signature and amendment due to the complexity of the signature process. All ECHO partners spoken to in the field mentioned the increased lag-time between field office agreement and finalisation of the decision at headquarters level, due to the need for all country desk officers to sign off on each contract and modification request.
- The significant variance in country contexts across the five implementing countries meant that individual country subcomponents were often implemented at different paces. This made it harder to fulfil single, one-size-fits-all reporting requirements (e.g. by requiring one interim report to be delivered at the same time across all countries) and hampered timely renewal of individual country subprojects on completion.

Did ECHO partners provide evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplications between countries and partner organisations?

- The potential efficiency gains of multi-country contracts through cross-country capitalisation and budget reallocations did not materialise:
  - Only a few cases of budget reallocations between country subcomponents of multi-country contracts exist. Partners and ECHO staff argued that such reallocations are difficult to implement, given the short implementation timescale for most ECHO-funded projects in combination with the lengthy procedures required to sign off modifications for multi-country projects (see above).
  - Capitalisation between country subcomponents occurred in a handful of cases observed by the evaluation team. NRC, for example, clearly applied lessons learned in the shelter work conducted in Lebanon to their operations in Jordanian non-camp settings. But such examples are not directly attributable to the nature of the multi-country contract. Rather, the internal learning structures of ECHO’s larger INGO partners were more normally cited as the key driving factor. This interpretation is supported by observation of similar learning activities taking place within partner organisations where the two projects in question did not fall under the same contract, e.g. between projects funded by ECHO and those funded by other donors.

- Only limited numbers of consortia were formed, and partner experience of them was negative, *viz.*:
  - in some cases consortia groups broke up during implementation, due to differing levels of engagement and ownership between the individual partners;
  - in other cases partners questioned whether ECHO’s procedures were well aligned with the development of consortia, a potential increase in overhead costs being required to manage coordination between partners and meet ECHO’s reporting requirements.
EQ 14 – Coordination

How successful has ECHO been in coordinating its operations with other main actors, notably in promoting synergies avoiding duplication, and addressing gaps and resource conflicts at the situational, regional, country and sector-specific levels?

This question seeks to determine the extent to which ECHO has succeeded in coordinating operations with other key actors in the Syria response across regional, country and sector-specific levels. This includes - but is by no means limited to - European donors, as section 1 above makes clear. ECHO coordination with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA, the UN Country Team in Damascus, regional level UN bodies, and neighbouring country offices will need to be assessed. Furthermore, coordination challenges for ECHO and other donors vary between Syria and neighbouring countries, each neighbouring country providing different levels of local coordination, as noted in ECHO (2014) Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Syria.

EQ 14 – Coordination – Answer Box

The nature of the Syrian crisis, as a Level 3 emergency with a significant refugee component, makes strategic-level coordination both important and difficult to achieve. In this context ECHO made significant efforts to improve strategic coordination between traditional OECD donors and technical coordination at the sector level. Both of these aspects were reasonably successful (although coordination of cross-line and cross-border operations could have been improved), and ECHO’s contributions to this success were widely appreciated.

On the other hand, coordination between humanitarian agencies (including donors) and host governments was generally weak, as was coordination with non-OECD donors. But in these cases coordination success was impeded by factors outside ECHO’s direct control, primarily concerning the willingness of other actors to engage in effective coordination activities. Most of all, the ambiguity of UNHCR’s and OCHA’s coordination mandates in the Syrian crisis hampered overall coordination at the macro-level.

At strategy level, did ECHO take specific action to enhance coordination with other main actors?

- The nature of the Syrian crisis makes strategic-level coordination both important and difficult to achieve, viz:
  - As Syrian populations move around within Syria (IDP) and between Syria and neighbouring countries (where they become refugees), coordination between donors, partners and UN agencies with different mandates and focusing on different types of population (IDP, refugees or host populations) becomes increasingly important.
  - But the question of which body, OCHA or UNHCR, takes the strategic coordination role is inherently more difficult in an L3 emergency that includes a substantial refugee crisis component. Confusion and weak articulation between HCR-led sectoral groups and OCHA-led cluster systems created tension.
In this context, ECHO, which often attended HCT “+” meetings (humanitarian agencies + key donors) made significant efforts to improve strategic coordination, viz.:
- ECHO supported the coordination role of OCHA both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries, including supporting the development of OCHA’s Whole of Syria approach;
- ECHO invested in a regionally-coordinated approach, by having a Syria coordinator at HQ and Amman, seeking to improve coordination of efforts both inside Syria and across neighbouring countries;
- ECHO also encouraged UNHCR to broaden its coordination activities in Lebanon in order to include non-HCR partner organisations. Stakeholders suggest that this improved strategic coordination between the key actors in this country.

But the end-results of these efforts remain limited:
- A difficult relationship between key personnel in UNHCR and OCHA continued to hamper coordination efforts for many actors, ECHO included. Some stakeholders argued that ECHO could have made better use of resources if it had not invested so heavily in promoting the OCHA coordination role. Moreover the perception that ECHO’s advocacy for the role of OCHA in having the upper hand in coordination in the refugee crisis actually fuelled greater inter-agency conflict.
- In Turkey stakeholders cited unaddressed weaknesses in the coordination capacity of UNHCR as compared to the cluster system, for which tools were developed such as coordination guidelines and training rosters.
- Questions were raised about the payback on investing in Amman as a hub for coordination of ECHO’s response across the region. While it was accepted by all stakeholders that coordination of the response inside Syria was a vital activity requiring significant resources, the task of coordination between countries had less obvious relevance.

**Did ECHO needs analyses and funding decisions identify and take account of the activities of other main actors?**

- ECHO supported the strategic coordination process, including efforts to improve needs assessments and data-sharing, such as ACAPS (the Assessment Capacities Project), SNAP (the Syria Needs Analysis Project) and REACH. However the presence of so many different needs assessments was itself cited by many ECHO partners as problematic. While these reports have reportedly been seen as useful by donors at HQ level, the lack of compatibility and comparability between the different data sets and assessments and question-marks about the quality of the data collection makes them difficult to use as an operation tool. Triangulation with other sources therefore remained imperative.

- The majority of ECHO-funded operations in neighbouring countries did take account of the activities of the other main actors. Assessing the presence of other actors inside Syria was more challenging due to the security risks involved. Nevertheless partner proposals for ECHO-funded activities inside Syria also provided an assessment, insofar as possible, of the presence of other actors in their areas of operation prior to project launch.

- ECHO’s funding decisions in Turkey notably addressed gaps in donor response in 2015, when it moved towards a “far-east” strategy of supporting non-camp refugees at the...
eastern end of the border region with Syria, an area not significantly covered by other donors.

- Finally, ECHO supported NGO coordination mechanisms in both Turkey and Lebanon, as well as supporting security coordination through the INSO platform (the International NGO Safety Organisation).

Did ECHO-funded actions target, and achieve, enhanced synergies and reduced duplications?

- Inside Syria the security context presented, and continues to present, an obstacle to effective information-sharing and thus to identification of possible duplications or gaps. In that regard:
  - ECHO partners have little or no access and struggle to gather information from local partners; the lack of international presence on the ground continues to present a problem in this regard, as highlighted in recent literature;\(^74\)
  - OCHA has struggled to obtain information on NGO presence inside Syria due to data security concerns. The lack of a secure data-handling service between even large INGOs and OCHA remains problematic in a context where information on the whereabouts of humanitarian actors can be highly sensitive for all those concerned.

- But ECHO did fund cross-border operations inside Syria prior to the engagement of UN agencies in this area, thereby helping address one of the largest coverage gaps in the crisis.

- In Jordan and Lebanon ECHO was vocal in working to increase coordination between a crowded market-place of donors. Duplication was observed between cash programmes in Lebanon, including the use of different banking card systems by different donors. In response, ECHO sought to develop a one-card solution to increase efficiency and coherence.

- In Turkey, in contrast, donor involvement has been lower, leading to gaps in assistance rather than duplication risks. ECHO has actively sought to ensure that such gaps are filled, for example through the “far-east” strategy developed for 2015 (see JC14.2 above).

\(^74\) See, for example, Healy and Tiller (2014) “Where is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Places.” MSF.
EQ 15 & 16 – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

To what extent are ECHO actions coherent with and complementary to the actions of other EC services? To what extent has LRRD been mainstreamed into ECHO-funded projects in the region? To what extent have medium-to-long-term objectives been taken into account in the programming of ECHO interventions?

To what extent have the ECHO-funded actions been successful in terms of LRRD? How has the handover to development actors been prepared and carried out? What further could be done (enabling factors, tools, mechanism, change in strategy, etc.) to increase the uptake of results and lessons learned from relief projects in development planning and programming?

As explained in the Commissions’ 2001 communication, the concept of LRRD originates from a “concern about the so-called “grey zone” between humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development. This grey zone arises because humanitarian assistance differs from development co-operation programmes. The former addresses the immediate needs of individuals affected by crises and is provided mainly through non-governmental and international organisations. The latter aims to support autonomous development policies and strategies and is provided mainly under co-operation programmes agreed with the partner country.”

These questions aim at verifying the extent to which ECHO funded operations were conceived with a view to link relief, rehabilitation and development. More specifically, in the context of an evaluation of ECHO’s support, they aim at verifying to what extent ECHO, when providing emergency aid, has taken longer term objectives into account in its programming and has also endeavoured to ensure complementarity with the longer term support provided, notably by DEVCO. It also aims at examining the successes achieved in this respect.

The answer to the question is constructed around four key issues:

- The meaning of LRRD in the specific context of the Syrian crisis;
- The extent to which ECHO has worked on mainstreaming LRRD in this context and its specific interaction with DEVCO for this purpose;
- Specific initiatives taken with respect to LRRD;
- The extent to which the approach to LRRD was part of a comprehensive and strategic approach.

The issue of LRRD has a specific relevance in the context of the Syrian crisis. Indeed, although the emergency needs continue to be extremely high, and even if at the beginning of 2016 there are no clear prospects on when refugees will be able to return home, the protracted nature of the crisis poses specific challenges that go beyond immediate relief. These concern both the refugees and the host communities. The refugees are confronted with specific needs linked to the long term nature of their stay outside of their country, for instance in terms of employment, livelihoods, education, or even longer term health support. The host communities of the neighbouring countries are under huge pressure to deal with the important flow of refugees, which implies longer term development needs (in terms of

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infrastructure, livelihoods, etc.). Inside Syria, with a continuously evolving and uncertain situation, and little prospect of reconstruction in the short run, the core needs remain heavily on the side of emergency support.

In this context, ECHO has taken several initiatives to mainstream LRRD and to collaborate with DEVCO in this respect over the period considered. The HIPs, for instance, always contain a specific section on LRRD and on the use of complementary instruments. ECHO and DEVCO have also collaborated to develop Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. In terms of collaboration between ECHO and DEVCO on the ground, there are different perceptions: some stakeholders underlined a close collaboration; others considered that the worlds of development and humanitarian aid were still very much separate, as they are more globally in the donor community.

ECHO has made this mainstreaming concrete through staging different interventions jointly with DEVCO between 2012 and 2014, but it is difficult to state that the LRRD approach adopted at strategy level completely trickled down to the project level. Indeed, the announced complementarity with, for instance, the ENI instrument and the IfS were concretised in a number of cases and there were also several examples of ECHO funded projects that took a longer term perspective while intervening in emergency situations. But the latter approach was not systematic.

Towards the end of the 2014, ECHO, but also the wider donor community, took specific initiatives that contributed to redesigning the aid architecture in the sense of a more comprehensive and strategic approach towards LRRD. Indeed, both the 3RP initiative developed by the UN and countries of the region, and especially the EU the MADAD fund put LRRD at the heart of their approach.

The issue of LRRD has a specific relevance in the context of the Syrian crisis: it should be understood against the backdrop of a protracted crisis; it needs to be posed differently inside and outside Syria; and it concerns different groups of target beneficiaries (refugees and host communities).

- Many stakeholders interviewed underlined that the first challenge remains to deal with the enormous amount of emergency needs. This is not to say that LRRD was not important, but the priority was often on relief.

- At the start of 2016, it is clear that this is a protracted crisis, without clear prospects as to its ending. Recent reports have cited the need for a significant revision to the aid architecture in order to address the protracted crisis with coordinated and multi-year mechanisms. This makes the relevance of going beyond relief even clearer: specific needs arise (see below) to make sure refugees can be supported in and for the longer run. This said, stakeholders interviewed underlined that with the protraction of the crisis, the emergency needs keep increasing, given the continuous flow of IDPs and refugees entering neighbouring countries. In this context, a number of interviewees underlined that their first concern remained dealing with emergency.

- The emphasis on emergency is even stronger inside Syria. At the beginning of 2016, military operations and destruction are still occurring on a large scale and the scenario of

76 See, inter alia, the DSRA (2015) Dead Sea Resilience Agenda; and ODI (2016) Enhancing Aid Architecture in the Regional Response to the Syria Crisis.
an end to the conflict is still very uncertain. In such a context of a continuously uncertain and evolving situation, there are very little possibilities to start thinking about the longer run. Moreover, donor support is made more challenging as it takes place through remote management. Hence, interviewees underline that their main focus remains clearly on dealing with emergency needs.

- Needs in terms of rehabilitation and development concern two types of beneficiaries:
  - First there are the **refugees** themselves. Confronted with the duration of the crisis, and with little prospect of a return to Syria in the short run, they face needs that are linked to their prolonged stay outside of their country, notably in terms of employment, livelihoods, education for their children, etc. As underlined by an interviewee, the lack of capacity of hosting countries and aid providers to deal with these needs most probably plays a role in the refugees’ decisions to leave the host country and continue their search for another location to stay in the longer run. This same interviewee explained that numerous refugees on a daily basis gave their reasons for leaving the host countries and moving to Greece as: 1) The lack of employment or the fact that they felt exploited in the job they had; 2) The lack of possibilities to offer education to their children; 3) A lack of health treatment (many of them had war related injuries or were suffering from severe diseases). In other words, this highlights the importance of going beyond immediate relief and suggests that difficulties were met during the period covered in doing so.
  - As mentioned under the response to EQs 2-4 above, the pressure on the **host countries** is very high. Many refugees are there to stay in the longer run. This poses challenges to the host countries in their capacities to deal with this situation, in terms of the livelihoods they can provide, sufficient water and sanitation, employment, etc. This is even more stringent for countries that already had difficulties in dealing with some of these aspects before the Syrian crisis.

**Over the period covered, ECHO has taken initiatives to mainstream LRRD, and to collaborate with DEVCO with a view to link relief to rehabilitation and development.**

- The HIPs have always contained a section on LRRD, which notably describes the complementarity of the ECHO support with other (EU) support such as the Instrument for Stability (IfS) or the ENPI funding. As an example, the 2012 HIP planned (among other things) to support emergency education for displaced Syrian children and for host communities in Jordan through UNICEF with ENPI funding. Similarly, the 2013 HIP announced the use of IfS funding to support the capacity development of local administrative structures in Syria and to support the stabilization of living conditions of Syrians through a community-based approach.

- ECHO and the EUDs have developed Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

- Stakeholders provided mixed messages on the overall collaboration between ECHO and the EUDs in terms of LRRD. In Turkey for instance, some interviewees reported a close collaboration between ECHO and the EU Delegation to maximize synergies and overlaps and to present an integrated “one EU” response. Likewise, in Lebanon, interviewees reported that the links between ECHO and other EC Services were activated rapidly at both HQ and country level. But other interviewees considered (in several countries) that ECHO and the EUD remain quite separate and operate from “two different worlds”, underlining that more generally throughout the donor
community there is still a too big divide between the development and the humanitarian worlds.

A number of initiatives made the mainstreaming of LRRD concrete over the period 2012-2014, although it is difficult to state that the LRRD approach aimed for at strategy level completely trickled down to the project level.

- As announced in the HIPs, ECHO has worked with other EU instruments to build a more integrated response to the crisis. In Turkey, for instance, the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) is a huge source of support, with around €600m per year, and contributed for instance with €3M to providing capacity-building for AFAD. Interviewees also explain that ECHO has played a specific role in supporting the EU Delegation in developing the IPA strategy for Turkey, notably by helping to identify priority sectors of support, geographical areas of need, and implementation partners. Jordan and Lebanon also worked through the ENI, with examples of good synergies, for instance through a focus on education for refugees (not a direct priority of ECHO) or on primary health care (with ECHO working on secondary health care), or WASH support, where DEVCO handles large infrastructure, whereas ECHO works at HH level.

- It cannot, however, be stated that the projects financed by DG ECHO were systematically aimed at ensuring the continuum between a shorter and longer term perspective. Nevertheless, several projects clearly pursued objectives that went beyond responding to the most acute and urgent needs. In Turkey, ECHO has supported the immediate education needs of refugees through the “Children of Peace” initiative. While not a traditional humanitarian responsibility, interviewees underlined that this has worked well. The flexible ECHO funding allowed the rapid start-up of educational programmes, and has been followed up through longer-term funding by development instruments that take time to mobilize.

Towards the end of the 2012-2014 period, and in the subsequent years, specific initiatives were taken, both within the overall and the EU specific donor architecture, to favour a more comprehensive and strategic approach towards LRRD.

- At the end of 2014, a “Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 20015-2016” (3RP) was drafted as “a nationally-led, regionally coherent strategy which is built on the national response plans of the countries in the region.” This plan “brings together almost 200 humanitarian and development partners, including governments, United Nations agencies, and national international NGOs”. It aims at “bringing about a scaling-up of resilience and stabilization-based development and humanitarian assistance with the crisis”. The 3RP, of which an updated version for 2016-2017 was published in February 2016, explicitly endeavours to inscribe support in an LRRD perspective, considering that “traditional humanitarian assistance is no longer enough, especially given that an end to the crisis is not imminent”. It calls for a “new aid architecture”, as “the task ahead goes well beyond the resources, expertise, capacities, and mandates of humanitarian organisations”, and because it is necessary to bring in “longer-term – and scaled up – assistance by development actors, bilateral partners, international financial institutions and the private sectors (...) to address the massive structural impact of the crisis.” The plan puts LRRD at the core of the aid architecture, adopting an approach “that combines protection and humanitarian relief efforts with more focus on

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77 The Disaster and Emergency Management authority from the Republic of Turkey. Although this concerns emergency, we would say that the focus on capacity-building inscribes this support with a will to deal with longer term aspects of a protracted crisis.
supporting national plans and development interventions to build resilience among individuals, communities and institutions across sectors”.78

- The MADAD Trust Fund was established under the ENI in December 2014. Its overall objective is “to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily in the first instance to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery”. The idea is for EU and international donor assistance to provide, through the Trust Fund, “a comprehensive response package commensurate to the challenges”. It shall also “recognize the complementary roles of development cooperation, humanitarian action and political dialogue and engagement as essential components of building resilience and ensure that effort to link relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) remain integrated to such activities.”79 In this context, the focus of the Trust Fund operations should be, among other things, on aspects that are key in an LRRD perspective, such as: supporting the long term capacity of host states to address refugee flows, education (for children, vocational training for adults, higher education to Syrian students, providing (in Iraq) seed money in the effort to link development with humanitarian assistance, support to governments of the region to pursue policies conducive to enhanced economic resilience among refugee and host communities, etc.80

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79 Agreement establishing The European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, « the Madad Fund ».

80 Strategic orientation document for the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, « the Madad Fund ».
EQ 17 – Security

To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners' organisations? What is the scope for improvement?

This question aims to assess the extent to which the design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions took into account the security situation, both within Syria and in neighbouring countries. In particular, the Evaluation Question aims to assess the quality of the operations design regarding the security situation. It also examines the role of ECHO in terms of promoting safe humanitarian access for partner organisations in low-security contexts.

**EQ 17-Security – Answer Box**

Evidence shows that ECHO-funded actions were based on in-depth knowledge of the security context, and that ECHO and its partners were able to adapt programmes to the fast-changing security situation in the field. Review of ECHO projects inside Syria show that 97% of funded projects included a suitably robust assessment of the security situation, despite the difficulty of gathering data in the country. As the security situation for international staff changed inside Syria, ECHO adapted its approach to programming, most notably inside AOG-controlled areas. The introduction of remote management guidelines helped ECHO partners minimise transfer of security risks to local partners and provide risk mitigation and training wherever possible. ECHO's support to the NGO security platform INSO also helped promote safe delivery of humanitarian aid by NGO partners and non-partners alike. Through both these efforts and its early and continued support for remotely-managed operations in hard-to-reach areas inside Syria, ECHO can be judged to have eased safe humanitarian access in areas of high risk.

To what extent did ECHO-funded operations take account of the security context?

ECHO-funded actions were based on an in-depth knowledge of the security context:

- Security assessments are conducted by the partners when designing the projects, and the analyses are reported to ECHO through the dedicated sections in the Single Form. The review of the “assumptions and risks” and “contingency measures” sections in the Single Forms of ECHO projects inside Syria indeed showed that 97% of funded projects included a suitably robust assessment of the security situation, despite the difficulty of gathering data in the country. This means that only 3% (two out of 68) of the projects inside Syria included no (or limited) assessment of the risks in their Single Forms. And in the two exceptional cases the low level of security assessment was highlighted by ECHO in the related FichOp.

- ECHO is also equipped to evaluate the situation on the ground on a real-time basis, notably thanks to its extended field presence and expertise. As highlighted in EQ6 on
added value, ECHO has an extensive field presence, strong in-house capacity, and a feet-on-the-ground capability that has led to a strong capacity to analyse and adapt to the context. In addition, ECHO’s regular contacts with the UN, ICRC and Member States offer important windows of discussion on the security situation.

There is evidence of ECHO’s capacity to adapt to the changing security context:

- Partners have highlighted that they have a good working relationship and dialogue with ECHO TA in the field. This dialogue is permanent, as changing security patterns in a given operational environment would imply the need to reassess the situation and to reallocate activities if required. Any change is then discussed and agreed with ECHO.

- In Lebanon for instance, it has been reported that whenever necessary ECHO demonstrated high readiness to discuss the implications for programming of a degraded security situation which limits access and necessitates adaptation. Similarly, sensitive areas of Lebanon (Beqaa plain, Tripoli area) are under permanent scrutiny by ECHO TA with a view to possible adaptation of programmes as required by the level of threats. In Syria, as an immediate response to changing frontlines, projects that targeted the new accessible areas of the Idlib governorate have been implemented.

To what extent did ECHO promote safe humanitarian access in situations of low security?

With the exception of cross-border operations from Iraq, ECHO has not been directly involved in either facilitation of humanitarian access inside Syria or the negotiations with armed groups on behalf of its partners. Nevertheless, ECHO has adapted its approach somewhat to ensure safe access in low security situations:

- First, by applying remote management inside Syria once the risk to international staff became apparent. Following attacks on international staff, ECHO’s partners decided to withdraw its international staff from inside Syria and to change its approach. ECHO was fully supportive both in accepting that its partners pull out their international staff, and in supporting their continued operations inside AOG-controlled areas with remotely-managed operations.

- Second, by developing guidelines on remote management that addressed security concerns, among other issues (see EQ9). These guidelines were a policy-level attempt to avoid transfer of security risks to local partners. Indeed, through the related training provided to its partners, and for instance through inclusion of local staff risks in monitoring requirements, ECHO sought to mitigate the risks conducting humanitarian aid operations in this manner. In addition, ECHO partners have also implemented their own measures to ensure the security of local staff delivering aid inside Syria. Such measures included for instance training of local staff.

ECHO has been involved in the promotion of the security and safety of humanitarian personnel:

- In fact ECHO has been financing security-focused platforms at both regional and country levels. At regional level ECHO has funded the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) that supports the safety of aid workers by establishing safety coordination platforms in insecure contexts.
At country level, ECHO has financed the Safety Security Committee Lebanon (SSCL), which includes collection and dissemination of safety and security information. In Iraq, ECHO has supported NGOs and their own social worker networks, through which risks and danger are identified and appropriate measures taken.

ECHO has also provided financial support for their partners, to facilitate the putting in place of adapted security measures, including security training events. The SSCL, for instance, was one of the outcomes of an ECHO project with DRC. Other projects, such as the Emergency Assistance and Enhanced Protection to Conflict-Affected Palestine Refugees project, had a share of their budget dedicated to security training.
EQs 18 – Advocacy

How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of humanitarian advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line interventions, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)? How could ECHO improve in this respect?

This Evaluation Question aims at understanding to what extent ECHO has conducted activities in terms of advocacy and to what extent such activities have contributed to change, for instance policy changes in neighbouring countries policies or in donor approaches.

Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO in the context of the Syrian crisis. Stakeholders (including representatives from ECHO) explained that ECHO devoted important resources to this area.

Such efforts were conducted at different levels within ECHO, from the more political to the more operational level. They targeted various audiences (national bodies, the UN, other donors, etc.), and concerned different subjects (access, the importance of providing a response to underserved areas like in the far East region in Turkey, visa granting, technical issues, etc.).

But the field, regional and global advocacy strategies were not fully linked up. This limited the overall effectiveness of ECHO’s advocacy work. If core messages were centrally agreed and prioritized it would have been far more effective. Nevertheless, context specific advocacy messages also had their specific comparative advantages. The difficulty can be summarized as the challenge of “how to be global enough and specific enough” to ensure that there is a global coherence in a diversified approach.

There are cases in which ECHO attains its goal in terms of advocacy, as well as cases where it did not (or not yet). There are also examples of missed opportunities. This does not allow a general statement of ECHO’s effectiveness in this respect, but it is clear that stakeholders underlined the importance of ECHO in this respect and were in favour of continued emphasis on advocacy by ECHO.

To what extent was advocacy a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries?

Several elements indicate that advocacy has been a priority of ECHO in the context of the Syrian crisis:

- ECHO representatives underlined that they spent a substantial part of their time on advocacy - one person even estimating this at one-third of their time;
- other stakeholders stated that ECHO devoted substantial resources to advocacy, also highlighting that they appreciated this and that it was an important role for ECHO;
Such advocacy activities were conducted at different levels within ECHO, targeting various audiences and covering a broad range of subjects:

- Advocacy also took place on a day-to-day basis in the countries, but several missions at the highest level took also place (Commissioner, Director General, Head of Operations of the B unit). This was especially important when it came to difficult negotiations with Damascus Authorities (on issues such as visas, presence of NGO, etc.)
- Such advocacy targeted different audiences: national and regional authorities, UN bodies, partners and donors, but it also took place within ECHO itself.
- It concerned different types of subject:
  - regarding authorities in the different neighboring countries, ECHO advocated:
    - on facilitating access, registration, visa granting, protection;
    - to obtain authorization for activities for non-camp refugees (Iraq, Erbil, joint advocacy by NRC, and ECHO); and to ensure that basic protection and security provisions are taken care of when supporting camps;
    - on the necessity of the aid system being able to monitor support from Damascus for cross-border operations;
    - on the importance of providing a response to under-served areas (as in Turkey for the far East region);
    - on humanitarian principles.
  - regarding partners: promotion of unconditional cash, pressing for improved quality in specific technical areas in market analysis, in WASH (case in Lebanon), etc.;
  - regarding the UN: advocacy for better coordination, for more engagement on access and protection, for better information management;
  - regarding other donors: for more engagement on political issues;
  - regarding several other stakeholders: support for the UN Security Council Resolution 2139 (February 2014) on ceasing attacks against civilians, etc.

To what extent did ECHO advocacy contribute to concrete changes in approach or policy neighbouring countries and among other donors, including in terms of coordination with Governments and better access inside Syria?

There are examples of successes and failures in terms of advocacy, as well as some missed opportunities:

- In some cases there are indications that the advocacy reached its goals (or part of them):
  - in Turkey, for instance, ECHO contributed to opening up the policy space for the GoT to respond to the needs of urban refugees, especially in the far east;
  - In Jordan, stakeholders explained that ECHO managed, together with DFID and BPRM, to gather wide support for the Jordan health system;
  - ECHO’s advocacy, together with DFID and USAID, on cross-border operations which, according to stakeholders, largely contributed to the joint decision of these donors to engage on a substantial scale with cross-border operations, even at a time where the UN Resolution was not yet available to give the required legal framework to these operations; this also included examples where ECHO contributed to increased coordination.
But the team came also across several cases where advocacy had (not yet) succeeded, *viz.*:
- as an example, ECHO did not succeed in pressing WFP to move more quickly on the cash system (see EQ 10 on cash for more details);
- similarly ECHO did not manage to enhance coordination between UNHCR and OCHA (see EQ 14 on coordination);
- ECHO’s advocacy with respect to the opening of the border in Lebanon for Syrian refugees in difficult situations (wounded people, escaping military operations, etc.) also did not generate the expected result, this also being the case in Jordan; in both cases the authorities questioned Europe’s willingness to “open the borders”.

Some cases were also identified where ECHO could have usefully advocated but did not really seize the opportunity. This concerns for instance the “30% rule” in Jordan (namely that 30% of NGO support should go to Jordanians), in which according to some stakeholders ECHO could have played a major role but was in fact only marginally involved.

A point raised by several stakeholders is that field, regional and global advocacy strategies were not linked. This undermined the overall effectiveness of ECHO’s advocacy work. If core messages had been centrally agreed and prioritized it would have been far more effective.

Although the advocacy has not always (or has not yet) reached its objectives, *stakeholders underlined the importance of ECHO’s role in this respect and were in favour of continued emphasis on advocacy by ECHO.*
5. Conclusions

This chapter presents the Conclusions emerging from the evaluation findings and analysis. They are structured in the following groups so as to facilitate an overall synthesis:

- The overall statement on ECHO’s response;
- Conclusions 1 to 3 on the speed and coverage of ECHO’s funding in response to the immediate crisis;
- Conclusions 4 to 8 all concern the way in which ECHO adapted its response modalities to the specific features of the Syrian crisis;
- Conclusions 9 to 11 concern the extent to which ECHO supported coordination, advocacy and linking relief, rehabilitation and development;
- Conclusion 12 examines how ECHO dealt with the protracted nature of the crisis.

Each conclusion refers where relevant to the evaluation question(s) and other sources on which it is based.

Overall statement on ECHO’s response

ECHO allocated significant funds in response to the Syrian crisis. It contributed to the improvement of living conditions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations inside Syria through a rapid response across five countries, in both camp and non-camp settings. ECHO also made important contributions to the setting-up of the infrastructure required for a large scale humanitarian response during 2012 and 2013. This included building partner capacity and presence in the region, developing needs assessment approaches and information tools and systems, and establishing coordination mechanisms at a regional level.

ECHO’s regional presence was stronger than other donors in the response. This enabled it to provide its partners with close support and advice on the basis of a well-informed understanding of the operational context in which they worked. ECHO also showed significant adaptability to the specific and evolving context inside Syria and its neighbouring countries.

Moving beyond the initial phases of the crisis will require significant attention in order to adapt to its protracted nature. Overlapping priorities emerge in this context, including the need for continued emergency response for those directly affected by the conflict and longer-term needs of displaced and host populations alike. ECHO will need to continue adapting its response to meet this evolving context, as well as ensuring good coordination with those actors best able to respond to longer-term needs.
Conclusion C1 to C3: On speed and coverage of the funding

C1 – In the first phase of the crisis between 2012 and end of 2013, ECHO made a considerable and important investment in the rapid scale-up of humanitarian aid operations in Syria and its neighbouring countries, which contributed to improved living conditions for affected populations.

Based on the inventory, EQ 5, and EQ 11

In 2012, in response to the outbreak of the crisis, ECHO immediately increased its funding to €156m. This was raised again to €357m in 2013; an increase of 129%. This rapid scale-up of funding allowed ECHO to contribute to the crisis response on two fronts. Firstly, it provided a cross-sectoral and multi-country response both in camp and non-camp settings. In terms of effectiveness, ECHO’s assistance was found to be well targeted to the right beneficiaries and in line with the priority needs in the region, taking into account the contributions of other actors. In this way, ECHO contributed to improved living conditions for IDPs and other affected populations inside Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries.

Secondly, ECHO made important contributions to the setting-up of large-scale humanitarian aid operations in countries where humanitarian capacities and expertise were either not present or not adequate to address the rapidly growing crisis. This phase of the crisis involved the opening up of country offices for several ECHO partners, the expansion of UN and NGO teams, the setting up of needs assessment approaches and information tools and systems, the definition of programmes and strategies, and the development of coordination mechanisms. These processes have a considerable positive influence on the early stages of the crisis.

C2 – ECHO was the fourth largest international donor to the Syrian crisis over 2012-2014. But the scale and geographical scope of the crisis challenged ECHO’s ability to provide a transparently needs-based response.

Based on the inventory and EQ 11

The massive scale and complexity of the Syria crisis has proved extremely challenging for all donors. The response has involved financing from diverse sources including host governments, international humanitarian aid, development finance, and from both OECD and non-OECD donors alike.

But the global response has not kept pace with the escalating humanitarian needs. UN appeals remain under-funded, forcing, inter alia, WFP to suspend a food vouchers programme serving 1.7 million Syrian refugees in December 2014. Likewise, inside Syria, the number of people in need has grown at six times the rate of the global international humanitarian response from 2011 to January 2015 (see Figure 18 above).

Over 2012-2014, ECHO was the fourth largest international donor to the Syrian crisis, contributing 8% of the total humanitarian contribution over this period. Nevertheless, the scale and geographical scope of needs has been particularly difficult for ECHO to respond
to within fixed budget ceilings. At times, notably in 2013, large allocations to Syria may have prejudiced ECHO’s ability to respond outside the region. Conversely, other major crises (e.g. Ebola in 2014) may have compromised the Syria response.

Likewise, ECHO funding allocations per country varied considerably, without clear link to the humanitarian needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Allocations (€m)</th>
<th># Refugees (m)</th>
<th>Allocations / Refugee (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria (IDPs)</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Country allocations per refugee will inevitably be impacted by many factors, including the cost of delivery in each country, the varying degrees of engagement of host countries and presence of other donors. Nevertheless, the link between these determining factors and the size of ECHO’s response was not always clear, with notably shortfalls cited in Turkey.

C3 – ECHO’s funding levels fluctuated significantly over the period 2012-2014 without a clear link to changing humanitarian needs. The lack of predictability hampered programming and implementation.

ECHO’s funding allocations fluctuated over time, with the global amount (€163m) falling back in 2014 to a level similar to the one of 2012, representing a decrease of about 50%. This applied to all the countries individually (with decreases always above 50%), except for Turkey, where there was a slight increase.

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81 To allow comparison to ECHO funding over 2012-2014, refugee numbers are here taken from UNHCR statistics as of December 2014. These figures have changed over the course of 2015. Source: Evaluation Inventory based on ECHO HOPE database; UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, data extracted on 5 May 2015; UN OCHA Syria Humanitarian Bulletin January 2015.
Although in some cases the evaluation could link the evolution of funding allocations to the evolution of needs (for instance the global increase in response to the massive influx of refugees in 2013), globally the linkage to needs were not clear. ECHO conducted annual analyses of needs using the Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) but this does not include an estimate of the level of resources required and there was no clear methodology to link IAF findings to the final budget level. Nor is the budget directly linked to the UN appeals process and response plans. Accordingly, some evolutions are difficult to explain, such as the budget contraction in 2014, in a context of continuing rise in refugee numbers.

ECHO did seek to mitigate the impact of these fluctuations on its programming partners. Firstly, by using contributions in 2013 to cover the first quarter of their partners’ operations in 2014 (and, in some cases, the entire first semester). And secondly, by privileging support to international NGOs (INGOs) in 2014 to ensure that, where possible, their assistance was not disrupted (as opposed to UN agencies which have stronger cash flows).

Whilst the overall perspective has been to increase ECHO funds to the region since 2012, the fluctuations between annual allocations have been criticised both by ECHO representatives and partners, who underlined the difficulty of dealing with the lack of predictability of the funding. In neighbouring countries in particular, the reductions between 2013 and 2014 forced ECHO to focus on only the most direct emergency needs, and to significantly cut the number of supported partners. This made it harder for partners to address the resilience of refugee households in the context of an increasingly protracted crisis.

Conclusions C4-C8: On adapting the response to unique features of the crisis

- The nature of the Syrian crisis presents the international humanitarian community with a unique combination of challenges and opportunities, stemming from a number of factors including:
  - **Security risks**: delivering aid where safe access for aid workers is extremely limited.
  - **Urban settings**: responding to a large-scale refugee crisis in a largely urbanised setting.
  - **Large-scale**: responding to a rapid refugee influx of unprecedented scale.
  - **Middle-income countries**: a different type of host government interaction.

- In this context, ECHO sought to tailor its response to the specificities of the crisis, and its ability to do so was cited as one of ECHO’s added-values compared to other donors. Conclusions C4-C8 outline the specific adjustments that ECHO made in this case. But
it should also be noted that ECHO was aided by two aspects of ECHO’s global modus operandi: i) its strong field presence and technical capacity in the region, which helped ensure that response options were adapted to the specificities of the crisis; and ii) its use of partner context and response analyses to justify the operational decisions taken at project level, rather than enforcing a top-down model on partner organizations as a condition of funding.

C4 – ECHO was innovative in supporting the large scale use of unconditional cash transfers to meet refugee needs in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria.

Based on EQ 10

ECHO supported the provision of unconditional cash transfers to meet the basic needs of refugees arriving in some of Syria’s neighbouring countries. The use of this modality proved an efficient and effective way to deliver aid in the largely urbanised, middle-income countries bordering Syria, where the financial systems and electronic transfer mechanisms are well developed, and the markets can supply many of the diverse goods and services required. Despite strong ECHO attempts to unify the delivery of a single cash transfer to refugees, parallel systems persisted in several countries – with UNHCR providing unconditional cash transfers alongside WFP food vouchers. Nevertheless it was and is clear that not all needs could be met through cash transfers. Consequently, projects to deliver complementary goods and services, including case management approaches, rightly remained in place.

C5 – ECHO’s support for remote management operations inside Syria enabled it to reach people in need inside areas controlled by armed opposition groups whilst mitigating the associated risks.

Based on EQ 9

ECHO helped to build the capacity of several partners to conduct operations inside AOG-controlled areas of Syria through local partners. By developing and sharing guidelines on remote management, as well as conducting training workshops and amending monitoring requirements, ECHO was able to support operations inside AOG-controlled areas whilst mitigating the associated risks. This in turn allowed ECHO to maintain its independence by ensuring delivery of humanitarian aid in both AOG- and government-held regions of Syria.

C6 – The humanitarian community is still learning how to adapt to urban crises, and the degree of adaptation to urban contexts varied considerably between ECHO-funded operations. The absence of a visible urban strategy looks to have hampered efforts to ensure common standards are met across the portfolio or to capitalise on lessons learned from previous programmes.

Based on EQ 7
In 2016, the humanitarian community as a whole is still at the steep-end of the learning curve regarding urban response. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that ECHO did not have a clearly developed strategy or set of funding guidelines for urban response during the evaluation period. Nevertheless, the absence of a strategic approach looks to have hampered efforts to ensure common standards are met across the portfolio or to capitalise on lessons learned from previous programmes.

Whilst some ECHO partners did provide examples of innovative responses to the specific challenges facing displaced populations and host communities in urban settings, the degree of adaptation to the urban nature of the crisis varied considerably between ECHO-funded projects. Particular problems were observed regarding the engagement of municipal authorities in design and implementation – a critical area of best practice emerging from the literature on urban response.

C7 – ECHO’s use of multi-country contracts facilitated the rapid scale-up of contracts in the early phase response, but hampered timely implementation of ECHO-funded operations from 2014 onwards.

Based on EQ 13

ECHO introduced multi-country contracts during the rapid scale-up of contract volumes in 2013. This reduced the administrative burden on ECHO desk staff and arguably sped up the contracting at a time when significant effort was required to scale-up the capacity for humanitarian action in the region. But as time went on, the use of multi-country contracts hampered timely implementation of ECHO-funded operations, creating unnecessary transaction costs and unwieldy administrative procedures. In addition, no real synergies were possible between country sub-components, which were by necessity implemented as separate contracts forced into one administrative dossier. The divergence in contexts between countries in the region meant that it was impractical for partners to implement single contracts across four or five different countries. Moreover, the combination of multi-country contracts and single-country desks within ECHO complicated the chains of command and increased ECHO response times for contract signature and modification requests. It further created a problem of accountability, with the signatory being held accountable for operations across the whole region whilst only actually following operations in one country. For these reasons, ECHO understandably reverted to country-specific contracts for 2015-2016.

C8 – ECHO engaged with authorities in host countries, but was in a difficult position to deal with these authorities, which hampered its capacity to build a partnership with them to enhance the response to the crisis.

Based on EQ 2 & EQ4, EQ 18

Engaging with authorities in host countries, is important for different purposes:

- to facilitate the provision of support provided by ECHO and its partners;
- to coordinate better with these authorities that provide support themselves;
- to provide support to host populations where this has been decided;
- to help host countries to provide support to refugees.
There are several examples of ECHO and its partners engaging with authorities of partner countries and local structures with these purposes. This concerned, among other things, advocacy on specific matters (e.g. for access to specific zones), coordination activities, but also support that was geared to host communities (about 30% of the projects supported can be related to host community support).

In some cases this engagement led to the expected results; in others not (see for instance the next conclusion on the coordination with host governments). In some cases, local authorities (such as municipalities) considered there was not sufficient consultation for instance.

Overall, it seems that several difficulties hampered ECHO’s capacity to build a partnership with the authorities of the hosting countries:

- The host countries are all middle income countries, some of which with a solid capacity to deal themselves with refugees, and with sometimes specific policies (like the necessity to direct a share of the support to host populations, even when there was no evidence that they were the most in need) that were difficult to deal with;
- The burden on the host countries was enormous, with very high levels of refugees to host, and with political repercussions on the willingness of host governments to host refugees;

This led to missed opportunities in terms of synergies between ECHO and Government support, and in terms of ECHO’s capacity to influence the host Governments who are key providers of assistance.

**Conclusion C9-C11: On coordination, advocacy and LRRD**

C9 - ECHO invested significant resources in high-level, regional coordination, the success of which was hampered by external factors. The decision to redirect resources towards more achievable targets was made too late. ECHO did however have greater success in supporting technical level coordination, through working groups and project-level information sharing.

Strategy-level coordination efforts were hampered by the ambiguity between UNHCR’s and OCHA’s mandates in an L3 crisis that includes an intertwined set of refugee, IDP and host community populations. In some instances this ambiguity led to complicated coordination structures and loss of potentially useful information-share. ECHO rightly identified this as a problem and sought to tackle it through advocacy towards the UN agencies in Amman and other countries. But ultimately, the inter-agency tensions

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82 Anticipation of refugee flows, for example, might have been improved by increased information-sharing between cross-border activities (coordinated by OCHA) and neighbouring country coordination activities in Turkey (coordinated by UNHCR).
remained, and UNHCR’s success in leading coordination efforts has remained uneven across the countries affected.83

- Moreover, ECHO’s efforts to encourage a coordinated regional response plan further complicated the task of improving inter-agency coordination. The time and resource investments in this endeavour were high, and the return limited. With the exception of regional coordination of cross-border activities, many stakeholders argued that it would be more efficient to strip away the regional coordination efforts and allow autonomous operations in each country. The priority at regional level was identified as coordination between the various cross border and cross line operations.

- Coordination between host governments and international humanitarian agencies was also problematic. In Turkey, notably, coordination between NGOs and the national and local governments was weak. This hampered coordination of the response for non-camp refugees and limited the potential for developing medium and long term response plans. ECHO had limited impact on improving NGO-government coordination, and appears to have had little traction in the coordination processes that exist between the government and UN agencies.

- At the technical level, ECHO contributed to coordination platforms and working groups in the neighbouring countries and at the regional level. This action helped partners to increase project-level coordination. Examples include ECHO’s support for cash working groups across the region, its encouragement of regular partner coordination exercises in UNHCR camps in Iraq, and its support to cross-border cooperation platforms in Turkey.

C10 - ECHO was recognized as a significant player in advocacy at a range of levels. But results were mixed, with notable difficulties regarding advocacy towards host governments.

Based on EQ 18

ECHO dedicated substantial efforts to advocacy initiatives at different levels of the organization (including the Commissioner level), on a wide variety of subjects (access, on support to under-served areas, etc.), and targeting different audiences (UN, host governments, etc.). Stakeholders appreciated and underlined the importance of this role played by ECHO. ECHO reached successes in this respect, for instance by contributing to the Government of Turkey allowing NGOs to respond to the needs of urban refugees in the far-east. But, as mentioned above, there were also examples of a less constructive dialogue between ECHO and host country governments, notably on issues such as coordination between the host government and NGOs in Turkey or policy stances such as the exclusion of livelihood activities and inclusion of host community support in Jordan.

83 In Turkey and Jordan, for example, the capacity of UNHCR to coordinate the refugee response was criticised. In Lebanon the situation improved when UNHCR, with ECHO’s support, took the lead and established a broad-based coordination programme that included NGOs it was not financing.
C11 – ECHO, EEAS and NEAR sought to build a strategic burden-share to tackle a crisis that simultaneously presents short- and long-term needs. But results at the operational level remain uneven, and the higher level obstacles to tackling refugee livelihoods remain.

Over the course of the evaluation period, the Syrian crisis evolved from a short-term displacement crisis into a protracted one. It now presents humanitarian donors with a broad spectrum of challenges, including both short-term and long-term needs simultaneously (e.g., the emergency needs for the displaced, capacity to respond to additional refugee outflows in the near future, the long-term livelihood needs of refugees, and the pressures on host communities to adapt to large refugee populations for the foreseeable future).

In this context, ECHO and the other EU institutions sought to build the framework for a strategic burden-share in the response. Inter-service meetings at headquarter level aimed to establish the boundaries and objectives of the different EU funding instruments at play in the region. At country level ECHO and the Delegations established Joint Humanitarian and Development Frameworks (JHDFs) to structure the interactions between humanitarian and development programming. And the creation of the MADAD Trust Fund should allow European Commission and Member State contributions to be channelled together to tackle the intersection between humanitarian and development needs.

But the fruits of these strategic efforts have not had sufficient time to be seen at the operational level. Whilst some instances of coordination and burden-sharing between financing mechanisms were observed, notably in Turkey, in other cases they were lacking. Involvement of ECHO partners with national and local authorities has been weak, even though coordination with them is a key element for future ECHO exit strategies.

Ultimately the socio-economic conditions of Syrian refugees will not improve until a combination of higher-level factors change, including: host governments granting access to their labour markets, investments being made in job facilitation, refugees who are unable to work being included in social safety nets, and third countries accepting responsibility for resettling a larger share of refugees. These factors present a range of strategic obstacles to the improvement of refugee livelihoods that call for renewed coordination on the part of EU institutions and Member States alike.

**Conclusion C12: On dealing with the protracted nature of the crisis**

C12 – ECHO has not yet adapted a strategy level focus on the protracted nature of the crisis, despite some progress in this respect.

In 2016, the Syrian crisis will enter its sixth year. The UN-backed political negotiations have yielded a cessation of violence, but the future of the conflict remains very difficult to predict. The response should therefore be equipped to handle the specific needs of a protracted
refugee crisis, as well as the challenge of providing assistance inside Syria as and when possible. This situation creates needs on multiple fronts: i) tackling the ongoing emergency needs of directly affected populations; ii) building their long-term resilience and self-help capacity; iii) ensuring that host communities receive enough support to handle the long-term pressures on them. As a result, clarity on the burden-share between ECHO, other EU institutions, Member States and other actors is vital.

ECHO made some progress towards this goal over the period 2012-2014:

- ECHO paid attention to the interplay between humanitarian funds and development resources, and maintained a close relationship with EU Delegations. The Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks, established at a country-level, have the potential to help clarify the burden-share between ECHO and other EU institutions. Over the period 2012-2014, this process remained in its infancy, with little evidence of its added value being fully materialized.

- ECHO worked closely with other funding EU instruments to build a more integrated response to the crisis. Examples of complementary investments from other instruments include:
  - The Instrument for Pre Accession (IPA) in Turkey. Implementation of IPA projects to support the refugee crisis has proved complicated and slow to establish. But the contribution of approximately €600m per year from the IPA has helped tackle the scale of needs in the country whilst allowing ECHO to focus its own resources on a narrower set of sectors and beneficiaries.
  - A European Trust Fund (ETF) for the Syria crisis response is starting up under DG NEAR. This is primarily related to long-term development funding on resilience but can be used as humanitarian aid instrument. In Turkey, the ETF will reallocate $18m from IPA funds and has earmarked $5m to WFP and $11m to UNICEF.
  - In Jordan and Lebanon, synergies were seen between ECHO’s work and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The ENI has provided support for education of refugees – an area not prioritized by ECHO.

But weaknesses remain in this area, notably regarding:

- **Engagement of local authorities and host governments to allow refugees the right to work.** Fostering the resilience of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries requires continued engagement with host governments on the issues of refugee livelihoods, the right to work and access to education. Likewise, supporting host communities as they adapt to resource pressures extending beyond the short-term, requires engagement with municipal authorities. ECHO and the EU Delegations have had limited impact on the policies of host governments with respect to refugee livelihoods. Likewise, strategic engagement of municipal authorities by ECHO and its partners was limited, even in urbanized areas bordering Syria where the refugee burden has been particularly high.

- **The predictability of ECHO funding levels for the Syrian crisis.** Predictability of funding allocations can facilitate strategic planning and linkages with long-term development financing. But as outlined in Conclusion 2, above, ECHO funding allocations for the crisis varied significantly year-on-year, with a 50% decrease between 2013 and 2014. Moreover, the link between the evolution of allocations and the evolution
of needs was not always clear, making it harder for ECHO to build synergies with other EU institutions working on the longer-term perspective.

- **Ability to support the resilience of populations inside AOG-controlled areas of Syria.** ECHO’s policy on supporting remote management operations has helped ECHO partners to provide essential emergency assistance to populations in hard-to-reach areas of Syria. But the restriction of support to directly life-saving assistance has been questioned by many partners. As the crisis inside Syria continues with no obvious end in sight, the need for resilience activities in these areas increases. Many ECHO partners are already conducting such activities with funds from other donors, but the scale of need presents a case for ECHO to consider ways for it to support similar projects.
6. Recommendations

The evaluation makes a total of 5 recommendations for the future response of ECHO to the Syrian crisis. Each of the recommendations are directed towards DG ECHO, although several require interaction with third parties to work together in order to improve the overall response.

The recommendations are intended to point the way towards further improvements in ECHO’s response based on previous successes and lessons learned from the early-phase response (2012-2014), as outlined in the conclusions presented above. But the evolving status of UN-supported political negotiations – including a cessation of hostilities announced in February 2016 – make it difficult to predict the context in which ECHO will be operating in the future. The recommendations made in this evaluation are therefore based on a working hypothesis that large-scale returns to Syria are unlikely in the near future, and therefore that the protracted refugee crisis will continue over the next 3-5 years.84

R1 – DG ECHO should provide, and/or advocate for the provision of, adequate and predictable resources to respond to the humanitarian needs of those affected by the Syrian crisis.

Based on Conclusions 1-3

As outlined in Conclusions 1-3, the allocations made by ECHO are not transparently aligned with assessed needs. The contributions of ECHO and other humanitarian donors have decreased sharply in 2014 and 2015, whilst at the same time the number of refugees has risen sharply. This has led to significant underfunding of UN appeals and cuts in assistance to affected populations.

Some actors have called for radical revision of the aid architecture for the regional crisis in Syria,85 and commitments have been made to build predictable, multi-year funding mechanisms that strengthen coherence and effectiveness in responding to a complex, protracted crisis.86 Given that ECHO itself cannot provide multi-year funding, it is recommended that ECHO instead considers the following actions to facilitate adequate humanitarian funding in the Syria crisis:

b) Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs that have been visibly identified by ECHO through a transparent triangulation of available needs assessments including, but not limited to, the UN-led Strategic Response Plan.

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84 As per, for example, ODI (2016) Enhancing aid architecture in the regional response to the Syria crisis.
85 Idem.
c) Actively seek additional voluntary contributions from EU member states to ensure that adequate funding for Syria does not adversely affect ECHO’s ability to meet needs in other humanitarian crises.

d) To make the best use of limited resources, ECHO should explore options for achieving cost efficiency savings through the provision of more predictable funding to core response agencies.

e) Continue to work with other EC funding instruments to identify opportunities for complementary development financing of interventions to reduce the pressure on humanitarian resources – without compromising humanitarian principles.

R2 – Further adapt the ECHO programme to respond to the specific context of the Syrian crisis.

Based on Conclusions 4-8

The Syrian crisis presents an atypical humanitarian context. The crisis includes a large-scale, regional displacement of unprecedented scale; across a collection of largely urbanized, middle-income countries; with significant security risks to humanitarian actors inside Syria. Over the first three years of the crisis, ECHO sought to tailor its support to these specificities. Many aspects of its response proved appropriate and effective - such as the use of cash and vouchers to meet basic needs. However, areas of support to adapt future programming include:

R2.1. Given the protracted nature of the conflict, ECHO should consider relaxing the current limitation in the remote management guidelines to limit interventions to life-saving activities. ECHO partners have now established close connections with local partners who have demonstrated their capacity to provide principled humanitarian aid in inside Syria. ECHO should consider funding livelihood support projects through remote management protocols where suitably justified.

R2.2. Given the huge protection needs associate with the Syria crisis, and the importance of ECHO in supporting this sector, it is recommended that ECHO should further prioritize the funding of protection-related activities. This should include dialogue and capacity building with implementing partners ensure protection support can be delivered in a timely fashion.

R2.3. In a context of continuing violence and instability inside Syria further refugee outflows may be anticipated. ECHO should put in place a strong and flexible capacity to respond to the needs of new refugee caseloads.

R2.4. ECHO should further promote the use of coordinated unconditional cash transfers to meet basic needs at scale. ECHO supported unconditional cash transfers in Lebanon and Jordan that covered a range of refugee needs in neighboring countries. Multi-purpose cash transfers proved both efficient and effective in meeting
a basket of basic needs in the context of highly urbanized host countries with functional markets and banking systems. It is recommended that ECHO should further develop this approach through:

a) Building the pre-requisites for coordinated delivery programmes focusing support away from agency level initiatives to coordinated needs assessments, common beneficiary registration systems, unified targeting criteria and establishing a shared infrastructure for cash distributions.

b) Engage in a high level strategic dialogue within the UN to clarify the mandates of sectoral agencies for the use of unconditional cash transfers – as opposed to vouchers.

c) In concert with likeminded donors, develop advocacy strategies to address host Government concerns on the use of cash transfers for refugees.

**R3 – Focus on country level coordination and contracting arrangements, augmented by carefully prioritized elements of regional coordination.**

*Based on Conclusions 7 & 9*

The Syria crisis has been framed as a regional crisis since the outset. There has been a substantial investment by ECHO in establishing regional coordination structures. Contracting was initially done through large regional contracts with ECHO partners. However, the value of the regional coordination structures has been limited and regional contracting inefficient. It is therefore recommended that:

a) ECHO should reduce funding of regional coordination activities. Continuing support to regional efforts should focus on coordination between the various cross-border operations and operations inside Syria.

b) ECHO should consider investing in strengthening the capacity of UNHCR to discharge its responsibility for country level humanitarian coordination through an Emergency Response Capacity grant at the central level.

c) Phase out any remaining multi-country contracts and replace with single-country contracts.

**R4 – Increase direct dialogue with the national authorities in the countries hosting refugees.**

*Based on Conclusion 10*

The vast majority of the response to the needs of refugees are being met by the authorities and communities in neighboring countries. ECHO has established weak links to national and local government structures. To some extent it has been able to utilize the established communication channels of the EU Delegations to communicate with Governments. The limited interaction also reflects a desire to remain ‘independent’.
The limited direct interaction carries costs. Strategic programmatic synergies may be lost through exclusion from key coordination forums. Critical opportunities for advocacy may be curtailed – including maintaining or increasing humanitarian and policy ‘space’ for the operations of ECHO partners. Enhancing coordination with host governments at national and local level could therefore improve the effectiveness of ECHO’s response whilst helping to prepare for ECHO’s exit.

It is therefore recommended that ECHO should systematically seek to strengthen its relationships with host governments in the region through regular liaison meetings with national counterparts during the missions of ECHO functionnaires, supplemented by periodic meetings with Field Experts. These meetings should be used to discuss issues including:

- Advocacy for humanitarian space and programmes and improved coordination between ECHO partners and Government. An additional issue for discussion is the inclusion of host communities as beneficiaries of humanitarian programming.

- ECHO should promote the principle that any assistance to host populations should be needs based, not policy driven. The level of need of host beneficiaries would need to be equivalent to the targeting criteria used for refugees. ECHO needs to better communicate why it cannot use humanitarian funds to support domestic political objectives.

R5 – Build greater synergies with EU Delegations and other EC funding instruments.

In the context of the Syria crisis it is understood that there is not a linear progression between different EC funding instruments. Instead they need to be used simultaneously and there is no uniform pattern of chronological transition between them. ECHO has made progress in building links to other funding streams, especially at the Brussels level. More could be done in a closer integration of ECHO and other instruments at country level. Specific steps in this process are:

- **Strengthen the participation of ECHO in joint planning processes with the EU Delegations.** The Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks developed at country level provide a framework for strategic cooperation between ECHO and the Delegations at the field level. The level of cooperation between ECHO and the EUDs in the region in developing, and implementing, JHDFs remains mixed, but with several very positive experiences. It is recommended that ECHO should prioritize its engagement in these planning processes at national level.

- **Build on best practices of integrated programming.** ECHO already had several examples of good practice which can be developed. In particular the use of the ECHO Children of Peace fund has been used to rapidly start educational support to refugees,
which were then followed by the larger, more predictable, but slower to mobilize EC development funds.

**Build towards potential exit strategies for ECHO.** The main strategy for an exit in neighbouring countries appears to be a combination of establishing the right to work for refugees with the ability to do so, and inclusion in a safety net for those who are chronically poor and unable to work. ECHO strategy does not yet specifically contribute to achieving this transition. ECHO could seek to explore this option in greater detail with the EU Delegations, to ensure that refugees can be covered by support to safety nets in neighbouring countries over the next two to three years.
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Terms of Reference

For the evaluation of the ECHO response to

The Syrian Crisis

2012 - 2014
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GENERAL CONTEXT

1. The legal base for Humanitarian Aid is provided by Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR; No.

87 "http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-the-functioning-of-the-european-union-and-comments/part_5-
external-action-by-the-union/title_3-cooperation-with-third-countries-and-humanitarian-aid/chapter_3-humanitarian-aid/502-
article-214.html"

Terms of Reference – The Syrian Crisis - 2011 / 2014
The objectives of EU humanitarian assistance are outlined in these documents, and could – for evaluation purposes – be summarised as follows: From a donor perspective and in coordination with other main humanitarian actors, to provide the right amount and type of aid, at the right time, and in an appropriate way, to the populations most affected by natural and/or manmade disasters, in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity.

2. The humanitarian aid budget is mainly implemented through annual funding decisions\(^{89}\) adopted by the Commission, which are directly based on the HAR. A funding decision is taken for humanitarian operations in each country/region at the time of establishing the budget, or for each unforeseen intervention as needed. The funding decision specifies the amount, the objectives, maximum amounts to be financed by objective, potential partners, and possible areas of intervention. Since 2011 the funding decisions are referred to as ‘Humanitarian Implementation Plans’ (HIP).

3. The Communication on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development\(^{90}\) (LRRD) stresses that better relief can contribute to development; better development can reduce the need for emergency relief; and better rehabilitation can facilitate the transition between two. The EU’s contribution to international efforts in protracted crises and post-crisis situations could be improved by better integrating the long-term perspective into relief operations, adaptation of development programmes and instruments to allow for quicker and more effective take-over from relief interventions and improved donor coordination. Furthermore, LRRD is central to the overall purpose of conflict prevention\(^{91}\). The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid\(^{92}\) highlights the link between humanitarian early recovery operations and long-term development objectives as well as coherence and complementarity in EU responses to crises.

4. Protection is embedded in the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department ECHO's mandate as defined by the HAR and confirmed by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Its objective is to reduce physical and psychological insecurity for persons and groups under threat. When providing general assistance, humanitarian actors must ensure that their actions do not undermine protection, nor exacerbate existing inequalities (do-no-harm principle). The 2009 funding guidelines for humanitarian protection activities\(^{93}\) define the framework in

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90 Communication COM(96) 156; Communication COM (2001) 153 - An assessment

91 Communication of the Commission on Conflict Prevention COM (2001)211 final


EVALUATION OF THE ECHO RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

which ECHO may support protection activities, including the type of partners and the kind of activities it may finance. ECHO supports non-structural activities aimed at reducing the risk, and mitigating the impact of human-generated violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse of vulnerable individuals or groups in the context of humanitarian crises.

5. In situations of limited access to crisis areas, remote management may be the only way to deliver assistance to affected populations. DG ECHO defines remote management as an operational approach used to provide relief in situations where humanitarian access to disaster-affected populations is limited. Typically, this involves humanitarian agencies transferring operational responsibilities, usually carried out by expatriate staff, to national and local employees or implementing partners. The aim is to enable relief projects to be implemented in places where expatriates cannot go. The Instruction note\textsuperscript{94} for ECHO staff on Remote Management provides guidance for DG ECHO staff on remote management, explaining what considerations must be made before accepting an action including a remote management component. The note can be used by Partners as a reference. When the Partner puts in place a remote management mechanism, it is necessary to explain, in section 6.1 of the Single Form, the organizational and management structure in place and, in section 8.1 of the Single Form, how the monitoring arrangements have been adapted to this specific working environment.

6. Urban areas are complex settings to implement humanitarian assistance and are different from rural areas in terms of needs and vulnerabilities of the affected people. Furthermore, capacities, methods, and preparedness of local actors, institutions, and partners vary considerably between cities and regions. Humanitarian actors, including DG ECHO, have developed and extensive range of policies, practices, standards and tools for humanitarian work that are often more adapted to rural areas, but far less to urban areas. In the past few years a number of studies have been conducted to explore the drivers of urbanization and its consequences and implications to humanitarian aid. Some of these studies have formulated suggestions on how international humanitarian aid can best engage with the changing settlement patterns.

7. Strengthening the gender approach within the European Union's (EU) humanitarian aid is a commitment made in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which highlights the need to integrate gender considerations, to promote the active participation of women in humanitarian aid and to incorporate protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence. A Commission Staff Working document\textsuperscript{95} has been established to address this issue.

\textsuperscript{94} \url{http://dgecho-partners.helpdesk.eu/_media/actions_implementation/remote_management/remote_management_instructions.pdf}

\textsuperscript{95} \url{http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/Gender_SWD_2013.pdf}
8. In certain humanitarian disasters, the supply of food to markets and shops is sustained, yet, the affected population loses the means to buy it. In such cases, the **cash and voucher aid approach** (See DG ECHO Thematic Policy document n° 3\(^96\)) ensures humanitarian aid reaches directly those with the greatest need in a timely manner. The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) uses cash and vouchers and other alternative forms of humanitarian assistance only after thoroughly evaluating all options. It recognises that cash and voucher programmes have to be cautiously planned in order to prevent unintended inflation, depression or social imbalances in local markets while reaching the most vulnerable groups (women, children and the elderly). The use of cash and voucher has been increasing in recent years. The fastest increase of use of this system has been reached in providing food assistance – up 47% in 2013. Yet, all humanitarian sectors are open to cash and voucher programmes.

**SPECIFIC CONTEXT**

**The Syrian Crisis**

Since March 2011, the violent crackdown of the protests in Syria and the ensuing protection crisis has progressively developed into a widespread non-international armed conflict, with severe humanitarian consequences in Syria and its neighbouring countries. From a widespread guerrilla fare, the conflict has evolved towards a full-fledged civil war. Large portions of the territory have fallen under the temporary or permanent control of numerous Armed Opposition Groups, particularly in the North and the East of the country.

With the conflict entering its fourth year, the needs of the affected populations, including 10.8 million people inside the country (UNOCHA, June 2014) and over 3 million refugees (UNHCR, August 2014), as well as overstretched host communities in neighbouring countries, are of an unprecedented scale. The number of conflict-related deaths has surpassed 191,000 individuals and an estimated one million have been war-wounded. The Syrian crisis morphed from a humanitarian emergency to a multidimensional acute and protracted crisis directly affecting several countries in the region – in particular Lebanon and Jordan whose social, economic and structural capacity to deal with the ever growing influx of refugees has been stretched to the limits.

**Current situation**

**Inside Syria**

During the last year fighting has escalated along and across shifting frontlines between opposition and governmental forces. In one year, the number of people displaced has increased 6-fold (6.5 million people), the number of people in need of humanitarian aid by more than two and the number of refugees in neighbourhood countries by three.


Terms of Reference – The Syrian Crisis - 2011 / 2014
The situation in Syria is expected to deteriorate further as there are no immediate prospects for a military or political solution to the conflict, and all sides still have significant capacity to resist and inflict damage. The international community has yet to find a way forward after the breakdown of the Geneva II process. The assumption is that violence and instability will continue to prevail. The growing involvement of extremist and foreign non-state actors in the fighting in Syria poses a threat to stability in the region and beyond. The prospect of an international military coalition against the specific threat of the so-called Islamic State in Syria in Iraq also risks worsening the plight of civilian populations caught in the crossfire. The rapidly changing dynamics of the conflict within a frame of substantial international military operation will render access of humanitarian aid more complex and challenging.

The response to population’s needs has been hindered by the sharp deterioration of the security environment, the systematic obstruction of the Syrian authorities, and the growing number of armed opposition groups which impose serious difficulties to aid agencies and at times prevent aid from reaching civilian populations. More than ever, all available options must be explored to support principled humanitarian operations everywhere inside Syria.

Access to people in need has not significantly improved in spite of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2139 (2014). The sixth report of the Secretary General of 21 August 2014 on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) relates some improvements in access across borders and across lines. While there have undoubtedly been new openings to increase aid delivery across borders, the scale, scope and outreach of this modality of aid delivery by the United Nations is still quite limited.

**Neighbouring Countries**

The neighbouring countries cannot cope with the refugee crisis in the long term without significant support from the international community. This is especially true for Lebanon which hosts over 1 million Syrian refugees representing 25% of its population, and Jordan where Syrian refugees account for 10% of its population on top of an already important presence of Iraqi and other refugees. Such a demographic burden is posing a growing threat to the economic, social and political stability of these states. Turkey is hosting more than one million refugees, with an increasingly strong impact on public services and infrastructure. Iraq, in the throes of its own crisis, is hosting over 215,000 Syrian refugees while trying to cope with 1.8 million new IDPs in the first eight months of the year; different waves of conflict-affected populations are now in direct competition for meagre resources.

An independent evaluation\(^7\) of the UNHCR response to the refugee influx in Jordan and Lebanon is currently ongoing and in its final stage.

**ECHO funding**

So far, DG ECHO has invested €665.75 million in the response to the Syria crisis through the Syria HIPs (including also the neighbouring countries), but as well from part of the Lebanon and Iraq HIPs:

- Financial decision: ECHO/ME/BUD/2012/01000, 10 M EUR

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\(^7\)Terms of Reference: [http://www.unhcr.org/52f8fcf89.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/52f8fcf89.pdf)
EVALUATION OF THE ECHO RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

**Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation**

Based on Regulation (EC) 1257/96 and the EU Financial Regulation, the purpose of this Request for Services is to have an independent **overall evaluation** of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey for the period of **2012 – 2014**.

The evaluation should cover relevance (including coherence, connectedness and EU Added Value), effectiveness (including impacts), efficiency (including cost-effectiveness) and sustainability.

It should:

- provide a structured and comprehensive retrospective assessment of DG ECHO's funded operations from an accountability perspective supporting the victims of the Syrian crisis from 2012 to 2014 in line with its mandate;
- include elements of a real-time evaluation defined as an evaluation that almost simultaneously provides feed-back for immediate use;
- and, it should provide a prospective strategic assessment with a view to identifying practical options and recommendations in the context of the future Syrian crisis strategy, with the view of improving performance of ECHO operations in the region.

The key users of the evaluation report include inter alia ECHO staff at HQ, regional and country level, national and regional stakeholders, the participating implementing partners, and other humanitarian and development donors and agencies.

The information requested in the evaluation questions listed in section 4 is the main subject of this evaluation. The findings of the evaluation must be presented in the report in the form of evidence-based, reasoned answers to each of the evaluation questions. Conclusions will be directly linked to recommendations, if applicable.

**Specific Scope of the Evaluation**

**Evaluation questions – applying to all five countries examined**

These questions reflect the Commission's needs in terms of information with a view to accountability and improved performance of humanitarian actions, and they will be further discussed and validated at the Desk Phase.
1. To what extent is the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis consistent with the **23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship**\(^{98}\)?

2. To what extent have local and regional communities been consulted in the design and implementation of ECHO-funded projects?

3. To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the **most vulnerable people** in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?

4. To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the **host populations**, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?

5. To what extent has ECHO and its partners been successful in **adapting their approach** and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?

6. What has shown to be the **EU added value** of the actions examined (i.e. the added value of EU intervention, compared to leaving the initiative to other actors)?

7. To what extent have the specific challenges of **Urban settings** been taken into account in the design and implementation of ECHO-funded projects, both for refugees and host populations? To what extent have projects implemented in Urban settings been successful? What particular challenges have been faced and what lessons have been learned?

8. How and to what extent has **Protection** been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?

9. In cases when **Remote Management** is being used, to what extent does this follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful is it?

10. In cases of use of **Cash and Vouchers**, to what extent has this been based on a proper analysis of the context, and how successful has it been?

11. Is the **size of the budget** allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?

12. Are appropriate **monitoring systems** in place to support a sound management of the ECHO operations?

13. What has been the partners’ experience of working in **consortia** as well as with a **multi-country approach**?

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14. How successful has ECHO been in coordinating its operations with other main actors, e.g. promoting synergies and avoiding duplications, gaps and resource conflicts at the situational/regional, country and sector-specific levels?

15. To what extent is the ECHO actions coherent and complementary to the actions of other EC services? To what extent has LRRD been mainstreamed into ECHO-funded projects in the region? To what extent have medium to long-term objectives been taken into account in the programming of ECHO interventions?

16. To what extent have the ECHO-funded actions been successful in terms of LRRD? How has the hand-over been prepared and carried out to development actors? What could be further done (enabling factors, tools, mechanism, change in strategy, etc.) to increase the uptake of results and lessons learned from relief projects into development planning/programming?

17. To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners' organisations? What is the scope for improvement?

18. How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, etc.)? How could ECHO improve in this respect?

Other tasks under the assignment

The Contractor should:

- identify the main lessons learnt in the different sectors covered by the ECHO intervention (Protection, Shelter/NFIs, Water and Sanitation, Health, Food Assistance, Multi-sectoral assistance and coordination). What has worked or not and what were the major critical success factors? How can the identification and documentation of good practices be further improved?

- at a general level, identify the main factors limiting the success of the projects funded in the region over the period covered by the evaluation. COMMENT: This relates to an audit recommendation; Success-limiting factors should be identified in order to develop indicators for focused monitoring, with the overall purpose of strengthening the monitoring system.

- reconstruct the intervention logic for the ECHO-funded actions in the Syrian crisis;

- provide a statement about the validity of the evaluation results, i.e. to what extent it has been possible to provide reliable statements on all essential aspects of the intervention examined. Issues to be referred to may include scoping of the evaluation exercise, availability of data, unexpected problems encountered in the evaluation process, proportionality between budget and objectives of the assignment, etc.;

- make a proposal for the dissemination of the evaluation results;

- provide an abstract of the evaluation of no more than 200 words.
METHODOLOGY, OUTPUTS AND SCHEDULE

In their offer, the bidders will describe in detail the methodological approach they propose in order to tackle the evaluation questions listed above, as well as the tasks requested.

This will include a proposal for indicative judgment criteria\(^{99}\) that they may consider useful for addressing each evaluation question. The judgement criteria, as well as the information sources to be used in addressing these criteria, will be discussed and validated by the Commission during the desk phase.

To the extent possible the methodology should promote the participation in the evaluation exercise of all actors concerned, including beneficiaries and local communities when relevant and feasible. The methodological approach will be refined with, and validated by, the Commission during the desk phase.

**Deliverables**

Within the framework of the present evaluation, the contractors will produce the following deliverables, in accordance with the schedule defined in this chapter:

1. Inception Report
2. Desk Report
3. Field Reports (per each country visited)
4. Final Report + one annexe per country (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey).

**Meetings**

It is expected that the contractor participate in four meetings in Brussels with the evaluation Steering Group, as specified below. For these meetings minutes should be drafted by the contractor, to be agreed among the participants.

**Desk phase**

The Desk Phase will deal with:

- an analysis of existing Commission documents as well as other donors’ and partners information;
- meetings with Commission staff, other donors, organisations and partners, as appropriate;
- the final approach and schedule for the field missions.

The Desk phase starts when the contract is signed, and it will be based both on documents provided by the Commission and retrieved by the contractors from the start of their work. The documents may be produced by the Commission or any other relevant actor (other Commission

\(^{99}\) A judgement criterion specifies an aspect of the evaluated intervention that will allow its merits or success to be assessed. E.g., if the question is "To what extent has DG ECHO assistance, both overall and by sector been appropriate and impacted positively the targeted population?", a general judgement criterion might be "Assistance goes to the people most in need of assistance". In developing judgment criteria, the tenderers may make use of existing methodological, technical or political guidance provided by actors in the field of Humanitarian Assistance such as HAP, the Sphere Project, GHD, etc.
services, international agencies, other donors, partners, communities of practice…). The contractor will ensure that an appropriate literature review is carried out throughout the contract.

The **Inception Meeting** will take place in Brussels at DG ECHO headquarters with the Steering Committee, on the basis of an Inception Report and a PowerPoint presentation that will be sent to the ECHO Evaluation Sector prior to the meeting.

A phone conference may be organized before the meeting to sort out any open issues that the evaluation team might perceive regarding the evaluation.

The Inception Report will contain the following elements:

- finalized evaluation questions; each evaluation question will be accompanied by judgement criteria and indicators;
- the rationale for each evaluation question;
- a description of the methodology for data collection and analysis, including the chain of reasoning for responding to the evaluation questions, and indicating limitations;
- a detailed work plan;

The report should demonstrate the consultants’ clear understanding of the Terms of Reference and of the deliverables required as well as the final timing for the evaluation, including the schedule for the field work and case studies.

The Inception Report will be commented on and, if satisfactory, approved by the Commission.

At the latest ten days before the start of the Field Phase, the contractors will produce a **Desk Report** that will include:

- A short description of the data collection work implemented, including the meetings, reviews and interviews conducted;
- The first elements of answers to the evaluation questions when available;
- The initial assumptions concerning the evaluation questions, to be tested during the Field Phase, on the basis of the preliminary analysis carried out during the desk phase;
- Progress of data gathering; a conclusion on the quality of data collected so far, and whether remedial actions will be required in the next phase to close information gaps; identification of data to be collected in the field; an outline for the field visit including a preliminary schedule and list of partners, stakeholders and projects to be visited, explaining criteria used for choosing the sample of projects;
- Methodological tools to be used in the field phase, describing how data should be cross-checked, including any possible limitations;
- A discussion of possible issues identified during the Desk Phase that had not been previously discussed with the Commission. The Commission will consider these issues and decide on whether they merit further consideration in the light of the evaluation.
A meeting will be organized in Brussels to present the desk report and discuss it with the Steering Committee. A video conference with the field office could be envisaged. The evaluator will duly consider all comments from the Steering Committee, as a condition for approval. In case of disagreement, the evaluator will provide an argumented reply explaining why a certain comment cannot be accepted. In case of substantial disagreements, the evaluator may be called for another meeting in Brussels to further discuss the subject of disagreement. The expenses for such a meeting will be covered by the existing budget of the Specific Contract.

Field Phase

Following the formal approval of the Desk Report, the evaluation team shall undertake the field visits to all the countries except Syria, security situation permitting. The details of the field missions will be discussed and agreed with the Commission during the inception meeting, and will be refined in the inception and desk reports.

The travel and accommodation arrangements, the organisation of meetings, and the securing of visas will remain the sole responsibility of the contractor.

If, during the Field Phase, any significant change from the agreed methodology or scheduled work plan is considered necessary, this will be explained to and agreed with DG ECHO Evaluation Sector, in consultation with the steering group.

At the end of the mission the consultants should meet with the Delegation, DG ECHO’s experts and DG ECHO’s partners for discussion of observations arising from the evaluation. The evaluation team is required to share their findings with the NGOs/IOs concerned to allow them to comment upon. The purpose is to promote dialogue, mutual learning and ownership and to build capacity of the Commission’s partners.

At the end of each field trip the team leader should ensure that a Field Report is drawn up and transmitted to DG ECHO Evaluation Sector. The Field Report will describe briefly the data collection activities implemented, with special mentioning of those of a participatory nature (including in annex the list of sites and persons visited, minutes from the focus groups if organized, the minutes of the workshop and any other relevant technical documents); a brief description of the situation found; as well as any relevant items identified during the field visit, which could have an influence in the methodology or the conclusions of the evaluation. N.B.: the Field Report is not an evaluation as such, and should not include overall conclusions and recommendations, neither a collection of project evaluations. It is a working document to report on the fieldwork and identify any particular issues to be tackled during the synthesis phase (e.g. remedial actions related to the methodological approach, etc.).

A meeting will be organized in Brussels to present the Field Report and discuss it with the Steering Committee. A video conference with the field office may be organised. The evaluator will duly consider all comments from the Steering Committee, as a condition for approval. In case of disagreement, the evaluator will provide an argumented reply explaining why a certain comment cannot be accepted. In case of substantial disagreements, the evaluator may be called for another meeting in Brussels to further discuss the subject of disagreement. The expenses for such a meeting will be covered by the existing budget of the Specific Contract.
As a reminder, conclusions and recommendations must be drafted with a view to the overall evaluation of the Commission's intervention in the area concerned, and will be based on the overall information collected during the evaluation process.

**Synthesis phase**

A first **Draft Final Report (maximum 60 pages excluding the annexes)** in accordance with the format given in point 5 of the annex of the Terms of Reference shall be submitted electronically to the DG ECHO Evaluation Sector. It should be submitted after the evaluators’ return from the field according to the agreed timetable.

A **meeting** will be organised in Brussels after the submission of the first draft final report. The evaluator will make a PowerPoint presentation to DG ECHO and key staff on the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The date for the meeting will be agreed between the Steering Committee and the evaluator.

Prior to the meeting, DG ECHO may provide written comments on the first draft report to the evaluation team.

On the basis of the results of the meeting on the Draft Report, and duly taking into account the comments received before and during the meeting, a **Draft Final Report (maximum 60 pages excluding the annexes)** will be submitted to DG ECHO Evaluation Sector not later than 10 calendar days after the meeting. The Steering Committee should mark its agreement, make comments or request further amendments within 10 calendar days.

**Final report**

On the basis of the comments made by DG ECHO, the evaluation team shall make appropriate amendments and submit the **Final Report (maximum 60 pages excluding the annexes), accompanied by an Executive Summary (maximum 8 pages)**, within 10 calendar days. If the evaluator reject any of the comments this must be explained and substantiated in writing.

The report shall follow the structure outlined in section 12.

The Executive Summary should be **translated** into French and German by a professional translation agency, once it has been approved by the responsible body.

The evaluator will provide a Power Point presentation in electronic form together with the final report, covering the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The evaluator may be requested to present the evaluation results to DG ECHO's staff and/or stakeholders.

For a detailed layout of the final report, please see section 11 below.

**Dissemination and follow-up**

The evaluation report is an important working tool for DG ECHO, and once finalised it will be published in the public domain on the Internet. Its use is intended for DG ECHO's operational and policy staff, other EU services, humanitarian beneficiaries, EU Member States and citizens, other donors and humanitarian actors.
Following the approval of the final report, DG ECHO will proceed with the dissemination and follow-up of the results of the evaluation.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation Sector of DG ECHO is responsible for the management and the monitoring of the evaluation, in consultation with the Unit(s) responsible for the evaluation subject. The DG ECHO Evaluation Sector, and in particular the internal manager assigned to the evaluation, should therefore always be kept informed and consulted by the evaluator and copied on all correspondence with other DG ECHO staff.

The DG ECHO Evaluation manager is the contact person for the evaluator and shall assist the team during their mission in tasks such as providing documents and facilitating contacts.

A Steering Committee, made up of Commission staff involved in the activity evaluated, will provide general assistance to and feedback on the evaluation exercise, and discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

EVALUATION TEAM

This evaluation will be carried out by a team with experience both in the humanitarian field and in the evaluation of humanitarian aid. If necessary, the experts must agree to work in high-risk areas. It is therefore recommended that the team include national experts whenever possible.

AMOUNT OF THE CONTRACT

The maximum budget allocated to this study is 350 000 €.

TIMETABLE

The duration of the assignment is 7 months.

The evaluation starts after the contract has been signed by both parties, and no expenses may be incurred before that. The main part of the existing relevant documents will be provided after the signature of the contract.

The indicative starting date of the evaluation is XXX.

In their offer, the bidders shall provide an indicative schedule based on the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicative timing</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T+2 weeks</td>
<td>Draft Inception Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T+3 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inception meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T+6 weeks</td>
<td>Draft Desk Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T+7 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Desk Report meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terms of Reference – The Syrian Crisis - 2011 / 2014
CONTENT OF THE OFFER

The administrative part of the bidder's offer must include:

1. The tender submission form (annex D to the model specific contract);
2. A signed Experts' declaration of availability, absence of conflict of interest and not being in a situation of exclusion (annex F to the model specific contract)

The technical part of the bidder's offer must include:

1. A description of the understanding of the Terms of Reference, their scope and the tasks covered by the contract. This will include a graphic reconstruction of the intervention logic of the Commission's humanitarian activities concerned. It will also explain the bidder's understanding of the evaluation questions, including a first proposal of judgment criteria to be used for answering the evaluation questions and the information sources to be used for answering the questions. The final definition of judgment criteria and information sources will be validated by the Commission during the desk phase;
2. The methodology the bidder intends to apply for this evaluation for each of the phases involved, including a draft proposal for the number of case studies to be carried out during the field visit, the regions to be visited, and the reasons for such a choice. The methodology will be refined and validated by the Commission during the desk phase;
3. A description of the distribution of tasks in the team, including an indicative quantification of the work for each expert in terms of person/days;
4. A detailed proposed timetable for its implementation with the total number of days needed for each of the phases (Desk, Field and Synthesis).
5. The CVs of each of the experts proposed.

The financial part of the offer must include the proposed total budget in Euros, taking due account of the maximum amount for this evaluation as defined in chapter 7 of this Terms of Reference. The price must be expressed as a lump sum for the whole of the services provided.

AWARD

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money on the basis of the following criteria:
Quality criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N°</th>
<th>Qualitative Award criteria</th>
<th>Weighting (max. points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Understanding of the terms of reference and the aim of the services to be provided</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Methodology for structuring, data collection and analysis</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Organization of tasks and team, timetable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the team on the basis of the expertise proposed</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only those tenders with a mark higher than 50% of the maximum number of points for each quality criteria, and higher than 70% for the overall maximum number of points, will be considered for the award of the contract.

**Price**

For the purpose of the financial evaluation of the offers, the Commission will use the lump sum price as submitted in the financial offer of the tenderer.

**Award of the contract**

The contract will be awarded to the tender achieving the highest score obtained by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Score for tender } X = \frac{\text{Cheapest price}}{\text{Price of tender } X} \times \text{total quality score (out of 100) for all criteria of tender } X$$

**THE FINAL REPORT**

By commissioning an independent evaluation and/or review DG ECHO expects to obtain an objective, critical, easy to read and transparent analysis of its interventions. This analysis should contain the information needed by the Commission for management, policy-making and accountability. It should also include operational, realistic recommendations at operational and/or strategic level. Above all, the report should be a document that can function as a learning tool. Therefore, while writing it, the evaluators should always bear in mind why the report is done, for whom, and how the results will be used.
To each evaluation question quoted in the report the consultant will provide an evidence-base, reasoned answer. Conclusions\textsuperscript{100} will be provided pointing out strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated intervention, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results. Furthermore, the report is a working tool of value to DG ECHO only as long as it is feasible and pragmatic, keeping in mind DG ECHO's mandate constraints and it clearly reflects the evaluator's independent view. DG ECHO's concern is to respect this independence.

The evaluation methods should be clearly outlined in the report and their appropriateness, focus and users should be explained pointing out strengths and weaknesses of the methods. The report should briefly outline the nature (e.g. external or mixed) and composition of the team (e.g. sector expertise, local knowledge, gender balance) and its appropriateness for the evaluation. It should also briefly outline the evaluators’ biases and/or constraints that might have affected the evaluation and how these have been counteracted (past experiences, background, etc.).

The report shall be written in a straightforward manner in English with an Executive Summary at the beginning of the document. Final editing shall be provided by the contractor. The report should be in the font Times Roman 12, have single line spacing and be fully justified.

The final report should contain:

- An Executive Summary of maximum 8 pages.
- A list of Abbreviations and Acronyms
- Technical annexes.
- Other annexes as necessary.

This format should be strictly adhered to:

- \textit{Cover page} (a template is provided at the end of this annex)
  
  title of the evaluation report;
  
  date of the evaluation;
  
  name of the company;
  
  disclaimer in the sense that "The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission."

- \textit{Table of contents}

- \textit{List of Abbreviations and Acronyms}

- \textit{Executive Summary}
  
  A clearly drafted, to-the-point and free-standing \textbf{Executive Summary is an essential element}. It should be short, no more than 8 pages. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the evaluation, outline the main points of the analysis, and contain a \textbf{matrix made of two columns clearly indicating the main conclusions and specific recommendations}. Cross-references should be made to the corresponding page or paragraph numbers in the main text. EU Member States receive each Executive Summary, which is also published on DG ECHO website.

\textsuperscript{100} A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses undertaken, through a transparent chain of arguments. (OECD Glossary of Key terms in Evaluation and results based management)
The evaluation team should take this into account when drafting this part of the report.

- **Main body of the report**
  - The report should include at least a description of
    - the purpose of the evaluation
    - the scope of the evaluation
    - the design and conduct of the evaluation, including a description of the methodology used
    - limitations and challenges
    - the evidence found
    - the analysis carried out
    - the conclusions drawn in the form of reasoned answers to each of the evaluation questions provided in the Specifications. The questions must be quoted fully in the report, followed by an evidence-based answer. Conclusions should be fully substantiated, and derive in a logical manner from the data collection and analysis carried out during the evaluation process
    - recommendations for the future. Recommendations should be clearly linked to the findings and based on conclusions. They should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible; they should take careful account of the circumstances currently prevailing in the context of the implementation of the humanitarian activities, DG ECHO’s mandate and of the resources available to implement it both locally and at the Commission level. Recommendations should be prioritised, directed at specific users and where appropriate include an indicative timeframe.

All possible confidential information shall be presented in a separate annex.

While finalising the report and its annexes, the evaluators will always highlight changes (using track changes) and modifications introduced as resulting from the meeting and the comments received from DG ECHO Evaluation Sector.

Each report and all its annexes shall be transmitted in electronic form to DG ECHO – To the attention of DG ECHO A3/Evaluation sector, AN88 04/05, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

The final report should be sent by email to DG ECHO Evaluation Sector (ECHO-EVAL@ec.europa.eu) in three separate documents in PDF format each containing: the executive summary, the report without its annexes (also removed from the table of contents) and the report with its annexes.

**TEMPLATE FOR COVER PAGE**

**NAME AND LOGO OF THE CONSULTING COMPANY**

Terms of Reference – The Syrian Crisis - 2011 / 2014
EVALUATION OF THE ECHO RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

(OPTIONAL INSERTION OF PICTURE/DRAWING/MAP)

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT;
DATE OF THE EVALUATION;

The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission.
Annex II: Evaluation Inventory

This annex presents the Evaluation Inventory used as the basis for the evaluation’s overview of the magnitude of the ECHO funding in relation to the Syrian crisis. It presents the list of contracts for ECHO-funded operations that fall under the evaluation scope. For each contract, the following data-points are provided:

- HOPE Contract number
- ECHO Signed Date
- Partner Name
- HOPE Contract Title
- ECHO Activity Description
- Sector
- Funding in € M

The annex includes two sections:

- Methods used to construct the Evaluation Inventory
- The Evaluation Inventory.

All.I Methods used to construct the Evaluation Inventory

The inventory was constructed from two sources:

- **The Syria Crisis Team Dataset**: the evaluators used the dataset provided to them by the DG ECHO Syria Crisis Team in Unit B4. This dataset provides the total EU funds contracted in response to the Syria crisis as of 09/01/2015.

- **The DG ECHO HOPE database**: the evaluators further took an extraction from the DG ECHO HOPE dataset on 29th January 2015.

The inventory was constructed from the cross-referencing of contracts between these two sources, staying in line with the scope defined in the evaluation Terms of Reference. This cross-referencing process contained five discrete steps, each of which are outlined below.

**Step 1: isolating eligible contracts from the Syria Crisis Team Dataset.**

The team isolated all and only those contracts in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset that are eligible for consideration in this evaluation. In line with the evaluation Terms of Reference (see Annex I), this includes all and only contracts falling under the Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) for Syria 2012-2014 and part of the Lebanon and Iraq HIPs:

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102 The Humanitarian Office Programming Environment (HOPE) database is DG ECHO’s internal database covering all funding decisions, project documents and contracts for ECHO-funded operations worldwide.
- Financial decision: ECHO/ME/BUD/2012/01000, 10 M EUR
- Financial decision ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91000, 146 M EUR
- Financial decision ECHO/LBN/BUD/2012/91000, 7 M EUR
- Financial decision ECHO/ME/BUD/2012/91000, 10 M EUR
- Financial decision: ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91000, 350 M EUR
- Financial decision: ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91000, 150 M EUR

It should be noted that only two of the contracts in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset came from HIPs in Lebanon and Iraq, namely:

- ECHO/LBN/BUD/2012/91002: Shelter and Water and Sanitation networks rehabilitation for vulnerable Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (€0.5 million).

Funds allocated to Syria and neighbouring countries over the evaluation period from other sources have not been included in the Evaluation Inventory.

**Step 2: cross-checking each eligible contract with DG ECHO’s HOPE database**

Each eligible contract in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset was then cross-checked against the HOPE database using the contract number and date. All eligible contracts were then assigned the full contract number given in the HOPE database.

The HOPE database extraction was conducted on the 29th January 2015 from the contracts module using external online access. The following search criteria were applied:

- Contracts signed by ECHO between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2014.
- Contracts in the following beneficiary countries: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey.
- All data fields were selected for the extraction.

Contracts extracted using this method that did not fall under the eligible HIPs outlined above in Step 1 were then removed from the extraction.

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103 ECHO/ME/BUD/2013 is not included in the list of HIPs provided in the Terms of Reference, but this contract was nevertheless included after consultation with DG ECHO Iraq Desk Officer.

104 Thus, all funds channelled from the following sources have been excluded in order to maintain focus on the evaluation scope defined in the Terms of Reference: the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, funds re-oriented from the Lebanon Annual Action Programme, Budget Support operations in Jordan, the Instrument for Pre-Accession, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Foreign Policy Instruments and the Instrument for Stability.
Step 3: construction of a consolidated Evaluation Inventory.

The information provided for each eligible contract in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset was then augmented with the further information provided by the full set of data fields available in the HOPE extraction. This allowed the team to determine, among other things, the sectors of intervention addressed by each operation.

The following data-points were collected for each contract and are presented in The Evaluation Inventory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data-point</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Contract number</td>
<td>HOPE extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO Signed Date</td>
<td>Syria Crisis Team Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Name</td>
<td>Syria Crisis Team Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Contract Title</td>
<td>HOPE extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO Activity Description</td>
<td>Syria Crisis Team Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>HOPE extraction and Syria Crisis Team Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding in € M</td>
<td>Syria Crisis Team Dataset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contracts for which Step 3 was conducted constitute the Evaluation Inventory.

Step 3 was not possible for some contracts, on the basis that they did not appear simultaneously in both the Syria Crisis Team Dataset and the HOPE extraction.

Step 4: Compiling the list of contracts not present in the HOPE database.

Some contracts present in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset were not present in the HOPE extraction. Further manual searches failed to retrieve the contract information from the database. These contracts have been presented in a separate table in the following section. The amounts funded for these contracts were not included in the inventory analysis presented below.

Step 5: Compiling the list of theoretically eligible contracts not present in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset.

Some contracts were present in the HOPE extraction but appear eligible for the evaluation due the datapoints extracted above. These contracts have been presented in a separate table in the following section. The amounts funded for these contracts were not included in the inventory analysis presented below.

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105 Where available, this information was taken from the primary aid type defined in the HOPE database. In those instances where the HOPE extraction did not define a primary aid type, the evaluators assigned a sector on the basis of the Activity Description and/or HOPE Contract Title.
AII.II The Evaluation Inventory

The result of this five step process was the construction of:

- The Evaluation Inventory
- The list of contracts not included in the Syria Crisis Team Dataset
- The list of contracts not included in the HOPE extraction.

The inventory presented in the final report is based upon the Evaluation Inventory alone.

This section presents the Evaluation Inventory in three tables (one for each contracting year in the evaluation period) and subsequently the two additional contract lists.
### Evaluation Inventory: 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOPE Contract Number</th>
<th>ECHO Signed Date</th>
<th>Partner Name</th>
<th>HOPE Contract Title</th>
<th>ECHO Activity Description</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Funding in € M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91001</td>
<td>27/03/2013</td>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>Emergency Food Assistance to People Affected by Unrest in Syria and Logistics &amp; Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination to Support Humanitarian Operations</td>
<td>Food assistance, SSO</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91002</td>
<td>15/02/2013</td>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Emergency assistance to conflict and displacement affected population in Syria and neighbouring countries</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFIs</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91003</td>
<td>04/04/2013</td>
<td>ACTED</td>
<td>Providing life-saving support to most vulnerable displaced Syrians and host communities</td>
<td>WASH, shelter winterization and NFIs</td>
<td>Water / Sanitation</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91004</td>
<td>17/09/2012</td>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>ICRC economic security activities in Syria</td>
<td>Food assistance, NFIs, Cash for work</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91005</td>
<td>13/12/2012</td>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>Emergency Assistance to Palestine Refugees impacted by Conflict in Syria</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFIs, food assistance</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91006</td>
<td>21/08/2013</td>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>Emergency support to populations affected by the crisis in Syria</td>
<td>Health, DRR, SSO, shelter winterization and NFIs</td>
<td>Health and Medical</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91007</td>
<td>03/05/2013</td>
<td>IRC-UK</td>
<td>Supporting Syrian Refugee Women’s and Girls? Protection and Mental Health</td>
<td>Psychosocial gender-based violence, WASH</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91008</td>
<td>18/07/2013</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Emergency response for vulnerable Syrian children, their families and host communities</td>
<td>Wash in refugee camps, coordination of wash activities</td>
<td>Water / Sanitation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Contract Number</td>
<td>ECHO Signed Date</td>
<td>Partner Name</td>
<td>HOPE Contract Title</td>
<td>ECHO Activity Description</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Funding in € M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91009</td>
<td>16/01/2013</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Support to Children and families affected by by violence in Syria</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFI's</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91010</td>
<td>04/02/2013</td>
<td>PU</td>
<td>Emergency support to unrest-affected population in Syria and neighbouring countries</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFI's</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91011</td>
<td>26/04/2013</td>
<td>ACF-SP</td>
<td>Humanitarian WASH response in support to the population affected by the unrest in Syria</td>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water / Sanitation</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91012</td>
<td>28/02/2013</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Support to displaced Syrians in neighbouring countries, and to affected population in Syria</td>
<td>Winterization shelter and NFI's, registration, health, coordination</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91013</td>
<td>25/10/2013</td>
<td>HELP</td>
<td>Emergency response to the conflict in Syria</td>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water / Sanitation</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91014</td>
<td>05/02/2013</td>
<td>ICMC</td>
<td>Winterisation Assistance to Vulnerable Syrians in Jordan</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFI's</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91015</td>
<td>31/07/2013</td>
<td>GVC</td>
<td>Winterization package for under-served Syrian families in the Bekaa Valley</td>
<td>WASH, shelter winterization and NFI's</td>
<td>Water / Sanitation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91016</td>
<td>16/04/2013</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Emergency intervention for the most vulnerable people affected by the Syrian crisis - phase 2</td>
<td>Emergency health care for people with injuries, protection</td>
<td>Health and Medical</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91017</td>
<td>23/08/2013</td>
<td>AVSI</td>
<td>Emergency intervention in support of syrian conflict affected population during winter in jordan and lebanon</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFI's</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91018</td>
<td>27/03/2013</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Response to health needs in Syrian Arab Republic</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Health and Medical</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Contract Number</td>
<td>ECHO Signed Date</td>
<td>Partner Name</td>
<td>HOPE Contract Title</td>
<td>ECHO Activity Description</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Funding in € M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91019</td>
<td>05/02/2013</td>
<td>TDH</td>
<td>Emergency support to people affected by the Syrian crisis</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91020</td>
<td>19/07/2013</td>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>Humanitarian Interventions to address Reproductive Health rights and prevent</td>
<td>Protection and health in Jordan</td>
<td>Health and Medical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and respond to Gender-Based Violence, among Syrian refugees in Jordan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91021</td>
<td>17/05/2013</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Continued support to people escaping the armed conflict in Syrian and seeking</td>
<td>Coordination, shelter winterization and</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>refuge in Neighboring countries.</td>
<td>NFI's, SSO, protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91022</td>
<td>31/05/2013</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Increased Winter Preparedness and Improved Hygiene for Syrian Refugees in Northern</td>
<td>Shelter rehabilitation, shelter</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>winterization and NFI's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2012/91023</td>
<td>27/03/2013</td>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>Turkey: Population Movement - Winterization programme</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Evaluation Inventory: 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOPE Contract Number</th>
<th>ECHO Signed Date</th>
<th>Partner Name</th>
<th>HOPE Contract Title</th>
<th>ECHO Activity Description</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Funding in € M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91001</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>ACTED</td>
<td>Emergency Assistance to Syrian conflict-affected and displaced populations and Support to Humanitarian Coordination</td>
<td>Emergency operation in Syria</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91003</td>
<td>01/12/2014</td>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>Emergency Relief Assistance to Vulnerable Populations Affected by the Crisis in Syria</td>
<td>Relief assistance to vulnerable populations affected by the crisis (emergency rehabilitation of collective shelters and NFIs distributions)</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91004</td>
<td>17/12/2013</td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Providing life-saving support to most vulnerable displaced Syrians and host communities</td>
<td>Cash assistance, food vouchers and NFIs distribution to urban refugees</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91005</td>
<td>02/07/2014</td>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Emergency assistance to conflict and displacement affected population in Syria and neighbouring countries</td>
<td>Shelter winterization, NFIs, protection &amp; coordination</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91006</td>
<td>12/12/2013</td>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>Emergency Assistance and Enhanced Protection to Conflict-Affected Palestine Refugees</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFIs, food assistance</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>8.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91007</td>
<td>29/11/2013</td>
<td>ICMC</td>
<td>Providing Humanitarian Assistance to Vulnerable Syrians and Host-Communities</td>
<td>Shelter winterization and NFIs</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Contract Number</td>
<td>ECHO Signed Date</td>
<td>Partner Name</td>
<td>HOPE Contract Title</td>
<td>ECHO Activity Description</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Funding in € M</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>Continued support to people affected by the Syria armed conflict</td>
<td>Continued support to people affected by the Syrian armed conflict: WASH, Shelter and NFI, Protection</td>
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<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91009</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Providing immediate relief and protection to children and their families affected by the conflict, both within Syria and border countries</td>
<td>Provision of immediate relief and protection to children affected by the conflict (cash transfer and therapeutic psycho-social activities in Jordan and shelter and support to new arrivals in Lebanon) + NFI winter in Syria</td>
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<td>CARITAS</td>
<td>Aide humanitaire de base aux réfugiés syriens au Liban</td>
<td>Support to new arrivals in the Bekaa valley (Food and NFI vouchers + rental assistance + SGBV) - Lebanon</td>
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<td>Providing life saving Sexual and Reproductive Health for populations affected by the Syrian crisis</td>
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<td>Enabling timely, principled and coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis triggered by the unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic.</td>
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<td>Life saving assistance to conflict-affected population in Syria and neighbouring countries</td>
<td>Life saving assistance to conflict-affected population in Syria and neighbouring countries: Food assistance, short term food security and livelihood support, WASH, Health, Shelter and NFIs</td>
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<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91017</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Emergency Assistance to the people affected by the Syrian crisis with particular focus on children.</td>
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## Evaluation of the ECHO Response to the Syrian Crisis

### Final Report

June 2016

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<tr>
<th>HOPE Contract Number</th>
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<th>Partner Name</th>
<th>HOPE Contract Title</th>
<th>ECHO Activity Description</th>
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<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91019</td>
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<td>Emergency intervention for the most vulnerable people affected by the Syrian crisis: Phase 3</td>
<td>Emergency intervention for the most vulnerable people affected by the Syrian crisis: Phase 3: Food assistance, Health, Shelter and NFIs, Protection, Coordinating</td>
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<td>Integrated EFSL, WASH and Protection Response for Syrian Refugees living in Host Communities in Jordan and Lebanon and Syria</td>
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<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91023</td>
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<td>Emergency Assistance &amp; Winterisation Preparation for Affected Population by the Syria Conflict in Lebanon</td>
<td>Emergency Assistance &amp; Winterisation Preparation for Newcomer (Palestine) Refugees from Syria to Beirut</td>
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<td>ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91028</td>
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<td>IFRC Top up</td>
<td>Provision of secondary level hospital and surgical care for the refugee population in Azraq, Jordan.</td>
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<td>Essential Emergency Health Assistance to Conflict Affected and Displaced Populations affected by the Syria Crisis</td>
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<td>SOLIDARITIES</td>
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<td>ICRC Health activities in Lebanon</td>
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<td>Health, SSO, shelter and NFIs</td>
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<td>Response to primary and vulnerability - based needs of PRS and Syrian Refugees in the Palestinian Camps and surrounding areas in Lebanon</td>
<td>Cash assistance and NFIs distribution to PRS and Syrian refugees in Lebanon</td>
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<td>IRC</td>
<td>Syrian Crisis Response - A Regional Approach</td>
<td>Psychosocial gender-based violence + WASH + Food</td>
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<td>Iraq HIP</td>
<td>ICRC Water/Sanitation and Protection activities in Iraq</td>
<td>Support to Iraqi refugees affected by the Syria crisis</td>
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**Notes:**
- The table above provides a summary of ECHO contracts signed with various partners, detailing the contract numbers, signed dates, partner names, contract titles, ECHO activity descriptions, sectors, and funding amounts in €M for different regions (SY, JO, LB, TR, IQ, Total).
- The funding amounts are distributed among the regions as indicated in the table.
### Evaluation Inventory: 2014

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<td>DANISH RED CROSS</td>
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<td>Emergency Support to Populations Affected by the Syria Crisis: Multi-sectorial operation with Health / SARC Capacity building on logistic / NFI / Wash with Hygiene Kits distribution</td>
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<td>MERCY CORPS</td>
<td>Initial request: Multi-sectoral assistance to Syrian IDPs refugees and their host communities MR Iraq: Winterisation assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees and host communities in Iraq(1/11/14-31/03/15) MR II- Syria Al Hassakeh: Support to people affected by the Syrian crisis(15/12/14-15/03/15)</td>
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<td>Humanitarian assistance to war affected population within Syria and urban refugees in Turkey</td>
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<td>OXFAM</td>
<td>Reducing suffering and vulnerability of those affected by Syrian Crisis in Jordan and Syria</td>
<td>WASH, cash assistance, medical/protection support to women in non-camp setting in Jordan + Wash, EFSL, NFIs, Shelter and capacity building in Syria</td>
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<td>CROIX-ROUGE FR</td>
<td>Program of assistance for the people affected by the Syria crisis</td>
<td>Syrian refugees and vulnerable hosting populations emergency assistance program in Lebanon and Jordan: Health support through Lebanese RC in Lebanon and WASH and cash assistance in Jordan</td>
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Annex III: Country reports

This Annex presents the evaluation country reports. Five country reports were completed in total, covering each of the countries under the evaluation scope: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.

The country reports are stand-alone documents providing:
- Background context on the humanitarian situation in each country
- ECHO’s response
- Findings per evaluation question
- Other relevant findings for the evaluation and
- Lessons learned.
# Iraq Country Report

## IRAQ COUNTRY REPORT

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<td>TENTATIVE CONCLUSION</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Methodology

1.2 Structure of the Iraq Country Report

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Iraq, KRI and the Syrian crisis

2.2 Outline of the humanitarian context

2.2.1 Key humanitarian issues

2.2.2 Response from the national and international communities

3. OVERVIEW OF THE ECHO APPROACH IN THE COUNTRY

4. KEY FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (EQS)

5. TENTATIVE CONCLUSION
1. Introduction

This Country Report on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is part of the broader external evaluation process carried out on the ECHO response to the Syria crisis.

1.1. Methodology

The methodology applied in this case study is based on four pillars:

- Documents reviewed: in addition to the work undertaken during the desk study, additional documents on the context, projects, needs and impact have been gathered in the field and analysed.
- Interviews with key stakeholders:
  - ECHO (other services of the European Commission are not represented in KRI) and Member States (French Embassy);
  - UN Agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, UNDP);
  - NGOs (DRC, NRC, MC, ACTED);
  - National actors (Camp Director in Gestapa, ERC, MODM);
- Three field visits (Gestapa camp, Syrian refugees in Erbid city, Syrian refugees in peri-urban areas) which allowed direct observation of programmes and interviews with Syrian refugees (in camp and non-camp situations);
- Initial briefing and final debriefing with ECHO staff to validate the findings and go through the initial and tentative recommendations.

1.2. Structure of the Iraq Country Report

The structure of the Iraq country report is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction
- Description of the methodology (description of places visited, types of interlocutor met, etc.)
- Description of the structure of the Country Report

Section 2: The context in Iraq
- Brief overview of the socio-economic context of Iraq
- Brief description of the specific constraints on the refugees’ and IDPs’ situation in the country
- Brief description of the national and international response

Section 3: Overview of the ECHO approach in the country:
- Overview of ECHO’s overall approach and main priorities in KRI
- Overview of funding and activities undertaken in KRI

Section 4: Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions

Section 5: Other relevant findings of the evaluation
- Specific findings on the case study subjects
- Specific lessons with respect to the sectors concerned (water, health, etc.)
- Other relevant findings

Section 6: Tentative conclusion
2. Context

2.1. Iraq context

Iraq is an upper-middle income country with a population of 37 million. The GDP per capita had declined by a third between 1980 and 2006, from about US$3,000 to about US$2,000 as a result of conflict and war. It has since grown steadily throughout 2006 and 2014, to reach US$6,147 in 2014.

Iraq's largely state-run economy is dominated by the oil sector, which provides more than 90% of government revenue. The oil price crisis and the crisis related to the so-called Islamic State, combined with political instability in 2014, impacted private sector consumption and investment, and limited government spending, particularly on investment projects. The oil sector has, however, continued to expand mostly thanks to the southern oil fields.

Iraq also faces severe security challenges. As a result of the ongoing conflict with the so-called Islamic State, more than 17,000 civilians were killed in Iraq during 2014. The number of civilian casualties continues to climb in reaching almost 8000 civilians through the end of June 2015. It is estimated that about 134,300 civilians were killed due to violence between 2003-2014.

The population remains extremely vulnerable to the ongoing security problems and reduction in oil prices. Poverty levels have increased and now stand at 22.5% in 2014. The number of people living below the poverty line increased by an estimated 2.8 million by end-2014. The displacement of Iraqis and Syrian refugees have further disrupted local economic conditions.

According to the estimates from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 26 August 2014, over 90% of the 215,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq were located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is facing an economic and humanitarian crisis as a result of both the influx of Syrian refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in 2014. According to a KRG – World Bank report, economic growth contracted 5 percentage points in the KRI, and poverty rate more than double increasing from 3.5 percent to 8.1 percent.

2.2. Outline of the humanitarian context

2.2.1 Refugee population

The total population of registered Syrian refugees inside Iraq saw rapid growth between August 2012 and March 2013. Thereafter, numbers continued to grow with varying rapidity, decreasing slightly from January 2014 to August 2014, and then increasing again with an influx from Kobane starting August through to January 2015.

The dynamics of arrival resulted in a phased settlement process, with the creation first of the Domuz camp, then several additional smaller camps in the Erbil and Sulemanya governorates. Figures taken at the end of November 2014 show that, of the 230,000 refugees registered at the time, 42% (88,286) were registered in 9 camps, and 58% (144,201) were hosted in the community. The camps accommodating the refugees were spread across Domiz, Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. The demographic breakdown varied between camp and non-camp settings, with men making up the largest share of refugees hosted in the community, and women making up the largest share in camp settings.

The security and access context in Iraq was complicated following the fall of Mosul to the so-called Islamic State in June 2014 and the ongoing conflict in Central Iraq, which has

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displaced 2 million Iraqis. The influx of IDPs into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has increased the competition for resources and placed increased strain on the host government when responding to the Syrian refugees’ needs. The so-called Islamic State’s takeover of the Al Obayidi camp in Anbar province has made this camp inaccessible to UNHCR and international humanitarian agencies, although some assistance is still provided to the 1,900 refugees accommodated there by national NGOs.

108 Ibid
2.2.2 Key Humanitarian issues

The humanitarian and security situation in Iraq became more complicated over the course of 2014, with the effects of the conflict with the so-called Islamic State in Central Iraq resulting in the displacement of two million Iraqis. The large IDP population has impacted on the Syrian refugees’ ability to cope with their own displacement in several ways, as the struggle for resources such as accommodation and employment has intensified and severely stressed the capacity of the KRI Government and the international community. 109

While some better-off refugees, especially those who were among the first waves, have managed to rent houses or flats of acceptable quality, many others live in sub-standard housing. Regarding employment, interviews with Syrian refugees in Erbil city reveal that they are for the most part unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The reasons for this vary from a lack of acknowledgment of Syrian certificates in KRI to strategic exploitation by KRI entrepreneurs to keep the refugees in low-paid jobs and maintain job precariousness by enhancing competition with other job searchers (from the Philippines, Bangladesh and now the IDPs). The relative proportion of Syrian refugees in the construction labour force was approximately 25% in December 2013. 110

Whereas the level of vulnerability of the refugee population has not increased too dramatically, as indicated by the recent food security survey (the food security score remains high111), the needs assessments for camp and non-camp refugees, conducted in 2014, revealed that in the future stronger emphasis needs to be placed on self-reliance, income generation and institutional capacity. Major gaps were identified in several sectors including education, particularly for refugees living outside camps, where some 40% of children are out of school. 112 Furthermore, the fact that many of the camps are overcrowded is also a concern and efforts are being made to increase their size in order to reduce population density and improve the living conditions of the refugees.

Pressure on basic services due to the influx of IDPs is expected to place further pressure on living conditions in already saturated communities and camps. To prevent the social conflict that may arise from competition for jobs and resources, an inclusive programme taking a holistic community approach, including both the impacted communities and refugees, needs to be implemented. 113

2.2.3. Response from the KRI Government

The KRI government has provided significant support to the Syrian refugees since the crisis began in 2012. 114 It has, for instance, paid infrastructure costs for camps in Erbil Governorate (about US$ 750,000 annually for electricity in all camps) and contributed to health and

110 DRC, Construction and Service – sector Labour Market Systems Mapping and Analysis, KRI, December 2014
111 Interview with WFP
education costs for Syrian refugees. The government has also granted residency permits that include the right to work and freedom of movement.

Border policy has impacted on refugee access to KRI over the evaluation period. As part of its initial very welcoming response, the Kurdish Regional Government facilitated residency permits granting the right to work and freedom of movement throughout the region. This was done in line with the progressive registration of all Syrian refugees by UNHCR. The response was coordinated with relevant ministries (Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Ministry of Interior of the KRG, Ministry of Planning) and other governmental structures in Central Iraq and in the KRI, UN agencies, and international and national NGOs. In each governorate there was a unit handling refugees, for instance the Erbil Refugee Committee (ERC), attached to the Ministry of Interior.

The year 2014 saw the closure of the Peshkhabour border crossing and irregular admission and entry restrictions have been observed. But likewise the opening of a new entry point at Ibrahim Khalid (Zakho district) during the period of the so-called Islamic State attacks on the Kobane district allowed the entrance of 13,000 refugees into KRI over a period of two weeks in 2014.

The arrest and detention of refugees for irregular entry or illegal movement has continued, and the Government of Iraq has increasingly linked their concern for border violations to their concern for terrorist activities inside of Iraq.

2.2.4 Response from the international community

The contribution of donors over 2012-2014 amounted to US$482 million, with a significant increase between 2012 and 2013 following the refugee influx increase. The USA has been the main donor, providing almost one-third of contributions, followed by ECHO (12%) and two EU Member States, namely Germany (9%) and the UK (8%). The USA is also the largest humanitarian donor, followed by Europe (ECHO), Germany, the UK and Kuwait. A few other EU Member States have also contributed to the response (Denmark, France).

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115 Ibid, p9
Figure 2 – Donor contribution in Iraq per year 2012-2014 (US$ million)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Almost 90% of donor contributions in Iraq were dedicated to multi-sector support. Coordination, shelter and NFI items and food together accounted for 5% of the support. Finally, support for water and sanitation, protection, education and health represented 3% of donor support, the remaining being support in unspecified sectors.

Figure 3 – Contribution by donors in Iraq (US$ million)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Until the end of 2014, assistance to Syrian refugees was guided by the Refugee Response Plan (RRP6), which prioritized life-saving or prevention of immediate risk of harm and prevention of conditions leading to increased vulnerability. There is now a trend in the international community’s understanding of the crisis away from a classic humanitarian crisis towards a protracted crisis requiring long-term involvement in the care and maintenance of the refugee camps, enhanced support for the livelihoods of refugees, and strong and consistent support for existing development structures that will strengthen the absorption capacity of the KRI society and economy. Therefore, the new Refugee Response and
Resilience Plan (3RP) for 2015-16 also incorporates a resilience component. The objective of this component is to reduce the dependence on aid by planning long-term responses, including increased attention on host communities impacted by the refugees’ presence. Of the US$426 million requested in the 3RP, US$108 million is for the resilience component.

Figure 4 - Donors’ contribution in Iraq by sector 2012-2014 (US$ million)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

3. Overview of the ECHO approach in the country

3.1. Support to refugee camps

ECHO’s camp-based operations are implemented through international agencies such as UNHCR (multi-sector, protection, coordination), WFP (food assistance), UNICEF (WASH interventions), NRC (shelter), and Medical Corp (health).

Food assistance, through the support of the WFP emergency food assistance scheme, was launched in response to an official request from the Kurdish authorities in Iraq and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration. Assistance was provided through vouchers (US$31 per person per month) and in-kind food baskets as well as emergency school meals. Food assistance is provided in the camps until incomes or addition to the PDS safety-net are assured.\(^{119}\)

ECHO has been active in WASH interventions and support to coordination in the sector. The provision of water and sanitation services to refugee camps in Iraq is essential, given the dry environment. All camps, regardless of size, have remained critically overcrowded (Dormiz hosting over 45,000 persons whereas it was originally built for 20,000). The congestion in the camps has resulted in ad hoc shelter with no connection to the water network.\(^{120}\) Improvements in water and sanitation were being implemented in Queshtapa camp at the time of the mission, in agreement with the municipal council as part of their “urban master plan”. However, a clear strategy from the authorities as to the future of the new camps and the meeting of the refugees’ most basic needs has yet to be elaborated upon.\(^{121}\)

3.2. Support for non-camp urban refugees\(^{122}\)

ECHO has supported key actors such as DRC or NRC in reaching non–camp refugees and ensuring adequate support to the most vulnerable. ECHO’s approach to non-camp refugees has consisted, through support to implementing partners, of:

- assistance to the most vulnerable households with shelter upgrades through vouchers;
- information outreach;
- winterization assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees and host communities.

Shelter is a primary concern for out-of-camp refugees, both in terms of high rental costs relative to available income streams and of the suitability of housing options. Needs assessments among refugees also revealed problems with access to employment and livelihood. The government has been hesitant to facilitate assistance, particularly to refugees in Erbil city (as compared to Dohuk or Sulaimaniyah).

There is also an information gap among urban refugees regarding existing and available services and service providers. Many of them are spread through peri-urban areas around the main cities with limited access to aid agencies as they are less visible and more difficult to

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reach. UNHCR is also involved in improving outreach to non-camp refugees and ensuring adequate support to the most vulnerable.

3.3. Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

ECHO has provided €27.3 million to the response inside KRI over the evaluation period. This represents approximately 4% of the overall Syrian response.

Around 70% of ECHO’s support to Syrian refugees in Iraq over 2012-2014 covered shelter (44%) and food assistance (27%). Water and sanitation (16%), multi-sector support (13%), and protection (1%) together represented the remaining 30% of ECHO’s funding over the evaluation period.

ECHO funds were channelled through a limited range of implementing partners, the main ones being UN agencies and the WFP.

Figure 5: Snapshot of ECHO’s response in Iraq 2012-2014

Source: ADE Evaluation Inventory, 2015

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)
4. Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions (EQs)

**EQ 1 – Good Humanitarian Donorship**

**JC 1.1 ECHO deployed specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syrian crisis response**

- Knowledge of the GHDI principles among the ECHO TA and ECHO partners in the field is in most cases relatively limited and restricted to the first principles (humanitarian principles).
- No specific mechanisms are in place to ensure consistency with the 23 principles. However, ECHO’s own procedures facilitate the consistency with certain principles (humanitarian principles based on assessed needs, engagement and participation of affected populations).

**JC 1.2 There are specific examples of where the Syrian response was (or was not) in line with the 23 principles**

- ECHO tries to promote appropriate needs assessments to facilitate resource allocation according to need (as per principle 5): two important Multi-Sector Needs Assessments were completed during April and May 2014, one covering the KRI camp resident population and the other the non-camp refugees. These assessments provided concrete evidence of the areas of assistance in need of further attention and were to be complemented by a second round of similar assessments in the latter part of the year. An inter-sector workshop was planned for August 2014, when the results of these assessments were due to be considered with a view to redesigning programmatic activities to address needs as shown. Together, these assessments formed the foundation for 2015 planning.

- ECHO paid attention to the precision of the description of activities and indicators as well as to the still very short timeframe of funding from a few months to one year, partly contradicting the engagement of Principle 13 “the possibility of reducing, or enhancing the flexibility of, earmarking, and of introducing longer-term funding arrangements”.

- The fact that ECHO does not contribute directly to UN, Red Cross or National Appeals is not in line with Principle 14 but is compatible with Principle 6 (allocation based on needs assessed). Yet ECHO supports projects which are in line with these appeals but not necessary through the appealing agency (UNHCR, OCHA).

- ECHO is perceived not to be in line with the principle aimed at limiting earmarking, which is supposed to facilitate flexibility; partners such as UN agencies complained about this.

- Most agencies complain about ECHO’s lack of adhesion to Principle 23 on standardized reporting. ECHO’s single form is seen by other donors as too complicated and not user-friendly.

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123 Project 2014/00793 eSingle Form:
EQ 2 – Consultation of local and regional communities

JC 2.1. ECHO or its partners deployed specific measures for involving local and regional communities

As a donor, ECHO does not itself deploy specific measures for involving local or regional communities. However ECHO expects its partners to be able to demonstrate how they engage with local communities in their operations. While most single forms make clear reference to this exigency, the reality in the field can be less evident. In many instances, however, decisions on site locations and site planning have been made by local authorities.

JC 2.2. ECHO and/or partner monitoring mechanisms took account of beneficiary views and provided appropriate feedback loops to funding officers

Consultations on project planning are supposed to be conducted with refugee leaders. Regular feedback is due to be sought from the camp management on services provided to ensure that all needs are tackled and that services are adjusted as needed. During the mission, complaint mechanisms were observed during NFI distributions by DRC and seem to function correctly. However, the real involvement of refugees in the operations is less obvious. Many are trying to cope with the aid they have received and needs that have not been covered despite affirmations that beneficiaries will be involved in all stages of the action, from design to implementation. As part of the assessments conducted to prepare proposals, all NGO and ECHO partners are supposed to seek information from refugees on the nature of their needs, as well as feedback on initial implementation through post-distribution monitoring. This happens unevenly despite commendable efforts by ECHO partners. Most NGOs use the information gathered to tailor future phases of the programme, to ensure that the main needs of the refugees continue to be met. Yet, this also means that readjustments of the programme might be needed, requiring (time-consuming) amendments with ECHO, which may reduce the incentive to regularly adapt programmes in light of feedback received.

EQ3 – To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?

JC 3.1 ECHO deployed specific measures/a specific approach/strategy to make sure ECHO-funded interventions took into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region both at design and implementation stages

The preparation of the HIP comprised a thorough review of the humanitarian situation in the affected area. After a year, during which the needs of Syrian refugees in Iraq were covered under the Syria Regional HIP, they finally ended up in the framework of the Iraq HIP, which was justified by the overwhelming weight of the IDP crisis.

JC 3.2 The design of ECHO-funded interventions reflects the needs of the most vulnerable people well

Most projects seen or discussed in the field have been based on a certain prioritization of the needs of the most vulnerable. For instance, at the project outset a partner had to refine the

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124 Project 2014/00793 eSingle Form:
125 Project 2014/00314 Single Form:
vulnerability criteria to ensure alignment with the relevant UNHCR sector guidelines. The core criterion is economic vulnerability, including larger families, families with limited income generation opportunities, vulnerable women-headed households, and families supporting a disabled or ill person. ECHO’s emphasis on the importance of targeting the most vulnerable as part of the proposed action encouraged its partners to focus on needs and not on status-related or protection-related vulnerability as laid down in the UNHCR sector guidelines.

**JC 3.3 ECHO took specific measures to ensure that during implementation the needs of the most vulnerable people were taken into account**

ECHO’s insistence on targeting is permanent, especially at a time of resource constraints.

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**EQ 4 – To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?**

**JC 4.1. : ECHO applied a specific approach/strategy to make sure that the needs and interests of host populations were taken into account**

KRI is not a poor area and the regional institutions have both the means and the will to cater for their population. However, with the end of the “real estate bubble” and the fall in oil prices, there may be a need for alternative funding to revitalize the local economy and make life easier for host populations and refugees alike.

**JC 4.2. : ECHO took specific measures to address the needs and interests of host populations**

At this stage, ECHO believes that given the economic situation of KRI and despite the consumer price increases that affect the host population, nothing meaningful can be done using already scarce humanitarian funding. The main priorities are to attract development funds and boost the private sector.

**JC 4.3. : The measures achieved their objectives**

The strategy in the current context is still in its infancy. The lessons from the past underline the importance of EU-Iraq bilateral cooperation agreements. The direction taken in the EU 2011-2013 Country Strategy Paper for Iraq indicated that the priorities for the EU in Iraq are basic services and good governance and it remains to be seen how this could be articulated with ECHO humanitarian objectives in KRI.

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**EQ 5 – To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?**

**JC 5.1 ECHO and its partners had a strategy to adapt their approach to the shifting needs of the region**

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126 Project 2014/00314 Fichop
Needs assessments have been widely used by ECHO and its partners to adapt their programmes to shifting contexts (cf. JC 1.2).

Actors met during the mission systematically referred to the following elements as being the strategy to adapt approaches to shifting needs:

- Permanent dialogue with ECHO’s team in the field
- Rapidity in the exchange of letters;
- Capacity to invest HR in the cumbersome revision of the e-single-form;
- Capacity to advance money;
- Exploration of other donors in case it takes too long for DG ECHO internal process (from the field TA to Syrian coordination based in Amman and then to Brussels).

**JC 5.2 ECHO and its partners have revised their approaches/interventions so as to better address the shifting needs of the region**

The box below describes how humanitarian stakeholders adapted to the sudden increase of Syrian refugees in KRI from August 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influx of refugees in KRI</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the 5(^{th}) September 2013 an estimated 56,000 Syrians arrived in the region through the border crossing of Peshkabur and Sahela. The new arrivals added to the already existing 149,258 (UNHCR, 13(^{th}) Aug) refugees settled in the Kurdistan Region’s Domiz camp and among host communities. The number of Syrian refugees seeking refuge in KRG continued to grow on a daily basis, with more than 500 crossing the border every day. The sudden influx of Syrians was stretching the response capacity of the government, local communities and other humanitarian stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being already overcrowded, the only existing and operational refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Domiz camp, could not host any further refugees. The ongoing camp development in Dara Shakran, Erbil Governorate (planned capacity: 10,000 with discussion of an extension to 20,000), was not due to be completed until September and was initially set up as a settlement option for vulnerable refugees currently residing in host communities. Additional camps, designed to host large refugee populations, were developed (Barika in Sulemanya and Gawilan in Ninewa) and opened in the last quarter of 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the ongoing influx, local communities already hosted over 105,000 refugees, which placed a significant burden on their resources. On arrival in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, refugees had to settle in a transitional area adjacent to the border, where they were granted access to basic facilities set up by the authorities and humanitarian stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a daily basis, new arrivals were then quickly relocated to temporary settlement sites (initially to communal buildings such as schools and mosques; then, when they were ready, to camps) in Erbil, Sulemanya, and Ninewa governorates through a shuttle system operated by KRG authorities with support from IOM. Given its already high refugee concentration, no new arrivals could be settled in Dohuk Governorate. In total, four sites in Erbil, two in Ninewa, and four in Sulimanya, were established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Situational Report, September 5th 2013
JC 5.3 In the case of project activities that have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, ECHO partners adapted their approaches/interventions to the changed needs.

JC 5.4 When adapting their approaches to changing needs, ECHO’s partners introduced specific innovations

As the crisis entered a protracted cycle, there were ongoing adaptations in the shelter sector, where NGOs such as NRC were moving from a “cash for limited improvement of living conditions” approach to a more sophisticated support for the improvement of shelter and securing land tenure. This new approach (tested in Jordan), consisted in the establishment of a contract between refugees, landlords, municipalities and NGOs for the rehabilitation of flats or houses, with ECHO-supported partners providing the landlords with financial support (on the basis of a Bill of Quantity) in exchange for a rent freeze or free rent for a given period of time. Municipalities were not too keen to see cheap lodging capacity being developed for Syrian refugees.

JC 5.5 Implications for ECHO (and partner) approaches relative to expected shifts in beneficiary needs

For the ECHO partner system, the implication of trying to adjust to shifting needs is additional work and exchanges between the field (KRI), Amman (regional coordination and RSO), Brussels and the partners’ HQs. While the obligation to justify changes with evidence is seen by all as an essential prerequisite, updating the e-single-form is seen as time-consuming, especially when fast-changing circumstances call for several, sometimes overlapping e-single-form modifications. If the timelines for exchange of information at field level are often straightforward (partners can easily call or come to the ECHO TA office in Erbil, the subsequent steps of consultation and validation with upper levels (regional, HQ) are often seen as relatively slow and sometimes frustrating, as the position of the TA and HQ can differ.

EQ 6 – EU added value

JC 6.1 ECHO’s approach to ensure added value

ECHO’s added value is seen as embedded in its TAs in the field and their dedication to field monitoring and dialogue with their partners.

JC 6.2 ECHO was recognized as providing specific types of added value

The advisory role of ECHO’s TAs is widely acknowledged. However, people sometimes complain of the “intrusiveness” it can cause when they try to influence agencies in some topical discussion or in terms of geographical orientation.

EQ 7 – Urban settings

JC 7.1 ECHO’s approach to embed urban issues

ECHO does not have a special policy on urban issues. It is, however, sensitive to the fact that urban contexts are full of threats and opportunities and that vulnerabilities have to be analysed in a specific manner.

JC 7.2 ECHO identified and took account of the major challenges that exist in urban settings
Assessments conducted indicate that shelter is a primary concern for out-of-camp refugees, both in terms of high rental costs relative to available income streams and of the suitability of housing options. ECHO’s partners have proposed shelter NFI assistance (through vouchers) to help refugees improve their shelter condition as the most appropriate response. They have developed a fully-fledged programme to promote the urban integration of refugees by helping them, through a cash system, to undertake a basic rehabilitation of equipment and facilities where they have settled.

The July 2013 assessment clearly identified that the need both for shelter and for a reliable source of income are priorities for households. An ECHO partner’s initial plans focused on physically upgrading refugees’ current shelters. However, more in-depth investigation during the January assessment showed that this was not feasible, primarily because many houses were illegally built or rented, or in the worst cases only partially constructed. Many refugees mentioned cash flow problems due to their irregular work or unemployment and the stress this places on households. Based on this information, shelter NFI assistance (through vouchers) to help refugees improve their shelter condition was identified as the most appropriate response.

**JC 7.3 ECHO tackled urban challenges and coordinated with local authorities, urban services and institutions in line with good practice**

Special institutions have been set up by the KRI Authorities to address refugee-related issues:
- Erbil Refugee Council (ERC) for the Erbil area,
- Dohuk Refugee Support Association (DRSA) for the Dohuk area,
- Suleymania Refugee Association (SRA) for the Sulemaniya area.

Agencies consult these institutions. However, there is less consultation with municipal institutions. ECHO itself has limited contact with authorities at governorate level and even less at municipal levels. Its partners often cite corruption and inefficiency as reasons for this limited engagement.

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**EQ8 – (Protection): How and to what extent has Protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?**

**JC 8.1. ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embedding protection within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

Although many e-single-forms mentioned that efforts will be made to embed and mainstream protection in project implementation, evidence of this is infrequent and often related to issues such as lighting streets in camps and around latrines, or ensuring that there will be “women houses and child-friendly spaces in the camps”.

**JC 8.2. The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major threats that exist to the physical and psychological security of humanitarian aid beneficiaries**

The main issues of protection in the area are linked to the application of refugee law and are implemented by UNHCR and some of its closest partners (for instance the NGO COPIL). Child protection and to a lesser degree SGBV are also seen as key issues. It seems, however, very difficult to differentiate issues specifically linked to the refugee situation from those more embedded in the local culture (addressing child and women protection in local cultures...
requires the presence of anthropologists and social scientists to identify the key issues and cannot be easily addressed under short-term humanitarian funding).

\textit{JC 8.3. ECHO-funded project designs disambiguated protection needs per population segment and location, including identifying specific threats to vulnerable groups.}

Many e-single-forms prepared at proposal level and revised at the interim and final reporting stages attempt to present data disaggregation. This remains uneven between project documents. The initial assessments on which proposals are made do not necessarily fully present the specific threats to vulnerable people, especially when the NGO was not present in the areas before the crisis and has little knowledge and few networks in the area for proper identification of these issues.

\textbf{EQ 9 – In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?}\textsuperscript{129}

Assistance to camp and non-camp refugees in Erbil Governorate does not require remote management. Most people working in Dormiz or Sulemanya Governorates also have direct access to the populations they assist. Remote management takes place only for the Allobay refugee camp for Syrian refugees, which is managed by UNHCR.

\textbf{EQ10 – Cash and vouchers}

\textit{JC 10.1 The ECHO strategy for Syria considered the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities}

There is a perception among many actors that there is a systematic and relatively dogmatic push by ECHO for “cash only” solutions.

\textit{JC 10.2 The appraisal of ECHO actions took account of an appropriate analysis of the context}

ECHO partners perceive ECHO as strongly pushing for unconditional cash from an ideological standpoint not fully backed up by micro-economic and sociological analysis. Some have already mentioned that if ECHO makes funding conditional on a "UCT only” strategy, they might decide not to request money from ECHO.

\textit{JC 10.3 ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations have been effective in the Syrian context}

Experience is, however, being acquired through pilot projects and through growing use of iris scan and card systems.

\textbf{EQ 11 – Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?}

\textit{JC 11.1. / JC 11.2. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was appropriate and proportionate}

The decreasing level of humanitarian resources affecting the overall Syrian response has had a significant impact in KRI, taking into account the eruption of the internal displacement...
crisis from the start of 2014, coupled with the influx of Syrian arrivals from Kobane in the last quarter of 2014. Subsequently, overcrowding and competition for humanitarian resources, service provision and jobs have risen sharply for refugees living in camps, while ECHO has had to press further for tight targeting.

**JC 11.3. ECHO calibrated its objectives to the available funding**

Calibrating the response objectives to the available resources is done through several mechanisms including:

- imposing further targeting of NGOs;
- allocating resources through two windows: HIP funding early in the year and a “top-up” by mid year; this system does not facilitate proactive planning by the partners.

**JC 11.4. ECHO-funded activities were cost-effective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ 12 – Were appropriate monitoring systems in place to support sound management of ECHO operations?</th>
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**JC 12.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure that the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms were conducive to support sound management of ECHO-funded operations**

ECHO supports the Cash Working Group to improve the quality of cash transfer through more dynamic exchanges between actors.

**JC 12.2. ECHO adopted a specific approach to ensure that monitoring mechanisms were tailored to the specific needs of remote management**

This is not an issue in KRI.

**JC 12.3. ECHO partners implemented operations monitoring and ensured data and findings were available for ECHO’s use in a timely manner**

There are three main contractual stages when partners have to ensure that data and findings are made available to ECHO:

- at the proposal stage, as part of the annex to the e-single-form;
- at the interim report stage;
- at the final report stage (especially when an external evaluation has been provided for and included in the budget).

Information also has to be made available when ECHO TAs carry out monitoring missions. The e-single-form requires that a monitoring system is put in place and activated. Given the importance of such data for reporting, ECHO partners ensure that monitoring provides the required information related to activities.

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<tr>
<th>EQ 13 – What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?</th>
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</table>

**JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**

Only one new consortium is currently being supported. Its objective is to channel more resources through the partners involved in a coordinated manner by Unconditional Cash
Transfer. It is the result of a discussion between ECHO and its possible partners, including Mercy Corps which is a key actor in the area.

**JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplication between countries and partner organisations**

At this stage, the objective of the Cash consortium is more about the coherence of the approach (indicators, targeting, etc.) than about coverage or gap avoidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ 14 – ECHO successfulness to coordinate operations with other main actors</th>
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**JC 14.1 Actions undertaken to enhance coordination**

The participation of all ECHO partners in coordination mechanisms is seen as compulsory and ECHO has invested significant amounts of money to make coordination work. In UNHCR camps, bi-weekly technical or sectoral meetings take place at camp level. ECHO TAs keep overall coordination under scrutiny as it supports UNHCR’s coordination activities\(^\text{130}\) for both camp and out-of-camp refugees.

The involvement of technical staff from UNHCR partners is required in coordination at camp level. NGO coordination bodies take care of coordination for the “non-camp refugees”. Reporting on coordination is uneven between ECHO partners. One of them, for instance, was not in a position to answer the question regarding the role of the Coordinator and Information Manager that ECHO has been paying for during the implementation of this action.

**JC 14.2 ECHO identified and took account of main actors’ activities**

With the UNHCR databases, the work done with OCHA, and its own participation in various coordination mechanisms, the ECHO team in Erbil is aware of the various activities planned or implemented by different actors. However, the ECHO team does not have enough resources to be as involved as they would like to be.

**JC 14.3 ECHO actions sought to enhance synergies and reduce the duplication of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

- ECHO supports a cash working group to facilitate coordination and the search for synergy in exchanges between agencies involved in cash transfer activities.

- ECHO contributed to the establishment of a regular coordination mechanism with its Implementing Partners (IPs) and UNHCR\(^\text{131}\) as part of the Domiz humanitarian response. All WASH partners joined the Domiz WASH Coordination Meetings, as well as \textit{ad hoc} working groups to tackle specific issues based on need. The coordination mechanisms in place have led to a clearer definition of responsibilities and lines of funding for the Implementing Partners.

**JC 14.4 ECHO’s actions demonstrated synergies and no duplication of effort, gaps or resource conflicts are apparent**

Few donors are present. Donor coordination to avoid gaps and duplication takes place either in Erbil, among the small group of donors with permanent presence in KRI, or in Baghdad.

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\(^{130}\) Project 2014/00793 Fichop:

\(^{131}\) Project 2013/00624 Single Form:
For donors with no presence in Iraq, coordination takes place when donors’ delegations come to KGI.

EQ15 – Mainstreaming of LRRD

JC 15.1 ECHO coordinated with EC development actors (DG DEVCO, EEAS, and EU MS) from the earliest phases of the crisis response

Coordination within the EU Delegation is seen from Kurdistan as relatively theoretical, as the Delegation is in Baghdad while the DCI team in charge of the Iraq programmes is located in Amman, and thus far from the field.

JC 15.2 ECHO deployed the various instruments available to implement stability measures in a coherent and complementary fashion with the EU toolbox

Most partners and interviewees stressed their difficulty understanding the EU set-up, with ECHO in Erbil, the Delegation in Baghdad and DCI in Amman. Unclear messages regarding the MADAD trust fund add further confusion.

JC 15.3 ECHO-funded actions have been based on a strong context analysis

ECHO TAs in Erbil use all available sources of information to develop and strengthen their own analysis and be better equipped to base their decisions on a strong context analysis. The complexity of the situation in Kurdistan has resulted in a situation in which the area covered by HIPs has varied, from one HIP only for Syrian refugees (coordinated at the Syria coordination unit) and one for Iraq (mainly for IDP), to one HIP for Iraq with two chapters, one for Syrian refugees and one for the Iraq IDP crisis.

JC 15.4 ECHO-funded projects have been framed in the context of longer-term requirements of reconstruction and development

In the context of the current protracted crisis and taking in account current budgetary restriction, ECHO is trying to refocus its project portfolio on life-saving activities. At the same time, it recognizes that building up the resilience of refugees and their host communities is essential for reducing dependency. In the EU Delegation in Baghdad and in Brussels, ECHO is leading discussions on how stronger emphasis on job opportunities and livelihoods will be essential for providing a longer-term basis for downscaling external support.

EQ16 – Success in terms of LRRD

JC 16.1 ECHO-funded operations have been implemented through rapid decision-making processes and flexible instruments

ECHO’s agility results from its definition of different types of funding window, ranging from advanced planning with the HIP to emergency decisions on rapid response to specific emergencies (here more linked to events in Iraq.) For more on rapid decision-making and adaptability, see EQ5 on flexibility

JC 16.2 ECHO provided a coordinated response strategy through its actions

During a large part of the period under review, the presence of ECHO in KRI was largely insufficient, which means that coordination capacity was extremely limited. This has improved significantly over the last 18 months with the opening of the ECHO office in Erbil, which has allowed ECHO not only to monitor funded projects much better, but also to be present on all coordination fronts.
JC 16.3 ECHO engaged with a range of locally important actors through its actions

In KRI, the number of actors involved with humanitarian aid is limited. UN agencies (such as UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, etc.) are all in the UN compound as part of the UN Integrated Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and were coordinated by its humanitarian branch, the Integrated Coordination Office for Humanitarian and Development Affairs (ICODHA), recently replaced by an OCHA office. INGOs are present in KRI, with a surge following the 2014 Syrian influx, but their capacity is extremely stretched owing to the Iraq IDP crisis. National authorities see ECHO as a key partner, although not all of them understand how it functions or the difference between the EU Delegation’s role and that of ECHO.

JC 16.4 ECHO-funded interventions experienced a smooth and timely phase-out, thereby avoiding “grey zones” in international assistance

DRC, 132 supported by UNHCR and UNDP, is currently implementing a livelihood programme with two components:

- support to business development in camps (through business grants and training);
- job placement within host communities.

The agencies are examining perspectives on how to support the sustainability of livelihoods for the target population, especially Syrian refugees.

JC 16.5 ECHO-funded actions encouraged “cross-learning” of humanitarian and development experiences

At this stage, there are extremely limited results as the office managing the DCI for Iraq are in Amman and come only occasionally to Erbil.

EQ17 – (Security) To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners' organizations? What is the scope for improvement?

JC 17.1. The design of ECHO-funded actions has been based on an in-depth knowledge of the security situation, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries

There is contradictory evidence on how much people base their actions on in-depth knowledge of the security situation both in Syria and in KRI. Most use the same sources (for instance the REACH reports) and access the same documents (International Crisis Group reports).

JC 17.2. The design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions facilitated humanitarian access for partner organizations

ECHO is not involved in facilitating access and security. ECHO partners and UN agencies function under the Baghdad Security Rules imposed by the Head of UNAMI, which are relatively extreme owing to the context in many parts of Iraq. The UN camp on the road to the airport can be as much a protection as it could become a trap. NGOs work under different rules and are extremely aware of the risk but also of the importance of balancing risk and humanitarian necessity. The camp environments in which many of them work under UNHCR are relatively secure and those working in non-camp environments are fully connected with networks of social workers who can inform them in the event of danger.

132 EMMA: https://mega.co.nz/#F!Wx52iDLJYsMk6efJQxt4yr626fUOf
JC 17.3. ECHO-funded actions promoted the security and safety of humanitarian personnel delivering humanitarian aid

ECHO gives significant support to NGOs and their own social worker networks, which is a means of identifying risks and danger and for taking appropriate measures (in particular no-go areas).

EQ18 – (Humanitarian advocacy) How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line intervention, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)?

JC 18.1. Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries

Advocacy on access, registration and protection has been a key component of ECHO’s presence. This, as well as the need to better monitor the supported projects, has been very instrumental in triggering the decision to open the ECHO office in Erbil (other factors in the choice were the better security and easier mobility as compared with Baghdad).

JC 18.2. ECHO advocacy contributed to concrete policy changes in neighbouring countries

Following the Erbil authorities’ reluctance to allow humanitarian assistance to refugees outside camp settings, NRC\textsuperscript{133} has engaged in strong advocacy, with ECHO support, for authorization to implement activities for non-camp refugees. A mechanism has been put in place to facilitate the flow of information between the partners and ECHO in order to promptly inform ECHO of any substantial limitation imposed on their activities and, if necessary, shift the focus of non-camp assistance to other governorates.

ECHO regularly reiterated its position of not supporting camps without basic protection and security provision in place.\textsuperscript{134} The location of Gawilan camp (and Aqra) in the DIB has been and continues to be of particular concern. ECHO continues to advocate for Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action (as per the IASC Principals’ statement of 17th December 2013) and is hoping for a similar stand from UNHCR. In the meantime, ECHO does not wish for any of its resources to be expended on camps in these areas.

JC 18.3. ECHO advocacy contributed to changes in approach by other donors in Syria and neighbouring countries

ECHO is seen by many visiting donor representatives, and by the few donors established in KRI (France, UK, USA, Germany, etc.), as the most engaged in the field and the most relevant in addressing questions as to how to improve humanitarian aid in that context. This means that when ECHO TAs raise an issue, for instance mainstreaming protection (as in the case of SGBV), other donors follow. One donor representative indicated that all advocacy messages from ECHO are immediately transmitted to HQ for information and with a request for direction.

JC 18.4. ECHO advocacy contributed to increased coordination between donors and governments in Syria and neighbouring countries

ECHO is regularly in touch with the different Refugee Committees established in the different governorates. This means that the TAs are regularly made aware of the concerns of the KRI Authorities and are able to forward this information either to donors which are based in KRI but are less mobile (embassy staff have much more restrictive movement procedures), or to visiting delegations.

\textsuperscript{133} Project 2013/00467 Fichop:
\textsuperscript{134} Project 2014/00793 Fichop:
5. Tentative conclusion

**ECHO is often seen as much as a partner as a donor:** this situation is largely correlated with the intensive presence of ECHO TAs, who are often seen as key actors in ensuring that proposals are submitted, that implementation is correct, whether modification is possible or whether coordination is effective. The quality and dedication of the TAs has been systematically mentioned, even by agencies which have received no funding from ECHO or else have had difficulties with their projects.

**The right staffing at the right time:** given the widely-recognized importance of a permanent ECHO presence in this type of situation, both strategically and operationally, it is “mission critical” to ensure that administrative “red tape” does not undermine rapid manning of ECHO offices with experienced TAs or recruitment of competent local field officers.

**Camp management is well under control; the main difficulties are for non-camp refugees:** ECHO’s early support for partners involved in setting up camps was highly appreciated; despite some need for improvement (WASH in particular) and for care and maintenance, the camps are well-established and able to cater for the refugees for the time being. The main area of difficulty is for the more vulnerable non-camp refugees, who might find themselves outside any form of social security net, and addressing the needs of these vulnerable refugees requires time-consuming and labour-intensive “house-to-house” surveys. This implies a regular presence in the different urban and peri-urban environments to facilitate the identification of cases and play an “honest broker” role with service delivery institutions.

The mission in KRI helped to identify a series of key issues:

- A need for ECHO to develop a capacity to better respond to crises in countries which have reached a certain level of economic development. The differential between what people used to have and what they now have is for them what defines “dignity”. This means that some “non-life-saving” needs (television, hot water, electricity, washing machines, etc.) are seen as equally important for them as “life-saving” ones. This is where the use of unconditional cash is of such value, but also carries its own risks and limits.

- A need for ECHO to further explore the requirements, constraints and opportunities associated with work in urban contexts.

**Cash transfer is a useful aid delivery mechanism, but the context in KRI is not always very favourable to rapid deployment of unconditional cash:** the lack of a well-functioning bank system (in many areas there is no ATM and bank-based transactions are not fully rooted in local culture) and some institutional barriers within agencies, for instance, have yet to be fully analysed and properly managed. Much experience is, however, being gathered from some pilot projects and through the growing use of iris scan and card systems.

**The influx of Iraqi IDPs is significantly modifying the humanitarian landscape in KRI, and Syrian refugees might be relegated to a lower priority.** The capacity of the humanitarian aid system to simultaneously address two crises of differing magnitudes and political importance is at stake here. Allocation of scarce resources may entail even stricter targeting and stringent prioritization, with all the humanitarian costs associated with them.
High levels of uncertainty and the need to remain extremely alert and agile: the complexity of the situation and its possible development comprises several factors which could all have significant impact on the humanitarian situation in KRI and will continue to require a high level of attention at both field and HQ levels, namely:

- the evolution of the crisis in Syria and of the flow of refugees and its possible stabilization or acceleration, including the risk of an influx of Aran Syrian refugees, who will not be as welcome as their Kurdish fellow-countrymen;
- the evolution of the war in Iraq and of the subsequent IDP crisis which is overwhelming all humanitarian efforts in KRI;
- the evolution of the impact of the economic crisis in KRI (decline in oil revenues, total cessation of all construction activities, etc.) on the employment market;
- the way in which neighbouring countries (especially Turkey and Iran) adjust their strategy to the situation.
Jordan Country Report

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1. Introduction

This Jordan Country report is part of the broader external evaluation process carried out on the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis.

1.1. Methodology

The methodology applied for this case study is based on four pillars:
- documents reviewed: in addition to the work undertaken during the desk study, documentation on the context, projects, needs analyses and impact studies have been gathered in the field and analyzed (see Annex 1)
- interviews with key stakeholders
  - From the European Commission (ECHO, EEAS) and Member States (DFID);
  - UN Agencies (RHC, OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA)
  - NGOs (DRC, NRC, ACF, Save, HI, PU-AMI, IRC, ICMC)
  - Red Cross (IFRC, Finnish RC, French RC)
  - National actors (Camp Director in Za’atari, Deputy Mayor in Irbid)
- three field visits (Za’atari camp, Azraq camp, Irbid town) which allowed for the direct observation of programmes and interviews with Syrian refugees (in Za’atari and in Irbid)
- a final debriefing with ECHO staff to validate the findings and go through the initial and tentative recommendations.

1.2. Structure of the Jordan Country Report

The structure of the Jordan country report is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction
- Description of the methodology
- Description of the structure of the country report

Section 2: The context in Jordan
- Refugee population
- Host government policy

Section 3: Overview of the ECHO approach in the country:
- Overview of ECHO’s overall approach and main priorities in the country
- Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

Section 4: Key findings with respect to the evaluation questions

Section 5: Other relevant findings for the evaluation
- Specific findings on the case study subjects
- Specific lessons with respect to the sectors (water, health, etc.) concerned
- Other relevant findings

Section 6: Country-specific conclusions

Annexes
- List of documents consulted and of persons met
- Other annexes deemed useful, including specific lessons learned
2. The context

2.1 Refugee population

Over 600,000 Syrian refugees were registered by UNHCR in Jordan over the evaluation period. The flow of refugees increased dramatically in 2013 (see figure below), with more than 1,800 arriving each day in early 2013, and then began flattening out in 2014, with 33 or fewer arriving each day between October and December 2014.

![Figure 1 – Evolution of Syrian refugees in Jordan (Jan. 2012 – Jan. 2015)](image)

Source: ADE on the basis of UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, data extracted on 3 December 2015

Of the total 646,700 refugees registered with the Jordanian Ministry of Interior as of October 2014, the largest group are women (23.5%), with 20.7% adult males. 85% (550,000) are living in non-camp settings in urban and rural areas. The highest concentrations are in Northern and central Jordan (Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa governorates). The largest camp population is in Za’atari, with more than 80,000 people in October 2014. Azraq is the second largest camp hosting 13,700 in October 2014.

During the first few months of 2012, refugees were hosted in a small camp (Bachab Cheh) close to at the border, and then, with the increased number, in two other settlements in Ramtha, Irbid Governorate (Cyber City and King Abdalah Park or KAP). Simultaneously,

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135 UNHCR (2015), 'Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal', last updated 24 April 2015

136 Government of Jordan’s official figures as of 18 October, 2014.
many refugees were hosted by families, as similar populations live on both sides of the border, especially in the case of Dara Governorate. Another camp was also created with Emirati support (called “Emirati Jordanian Camps”-EJC- often referred as “five-stars camp”).

With the rapid growth of the refugee population, more and more entered into cities, the situation became a source of growing concern for the Government of Jordan. Za’atari camp was built and opened in July 2012. This camp has grown progressively and has evolved organically, with little overall planning. By the end of 2013, Za’atari’s population had reached 120,000. The camp evolved, with the tents being replaced by so called “caravans” (prefabricated houses), and saw its population diminish to 80,000 refugees. By mid-2015, approximately 430,000 refugees had passed through the camp. 120,000 residents had returned to Syria, 60,000 had been sponsored by Jordanian nationals to enable them formally to leave the camp, and 120,000 more had left the camp informally.

As the population continued to cross the border from Syria, the Government of Jordan has decided that another camp should be opened and all new refugees should be brought into it. The Azraq camp was then created in the desert of Zarqa Governorate in Central Eastern Jordan. The camp was designed to host a maximum of 130,000 refugees and was intended to take into account the lessons learnt from Za’atari, including the use of advanced planning and the early creation of infrastructures. Expensive infrastructural work was undertaken with UNHCR (ECHO-funded) for the road network, for the water (borehole and trucking systems) and sanitation systems (septic tanks and gully trucks), for NFI distribution and voucher or cash utilization (supermarket), and for the health infrastructure, with a first level of care taking with International Medical Corp, a well-equipped hospital under the Finnish Red Cross and a referral system with Amman hospitals for serious cases. At the time of the evaluation visit (mid-2015), there were only 18,000 refugees and the number was growing slowly, but steadily. The camp had been held in a state of readiness in the event of an unexpected increase.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{137} UNCHR (2015) RRP6 Jordan Response Plan. UNHCR.

84\% of refugees are concentrated around major urban areas in the northwest as against 16\% in camps (Za’atari, Azraq, ERC), whilst the remainder are living in rented and informal shelters in Amman and in southern governorates.
Table 1 – UNHCR registered Syrians by location\textsuperscript{138}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amman</th>
<th>Mafraq</th>
<th>Irbid</th>
<th>Zarqa</th>
<th>Balqa</th>
<th>Madaba</th>
<th>Jarash</th>
<th>Karak</th>
<th>Ajloun</th>
<th>Maan</th>
<th>Aqaba</th>
<th>Tafilah</th>
<th>Dispersed</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>174,972</td>
<td>158,651</td>
<td>143,031</td>
<td>74,994</td>
<td>20,702</td>
<td>11,172</td>
<td>10,738</td>
<td>9,398</td>
<td>9,387</td>
<td>7,278</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>2,047</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>627,29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Figure 2 – Geographical spread of refugees in Jordan 2012-2014\textsuperscript{139}

Source: UNHCR Syria Portal

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{139} ACAPS (2015) Syria Four Years On: No End in Sight. ACAPS.
2.2 Host government policy

Over the evaluation period, Jordan has hosted 646,700 Syrian refugees, amounting to 10% of its pre-crisis population. This has impacted Jordan’s fiscal position and driven up demand for basic commodities while contributing to rising inflation.\(^{140}\)

Pre-crisis unemployment levels in Jordan were already persistently above 12%.\(^{141}\) Syrian refugees, like all non-Jordanians, require a work permit in order to gain employment. But the process for Syrian refugees to obtain a work permit has been criticised as slow and opaque by international organisations.\(^{142}\) This has contributed to the gradual exhausting of refugee assets and the increased use of negative coping mechanisms.

The Government of Jordan’s border policy has included sporadic closures of border crossing points with Syria. Until mid-2013, the Jordanian government permitted entry to Syrians across its informal border crossings with Syria. Most Syrians crossed through western entry points from Da’raa, near Tal Shihab, Hayat and Al Naseeb. But in mid-2013, the Jordanian government closed these informal western crossing points to all Syrians except the war-wounded and exceptional cases. Since then, crossing points have been closed between Ramtha and Da’raa (by the Jordanian and Syrian governments) and Jordan has barred entry at Amman’s Queen Alia International Airport to Syrians without Jordanian residency permits or special exceptions.\(^{143}\)

The closure of these crossing and entry points has forced Syrians fleeing to Jordan to pass through dangerous areas of Syria in order to reach the remaining eastern border crossings. There have, moreover, been cases of refugees being brought into Jordanian territory from eastern crossing points “screened at the Government of Jordan registration center, and then immediately deported to Syria without being registered”.\(^{144}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugees out of camps:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The majority of refugees are out-of-camp:</strong> by 2015, 83% of Syrian refugees in Jordan (520,700) live outside the camps(^{145}) with the largest concentrations living in urban areas in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid governorates.(^{146})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing vulnerability:</strong> UNHCR reports in 2015 acute needs inside Mafraq governorate, the third most densely populated refugee governorate outside the camp settings (behind Amman and Irbid). Two-thirds of refugees in Mafraq are now living below the national poverty line and one in six refugee households is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{144}\) SNAP (2015).

\(^{145}\) Ibid.

in abject poverty. Almost 50% of refugees have no heating, 25% have unreliable electricity and 20% have no functioning toilet. **Rising social tensions:** in 2015 one in 11 people in Jordan are now Syrian refugees, and the increased strain on Jordanian infrastructure and competition for housing, jobs and to some extent international assistance is creating social tensions between refugees and host communities.\(^{147}\)

**Informal shelter:** in April 2015 one in ten refugees was living in an informal shelter such as a tent or caravan. Living conditions in informal shelters are often worse than in formal shelters.\(^{148}\)

**Inflation-effects:** rental costs have increased between 100% and 200% in some urban areas since the crisis, threatening many Syrian families with eviction. Half of those living in rented accommodation are in inappropriate conditions, 20% being without functioning latrines.\(^{149}\)

This situation has had significant repercussions on the economic and social features of Jordan. Rental prices have increased between 100% and 200% in some urban areas since the crisis. Half of the refugees living in rented accommodation are in inappropriate conditions, with 20% not having functioning latrines. Community resources, infrastructure and social services are overstretched. Rent rises and job competition have led to rising tensions with the host population.

### 2.2.1 Key humanitarian issues

Several key changes in the Government of Jordan’s policies have contributed to an increasingly precarious humanitarian situation in the country:

**Access to Jordanian Territory:** the number of entry points has decreased since 2013, leaving only those that are hard to reach. There were multiple reports in 2014 of large numbers of refugees trapped between Syria and Jordan, and forced returns from registration centres in Jordan have been reported. The asylum policy began to change with the policy on entrance into Jordan becoming more and more strict. The only entry point left by mid 2015 was on the northeastern frontier. It is a military zone where ICRC is one of the very rare agencies to have access, thanks to its old contacts with the Jordanian Army. It is the area where the only border crossing of the East is established. ICRC supported the creation of a small transit camp and a hosting capacity with water and relief supplies in the “no man’s land” on the Syrian side. A system of precooked meals is now in place for “no man’s land” and for the transit camp prior to people being screened by the Jordanian Border Police and transferred to the UNHCR camps. This was the result of a lengthy negotiation process, with the security of Jordan very much uppermost in the debate.

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\(^{147}\) Ibid.

\(^{148}\) Ibid.

\(^{149}\) ACAPS (2015) Syria Four Years On: No End in Sight. ACAPS.
Access to aid: Concerns have grown about access to humanitarian aid in 2014. Camp residents are finding it increasingly difficult to complete registration requirements for relocation to urban areas. Forced returns to camps are increasingly reported, contributing to reticence in approaching authorities and the subsequent impact on access to aid and public services within host communities. Free access to health services in State hospitals for Syrian refugees, which was granted since 2012, was terminated in November 2014, adding to the financial burden of the refugees. WFP cut food assistance to 37,000 urban refugees in October 2014 owing to a funding shortfall, although some have had their assistance restored after appeal. The value of WFP food vouchers was also reduced in 2015, with 85% of refugees reporting they would be unable to meet the cost of basic needs without food aid. Negative coping strategies such as early marriage have grown in 2014 among the Syrian refugee community, with 30% of all registered Syrian marriages in Jordan involving women under 17 and a worrying increase in deliveries below age 16. Children dropping out of school to engage in different types of jobs in the informal sector became a significant source of income for Syrian refugee families.

2.2.2 Response from the international community

The UN system established that funding requirements for 2015 would amount to US$ 1.2 billion\textsuperscript{150}. By April, only US$ 195 million (16\% coverage)\textsuperscript{151} had been received.

Figure 3 – Donors’ contribution in Jordan 2012-2014 (US$ million)

\[\text{Figure 3 – Donors’ contribution in Jordan 2012-2014 (US$ million)}\]

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Different forms of vulnerability: Among the different groups which took refuge in Jordan, several groups are particularly vulnerable:

- Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) who were under the responsibility of UNRWA. PRS struggle with limited incomes and livelihood opportunities and are at risk of forced return.
- Young girls who can be married early in order to lessen their economic weight on the family.
- Young children in general who can be taken away from school and put to work to participate in the household.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) is a growing protection concern in both Za’atari and Azraq camps. Women in general can be targeted by SGBV in a situation where men are increasingly distressed by the situation and can become even more violent.
- Negative coping strategies among poor families are also a concern, including early marriage and child labour.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{150} UNHCR (2015), ‘Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal’, last updated 24 April 2015

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
Jordan was the third biggest recipient in terms of total contributions during 2012-2014 (behind Syria and Lebanon), receiving US$2 billion from the international community. This represents 18% of all contributions to respond to the Syrian crisis (US$11 billion).

The increase of registered refugees from 100,000 to 550,000 in 2013 triggered a four-fold increase in total contributions, with subsequent 2014 contributions remaining above 90% of that peak. The USA contributed almost one quarter of all funds, with ECHO and the UK making up a further 22%. Other major donors include a mix of OECD and Middle Eastern countries and UN agencies. One particular feature of this crisis is that Gulf Donors are in 4th, 6th and 7th positions in terms of recorded financial contributions.

Figure 4 – Contribution by donors in Jordan (US$ million)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Figure 5 – Donors’ contribution in Jordan, by sector 2012-2014 (US$ million)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

Multi-sector support made up almost 80% of international contributions, perhaps reflecting the use of cash and voucher-based assistance for the 84% of refugees living outside the camps. Other major sectors supported by the international community include shelter and NFIs, food and health.

Coordination of international efforts in Jordan has been very complicated and a subject of much tension between UNHCR, which sees the crisis in Jordan as “a refugee
crisis”, and OCHA, which has tried to establish itself to coordinate the response at a higher level of crisis management (including promotion of a “Whole of Syria” (WoS) approach coordinated by a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator based in Amman, but supervising the efforts of the Jordan-based HC who was in effect the UNHCR Representative). Overview of the ECHO approach in the country

2.3 Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

Funding from ECHO increased in 2013 (a year which saw important investment in Azraq camp) and diminished in 2014.

In recognition of the significant level of humanitarian needs in Jordan, ECHO has supported a range of partners over the evaluation period. This support has included shelter, food, WASH and multi-sector cash-based assistance, alongside health and protection services. Support has targeted both camp and non-camp settings, including urban refugees in Amman and rural-based non-camp refugees in Irbid Governorate.

- Over one third of ECHO’s support covered shelter, totalling US$54 million during the period 2012-2014.
- Food (16%), water and sanitation (15%) and multi-sector support (14%) were the next largest sectors by contribution size.
- ECHO worked through a range of implementing partners, with a large share of funds (82%) channelled through the top ten partners.
2.4 ECHO’s strategic sectoral choices

The interviews in Amman and the field visits confirmed that ECHO-supported operations, in line with Humanitarian Intervention Plans (HIP)\(^{152}\), cover the following priorities by sector in Jordan:

- **Camp settings**: ECHO supported in-camp infrastructure establishment (road, camp planning, water and sanitation, energy) and improvements though UNHCR and NRC. ECHO also sought to encourage improved site planning in Azraq on the basis of lessons learned in the Za’atari camp. In-camp spare capacity is now significant. Both Za’atari and Azraq have a maximum potential capacity of 130,000. By current figures this leaves an extra capacity of 50,000 in Za’atari and 112,000 in Azraq.\(^{153}\)

- **Shelter**: in camps, ECHO supported the process of improving shelters to meet the needs of prolonged occupation of shelter units through a transition from tents to “prefabricated housing”. Cash assistance was prioritised for non-camp shelter support, to help pay rent and share the economic burden with host families. In addition, and taking into account the low social housing stock available, ECHO also targeted the provision of additional housing by specific support for landlords to facilitate apartment rehabilitation to counterbalance increased housing demand and rent rises in response to the refugee influx.

- **Non Food Items**: as far as possible, ECHO supported the use of unconditional cash as a means of facilitating refugees’ choice in NFI. This seems to have been most appropriate for hygiene kits and winterization items (blankets, clothes). One caveat reported is that in this case, refugees tend to opt for the lowest price, often the lowest


quality. This reportedly results in a certain level of risk (e.g. gas explosions) and rapid deterioration of the items. Winterization programmes are reportedly frequently implemented late owing to the late arrival of an ECHO top-up budget.

- **Food**: ECHO works though UNHCR and WFP for its food programmes. Targeted provision of food vouchers to camp-based refugees through a system of supermarkets offering a wide range of food and non-food items under a fixed price is a very interesting innovation, although the absence of ATM distribution systems in camps does not yet allow real unconditional cash transfers. Cash assistance to those outside the camps and host communities is done through a sophisticated and innovative system involving biometric measures (iris scans in particular) and distribution of ATM cards.

- **WASH**: in-camp, ECHO supported the establishment of a water supply (boreholes, trucking system, distribution of tanks) through UNHCR, which sub-contracted first to ACTED and then to additional agencies to reduce possible risks (OXFAM, JAN). Sanitation remains a significant problem as septic tanks and gully trucks still represent the main, albeit costly, option. The WASH conditions of in-camp residents have been challenged by the rapid influx of new refugees. Misuse and vandalism of WASH facilities and water wastage is an important problem in Za’atari. Costs of delivering effective WASH services in Azraq are estimated to be double that in Za’atari owing to the long distance for truck replenishment and difficulties in reaching underground water.  

  Hygiene promotion and community mobilisation was also targeted to minimise transmission of WASH-related communicable diseases. Access to water and sanitation outside the refugee camps is limited. The proportion of households in refugee-hosting areas with access to municipal water networks can be as low as 55%. Access is still more problematic for those living in informal shelters. For non-camp residents, ECHO targeted a mixed modality approach through in-kind, cash transfers and vouchers. ECHO has sought to provide a flexible, integrated and adaptable WASH approach outside camp settings. This approach was justified by the rapid evolution of refugee numbers, dispersion and seasonal needs. ECHO prioritised a flexible and adaptive approach taking account of the refugee trends and necessary adjustments to seasonal needs.

- **Health**: Healthcare in Za’atari was by mid 2015 well covered, whilst in Azraq the priority has been on increasing healthcare outreach and reducing the burden on local health facilities.  

  Within camps, health services function at three levels:

  - Public health managed in Za’atari by different NGOs with nine primary healthcare centres and 120 community health volunteers. Primary health concerns include communicable and non-communicable diseases, as well as treating the war-wounded and providing immunization for children (Handicap International funded by ECHO in Za’atari and in Azraq by IMC).

  - First-line hospitals (two field hospitals in Za’atari managed by different NGOs including an MSF hospital not funded by ECHO, and in Azraq the Finnish Red Cross Hospital only).

  - Third-line care through referral to better equipped Jordanian hospitals in Amman.

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156 UNHCR (2015) Factsheet Za’atari Refugee Camp, April 2015. UNHCR.
Health priority targets included reproductive health (with antenatal care, obstetric work and post-natal follow up), management of GBV cases and treatment of chronic diseases. Outside the camps, emphasis has been given to cash support in order to expand access for those not receiving healthcare, whether due to non-registration, expired certification, residence in remote areas or, in many cases, lack of financial means. ECHO has also targeted advocacy towards other donors and financial instruments for much greater support to the health system.

- **Protection:** ECHO supported different types of protection programmes in favour of refugees in Jordan. Support for UNHCR as the main responsible agency for refugee rights represents a key stumbling block. In addition, different programmes of agencies have been supported, in particular:
  - those involved in children’s rights (UNICEF);
  - those in targeted protection against SGBV (UNFPA, IRC) with preventative measures, as well as individual medical and legal support to SGBV victims;
  - those in protection against deprivation of socio-economic rights for all those fleeing from Syria, through legal counselling, support in administrative processes linked to registration, etc. (NRC, HI) in order to prevent forced repatriation or forced relocation to camps; and
  - psychosocial support for people affected by conflict-related trauma and family separation, as well as prevention of and assistance to victims of GBV.

Special attention was paid to the fate of Palestinians refugees from Syria, initially under the mandate of UNWRA.

- **Integrated approach and multi sector programmes:** conditional cash supported by hard and soft measures and unconditional cash modalities were considered under the HIP 2014 as a strategic tool for humanitarian programming.

- **Coordination:** ECHO has been involved in different levels of coordination (with donors, within the HCT and IATF) and has encouraged harmonised needs assessment methodologies, targeting criteria and modality selection.
3. Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions (EQs)

**EQ 1 – Good Humanitarian Donorship**

**JC 1.1 ECHO deployed specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syrian crisis response**
- From interviews, it appears that several ECHO TAs’ and ECHO partners’ knowledge of the GHD principles mostly concerned the first principles (humanitarian principles).

**JC 1.2 There are specific examples of where the Syrian response was (or was not) in line with the 23 Principles**
- The fact that ECHO did not contribute directly to UN, Red Cross or National Appeals is not in line with Principle 14 but is compatible with Principle 6 (allocation based on assessed need). This means that ECHO supports projects which are in line with these appeals but not necessarily through the appealing agency (UNHCR, OCHA or Jordan Refugee Plan).
- Several interviewees considered that the reporting on the basis of the ECHO single form was rather complicated and not so user-friendly, and hence not really in line with principle 23 on standardized reporting.

**EQ 2 - Consultation of local and regional communities**

**JC 2.1. ECHO or its partners deployed specific measures for involving local and regional communities**
- ECHO TAs in the field devoted due care that its partners involved local communities (local groupings rather than institutional mechanisms such as municipalities; see comments on EQ7) in their operations, according to interviewed NGOs in Amman and Irbid. This is confirmed by the analysis of several single forms.
- But there is less evidence of the engagement of local municipal authorities. Field interviews suggest that some municipal authorities feel that the impact on municipal services and the question of donor exit strategies have not been sufficiently addressed.

**JC 2.2. ECHO and/or partner monitoring mechanisms took account of beneficiary views and provided appropriate feedback loops to funding officers**
- Through their national staff, NGOs have mechanisms to collect feedback from their beneficiaries. NGOs such as HI and NRC have established call-centres to facilitate interaction with the populations. For UNFPA, special care is paid to interaction with SGBV cases to ensure that they are well-treated when sent to referral mechanisms.
- Where ECHO partners work with and through local organizations, particular attention is paid to ensuring that monitoring mechanisms allow for a proper feedback loop and retroaction. For instance, JHAS (Jordan Health Aid Society), the main partner of HI in Jordan, implements some of the HI activities in JHAS PHC clinics.
Specific reporting systems enable HI to follow the work of JHAS and correctly report on it.\footnote{Fichop 2013/00645}

**EQ3 – To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?**

**JC 3.1 ECHO deployed specific measures/a specific approach/strategy to make sure ECHO-funded interventions took into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region both at design and implementation stages**

- The preparation of the HIP comprised a thorough review of vulnerabilities in the affected area. Projects not fitting into that analysis have mostly not been considered. In the case of Jordan, this issue has been made more complicated by a request by the Jordan Government for 30% of resources to be systematically channelled through NGOs allocated to the plight of vulnerable Jordanians. As explained by several interviewees, this has put ECHO and its NGO partners in a difficult situation as most vulnerable Jordanians are far less vulnerable than the Syrian refugees, who have seen their resource base eroded by years of displacements following often serious losses in the area of origin.

**JC 3.2 The design of ECHO-funded interventions reflects the needs of the most vulnerable people well**

- Projects seen in the field have generally been based on the needs of the most vulnerable people, \textit{viz.}
  - ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91012 (UNFPA): this project specifically targeted victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in ten governorates of Jordan and in Za’atari camp. The project provided sexual and reproductive health care for the most vulnerable populations.
  - ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91019 (HI): this project specifically targeted disabled and injured refugees in Jordan, providing support for basic needs, physical rehabilitation, support and mobility devices, and psychosocial support. (Source: single-form, p.10)

ECHO and a certain number of its partners (UNHCR, Finish Red Cross, ACTED, NRC) had to anticipate the evolution of camp populations following a significant additional inflow of refugees in 2013, meaning that the design of Azraq camp is based on the assumption of 130,000 refugees. Funding was allocated not on the basis of assessed needs but on the basis of the expected needs of Azraq camp; and its facilities, including the Finish Red Cross Hospital, are largely underused. The Finnish Red Cross ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91028 continues to provide healthcare to all sick people in Azraq camp as they are deprived of access to any hospital structure, although emphasis was placed in the single-form for expected vulnerable groups with special health needs, including women, children and the elderly (p.7). In refugee camps, health structures have to be accessible to all sick people.
JC 3.3 ECHO took specific measures to ensure that during implementation, the needs of the most vulnerable people were taken into account

During the field visits, ECHO TAs normally verify that the needs of vulnerable groups are properly catered for by the partners. For instance, in Jordan the situation is especially difficult for persons with injuries (PwI) or disabilities (PwD), older persons, and persons with chronic diseases. PwI, in particular, are in urgent need of follow-up care for their injuries to prevent or tackle the development of permanent disabilities. In Jordan, HI teams report an increasing numbers of persons arriving with injuries, often complex, war-related injuries. Of the persons with injuries supported by HI in Jordan, 90% have war-related injuries. ECHO staff are in regular contact with their partners to verify that persons with existing disabilities, older persons, and persons with chronic diseases, who often face additional barriers in accessing support and relief efforts, are properly supported. Lack of physical accessibility, existing attitudes within the community, and the breakdown of social networks have to be particularly kept in view by ECHO-funded support systems. One of the key issues identified is that classical response activities do not identify these vulnerable populations, which often become "virtually invisible" to relief stakeholders.

EQ 4: To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?

JC 4.1: ECHO applied a specific approach/strategy to make sure that the needs and interests of host populations were taken into account

ECHO and its partners devoted due attention to the plight of host populations, which are also affected by the economic impact of the presence of high numbers of refugees in Jordan's cities. This is rendered essential by Jordanian policies which direct that 30% of all aid to refugees through NGOs must be allocated to vulnerable Jordanian groups.

JC 4.2: ECHO took specific measures to address the needs and interests of host populations

As ECHO allocates resources on "assessed needs", it requests its partners to appraise the needs of these Jordanian vulnerable groups. While there is no doubt that there are high levels of unemployment and poverty in Jordan, the situation of these groups is better than that of many refugees, particularly owing to the existence of a national programme for social protection which is not accessible to Syrian refugees. Interviewees highlighted a feeling of unease about the implementation of this compulsory earmarking of resources regardless of the real levels of need. Specific concerns have been raised about the appropriateness, implementation and impact of complying with the 30% rule. Concerns included:

- whether responsibility for providing the 30% for host populations should fall on ECHO’s shoulders rather than the Joint Humanitarian Development Framework; the latter option would allow ECHO to continue targeting according to need and regardless of origin, in line with its mandate;
- implementation difficulties, which have been noted by ECHO partners, some of whom have struggled to receive sufficiently consolidated data on the host population for targeting the beneficiaries in greatest need;
- the fact that the impact on ECHO partners’ ability to successfully target the greatest needs has been negative. Whilst host population needs are clear, the imposition of a fixed
funding ratio on the basis of origin rather than need has forced NGO partners to reduce their coverage of the most needy in their response to the refugee crisis.

It is largely through dialogue with EEAS and NEAR at the Delegation and Brussels levels that options for enhanced support for host populations are identified and funded. This is particularly the case in contexts such as Irbid, where funding for alternative energy projects is made available to host populations through the NEAR budget.

**JC 4.3: The measures reached their objectives**

It is difficult to know if these measures are achieving their objectives as they are relatively new. Field interviews suggest that municipal authorities are facing growing resource constraints (including water, waste management, housing, education and law and order) directly linked to the out-of-camp refugee populations. It is not evident that donor investment sufficiently targeted these concerns during the period 2012-2014. But the measures already taken do represent an important entry point in the dialogue with the Jordanian authorities on the support for vulnerable Jordanian populations.

**EQ 5 - A) To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?**

The ECHO team has been very attentive in ensuring that variations in the context are backed up by proper development of the project and that all partners pay due tribute to this attentive and supportive attitude.

**JC 5.1 ECHO and its partners had a strategy to adapt their approach to the shifting needs of the region**

- There is a primary source of flexibility within each budget item (with strict limits) which allows for a first level of flexibility, not requesting interaction with ECHO. Most ECHO partners use this facility without difficulty.
- Through dialogue and rapid mechanisms (exchange of letters after oral consultation), ECHO partners can easily adjust their programmes beyond the in-built level of flexibility if so required. It has to be duly backed up by argument and explanation, but most partners acknowledge that it functions quite well. Handicap International requested a modification to project ECHO/SYR/BUD/2013/91019 in order to scale up the response to the crisis as the number of IDPs and refugees increased in 2013. (Source: Single form, p.6.)

**JC 5.2 ECHO and its partners have revised their approaches/interventions so as to better address the shifting needs of the region**

- As outlined in Section 2.2.1 above, refugee numbers in Jordan grew rapidly over the evaluation period. In July 2012, the number stood at 25,000, mostly based in small camps in the north, but within a year it had grown to over 500,000, spread across the
northern governorates in primarily non-camp settings. ECHO responded to the rapid growth of WASH and shelter needs in the Za’atari camp through its partnership with UNICEF, as well as supporting ACTED and the NGOs that followed them in the out-of-camp response across Jordan.

- Regarding the initial support to out-of-camp refugees, field interviews suggest that there was a high degree of lesson-learning as they progressed, particularly in the early responses during 2012. Enhanced feedback mechanisms were in place that enabled partners to provide new assessments on every site visit, rather than restricting it to periodic monitoring mechanisms. This was cited as an enabling factor in ECHO’s responsiveness to the rapidly changing situation.

- The funding for the hospital in Azraq camp was allocated at a time when UNHCR expected the camp to receive 130,000 refugees. In the light of the significantly lower number of refugees that have registered there, the EU’s financing of €3.5m for the hospital has raised some concerns. Adaptation has taken place to some extent (e.g. reducing ECHO funding from an initial €5.2m, focusing on cost containment measures and reduction of human resource costs). Finally, ECHO informed the implementing partner that it would not continue to support the hospital costs at the present level. Discussions with the partner explored the different options, taking into account the different scenarios (especially in relation to the 24/7 presence of certain services in the hospital (especially in surgery) or the higher reliance on referral to Amman hospitals). An in-depth analysis is ongoing to identify where savings could be made in the cost structure, without degrading the quality of the services. Finnish Red Cross is preparing a revised proposal taking into account the budget reductions to be gained from increased synergies and scale-downs. ECHO has also raised the possibility of hospital closure in the event that refugee numbers do not significantly increase.

**JC 5.3 In the case of project activities that have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, ECHO partners adapted their approaches/interventions to the changed needs.**

- In the case of Jordan, moving from one funding cycle to another basically means being confronted with the impact of the duration of the crisis on the affected populations (accentuated deprivation and increased reliance on negative coping strategies) and stronger confrontation with the more and more constraining policies of the Government of Jordan. It also means being confronted with changing donor policies and resource availability. ECHO partners had to adapt to these trends. Funding reductions have been particularly felt as they obliged some partners to stop, scale down, or significantly modify their programmes. Others explored alternative funding streams (e.g. NRC actively explored NEAR, and others turned to DFID and BPRM).

**JC 5.4 When adapting their approaches to changing needs, ECHO’s partners introduced specific innovations**

**JC 5.5 Implications for ECHO (and partner) approaches relative to expected shifts in beneficiary needs**

- Shifts of beneficiary needs will be the result of:
  - dramatic changes in Syria
  - evolving policies in Jordan
• Anticipating these possible changes or just responding to them will lead to very different courses of action for ECHO and by extension for its partners. Political analysis and full use of the toolbox of political economy are the prerequisites for identification of changes and exploration of adaptive options.

EQ 6 – EU Added-Value

JC 6.1 ECHO employed a specific approach and took specific initiatives to ensure it could provide added value

• The main element of ECHO’s added value, as recognized by all partners in Jordan, is not linked to the Jordan programme but to the overall set-up of ECHO with its TAs in strong interaction with the partners.
• The specific set-up in place for the Syrian crisis, linked to ECHO’s global capacity to coordinate operations beyond the strict boundaries (with HQ and field coordinators) is recognized as interesting, but opaque. Many stakeholders do not understand or visualize the difference between the RSO and the Regional Syria Coordination.
• Many actors recognize ECHO’s role as a gap-filler through the provision of multi-sectoral multi-partner assistance.158
• The capacity of ECHO to connect with other funding streams in the EU Delegation is seen as a “not fully explored added value”. Indeed, this capacity to connect can offer interesting avenues for covering the specific needs that are emerging as the crisis becomes more and more protracted in nature. Yet both HQ and field interviews underlined the fact that the process is still in its infancy and that much remains to be done for this added value to fully materialize.
• The capacity of ECHO to enter into the different coordination mechanisms (between donors, at the HCT/IATF) is seen as an added value.

JC 6.2 ECHO was recognised as providing specific types of added value in the context of the Syrian crisis

• The main element of ECHO’s added value, as recognized by all partners in Jordan, is largely linked to its strong engagement in advocacy where it can have a strong voice: this is particularly true in the coordination debate as well as in the definition of the response to the GoJ requests.
• Partners also cited the strength of ECHO’s field presence and expertise. Compared to other donors, ECHO was viewed as having a strong in-house capacity to identify gaps and respond, and the quality of the monitoring feedback from ECHO officers to partner staff has been highlighted as useful added value during implementation. Some partners argued that this expertise, whilst strong, is still very much person-led; changes in ECHO field personnel can therefore lead to a shift in focus or understanding of priorities or gaps in coverage.

EQ 7 – Urban Settings

JC 7.1 ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed urban issues within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis

With more than 80% of Syrian refugees living in Jordanian cities outside camps, it was of utmost importance that the urban nature of part of the refugee crisis be understood and addressed through “urban lenses”. This was done through several entry points:

- **Cash**: cities indeed function through a cash economy, and ECHO and its partners have engaged strongly in unconditional cash transfers; DRC implemented cash transfers in Jordan in urban contexts in Amman Karak and Ma’an governorates, through a partner (JHCO) with a particular mandate to provide assistance in urban settings (source: single form, p.65) ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91012 (DRC);
- **Shelter**: ECHO supports a new approach to shelter in Jordanian cities, with cash-for-rent components as well as dedicated cash programmes helping landlords to improve, refurbish and release new flats to be made available to refugee families.
- **WASH**: ECHO supports operations dealing with urban WASH through support in negotiation with Water Authorities and landlords for installation of water meters and improvements in sanitation programmes.

**JC 7.2 The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major challenges that exist in urban settings in order to design interventions appropriate to these specific types of situation**

- Identification of the administrative system regulating life in cities has contributed to ECHO’s support for interesting mechanisms to help refugees manage their paperwork properly. Support for NRC counsellors and Hotline systems, for instance, represents an important contribution to helping refugees survive in Jordanian cities.
- The fact that urban economies are, in Jordan as in almost all urban contexts, largely monetized implies that many ECHO programmes in cities in Jordan are cash-based.
- A few missing issues are linked to the limited strategic engagement of ECHO and its partners with municipal institutions and authorities.

**JC 7.3 Throughout implementation, ECHO-funded projects were able to tackle the specific urban challenges (for displaced persons and refugees as well as for the host urban populations) and to coordinate properly with the local authorities, urban services and institutions (municipalities), in line with the good practices elaborated by the sector**

- Coordination mechanisms for the urban response have taken time to become established in Jordan. Field interviews suggest that coordination of the urban response in 2012 was particularly poor, whilst all donors, not just ECHO, focused on the significant need to invest in scaling up the in-camp response in the Za’atari and, later, Azraq camps.
- By 2014, urban coordination mechanisms had been set up, but they remain primarily focused on the north of the country, with limited coverage of activities in the south.
- Coordination with local authorities is also complicated by the fact that most donors are operating in the same areas as projects financed through development funding streams. Some relationships have been hampered by the practice of all donors, not just ECHO, of soliciting the same local authority staff separately for humanitarian and development programmes that operate in the same urban zones.
**EQ8, (Protection): How and to what extent has Protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?**

**JC 8.1. ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed protection within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

The approach to embedding protection in programming is very different where the partner is a mandated agency as compared to a non-mandated agency which has to mainstream protection in its normal programming.

**Protection by mandated agencies:**

**ICRC:** ICRC is involved in Jordan largely for its system of tracing and re-establishing family links through the Jordanian Red Crescent Society. It is also developing a specific programme to combine assistance and protection in the “no-man’s land” at the Jordan/Syria border. ICRC is slowly coming to grips with the extremely complex and problematic issue of “missing persons”. ECHO will be funding ICRC in 2015 to address the repression and deportation concerns that have arisen as the crisis has evolved.

**UNHCR:** for UNHCR, the protection challenges are multiform: preventing repression in the “no-man’s land”, ensuring protection while in first asylum countries, prevention of forced repatriation and facilitating asylum in a third country. The first step of protection in Jordan is the registration of refugees with a sophisticated system based on biometrics and iris scanning to avoid fraud, enhancing protection but, even more importantly, ensuring access to certain services. Growing concerns are emerging over reinforced entry right limitation and increased deportation, reflecting the country’s own security concerns. UNHCR is making a lot of effort to promote refugee protection through enhanced efforts to facilitate refugee registration and regulation, in particular in out-of-camp situations. Enhanced attention is needed as negative coping strategies triggered by deteriorating economic conditions have an impact on protection for refugee children (forced labour), girls (early marriage) and women (SGBV). The RTE of the UNHCR response to the Syrian refugee crisis concluded that UNHCR managed to substantially scale-up its operations in the regions and helped prevent the refugee crisis from spiralling out of control.

**UNICEF:** by supporting child protection directly and through its partners and developing advocacy, UNICEF tries to implement the Child Convention. In Jordan, the direct number of boys and girls benefiting from protection interventions is estimated at 4,200 in Azraq camp, based on an expected influx of 70,000 refugees in Azraq.

**UNWRA:** UNWRA supports, and is making all efforts to protect, Palestinian refugees in Syria and those that flee from Syria to neighbouring countries.

**Protection by non-mandated agencies:**

As a cross-cutting theme, it has been difficult to mainstream protection in partner programmes. But ECHO has sought to work with specific partners on protection concerns throughout the evaluation period. In particular:

**IRC:** IRC has deployed significant efforts in both protection of women and child protection, in coordination with, and with the support of, UNICEF.

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159 From slow boil to breaking point; a RTE of UNHCR response to the Syrian refugee crisis, July 2013
DRC: DRC has been conducting protection projects with ECHO funding that focus on addressing barriers to registration for refugees. New requirements placed on refugees mean that the cost of registration (30 Jordanian Dinars) needs to be met upfront by refugees before they can access services. DRC has been providing support to tackle this barrier to registration, and ECHO is seen as a key donor in this area.

UNFPA: UNFPA endeavours to prevent SGBV and to alleviate the suffering of SGBV victims through various programmes ranging from advocacy and prevention to support for victims.

JC 8.2. The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major threats that exist to the physical and psychological security of humanitarian aid beneficiaries

This is done in a relatively systematic manner by ECHO partners when they write their proposals and have to justify a protection agenda in their proposal. The mandated agencies refer more to their mandate than to a precise description of threats. Non-mandated agencies tend to be less specific in terms of description of threats and use very generic terms (SGBV, child protection). Yet security and protection require a sensitive approach which partly explains this cautious attitude.

JC 8.3. ECHO-funded project designs disambiguated protection needs per population segment and location, including identifying specific threats to vulnerable groups

Many threats, such as being victim of indiscriminate bombing or prevention of entire groups from entering a country to find a safe haven, do not target specific segments of a population (e.g. as stated in the single forms of ICRC and UNHCR) while others (SGBV, forced recruitment of child soldiers) do specifically target discrete groups (women, young girls and boys, etc.). Most partners try to disaggregate the population accordingly (see the single forms of UNICEF, IRC, UNFPA).

EQ 9: In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?\(^{160}\)

This is not applicable in Jordan.

EQ 10 – Cash and vouchers

JC 10.1 The ECHO strategy for Syria considered the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities

- For cash programmes in Jordan, ECHO has prioritised implementing partners that have no obligation to provide assistance to host communities (primarily IFRC and UN agencies) as well as partners that provide other forms of community support to complement cash transfers (e.g. psychosocial support, reproductive health, gender-based violence and other risks).\(^{161}\)
- But ECHO has also provided cash grants through a large number of NGOs inside Jordan, including IRC, ACF, DRC, and Save the Children. Support has included

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\(^{160}\) With a view to avoiding ambiguity on the period covered, we suggest phrasing the question in the past tense.

unconditional cash transfers to tackle multi-sectoral needs, indexed against basic needs defined through Minimum Expenditure Baskets.

- Field interviews suggest that ECHO has invested time in the question of modality selection in Jordan, and partner single forms on the whole link the modality selection to the response analysis.
- Some partner projects have sought to use a range of modalities to tailor their response to need e.g. ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91024 (IRC), which deployed a range of transfer modalities in their response to the needs of GBV victims in non-camp settings in Jordan. Support included SGBV case management, provision of psychosocial and healthcare and provision of cash transfers. IRC specifically targeted vulnerable groups which had been subject to GBV and which had limited access to financial services through other means (source: single form, p.7).

**JC 10.2 The appraisal of ECHO actions took account of an appropriate analysis of the context**

- **Food:** cash has been prioritised for food assistance outside camp settings, for both Syrian refugees and host communities. Conditional cash transfers (e.g. cash for work) have been considered, and ECHO has sought to encourage harmonised needs assessment methods, targeting criteria and transfer mechanisms.
- **Shelter:** ECHO has targeted cash assistance for shelter outside camp settings, with the primary focus being on helping vulnerable Syrian families pay rent and share the economic burden with host families. In the light of the increased housing demand and rising rent charges, ECHO has also sought to promote provision of additional housing units.
- The 2015 ECHO mission to Jordan cites concerns about the sustainability of cash transfers in Jordan. In particular, the mission report cites usage of cash for rent and debt without tackling the rising GBV and child education challenges. The ECHO mission also reports negative coping strategies in response to debt and aid dependency – and links them to the use of cash transfers – such as limiting food consumption and child access to education, marrying children off or sending them to work.162

- ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91012 (DRC): this ECHO-funded DRC programme used unconditional cash transfers in Jordan and other neighbouring countries. In the Jordanian context, needs assessments do not appear to have included market assessments, instead relying on lessons learned and monitoring reports from previous programmes, which pointed to continuing inaccessibility of livelihood options for Syrians in Jordan (source: single form).

**JC 10.3 ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations have been effective in the Syrian context**

- The 2015 ECHO mission to Jordan showed that over 57% of ECHO funding goes towards cash-based programmes (or 40% if WFP in-camp vouchers are not counted).163

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Unconditional cash has been the most widely adopted approach by ECHO partners (13 out of 18 partners under HIP 2014), and was recognised as the most cost-efficient and dignified modality for urban refugees.\(^{164}\)

**EQ 11. Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?**

**JC 11.1. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was appropriate**
Field visits highlighted the fact that the humanitarian assistance in Jordan has not been large enough to keep the refugees afloat. Regardless of modality or donor, the response has failed to break the vicious cycle of refugees needing to deplete their reserve assets to meet their basic needs, then depleting the negative coping strategies open to them, and then finally having no option for remaining afloat other than returning to the camps or to Syria. Diaspora support has not sustained refugee living standards in the same way as it has done for Palestinian or Somali refugees.

**JC 11.2. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was proportionate**
- Despite the overall inadequacy of the donor response, the sudden peak in funding allocations in 2013 was viewed as politically driven, rather than calibrated to the growth of humanitarian need in that year as compared to 2012 or 2014.
- Needs assessments in the region are gradually improving. But competition between tools (e.g. the difference between the mapping tools used by SNAP and REACH) and a degree of information overload has hampered the comparability of assessment data. In this context, ECHO has rightly continued to cross-check partner needs assessments against ACAPS or similar benchmarks.

**JC 11.3. ECHO calibrated its objectives to the available funding**
- The drop in available funds between 2014 and 2015 forced ECHO to calibrate its objectives over this period. It has reduced the number of partners funded by approximately one-third and has sought to focus support on emergency needs.

**JC 11.4. ECHO-funded activities were cost-effective**

**EQ 12: Were appropriate monitoring systems in place to support sound management of ECHO operations?**

**JC 12.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure that the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms were conducive to support sound management of ECHO-funded operations**
- NGO partners have on the whole been happy with ECHO's approach to project monitoring. Partners themselves have, where appropriate, been able to continue their own monitoring approaches and ECHO has been open to the information fed back to them from partner-led monitoring mechanisms.

ECHO’s feedback to partners from their own monitoring visits has also been well received by most NGO partners, notably due to the quality of the operational feedback and information sharing. A limited number of complaints were received from NGOs regarding ECHO monitoring missions, focusing primarily on the lack of a collaborative framework for improving project implementation and the absence of independently-contracted monitoring staff.

**JC 12.2. ECHO adopted a specific approach to ensure that monitoring mechanisms were tailored to the specific needs of remote management**

**JC 12.3. ECHO partners implemented operations monitoring and ensured data and findings were available for ECHO’s use in a timely manner**

**EQ 13: What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?**

**JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**

- Consortium and multi-country programmes are largely seen as tools for decreasing transaction costs at donor level by transferring this burden to leaders of consortia or of multi-country programmes. Interviews in Brussels and in the field indicated that this was seen as a very good solution by ECHO field and HQ staff at a time when human resources were extremely stretched and the portfolio size was large. By all accounts, this seems to have been a false lead, as consortia and multi-country programmes are in fact extremely complex and their management very resource-intensive.

- Specific problems created by multi-country programmes included:
  - lack of clear focal points and long chains of command increasing contracting delays and hampering timely responses when problems arose during implementation;
  - the feasibility of switching funds between country sub-programmes being hampered by slow reaction times and disagreements between the multiple programme stakeholders and ECHO TAs involved, and by the short liquidation periods for ECHO projects;
  - the potential added value of multi-country projects in terms of lesson-learning between countries being limited by the fundamentally different refugee contexts in different neighbouring countries.

**JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplications between countries and partner organisations**

- Several partners rightly emphasized the impossibility of predicting the evolution of crises, the security environment or the impacts of these evolutions on protection issues. They base their propositions on their current appreciation of the context and on possible likely scenarios.

- **JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**
EVALUATION OF THE ECHO RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

- Protection is too sensitive a subject to be appropriately tackled per se by consortia as the sensitivity and the confidentiality of information is often high. Consortia between ECHO partners have been more frequent for classical assistance interventions, but tried to mainstream protection under the “do no harm” principle. The multi-country approach allows better understanding of the various dynamics of the Syrian conflict and its spill-overs into neighbouring countries and significantly strengthens analytical and anticipation capacities as regards population protection and staff security.

- **JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplications between countries and partner organisations**
  - Being multi-country also allows diversification of operational options and adaptation of programmes to a possible deterioration of the situation (shifting part of the aid planned for one area to another, in particular in areas where internal displacements and cross-border movements expose people to more aggression, violence and breaches of IHL and IRL, thus increasing protection needs). If the situation allows, the regional geographical set-up is seen as significantly strengthening the position of any serious partner involved in protection in a range of difficult areas (ICRC, UNHCR and DRC, for instance).

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**EQ 14 - ECHO successfulness to coordinate operations with other main actors**

**JC 14.1 Actions undertaken to enhance coordination**
- ECHO is involved in humanitarian donor coordination and this is one of its strongest pillars. ECHO is also a member of the Interagency Task Force and of the Humanitarian Country Team, as an active observer.
- ECHO supports OCHA in its coordination role.

**JC 14.2 ECHO identified and took account of main actors’ activities**
- ECHO analyses the activities and how they are coordinated at different stages in the programming process through:
  - HIP discussions
  - Single form preparation and reporting
  - ECHO field reviews
  - Coordination processes

**JC 14.3 ECHO’s actions sought to enhance synergies and reduce duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**
- The single form makes compulsory the mention of how partners are involved in coordination to avoid duplication and gaps. This is regularly reviewed by ECHO TAs as they are involved in many coordination efforts, including with other humanitarian donors.

**JC 14.4 ECHO actions demonstrated synergies and no duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**
In the context of Jordan, it is important to state that we are not in a classical LRRD situation but more in a state of transition from acute emergency to protracted crisis, articulating short and long terms, specifically involving:

- **initial investment in camp infrastructure** covering priority humanitarian needs of camp residents, ECHO’s per capita funding of the camps has fallen since mid-2014 as the initial infrastructure investments have mostly been completed and the marginal cost has decreased. For this reason, ECHO will cease to support partners in in-camp WASH and shelter activities in 2015; but

- **continuing ECHO support for refugees in camps** to support the most vulnerable who have no other option but to stay in the camps. Priority will be given to the most vulnerable, including women and children.

**JC 15.1 ECHO coordinated with EC development actors (DG DEVCO, EEAS, and EU MS) from the earliest phases of the crisis response**

It is important to note that ECHO has been concerned by a set of specific issues, *viz*:

- **the duration of the crisis and the limited adaptation of emergency response to protracted needs**: when a displacement lasts more than a few months, the needs evolve and the means of responding to them has to adjust and adapt to these new challenges;

- **the plight of the host populations**: the demand by the Jordanian authorities that 30% of the funds should be systematically allocated to vulnerable Jordanians has created a feeling of unease, as their difficulties are not solely the result of the refugee influx, but also the impact of reduced resilience due to unsustainable and unfair development. ECHO has underlined several times their efforts to bring on board development donors to respond strategically to this issue.

**JC 15.2 ECHO deployed the various instruments available to implement stability measures in a coherent and complementary fashion with the EU toolbox**

In 2014, ECHO’s Amman office began working with the EU Delegation on the development of a Joint Humanitarian and Development Framework (JHDF). The JHDF negotiations seek to ensure that ECHO operations go beyond coherence with other policies in the country and towards complementarity. One example would be the potential use of IfS and other tools to address host community tensions in the perspective of a protracted crisis, or the inclusion of Syrian refugees in NEAR-funded livelihood programmes. This drive corresponds to the broad-based movement towards resilience in the 3RP response plan.

**JC 15.3 ECHO-funded actions have been based on a strong context analysis**

**JC 15.4 ECHO-funded projects have been framed in the context of longer-term requirements of reconstruction and development**

ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91018 (DRC): this ECHO-funded DRC project specifically seeks durable solutions for the long-term displaced Syrian population. In Jordan, DRC used recurrent monthly cash transfers to increase livelihood options and support the monthly costs for refugees living out-of-camp.
EQ16 – Success in terms of LRRD

JC 16.1 ECHO-funded operations have been implemented through rapid decision-making processes and flexible instruments

JC 16.2 ECHO provided a coordinated response strategy through its actions
ECHO has noted significant LRRD concerns regarding Syrian refugees inside Jordan, including the depletion of refugees’ own resources and the use of negative coping strategies to enhance livelihoods.

JC 16.3 ECHO engaged with a range of locally important actors through its actions
Education services in Za’atari are provided through three schools operating on double-shifts. 55% of the 28,000 school-age children in Za’atari are enrolled, whilst 13% are engaged in child labour. UNICEF partners also provide child protection case management, psychosocial support and recreational activities for children. The desire to continue education has also been cited as a reason for returning to Syria.165

JC 16.4 ECHO-funded interventions experienced a smooth and timely phase-out, thereby avoiding “grey zones” in international assistance
- Food rations for refugees in-camp continue to need full support from donor funding. The shift from in-kind to voucher systems in Za’atari was viewed as a success, Azraq having introduced a similar system from the outset.
- In contrast with phasing-out operations, several projects in non-camp settings in Jordan are being continued and rolled over in the context of a potentially protracted crisis, e.g. ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91018 (DRC) and ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91024 (IRC). Nevertheless, development of the Joint Development and Humanitarian Framework (see EQ 15 above) may address future phase-out challenges in the years to come.

JC16.5 ECHO-funded actions encouraged “cross-learning” of humanitarian and development experiences
- ECHO supports the production of several studies and advocacy documents, including lessons learned, which all represent interesting opportunities for cross-learning, first of all among humanitarian actors;
- The only areas for cross-learning between humanitarian and development actors at this stage are:
  o the discussions around the JHDF at Delegation level;
  o the discussions with certain partners which also have “development resources” (for instance the French Red Cross, which is an ECHO partner with large programmes under a Red Cross Consortium, financed by the Agence Française de Développement for a programme in Amman).

165 UNHCR (2015) Factsheet Za’atari Refugee Camp, April 2015. UNHCR.
EQ17, (Security) To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners' organisations? What is the scope for improvement?

JC 17.1. The design of ECHO-funded actions has been based on an in-depth knowledge of the security situation, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries

Security in Jordan is not a strong concern for the aid agencies as the Jordanian security apparatus seems to be extremely effective. However, there exists a security reference person in every ECHO partner.

JC 17.2. The design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions facilitated humanitarian access for partner organizations

ECHO engagement in supporting access to affected populations by its partners takes several forms:

- engagement on specific issues (for instance with UNHCR on police round-up of refugees in Jordanian cities);
- engagement with ICRC on improving access to and delivery of assistance and protection in the “no-man’s land” at the Jordan-Syria border. This has involved inter alia joint visits to the border area.

The fact that this engagement is also accompanied by funding greatly facilitates the impact of ECHO advocacy towards its partners.

JC 17.3. ECHO-funded actions promoted the security and safety of humanitarian personnel delivering humanitarian aid

See 17.1

EQ18 (Humanitarian advocacy) How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line intervention, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)?

JC 18.1. Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries

ECHO has repeatedly made presentations to COHAFA and to other fora in the EU about the need to protect and assist the Syrian population and the affected inhabitants of host countries.

JC 18.2. ECHO advocacy contributed to concrete policy changes in neighbouring countries

ECHO is marginally involved with the EU Delegation in Amman and much more involved with other humanitarian donors in discussions with the national authorities on humanitarian access (opening or closing borders), camps and non-camp management.

ECHO undertakes considerable advocacy with UN agencies:

- With some success: ECHO made much effort to persuade UNHCR to design timely winterization programmes for 2013. It came too late and was of poor quality, so ECHO decided not to finance it. The following year the same situation occurred but finally,
under much pressure from ECHO, UNHCR managed to present a better action plan for winterization.

- With total lack of success:
  - advocacy in pressing WFP to move more quickly to a cash system;
  - advocacy for improving coordination between HCR-OCHA.

**JC 18.3. ECHO advocacy contributed to changes in approach by other donors in Syria and neighbouring countries**

ECHO’s efforts in advocacy, together with DFID and BPRM, probably influence other donors, for instance in garnering wider support for the Jordanian health system in response to the strain placed on Jordanian infrastructure by the long-term presence of such large numbers of refugees.

**JC 18.4. ECHO advocacy contributed to increased coordination between donors and governments in Syria and neighbouring countries**

ECHO is always very engaged in coordination efforts between donors, the aid community and, when required, governments, although coordination with the latter, while encouraged by ECHO, is often left to the operational partners.

### 4. Country-specific conclusions

#### 4.1. Addressing complexity and adjusting to a protracted crisis

The complexity of the context in Jordan presents several critical challenges, *viz*:

- managing and funding humanitarian contexts in which crises are linked to a range of factors and earlier events, especially the Palestinian and Iraq crises and their different phases. These different layers all have their impact on Jordanian society and its perception of refugees, exile and asylum. ECHO’s role in navigating these different priorities is relatively complex
- the complexity of moving from emergency response to a situation of protractedness;
- decreasing coping capacities of all stakeholders;
- the total absence of a political perspective;
- decreasing donor funding capacity;
- a context in which stability and regional security is at stake.

In that type of context flexible funding, with a capacity to programme over a period longer than one year, and readiness to explore operational options beyond classical humanitarian aid, is essential.

Responding to the protection and assistance needs of Syrian refugees will require much stronger engagement with municipal authorities and clearer signals from development agencies that they are also ready to engage more forcefully in helping Jordan’s population. Otherwise the more vulnerable non-camp refugees will either move to camps or try to return to Syria, with all the associated risks.

#### 4.2. Addressing unpredictability and uncertainty: the “no regret” approach.
The difficulties in planning the sizes of the camps and in calibrating the level of services in a time of high uncertainty highlights the need for a degree of courage and a capacity to take some proactive decisions in the full knowledge that there remains a risk of making mistakes. Risk-taking is an attitude less and less frequent in the humanitarian sector and ECHO TAs should be enabled to support such an approach, provided that it is done in a transparent manner with the relevant hypotheses clearly laid down on the table for discussion.

4.3. Camp and non-camp refugees

Owing to its presence in Jordan prior to the crisis, ECHO was able to provide early support to its partners, mainly UNHCR, involved in camp settings. In Za’atari camp care and maintenance are needed as the camp is densely populated. The need to design additional camps to ensure that there exists capacity to cope with any potential additional influx of Syrian refugees led to creation of the Azraq camp, which is still largely underutilized. The situation of these camps is relatively stable, with the possibility that the robust policy of the GoJ will trigger further movements to camps. The situation is far more precarious for non-camp refugees who are less and less welcomed by the Jordanian Authorities. Protection of and assistance for them is more complex, labour intensive and far less visible. While some manage to find different kinds of livelihood in the informal sector (construction, agriculture, etc.), many others are struggling against many odds to survive and their situation will become even harder if GoJ’s tightened policy is confirmed.

4.4. Appropriate human resources

While ECHO has been present in Amman for a long period with the RSO, the slow adaptation of its capacity to cope with the rapid increase of work has been a source of much hardship, burnout and disarray at all levels in ECHO. While the setup is now seen as optimal, new rumours of reorganization are creating another phase of destabilization, which is not conducive to effective and efficient delivery. The appropriateness of staffing is made even more important as many actors see in ECHO an extremely valuable donor, as the TAs often play as much a role of strategic partner as of donor.
Lebanon Country Report

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1. **Introduction**

This Lebanon Country report is part of the broader external evaluation process carried out on the ECHO response to the Syria crisis.

1.1. **Methodology**

The methodology applied for this case study is based on four pillars:

- Documents reviewed: in addition to the desk study, additional documents on the context, projects, needs and impact have been gathered in the field and analyzed
- Interviews with key stakeholders
  - ECHO and other services of the EC’s Delegation in Beirut
  - DFID, French Embassy, Swiss SDC, Spanish Embassy;
  - UN Agencies (HC, UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, WFP)
  - I NGOs (DRC, NRC, WA, PU-AMI, OXFAM; TDH-I)
  - L-NGOs (Amel, Naba’a)
  - National actors (in Tripoli and in the Bekaa Valley)
- Three field visits in the North (Tripoli) and in the Bekaa Valley (Zahle and Baalbeck)
- Initial briefing and final debriefing with ECHO staff to validate the findings and review the initial and tentative conclusions.

1.2. **Structure of the Lebanon Country Report**

The structure of the Lebanon country report is as follows:

**Section 1: Introduction**
- Description of the methodology
- Description of the structure of the country report

**Section 2: The context in Lebanon**
- Brief overview of the socio-economic context
- Brief description of the constraints faced by the Syrian refugees
- Brief description of the national and international response in Lebanon

**Section 3: Overview of the ECHO approach in the country**
- Overview of ECHO’s overall approach and main priorities in Lebanon
- Overview of funding and activities undertaken in Lebanon

**Section 4: Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions**
**Section 5: Tentative conclusion**
2. Context

2.1. Lebanon context

Lebanon is a small, high-middle income country of 4.5 million people (plus a large diaspora of several million), with an area of 10,452 km², and an average GDP per capita of around US$18,100 in 2014. It is one of the few countries in the region with ample water resources and plentiful rainfall. Its service-based economy is driven by a dynamic private sector and is highly dependent on the Arab Gulf economies. Lebanon is a sectarian-based consensual democracy in which political authority is shared among confessional groups (largely between representatives of the Christian and Muslim communities). The President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker of Parliament share power. The consensual nature of the country’s governance system renders policy decision-making lengthy and can create deadlocks that have, in the past, derailed government’s drive for reform.\(^\text{166}\)

One of the key issues facing Lebanon is the economic and social impact of the Syrian crisis, now entering its fifth year. Over one million Syrians, about a quarter of the Lebanese population, have taken refuge in Lebanon since the conflict started in March 2011 (see section 2.2), straining public finances, service delivery and the environment. It is estimated that as a result of the Syrian crisis, some 170,000 additional Lebanese had been pushed into poverty (above the current 1 million) by the end of 2014; an additional 220,000 to 320,000 Lebanese citizens are estimated to have become unemployed, most of them unskilled youth.\(^\text{167}\)

The international community realised very rapidly that the existing high level of governmental instability was at stake if the GoL was left to handle the Syrian refugee crisis alone. This lead to early mobilization not only of humanitarian aid, but also of development funds to support the capacity of decaying Lebanese infrastructures (notably in water and education) to cope with the influx of new users.

2.2. The humanitarian context in Lebanon

2.2.1. Refugees in Lebanon

Over 1 million Syrian refugees have been registered by UNHCR inside Lebanon over the 2012-2014 period. With a pre-crisis population of approximately 4 million, the end of the evaluation period (1 January 2012 – 31 December 2014) saw Lebanon hosting the largest per capita refugee population in the world, at more than one quarter of the country’s population.\(^\text{168}\)

The following figure presents the evolution of registered refugees over the evaluation period. The registration rate increased significantly in the first quarter of January 2013 and maintained a near constant level until the end of 2014. Since then, registered numbers of


\(^{168}\) ECHO (2015) ‘Syria Crisis ECHO Factsheet April 2015’
refugees have flattened. On 6 May 2015, UNHCR Lebanon temporarily suspended new registrations in accordance with the instructions of the Government of Lebanon.\(^{169}\)

**Figure 1 – Evolution of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (Jan. 2012 - Jan. 2015)**

The refugees have progressively increased their presence in many parts of the country: Bekaa Valley, adjacent to Syria (418,189), Beirut (346,125), North Lebanon (286,882), and South Lebanon (140,255).\(^{170}\) Given the non-camp policy of the GoL (mainly due to its past experience with Palestinian refugees), Syrian refugees are dispersed throughout urban and peri-urban host communities, in family flats, small informal tented settlements, or in collective centres.

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Until October 2014, the Lebanese government operated an open-border policy with Syria. Lebanon is not a state party to the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees, and has not signed the 1967 convention. Indeed Lebanon refers to the Syrian refugees as ‘displaced’. The GoL’s new border policy, issued in December 2014, seeks to reduce the numbers of Syrian refugees in its territory and ease the burden on host communities. Syrians (and Palestinians from Syria) seeking entry from Syria are required to provide evidence that they fall into one of nine eligible categories or that they are sponsored by a Lebanese citizen. The new policy also allows Lebanon to revoke refugee status from those who violate Lebanese laws, their conditions of entry, or who repeatedly travel between Lebanon and Syria.

The lack of official status for many of the refugees, and the subsequent risk of harassment by the Lebanese security forces, has resulted in restrictions on their movements and in their not seeking health care even when sick. This is particularly the case for men.

### 2.2.2 Key issues

- Shelter remains a serious concern for the vast majority of refugee families. Almost all refugees pay rent, even if many live in very poor shelters such as garages and tents. The number of house evictions and dismantling of informal refugee settlements is increasing, and forced repatriations to Syria, regular deportations and backflows of vulnerable persons have been reported.

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The majority of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are poor. After four years in Lebanon, the refugees are experiencing a deterioration of their economic situation (VaSyR 2015 preliminary results). This is partly due to a reduction in humanitarian assistance, lack of access to employment opportunities, diminution of the legal status of refugees in the country, and depletion of their financial and asset reserves. At the same time, the economic conditions of the poorest Lebanese have also followed the same pattern of degradation, albeit for different reasons, such as reductions in daily employment opportunities, and competition for jobs with the cheaper and more easily exploitable Syrian work force.

Tensions with local communities have increased, notably due to the economic concerns mentioned above, and also due to security concerns. A few thousand Syrian refugees have, for instance, experienced disputes over land and rent-related housing tenure. In 2014, extremist armed groups crossed into Lebanon from Syria and clashed with the Lebanese Armed Forces, resulting in the displacement of communities. Lebanese leaders have been increasingly active in easing tensions.\textsuperscript{174}

Over the evaluation period, access to basic services, particularly health services, has become more expensive and more difficult, especially following the reduction of services at subsidized prices. This reduction of access is compounded by the healthcare system in Lebanon, consisting essentially of private and for-profit health centres, clinics and hospitals charging very high prices, and with a secondary level barely accessible to Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2014 secondary health care results). Certain services, such as immunizations, pre- and post-natal care, and chronic diseases, have very low coverage in the “supported” health services for both Syrian refugees and the poorer sections of the Lebanese population. In the case of chronic diseases, which have a very high prevalence in both the Syrian and Lebanese populations, this not only represents a very high cost

\textsuperscript{174} 3RP (2014) ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience plan 2015-2016 – Lebanon’, p.4
for the patient, but also increased risk and additional cost when secondary or tertiary care is needed.

2.2.3 International response

- With US$2.2 billion received during the period 2012-2014, Lebanon has accounted for the largest share of humanitarian donors’ support to the Syrian crisis in the region.

The situation faced by refugees can be summarised as follows:

- **Food**: 74% of displaced Syrians are considered food-insecure.
- **Shelter**: 55% of persons displaced from Syria live in sub-standard shelters, including 16 per cent in informal settlements.
- **Education**: 280,000 school-aged Syrian children were out of school during the 2013-2014 school year.
- **Health**: The displaced from Syria increasingly need subsidization and assistance in accessing basic healthcare. The risk of infectious disease is also rising for children in the context of lower average immunization rates.
- **WASH**: A third of displaced Syrians lack safe water access. 12% of displaced Syrian households have no access to bathrooms.
- **Many children displaced from Syria reportedly need psychosocial care to recover from traumatic events and address behavioral issues.**

**Figure 4 – Humanitarian donor contributions in Lebanon 2012-2014 (US$ million)**

- There was a significant increase in humanitarian donor contributions from 2012 to 2013, and an average contribution of US$1 billion in 2013 and 2014. The increase in contributions followed the rise in the refugee influx. The USA has been the main donor, providing 27% of the contributions, followed by ECHO (10%) and two EU Member States, namely the UK (9%) and Germany (6%). As the GoL indicated that the handling of that crisis should largely be undertaken by the international community, a combination of UN agencies and national and international NGOs have mobilized themselves in response to the situation. UNHCR was mandated to take on the international
coordination role, while on the side of the GoL, the High Relief Committee, attached to the Prime Minister’s Office, was designated as the key focal point.

**Figure 5 – Contributions by Donors in Lebanon (US$ million)**

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

- Over 80% of donor contributions were dedicated to multi-sector support. Support for the provision of food (3%), shelter and NFI (2%), and health (2%) together represented 7% of contributions. The remaining 9% consisted of support to non-specified and other sectors (including water and sanitation, education, and protection).

**Figure 6 – Donor contributions in Lebanon by sector 2012-2014 (US$ million)**

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)
There has been an evolution among the international community in its understanding of the Syrian crisis, from its being a humanitarian crisis to its being both a humanitarian and development crisis. In consequence, the 3RP plan 2015-2016 includes a resilience dimension which aims at supporting investments in long-term development solutions and resilience-building in addition to humanitarian assistance. From the US$1.97 billion foreseen in the 3RP, a budget of US$724 million was dedicated to the resilience component.\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{175} UNHCR and UNDP (2015) ‘3RP Update – Issue 4, p.2
3. Overview of the ECHO approach in the country

3.1. Newcomers programme

During the period under review, ECHO supported a “flagship programme”, the Newcomers programme, which started in August 2012 and was scaled up in January 2013. This programme aimed at providing a fast response to the needs of newly-arriving Syrian refugees until they could be taken care of by normal UNHCR activities; more specifically:

- newcomers were assisted with non-food items (blankets, mattresses, kitchen kit, hygiene kit and baby kit, if applicable, worth on average $300 for a standard family of five people) and food assistance (provided by WFP, worth $105 for the same sized family);
- the programme relied on a well-connected network of local focal points (municipalities, community focal points, mayors, NGOs and in some cases other newcomers themselves) to identify beneficiaries.

The programme was implemented to cover the needs of new arrivals up until registration with UNHCR when the waiting period exceeded three months. By end of February 2014, the registration waiting period had decreased significantly to an average of 22 days countrywide, and refugees had access to assistance one or two weeks later. However, assistance for registration did not include the package provided to newcomers, for instance blankets, mattresses, and kitchen kits. With the likely permanent closure of the borders, the newcomers’ operations have been redirected, using the available stocks of non-food items or NFIs (blankets, stoves, fuel, etc.) for winterization activities and for provision of assistance, notably to victims of secondary displacement and evictees.

ECHO’s contribution to the Newcomers programme in Lebanon is shown in the table below. DRC has been the leading agency, targeting around 25,000 newcomers per month in the North, South and Bekaa governorates. UNHCR has assumed the role of ‘provider of last resort’ or ‘gap filler’ to the newcomer programmes implemented through ECHO partners.
Table 1 – ECHO funded newcomers projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECHO Partner</th>
<th>Newcomers</th>
<th>HH</th>
<th>Budget NC (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>305,000</td>
<td>70,930</td>
<td>8,084,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLIDARITES</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>3,488</td>
<td>810,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>29,250</td>
<td>5,850</td>
<td>2,350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARITAS-FR</td>
<td>17,650</td>
<td>5,230</td>
<td>734,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDAIR</td>
<td>6,170</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERCY CORPS</td>
<td>10,290</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA-UK</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>7,674</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5,814</td>
<td>815,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OXFAM</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDH-IT</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVSI</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>302,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GVC</td>
<td>17,400</td>
<td>4,047</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>472,410</strong></td>
<td><strong>108,373</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,865,037</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ECHO has also been very involved in the discussions on transfer modalities. Indeed, different transfer modalities co-exist in Lebanon, with the need to find optimal synergies and enhanced effectiveness while still being able to ensure that “niches” can be reached and that emerging constraints are not jeopardizing access to transfer modality mechanisms.

3.2. Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

After Syria, Lebanon is the second beneficiary of ECHO support for the Syrian crisis, with 25% of the funding over the period. ECHO’s HIPs over the period 2012-2014 focused on the following areas for support of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, viz.:

- Half of ECHO’s support for Syrian refugees in Lebanon during the period 2012-2014 was for shelter (53%). This took several forms, from unconditional cash that could be used for the renting of houses or flats, to more sophisticated programmes involving basic repair or quadripartite contracting (between house-owner, refugee, NGO and municipality) in order to improve tenancy security for the refugee.
- Multi-sector support (21%), and food support (10%) together represented 31% of ECHO’s funding over the evaluation period.
- Health and medical support (7%), protection (5%), and water and sanitation (4%) represented the remaining 16%.
- Specific support for winterization has been a key component of the ECHO-supported response as the weather in the Bekaa Valley has been extremely severe over recent winters, with several snowstorms.
ECHO funds were channelled through a range of implementing partners, UNHCR being the main one. The ten largest implementing partners represented 81% of total commitments in Lebanon.

**Figure 7 – Snapshot of ECHO’s response in Lebanon 2012-2014**

- **Total: €169m**
- **Shelter (€88.8m)**
- **Food (€17.6m)**
- **Health and medical (€11.1m)**
- **Protection (€8.4m)**
- **Water/sanitation (€6.9m)**

- **Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Lebanon**
  - UNHCR
  - DRC
  - WFP
  - HI
  - NRC
  - SC
  - Save The Children
  - MEDAIR
  - PU-AMI
  - DRC

Source: ADE Evaluation Inventory, 2015

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)
4. Key findings with respect to Evaluation Questions

EQ 1 – Good Humanitarian Donorship

JC 1.1 ECHO deployed specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syria crisis response

ECHO TAs acknowledged a certain level of understanding of what the GHDI stands for, especially regarding the engagement of donors on humanitarian principles. The GHDI is to some extent perceived as relating to HQ policies rather than to the field, for instance as regards to harmonization and simplification of reporting.

JC 1.2 There are specific examples of where the Syria response was (or was not) in line with the 23 Principles

Even if the HIP ensured a certain level of advanced understanding of the amounts of resources available and of ECHO’s strategy, it remained difficult to ensure predictability in the funding of partners. This was further accentuated by the relative unpredictability of funds (cf. for instance the system of top-up) and the fact that the strategy could only be revised when new resources were allocated. In that context, the implementing partners would have welcomed a clear strategy from ECHO. However, they all recognized that ECHO had made efforts to adapt its resources to the needs faced by the partners as regard to the crisis.

EQ 2 - Consultation of local and regional communities

JC 2.1. ECHO or its partners deployed specific measures for involving local and regional communities

ECHO partners regularly managed to engage with local structures deeply rooted in the communities (Naddah for the Palestinian Syrian refugees, for instance). Other structures, such as the Welfare Association (WA) or Amel, are Lebanese NGOs that have been involved for years with communities and are now opening international offices in Europe. This should increase their visibility and contribute to their involvement as partners of ECHO and international NGOs.

JC 2.2. ECHO and/or partner monitoring mechanisms took account of beneficiary views and provided appropriate feedback loops to funding officers

Consultations and focus groups with refugees are organised by partners in Lebanon. However, they provide a feed-back loop to project managers and technical staff rather than to funding officers.

EQ 3 – To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?

JC 3.1 ECHO deployed specific measures/a specific approach/strategy to make sure ECHO-funded interventions took into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region both at design and implementation stages

Systematic needs assessments are reported by implementing partners and are a prerequisite for preparing an e-single-form. Implementing partners have also reported that they have to
be more restrictive in how they select the beneficiaries as resources become more stretched. However, the fact that the population is not in camps but rather dispersed in family flats, small, informal tented settlements or collective centres makes it a challenge to identify the most vulnerable and where they are. Partners also report challenges in collecting information on refugees, especially given the highly labour-intensive process required for this type of situation with a high level of dispersion, but also because some refugees do not wish to be identified as they do not always have all the papers needed.

The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASYR) represents a significant inter-agency initiative and a useful source of information on vulnerability, yet it cannot explore all the key issues in detail. Some studies have been launched at project level to provide a more fine-tuned overview of the vulnerability of the population.

**JC 3.2 The design of ECHO-funded interventions reflects the needs of the most vulnerable people well**

The Newcomers programme was more of a “blanket programme” than a programme designed to discriminate between different groups of people according to degree of vulnerability. In almost all other supported programmes, partners have been requested to undertake significant efforts to improve targeting and to strengthen the focus on the most vulnerable groups.

**JC 3.3 ECHO took specific measures to ensure that during implementation, the needs of the most vulnerable people were taken into account**

ECHO has been recognized as a flexible donor, allowing adaptation to changes encountered during the implementation of its support. The Newcomers programme is itself an innovation that was supported as deemed necessary during the first years of the Syrian refugee influx into Lebanon. The dialogue between ECHO and its partners, along with frequent field visits, have contributed to the development of the programme over time, taking into account the variations in the needs and numbers of refugees crossing borders.

**EQ 4: To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?**

**JC 4.1: ECHO applied a specific approach/strategy to make sure that the needs and interests of host populations were taken into account**

The interests of the host communities have been taken very seriously into account by the development donors, in particular the development institutions of the EC, to ensure the political stability of the country. ECHO did not develop a specific approach in this regard.

**JC 4.2: ECHO took specific measures to address the needs and interests of host populations**

ECHO’s role was more of an “advocacy nature” within the EU Delegation and with other donors. In particular, ECHO has tried to ensure that the concerns identified by their partners in the field were covered by the other instruments of the EC when they were mobilized.

The fact that the GoL does not provide services at municipality level represents a significant challenge. The lack of involvement of the GoL also inhibits resolution of some issues, particularly in the fields of infrastructure (WASH) and social housing (shelter). When
compatible with the response to the Syrian refugees’ needs and when resources were available, ECHO partners tried to fill some gaps in sectors not covered by the government, for instance in WASH.

**JC 4.3: The measures reached their objectives**

In situations of permanent political instability, when there is often nobody to sign documents relating to the disbursement of the resources of bilateral and multilateral agreements, ECHO’s room is limited.

In that context, there is a perception in some circles of a 5-star response provided to Syrians. There is also a perception that Syrians have money, and that the international community has forgotten the Lebanese, especially the poor.

**EQ 5: A) To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?**

**JC 5.1 ECHO and its partners had a strategy to adapt their approach to the shifting needs of the region**

ECHO was the first humanitarian donor to open a permanent office in Lebanon. ECHO was also engaged from early on in field assessments so as to better understand the local realities and to decide where and through whom to allocate resources. ECHO has also rapidly engaged in consultation with the main actors (even those that were not its partners) in the different sectors so as to be able to adapt its approach and to better understand the needs of the population, their nature and their dynamics. The Newcomers programme, for instance, arose from the delays observed in registration (it requiring up to three months to become registered).

The regular engagement of ECHO in coordination mechanisms also helped identify emerging needs resulting from changing situations. Partners also reported strategic bilateral discussions with ECHO on changing contexts and gaps in the field, and the possible repercussions on their ongoing programmes.

**JC 5.2 ECHO and its partners have revised their approaches/interventions so as to better address the shifting needs of the region**

ECHO and its partners rapidly initiated the Newcomers programme. Given the border restrictions that led to a reduction in newcomers, partners discussed with ECHO how to continue such projects. In one case the focus was shifted to the renovation of shelters.

**JC 5.3 In the case of project activities that have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, ECHO partners adapted their approaches/interventions to the changed needs.**

Partners have reported flexibility from ECHO in accepting changes in response to changing situations or when real problems (for instance, security) hinder implementation. Interactions with the TAs most of the time led to rapid decisions with the ECHO field office. Validation at other levels, especially Brussels desks, often took more time, but in most instances
modifications were accepted and the partner had either to undertake a modification of the e-single-form, or to ensure that any change in implementation was reported in the interim report. For instance, a partner has reported that it had a project for PRS that was banned by the government. A needs assessment was carried out, and it appeared that shelter was a real need. ECHO funds were then reallocated to shelter, which was new for the partner.

Given the drastic change in the GoL’s policy towards refugees and, more specifically, the closure of borders from 24th October 2014, another partner had to modify its activities in 2014. This was considered relevant and justified given the steep decrease in the number of refugees entering the country. Intensive communication and discussions have taken place in the field in order to channel resources to some of the pressing needs of the most vulnerable refugees.

**JC 5.4 When adapting their approaches to changing needs, ECHO’s partners introduced specific innovations**

The main innovation is the emergence of the “basic needs” concept which brings together food, NFI, shelter, and so forth. It can be implemented through a single card, with or without unconditional cash transfer (CT), or with a combination of unconditional and targeted CT. The other interesting evolution is the fact that, following ECHO’s recommendation, UNHCR has created a “coordination mechanism” dedicated to working with and for non-UNHCR partners.

**JC 5.5 Implications for ECHO (and partner) approaches relative to expected shifts in beneficiary needs**

When the HIP was regional, modification requests in response to changing situations affecting different contexts in a non-synchronous manner resulted in complex processes requiring several exchanges. The related workload for both ECHO and its partners was high. With national HIPs, which is now the usual response model, the process is less complicated and less time-consuming.

**EQ 6 – EU Added-Value**

**JC 6.1 ECHO employed a specific approach and took specific initiatives to ensure it could provide added value**

ECHO’s approach to ensuring provision of value added to both its partners and other donors remains anchored in the presence of its TAs, who are able to move much more easily in the field than many other donor representatives. The rapid reopening of the ECHO office in the EU Delegation in Beirut and the reinforced manning of this office with a second TA specialized in cash and food security gave ECHO an enhanced capacity to follow developments (examples include the Bekaa situation during the incidents in the North), and to intervene in key humanitarian debates (on protection, cash, health, etc.).

**JC 6.2 ECHO was recognised as providing specific types of added value in the context of the Syrian crisis**

ECHO is perceived as flexible in terms of funding requests as compared to other donors. Its involvement at both operational and strategic levels with its partners is well received, even if disagreements have occurred (over cash, for instance). Its role in the debates is seen by its partners as creative and fostering innovation.
ECHO is also perceived to have a political role in influencing the aid agenda and the shaping of the aid architecture (which is perceived as sometimes going beyond a donor’s role).

**EQ 7 – Urban Settings**

**JC 7.1 ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed urban issues within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

As the GoL agreed to receive Syrian refugees on the basis of a “no camp policy”, the refugees had to find other solutions to their shelter needs. Several options were identified: flats in unfinished houses for rent, unused parts of existing buildings in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, collective centres, or small settlements known as “informal tented settlements” (a group of tents to which aid agencies deliver basic services, e.g. WASH, counselling, informal adult and child education).

There was no specific approach to the embedding of urban issues, but there was an understanding that some of the key modalities used in camps (such as pit latrines) are not appropriate in urban (non-camp) environments.

**JC 7.2 The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major challenges that exist in urban settings in order to design interventions appropriate to these specific types of situation**

**WASH:** Most equipment is provided under a “life-saving” argument and is supposed to be temporary basic equipment. But in high-density urban conditions, if the structures are not permanent, there is risk of contamination with water-borne diseases. It is important to recall that many of the WASH urban infrastructures in Lebanon are old and have not been properly maintained for years. But rehabilitating the urban WASH networks is far beyond ECHO’s mandate and capacities. ECHO partners, however, work at the lower level and at the final end of the network, at “distribution level”, with an entity (water establishment) which has capacity problems. There is a need for coordination between stakeholders, including the government and the water establishment.

**Settlements and Shelter:** Many refugees (30% of refugees in Akka, for instance) are in informal settlements while some others have managed to find more formal arrangements and are renting flats. Limited support for the improvement of unfinished flats and unused parts of buildings has been provided in individual houses, collective centres (settlements managed by refugees with organised structures – which are more urban), and collective shelters (refugees managing their own settlement, but without a management structure). According to a partner, 50% of refugees are still in need of shelter support.

**Cash for rent:** Cash for rent programmes have been established. This is more an adaptation to a situation in which refugees are on their own (no camps) in middle-income countries than in urban contexts, as it can be applied in both urban and rural areas. There are different options, ranging from dedicated cash for rent programmes (refuges received a grant of $150/month for rent) to unconditional cash operations in which refugees can decide how they want to use their money, rent often being one of the chosen priorities. Two problems have been mentioned:

- The risk of destabilizing the rent market and triggering rent increases that would also affect the Lebanese population and cause tensions.
- The limited negotiation power refugees have vis-à-vis landlords (who can increase rent, evict people, etc.). This is where the mechanism of quadripartite agreements for flat improvement intervenes. In the quadripartite agreement, signed by the landlord, the beneficiary, the municipal authority and the NGO, the landlord directly receives funds to improve the flat according to an agreed upon Bill of Quantity, and accepts a rent freeze or even a free-rent period during which the refugee family will be hosted in the renovated flat.


JC 7.3 Throughout implementation, ECHO-funded projects were able to tackle the specific urban challenges (for the displaced and for refugees as well as for the host urban populations) and to coordinate properly with the local authorities, urban services and institutions (municipalities), in line with the good practices elaborated by the sector.

It appears that many partners have had limited coordination with municipalities. NGOs have contacted municipalities only when problems have arisen, and not during project design, which has sometimes led to incoherent planning with negative effects on local communities (e.g. in the case of a water evacuation project between two municipalities). Municipalities have also reported that they were not always informed when EU projects were implemented.


EQ8: How and to what extent has Protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?


JC 8.1. ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed protection within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis

Apart from UNHCR, which is mandated by the international community for refugee protection, and apart from agencies addressing the need to secure access of refugees to shelters through rental agreements and counselling (ICLA with DRC for instance), there has been limited real protection programming among ECHO partners, although many refer to protection in their project proposals.  

Initial registration has been incorporated into a more comprehensive data base, the Refugee Analysis Information System (RAIS), which combines different types of socio-economic information with the official data set. Many Syrians do not wish to be registered in the “RAIS” (involving profiling of refugees as used by UNHCR) because they do not wish to be associated with a camp. The position of one of ECHO’s partners is not to use this database, as the privacy of the people they seek to protect is not guaranteed. However, ECHO wishes this database to be associated with the cash programme, although this means that the government might be able to gain access to the information.


JC 8.2. The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major threats that exist to the physical and psychological security of humanitarian aid beneficiaries

One of ECHO’s partners assists refugees in obtaining official documents. The Lebanese authorities established a series of visas for entering Lebanon. Refugees are no longer allowed to enter, but they can still come if they have reasons other than seeking refuge (health, job, transit to another country, etc.). The type of visa and the validity of the residency permit have strong impacts on livelihood and movements, as some refugees prefer to restrict their

176 As per many single forms consulted
movements so as not to encounter checkpoints as they are illegals. Indeed, the fact that refugees have to renew their registration every six months at a cost of US$200 has created a growing body of unregistered refugees with access neither to health services nor to protection. When refugees are arrested at the checkpoint they may be detained for weeks or months (depending on their capacity to pay fines, support from an employer, etc.). UNHCR and, to a lesser extent, ICRC are the main ECHO partners keeping in contact with these people while in custody, in order to provide legal assistance, for example.

**JC 8.3. ECHO-funded project designs disambiguated protection needs per population segment and location, including identifying specific threats to vulnerable groups**

The level of disaggregation of protection needs is not optimal. In fact, it varies more by area in relation to existing security measures locally in place than by type of population. In addition, it fluctuates considerably as it depends significantly on national policies on asylum. The main element that is kept under scrutiny by most ECHO partners is currently the impact of changes in asylum policy and residency permit renewals, and this applies to all Syrian refugees.

**EQ 9: In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?**

Most areas are normally accessible in Lebanon, although the region of Tripoli and the Northern part of the Bekaa Valley have been subject to regular tension, making them from time to time difficult to access by international staff. In Tripoli, only national staff would visit the areas during difficult periods and programmes would be put temporarily on standby. In the sealed area of Asal in the Northern Bekaa Valley, where heavy confrontations between Syrian movements and the Lebanese army took place, ACF managed to retain its national staff and maintain its activities in the enclave. Remote management is not used *per se*, the agency involved being relatively experienced in this type of sensitive operation and managing the situation well with its own methods.

**EQ10 – Cash and vouchers**

**Rationale for cash transfers in the context of Lebanon**: as a middle-income country with a free market economy and a functioning banking system, Lebanon offers possibilities for testing and implementing a different type of humanitarian aid operation (no logistics difficulties, functioning markets, etc.). Cash transfers are expected to be a cost-effective modality, with economies of scale and mainstreamed assessment (instead of duplication involving one assessment for food, one for education, one for shelter, etc.). Given the massive need and limited funding, effective use of the funding is crucial. The development of telecommunication and cash transfer technologies has greatly improved the efficiency and security of cash delivery over time. Cash transfer is unavoidable, as the main need of the refugee population is rent subsidies.

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177 With a view to avoiding ambiguity on the period covered, we suggest phrasing the question in the past tense.

Challenges to cash assistance\(^{179}\): cash assistance requires a strong coordination mechanism and true cooperation between partners on the ground in order to have:

- joint and multisector assessments of needs and vulnerability;
- a common assistance package in line with identified needs; \(^{and}\)
- agreement on the delivery modality (i.e. on the agency with the formal card, the bank contract, monitoring responsibilities, responsibility for updating the list of beneficiaries, etc.)

**ECHO’s approach\(^{180}\):** ECHO’s assistance is provided through both unconditional cash transfers (mainly for the winterization programme) and restricted cash assistance (through vouchers) for food and rent. Regarding the winter response, ECHO contributes notably to the provision of unconditional cash to cover the most vulnerable HHs’ basic needs while prioritizing those living at high altitudes (through UNHCR and NGOs). ECHO so far is channelling such funds through UNHCR, for a total of €10m. UNHCR and NGOs have agreed on an amount of money to be given to the most vulnerable to meet their basic needs. Cash assistance is provided to only 10% of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. Those assisted represent the most vulnerable, who struggle to meet basic needs (women-headed families, etc.). The assistance provided covers the minimum survival expenditure and is far below Lebanon’s minimum wage.

Extensive work has been done to develop a multipurpose unconditional cash transfer programme at inter-agency level. A combined transfer of around $300 (probably to be funded by WFP and UNHCR), hopefully through one electronic card, is under discussion – with $150 in the form of electronic food vouchers and $150 as cash. ECHO has been extensively involved through its country office and through the support of a cash expert seconded to the cash working group.

As resources have been shrinking over the last two years, there is a need to “do more with less”, a point that highlights the importance of an efficient, prioritized and coordinated response. ECHO has been advocating greater use of cash as a cost-efficient modality, targeting the most vulnerable and improving coordination. Concerted efforts to design an inter-agency cash operation are finally bearing fruit.

**JC 10.1 The ECHO strategy for Syria considered the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities**

ECHO in Lebanon works through partners using different modalities for resource transfer: food vouchers through WFP, cash through UNHCR, in-kind or a combination of in-kind and cash though several NGOs (DRC for Newcomers, WA for winterization, etc.). Yet ECHO has been extremely vocal in promoting unconditional cash transfers (UCT) as the best option in the context of Lebanon. At first, ECHO supported WFP in the implementation of food vouchers but subsequently, when WFP demonstrated some resistance to cash, ECHO discontinued its support. Partners have suggested that ECHO should allow space for different approaches instead of pushing exclusively for UCT.

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\(^{179}\) ECHO (2014) ‘Single cash transfer in Lebanon – One-pager or CoHAFA

JC 10.2 The appraisal of ECHO actions took account of an appropriate analysis of the context

Partners call for better understanding of how refugees use their money, given the restrictions on their mobility and the number of cards they have to manage (as the one-card approach may not materialise). The unconditional cash approach has generated reluctance from ECHO partners for various reasons:

- mandate issues (for WFP for instance);
- limited quality control of the products bought by the beneficiaries (for instance medicines);
- depending on the geographical areas, cash is not always the solution (e.g. when there is no ATM cash transfer cannot be used);
- some partners consider that cash cannot be used for WASH, especially for large, community infrastructures;
- many studies are reported to have shown that the buying power of refugees is lowered through use of unconditional cash as they depend on local market prices with limited negotiating power with traders;
- partners have also highlighted their incomprehension of ECHO’s willingness to move all its money into multipurpose cash (WASH, shelter, etc. while people use money for education, health, etc.); they consider that, in the case of shelter for instance, cash is not a good option (people will rent substandard shelter at higher prices), and moreover they have stressed that the amount will never cover minimum basic needs, as ECHO is aware;
- some partners consider that cash for protection is not possible in this country.

ECHO considered that the context of Lebanon was such as to allow testing and learning from the unconditional cash modality.

JC 10.3 ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations have been effective in the Syrian context

With cash used to pay for rent and health expenditure, and food vouchers facilitating access to food for those who benefited from them, resource transfers have indeed been useful. Yet the significant reduction of funds, leading to stronger targeting and limited coverage, together with the growing difficulty Syrian refugees have had in accessing an ATM, have limited overall effectiveness.

EQ 11. Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?

JC 11.1. The ECHO budget allocation in response to the Syrian crisis was appropriate

The aid allocation by ECHO to Lebanon was sufficient to cover the special needs of newcomers and to cover winterization programming. The declining donor support for WFP culminated in a reduction of the monthly food allowance for refugees from US$37 to US$19 and then to US$13. This is likely to have significantly affected the capacity of many Syrians
to cope. If that trend, which has been clearly identified in VASyR 2014 and 2015, continues, ECHO resources may not be sufficient to address the degradation of the humanitarian situation.

**JC 11.2. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was proportionate**

Most ECHO TAs and HQ staff underlined the fact that HIPs should be national in order to secure the funds allocated to each country on the basis of the situation in the field. At the same time, it makes sense to have a global vision to ensure that, in times of scarce resources, appropriate reallocations are possible. The current mechanism, with oversight of the whole response, a fine-tuned assessment of specific needs permitted by the presence of TAs in the field, and permanent dialogue between partners, TAs and ECHO HQ, offers a good set-up to ensure resource allocation is in line with needs.

**JC 11.3. ECHO calibrated its objectives to the available funding**

As a needs-based donor, ECHO's funding envelopes should be determined by the scale of need. The Syrian crisis and its high political visibility inverted the process and linked objectives to funding availability. According to a partner, competition for funding between the different agencies drives response design to a greater extent than it should.

**JC 11.4. ECHO-funded activities were cost-effective**

**EQ 12: Were appropriate monitoring systems in place to support sound management of ECHO operations?**

**JC 12.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure that the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms were conducive to support sound management of ECHO-funded operations**

ECHO presence in the field, with a full-fledged office manned by two TAs and their national assistants, contributes to its capacity to monitor programmes, identify risks and difficulties, and engage in discussions with partners to find solutions.

**JC 12.2. ECHO adopted a specific approach to ensure that monitoring mechanisms were tailored to the specific needs of remote management**

Apart from the very special situation in the Northern Bekaa, where only one I-NGO is working (ACF), there is no need for remote management in Lebanon.

**JC 12.3. ECHO partners implemented operations monitoring and ensured data and findings were available for ECHO’s use in a timely manner**

The number and size of reports to prepare for ECHO is seen as substantial and time-consuming by some partners. Some of them also see monitoring more as a tool for reporting to donors than as support for project steering. Yet the field-level monitoring missions carried out by ECHO staff are regarded differently. A partner even reported that ECHO’s regular field monitoring visits were very helpful in analysing project difficulties (in that particular case in WASH and shelter), and in facilitating reallocation of funds when deemed necessary (e.g. to adjust to significant situational changes).
EQ 13: What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?

**JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**

The multi-country approach was used at the outset, as it was perceived by ECHO to be the most appropriate given the resources available for the Syrian crisis at the time (at both HQ and field levels). This approach was also expected to increase coordination between partners’ offices in the different countries. From the partners’ point of view, however, the consortium approach was perceived to be time-consuming, and to involve additional bureaucracy. Multi-country programmes can be envisaged when the same programme applies in the various countries. It becomes more complicated when there are different programmes in different countries, all falling within a regional programme.

Once human resources were increased and disparities between countries (leading to significant differences in the modalities of project implementation) were better understood, the national contracts were prioritized. The fact that the reinforced structure in the field mirrored a similarly strengthened capacity at HQ level was highly appreciated by all. The possible exception could be cross-border issues, for which it might make sense to have regional (multi-country) programmes.

**JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplications between countries and partner organisations**

EQ 14 - ECHO’s success in coordinating operations with other main actors

**JC 14.1 Actions undertaken to enhance coordination**

ECHO has been proactive in enhancing coordination, *viz*:

- ECHO has funded coordination from the outset;
- ECHO has contributed, with HCR Lebanon, to facilitating the creation of a dedicated coordination mechanism outside pure UNHCR programming, in order to clearly dissociate HCR coordination activities and the HCR programme;
- ECHO is pressing for better geographical coordination, and a limited number of actors in the Bekaa valley for instance (through the HIP 2015);
- ECHO is perceived by some implementing partners to have played a key role in coordination (ECHO suggested, for instance, covering both WASH and shelter, which used to be separate), as compared to other donors (DFID for instance);
- ECHO staff consider that a common vision should be defined with active donors, in order to have joint programming of funds (which would be new); this should be a top-down approach with the support of HQ, as the influence of ECHO in the field on some operating donors such as UNICEF is limited.

There are some key limits to what ECHO can do in coordination, as many donors chose their own programmes in the context of political vacuum in the GoL. ECHO’s role in pressing for better donor coordination is, however, well recognized. ECHO has also invested
much time and energy in establishing how the international coordination and aid architecture in Lebanon could be improved. In that respect, ECHO has also been accused of having fuelled the debate on the coordination mandate between OCHA and UNHCR, which took much time and energy from the partners.

**JC 14.2 ECHO identified and took account of main actors’ activities**

ECHO’s engagement at all levels with the UN system has been essential, but time-consuming. At field level there is an uneven level of coordination with municipalities, which are more involved than the higher levels of government. The fact that the implementing actors have to negotiate with different levels of government increases the complexity. ECHO has kept some distance from these national-level actors and in most instances presses for the EU Delegation to be the front-runner in negotiations with the GoL.

**JC 14.3 ECHO actions sought to enhance synergies and reduce duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

The risk of duplication (in terms of structures or operations) arising from the high number of actors in Lebanon has been indicated, and is perceived not to be cost-effective. It has been reported that, in terms of assistance, duplication is avoided thanks to inter-agency tools (there is a questionnaire on who does what). However, in WASH for instance, the map of who does what and where indicates that some regions have many implementers, while others are significantly less well covered. It is expected that donors could improve the situation, for instance by having discussions on gaps with sector coordinators rather than at the partner level. It is also currently perceived that intervention choices are highly political and not evidence-based.

**JC 14.4 ECHO actions demonstrated synergies and no duplication of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

With its TAs in the field frequently visiting the operations, the clear request in the e-single-form for presentation of the coordination mechanisms in which the partners are involved at different times in the life of the project, and the regular participation of ECHO staff in coordination meetings with other donors and the humanitarian community, much effort is being made in Beirut and at field level to limit gaps and duplication. The support by ECHO of consortia (for instance for the Newcomers programme) or to stimulate collective debate on cash transfer also contributed to the identification of possible synergies.

**EQ15 – Mainstreaming of LRRD**

**JC 15.1 ECHO coordinated with EC development actors (DG DEVCO, EEAS, and EU MS) from the earliest phases of the crisis response**

The links between ECHO and other EC Services were activated rapidly at the Brussels and Beirut levels. From 2012, a document defining the respective roles of ECHO, DEVCO and IfS (prior to the JHDF format) was available. The collaboration between ECHO and DEVCO is perceived as good in Lebanon (common position papers, joint programming, etc.). Problems have, however, occurred owing to mandate-related issues: child protection is partly covered by ECHO’s mandate but can be linked to the education activities of DEVCO. EU staff in Lebanon consider that most of the problems have arisen from difficulties at HQ level rather than in the field. Coordination with Member States varies widely, with very strong
links with some and limited links with others. There is, however, a demand for a closer collaboration with ECHO, and recognition of the essential role the TAs play in keeping MS aware of the situation in the field.

**JC 15.2 ECHO deployed the various instruments available to implement stability measures in a coherent and complementary fashion with the EU toolbox**

**JC 15.3 ECHO-funded actions have been based on a strong context analysis**

ECHO’s presence and mobility in the field and its close linkages with its operational partners are essential components of a strong capacity to access information and analyses on contexts, needs, and risks. Through its national staff and participation in many meetings, ECHO monitors not only humanitarian issues but also context evolution.

**JC 15.4 ECHO-funded projects have been framed in the context of longer-term requirements of reconstruction and development**

Long-term vision requires notably strong upfront engagement with municipal institutions by ECHO and its partners, which was limited. Municipalities indeed reported that they are not always informed about EU projects.

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**EQ16 – Success in terms of LRRD**

**JC 16.1 ECHO-funded operations have been implemented through rapid decision-making processes and flexible instruments**

The fact that ECHO had a presence in Lebanon facilitated rapid understanding of the issues at stake (refugees flooding urban settings, tensions over the creation of refugee camps, etc.) and facilitated decision-making at an early phase, even before the reopening of the ECHO office in Beirut. The permanent exchange of information between ECHO staff, their partners and other donors also greatly facilitated swift accumulation of data on the situation and enabled ECHO to take rapid decisions (for instance when flows of refugees were on the rise at the Syrian-Lebanese border).

**JC 16.2 ECHO provided a coordinated response strategy through its actions**

The position of ECHO in almost all key coordination fora was key to ensuring that the provision of ECHO-supported aid took place in a coordinated manner. This was particularly important when strategic decisions had to be made, for instance to continue or discontinue the “Newcomers programmes” or to limit operations when security became an issue in the Tripoli area.

**JC 16.3 ECHO engaged with a range of locally important actors through its actions**

In Lebanon, ECHO has been in regular contact with the top levels of the humanitarian community, ranging from the RC/HC to all heads of agencies. ECHO TAs were also invited to hold discussions with high-level delegations visiting the humanitarian operations in Lebanon. The contacts with the Lebanese authorities were given much lower priority, as political dialogue was much more in the hands of the EU Delegation.
JC 16.4 ECHO-funded interventions experienced a smooth and timely phase-out, thereby avoiding “grey zones” in international assistance

There is a willingness to transfer the know-how to the Lebanese, in order to leave the humanitarian sphere for the development sphere (“Lebanisation” of the aid).

JC16.5 ECHO-funded actions encouraged “cross-learning” of humanitarian and development experiences

EQ17 - To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners’ organisations? What is the scope for improvement?

JC 17.1. The design of ECHO-funded actions has been based on an in-depth knowledge of the security situation, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries

The network of ECHO TAs throughout the whole Syrian crisis and the existence of a coordination mechanism in the field, based in Amman and mirrored by a similar coordination system in Brussels, are strong assets in ensuring proper monitoring of the way in which the crisis evolves and in anticipating possible repercussions on the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. The fact that ECHO TAs in Beirut are highly respected, are in permanent contact with their partners but are also part of the ECHO network across the whole region also makes them sources of key information on the evolution of the situation and risks in the whole region.

JC 17.2. The design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions facilitated humanitarian access for partner organisations

ECHO accepts financial provision for security and safety in the e-single-form. In addition, when deemed necessary, ECHO has demonstrated high readiness to discuss the repercussions of a deteriorating security situation limiting access and requiring the adaptation of programmes.

JC 17.3. ECHO-funded actions promoted the security and safety of humanitarian personnel delivering humanitarian aid

One of the projects supported by ECHO is the Safety Security System (SCCL program), which includes collection and dissemination of safety and security information (when there is an alert, a message is sent via SMS and WhatsApp) and training events.

EQ 18 - (Humanitarian advocacy) How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line intervention, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)?

JC 18.1 Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries

ECHO’s Syria network included a number of favoured topics (unconditional cash transfer, OCHA/UNHCR coordination divide, etc.) for advocacy. These subjects, together with protection and access, formed the basis of an informal advocacy strategy.
JC 18.2 ECHO advocacy contributed to concrete policy changes in neighbouring countries

According to its partners, ECHO is in favour of advocacy on NGOs working with unregistered, deregistered or illegal refugees. But ECHO’s influence on the government is unclear to the partners, especially as the Delegation and the Ambassador may not convey the same message. In terms of border restrictions, ECHO advocated for the right of refugees to mobility. However, its argument was questioned by the government, given the EU’s own current policy on migration, and the EU’s support for Lebanon in response to the crisis.

JC 18.3 ECHO advocacy contributed to changes in approach by other donors in Syria and neighbouring countries

JC 18.4 ECHO advocacy contributed to increased coordination between donors and governments in Syria and neighbouring countries

ECHO staff have reported that they have succeeded in obtaining approval for the revision of ECHO’s policy on cash and vouchers, as cash is now considered to be the appropriate approach in Lebanon.

JC 18.5 ECHO and EEAS advocacy contributed to increased humanitarian access inside Syria

This is not a real issue in Lebanon.
5. Tentative Conclusion

The Lebanon mission identified a series of key issues for ECHO.

- **Working in a protracted crisis requires sophisticated coordination mechanisms** both within the EU system (ECHO, EEAS, DEVCO, IsF) and in the international aid architecture. The situation in Lebanon shows how complex it is to achieve the right balance and structure and how time-consuming it can easily become.

- **Highly politicized contexts attract resources and political commitments.** There is always a danger of ECHO being either flooded by “political money” or instrumentalized under a stabilization agenda.

- **Middle-income countries and highly-urbanized contexts constitute a challenge to many aid practices.** Micro-economists, social scientists and urban specialists are essential assets not frequently present on the rosters of aid agencies.
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1. Introduction

This Syria Country Report is part of the broader external evaluation process carried out on the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis.

1.1. Methodology

The methodology applied for this case study is based on four pillars:

- Documents reviewed: in addition to the work undertaken during the desk study, documentation on the context, projects, needs analyses and impact analyses has been gathered in the field and analysed (see annex N°1)
- Interviews with key stakeholders
  - ECHO and other services of the European Commission
  - UN Agencies (regional HC, UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, WFP), including the team leader of the OCHA Operational Peer Review of the Syrian response and ICRC
  - NGOs (DRC, NRC, PU-AMI, ACTED, GOAL, CARITAS, Save the Children) and other experts

Owing to the ongoing security risks inside Syria, no field visit could be carried out, either from Damascus or from neighbouring countries. It is important to recall that in view of this restriction, which affects both the evaluation team and ECHO staff, the evaluation findings could only be gathered via discussion with stakeholders in neighbouring countries and the HQ. The team visited Gaziantep and the Turkish border region to assess cross-border operations, and interviewed a range of ECHO’s INGO partners operating remote management operations from Turkey and Iraq. Triangulation between sources was prioritised where feasible in order to increase the level of confidence in the data collected.

1.2. Structure of the Syria Country Report

The structure of the Syria country report is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction
- Description of the methodology
- Description of the structure of the country report

Section 2: The context inside Syria
- Brief overview of the socio-economic context in Syria
- Brief description of the specific constraints of the IDPs and conflict-affected population in the country
- Brief description of the national and international response in Syria

Section 3: Overview of the ECHO approach in the country:
- Overview of ECHO’s overall approach and main priorities in Syria
- Overview of funding and activities undertaken in Syria

Section 4: Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions

Section 5: Other relevant findings for the evaluation
- Specific findings on the case study subjects
- Specific lessons with respect to the sectors (water, health, etc.) concerned
- Other relevant findings
Section 6: Country-specific conclusions

Annexes

- List of persons met
- List of documents consulted
2. Context

2.1. The crisis in Syria

People in need:

As of the end of the evaluation period, in December 2014, a total of 12.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria. This represents a twelvefold increase since the start of the crisis in 2011. Of the 12.2 million in need, over 7.5 million were internally displaced, and 4.8 million were in hard to reach areas.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) grew throughout the evaluation period in response to the ongoing severity of the complex, multi-sided and fast-moving conflict. But the greatest growth in IDP numbers were seen over the first two years of the evaluation period, 2012-2013, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 2 – Evolution of Internally Displaced Persons inside Syria (Jan 2012-2015)

Humanitarian needs and response parameters:

Needs assessments inside Syria vary considerably between organisations, but OCHA estimates for December 2014 suggest that:

- 9.8 million people were considered food insecure.
- The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate was 7.2% across 13 governorates covered by a series of rapid nutrition assessments in July 2014; whilst the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate was registered at 2.3% in the same assessment.
- 11.6 million were in urgent need of access to clean water.
- Only 43% of Syria’s hospitals remain fully functional.
- 25% of Syria’s schools have been damaged, destroyed or used as collective shelters or other non-educational purposes.
- 1.6 million people are in need of shelter, with 1.2 million houses damaged or destroyed.
- Human rights violations have continued to occur in a context of insecurity and disregard of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law.\[181\]

The ability of humanitarian actors to respond to these needs has been severely constrained by the crisis:

- Humanitarian access has been impeded by the use siege tactics, indiscriminate bombardment and the presence of multiple extremist groups willing to target and kidnap humanitarian workers.
- Staff of most major donor organisations and most expatriates have been impeded from entering Syria legally through the imposition of visa restrictions.
- The conduct of cross-border humanitarian operations in areas not controlled by the government of Syria was initially hampered by the position of the Government of Syria.

During the period covered by the evaluation, the conflict evolved from a situation where only a limited number of areas were affected, to a whole-of-Syria multi-group war, leaving no area untouched. The trend over the years was the emergence of three different areas of conflict:

- The North with the Kurds;
- The South with the Free Syrian Army;
- The centre with the so-called Islamic State (IS), Jabhat Al Nusra and other alliances.

The white part of the map is mainly uninhabited desert.

Syria is a highly urbanized country with at least half of its 22.2 million people living in urban and peri-urban areas. Its cities are modern and thus very dependent on electricity, telecommunication networks and sewage systems, all of which have been severely disrupted during the conflict. With a population of over 1.8 million, Damascus is the centre of power in modern Syria. The capital was defended by the Syrian military, making it difficult for insurgents to infiltrate the suburbs. Once they did, the government responded with intensive
aerial bombardment, regular mortar fire and heavy shelling. The insurgents reacted by penetrating deeper into the city, even carrying out hit and run operations against government targets.

In other cities such as Aleppo (which had a pre-war population of almost 3 million people) or Homs, the impact of the war has been huge. Carpet bombing and use of barrel bombs have taken a high toll on the civilian population while making external humanitarian intervention extremely difficult.

### 2.2. The humanitarian crisis in Syria

#### 2.2.1. Outline of the humanitarian context

The humanitarian situation can be characterized by several indicators:

- High level of casualties directly linked to military confrontations. The death toll has been constantly on the rise. Estimates of deaths in the Syrian Civil War vary depending on the source, but on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 the United Nations put out an estimate of 220,000 deaths including a large proportions of civilians caught or targeted by military operations.

- Important population displacements both within the country and into neighbouring countries:
  - 3.9 million people fled the country
  - 7.6 million IDPs tried to seek a safe-haven inside the country, moving from rural to urban areas, from urban to rural zones, from one city to another or from one neighbourhood to another within the same city boundaries. *(UNOCHA March 2015)*

- Populations in need and unable or unwilling to move from their current settlements:
  - An unknown number of people in besieged areas (cities under blockade)
  - A significant number of people in areas controlled by AOG.

Over the years, the war has by and large paralyzed the whole economy of the country. Energy distribution, trade, local production (industry and agriculture) and service delivery are between slow motion and total standstill. This has increased the challenge to survive. The number of people (PIN) in need inside the country is estimated by OCHA at around 12.2 million *(Source: UNOCHA as of March 2015)*, with one-third (4.8 million) trapped in “hard to reach areas”, a term describing besieged areas and areas under the control of opposition groups. *(Source: UNOCHA 2015 Strategic Response Plan)*.
Protection is the most important need, as none of the parties in the conflict seem to pay any respect to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). ICRC is making every effort in a very difficult context to disseminate IHL, to call on all armed groups to respect it and to abide by certain rules of combat, and is collecting allegations of all manner of breaches of IHL in the neighbouring countries. ICRC is progressively but still unsatisfactorily gaining access to jails inside Syria. It is developing its system for tracing and re-establishing family links through the network of National Societies. ICRC is slowly coming to grips with the extremely complex and problematic issue of “missing persons”, which will be a highly problematic issue in the future.

Relatively sophisticated water and sanitation systems existed in the cities as well as in the countryside, although a downward trend in the water table “recharge” was seen as a serious likely problem, especially for the growing urban centres. This system was based on sizeable power stations, large-scale electricity and more importantly a comprehensive system of high tension power lines for electricity distribution across the country. Many of these networks have been partially or totally destroyed as a result of military operations, which means falling back on large generators. The changing pattern of the demography linked to population displacements is modifying the geographic repartition of the demand and putting heavy demand on old water networks.

There was a relatively good and modern health care system prior to the conflict. In particular, many medicines and items of medical equipment were produced in-country. The health system was progressively building its capacity to tackle modern health problems and chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and others. The system has by and large collapsed in many areas. The targeting of the health system by conflict actors has had dramatic repercussions. Medical equipment and products for surgery are prohibited or tightly controlled whilst health structures are targeted by military means and first aid activities have been deliberately targeted by snipers. Surgery is being conducted in appalling conditions by very courageous Syrian practitioners, ill equipped, with limited supplies. The brain drain in the health system has been particularly hard-hitting for the population. Physical rehabilitation will be one of the most challenging sectors in the post-war era. In Aleppo alone there are around 650 to 750 forced amputations per month. Handicapped persons and amputees now number between 70,000 and 100,000 in the Aleppo region. This will present a daunting prospect for the post-war era.

Public health is also suffering dramatically from the destruction of the health system. Leishmaniosis re-explodes everywhere, as do measles, tuberculosis and possibly polio. UNICEF and WHO are doing their best to vaccinate children on all sides, but this is very difficult. Developed-country and urban diseases are extremely difficult to treat, and there are not many experienced health aid actors in the country. Psychosocial care is also an area where the impact of the war is most dramatic.
A dominant feature of humanitarian aid delivery in Syria relates to the lack of humanitarian space and the attempts of some armed groups to take over humanitarian aid as a potential winning hand in gaining the support of local communities. Humanitarian access\(^{182}\) has been hindered by the deterioration in the security environment, obstruction by the Syrian authorities and the growing number of AOGs which have at times prevented aid from reaching civilian populations.

One might note that no credible, large scale nutritional survey has been carried out since the beginning of the conflict, despite the growing concerns after four years of war. Despite the impressive resilience demonstrated so far by the Syrian population, there is a high likelihood that survival mechanisms will soon be exhausted. Until recently there was no “GAM alert”, but there are now a few reports from Aleppo hospitals indicating that the trend might be changing and that malnutrition might become a serious issue.

2.2.2. The international response

The first humanitarian interventions inside the country were the result of a limited presence of NGOs (between 13 and 15) and UN Agencies, many of which were involved in either “development programming” or in the response to the Palestinian and Iraqi refugee presence in Syria.

*The global humanitarian response in figures:*

Humanitarian agencies in Syria immediately faced four challenges:

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\(^{182}\) (Source: ECHO 2014 Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Syria Crisis, pp.2-3)
- how to develop humanitarian interventions in Government-controlled areas;
- how to develop acceptable humanitarian interventions in areas controlled by armed oppositions groups from Damascus (cross-line operations);
- how to develop acceptable humanitarian interventions in besieged areas or in areas closed by active war operations;
- how to develop operations outside government-controlled areas when crossing lines is not possible: the concept of cross-border operations from countries bordering Syria arose as the only alternative.

Inside Syria, the UN System, through its RC/HC and the UN agencies, took the lead in the negotiations with the Syrian Government and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) on the issue of working in or from Government-controlled areas. The negotiations finally took a positive turn in early summer 2012 and a new MOU was ready by July 2012 for signature by humanitarian agencies and the Government. This MOU underlines, inter alia, that by signing the text the NGOs remain within the framework of Syrian law and will not attempt to become involved in cross-border operations. For agencies present in Damascus, the terms of the alternatives in summer 2012 were simple: stay in Damascus or develop cross-border operations. Several NGOs made the choice to stay in Syria, to try to develop operations in Government-controlled zones and in hard-to-reach areas through cross-lines.

The cornerstone in all these discussions and operational engagements is the SARC. It is through SARC that visas are transmitted to the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is through the SARC that field visit permits can be obtained and it is the SARC that facilitates the possibility of having international staff posted in the different governorates outside Damascus. SARC has been mandated by the Syrian Government for the coordination and implementation of humanitarian aid.

Several actors who work constantly with it even underline the fact that, at branch levels in the governorates, there is much commitment to humanitarian aid. In practical terms, SARC receives aid items in Damascus and distributes them to the expected beneficiaries.

The situation mostly did not evolve positively. Access remains the most important problem. NGOs have been expelled from Syria because of their involvement in Cross-Border Operations.

ICRC, NGO and UN agencies finally managed to open some doors in 2013 by including activities of reconstruction of and support for health and education structures, in relation to the respective line ministries. Yet the tendency of the Syrian Government to change administrative procedures and rules regularly helps maintain a high level of uncertainty on the capacity to operate inside the country from Damascus.
The appeals from the UN system represent an interesting indicator of the overall level of resources mobilized in Syria between 2011 and 2015. Assistance for populations inside Syria (in government-controlled areas and in areas controlled by the opposition groups) amounts to US$2,802bn. This can be compared with the amounts of money injected by non-conventional donors in all sectors, including military assistance. According to the European Council on Foreign Affairs and Survival, assistance from Saudi Arabia and Qatar was estimated at US$6-7bn between 2011 and 2013. Iranian aid to Syria was reportedly in the range US$15-19bn over a similar period. The combination of all available data from these countries totals US$21-26bn, probably an underestimate. This does not take into account other financial means injected into Syria by the Russian Federation, the USA or even Europe and its Member States. Some think-tanks estimated that humanitarian aid represents no more than 10% of overall resources injected into the country. Data is lacking on the overall level
of resources that the so-called Islamic State is allocating to social services, health, and food assistance in favour of the population under its control.

**Figure 3 – Donor contributions in Syria by sector 2012-2014 (US$ million)**

![Syria contributions by sector](image)

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

One key parameter is information on needs, situations, and presence of aid actors. A series of loosely coordinated initiatives emerged, with the Syrian Need Assessment Project (SNAP) from ACAP, REACH from ACTED, SIMAP from OCHA, and others. These different tools frequently presented similar issues, albeit packaged differently, and produced a high quantity of information which was not easily absorbable and has effectively been more often a black box than a clearly understood body of data on developments in Syria.
3. ECHO’s response

3.1. Overview of ECHO’s overall strategy and main priorities in Syria

In recognition of the fact that the scale of the most urgent needs inside Syria outstrips its response, ECHO’s strategic approach has been to prioritise life-saving activities and require partners to ensure that the most vulnerable are assisted first. In line with this approach, of ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Syria during 2012-2014, almost three-quarters covered food assistance and livelihoods (32%), shelter and non-food items (23%), and multi-sector support through UN agencies (18%); health, water and sanitation, protection and coordination together made up the remaining one-quarter of the total. ECHO worked through a range of implementing partners, with a large share of funds (69%) channelled through the top ten partners.

**Figure 4 – Snapshot of ECHO’s response in Syria 2012-2014**

ECHO’s strategy for responding to the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people has evolved significantly over the period under review, both as a response to changing situations or as a result of enhanced understanding of the situations, needs and capacities of its partners. ECHO globally aimed to provide support both inside and beyond government-controlled areas, and refined its approach, in dialogue with its partners, in view of the difficulties of deploying aid agencies and delivering meaningful humanitarian aid. Three key directions where identified:

- more focus on pure humanitarian aid (health, life saving aid provision, protection);

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- identification of how to improve access;
- creation of conditions for better targeting.

3.2. ECHO’s approach to humanitarian access in hard-to-reach areas

The majority of hard-to-reach people in need inside Syria are in AOG-controlled or contested territories. Accessing them represents a significant challenge. From Damascus:

ECHO kept pushing to be able to carry out field monitoring and in 2015 managed to obtain some opportunities to do so (in rural Damascus with WFP and IFRC). But with the increased difficulties of obtaining visas, signed MOUs and field visit permits, the number of Damascus-based partners has decreased. From 2012 to 2013 the main priority was to refine the strategy with ICRC, WFP and UNICEF. With the increased demand for better reporting on operations inside Syria, especially on access to hard-to-reach areas, ECHO and its partners had to modify their strategy by:

- first, shifting from a “multi-sectoral approach” to a strategy more focused on priority areas (protection, health and WASH) with shelter, NFI and food assistance as part of a “second line” of intervention;
- second and in parallel, streamlining the geographical focus on areas most in need; this amounted to a stronger focus on “rapid response capacity” to intervene rapidly in areas where event-related emerging needs can be detected (for instance after a military confrontation, with an increased number of IDPs in a given area requiring urgent assistance);
- the third element of the evolution of the strategy consists of much greater integration and collaboration between ECHO and the other EU instruments, especially NEAR and Instrument for Stability.

Cross-Border operations: as provision of aid inside AOG-controlled territory is impeded by the difficulty of achieving agreement on cross-line operations with Damascus (aid provided to AOG-controlled areas from government-controlled areas), cross-border operations were discussed between ECHO and its partners long before the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2139 (2014), authorising UN agencies and implementing partners to bring life-saving assistance through border crossings. When the ECHO office in Damascus was closed for security reasons, cross-border operations were carried out from various locations, largely based on remote management, again became an option. The process had already started from Turkey in 2012, with Food for Peace resources (part of the US Aid system). The three main donors involved (ECHO, DFID, USAID) decided together that cross-border operations should go ahead and be scaled up. Very soon, 45% of the assistance outside of government-controlled areas was being delivered through cross-line operations, with 55% through cross-border operations. Cross-border operations were carried out from

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184 AOGs are all Non-State Armed Groups, following the OCHA definition which covers FSLA, secular groups and Islamist groups such as the so-called Islamic State and Al Nusra.
ECHO AMMAN (2014) Preliminary analysis on the monthly reports from ECHO partners received during the year 2014, 4 p.
Southern Turkey (the highest volume), Jordan (mostly through Government of Jordan structures), from the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KIR), and to a lesser extent from Lebanon. Indeed, not considering this option was seen as a breach of humanitarian principles (impartiality and independence) and would have left large parts of Syria only to donors not following GHD principles. The legality of cross-border operations raised much discussion within ECHO and among its partners given the different positions taken by governments of neighbouring countries and the lack of consent from the Government of Syria. At the beginning, ECHO was extremely reluctant, but finally accepted some operations. Large-scale operations were launched from Turkey, with a certain level of international field monitoring. Working modalities had to be explored, for instance the use of the Hawala system to pay staff inside the country, and the types of partnership that were possible and effective (with local society organizations, municipal councils, etc.). Cross-border operations rapidly became synonymous with remote management, especially after the kidnapping of two ACTED staff and subsequent degradation of the security environment (with additional aid worker kidnappings). ECHO’s position on remote management has been very prudent, as this was seen as a “last resort option” (no real needs assessment and targeting, very limited capacity for real monitoring), but also very pragmatic (what would be the humanitarian cost of not doing it?). A series of key parameters have been put in place to ensure that ECHO-supported cross-border operations are cost-effective, respect key aspects of due diligence and limit the risk of negative effects. This has led to the development of a multitude of tools and innovative use of existing technologies. If communication by telephone and internet is not necessarily easy (bad connections, many gaps in the network, security and confidentiality issues), the different options (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) are used widely. Geo-referenced photos and videos (proof of realization of activities), third-party monitoring and other triangulation means are tested, explored and developed. In addition, ECHO is still internally negotiating its own capacity to carry out direct monitoring by its TAs or national staff. This took place successfully in the Hassakeh area from KIR; and the challenge now is to identify further areas where it might be feasible, particularly from Turkey.

The seven questions on remote management\footnote{Instruction note for ECHO staff on Remote Management, Brussels; Ref. Ares(2013)168580 - 08/02/2013} are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Specific assessment criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | Is there an access problem? | 1. It is clear that access problems exist that cannot be resolved by the partner, and that these are sufficiently serious to prevent humanitarian delivery unless a remote management approach is adopted.  
2. No other humanitarian organization eligible for ECHO funding, with the required capacity and experience, is willing and able to meet the humanitarian needs identified in the proposed action through direct implementation. |
| 2      | Does the proposed action include acceptance-building measures? | 1. The proposed action identifies actors at local, provincial, national or international levels who have or could have an impact on humanitarian access in the proposed geographical area(s) of intervention.  
2. Where possible, the action includes concrete steps to gain, regain or maintain acceptance of neutral and independent humanitarian action. |
Is it a direct life-saving action?
The action is designed to implement direct, life-saving operations.

Can the action be implemented without risking the lives of those undertaking the work on the ground?
There is clear evidence that the security risks linked to project monitoring undertaken by local staff/partners are substantially lower than the risks identified as the reason for withdrawing, or limiting access by, expatriate staff.

What is the source of the needs assessment in a remotely-managed action?
1. The proposed action specifies which sources of information have been used to estimate needs.
2. In conflict-affected environments, data collected remotely (e.g. through local staff, external partners or aerial surveillance) have been confirmed through cross-verification with direct sources (e.g. IDPs who have fled affected areas, traders or community representatives).

Are the staff adequately qualified?
1. Steps have been taken to ensure that suitably senior and competent national staff, with experience inside and outside the country, are placed in key managerial positions as close as possible to the area(s) of intervention.
2. The action identifies potential qualification gaps and explains whether the necessary technical, analytical and managerial skills can be found in the national labour market. If skill gaps have been identified, the proposal includes relevant training measures to address them.

Are monitoring arrangements adapted for remote management?
1. The proposed action includes arrangements to facilitate direct contact between senior staff in charge of remotely-managed operations and beneficiaries or other local stakeholders.
2. The action does not rely on third party monitoring provided by private firms or individual consultants that offer or have offered their services to military organizations or any other party in the conflict.

Challenges to cross-border operations are, however, numerous:

- while UN Security Council Resolution 2139 was passed in 2014 (requesting consent from the Government of Syria and providing a mandate for ECHO and its partners to develop cross-border operations), it represents a significant politicization of the humanitarian scene which is not without its dangers;
- the same applies to UNSCR 2165 approved in July 2014, making cross-border operations official, thereby overcoming the legality challenge;
- the legal framework for INGO operations inside Turkey is not clear and major donors, including ECHO, have decided to abide by Turkish regulations; this has held back the ability of ECHO to scale up support for cross-border operations (CBOs) from Turkey and has therefore limited the INGO capacity to implement CBOs on an expanded scale.

ECHO drew up a framework for cross-border operations in order to support the capacity of aid actors to implement CBOs on an expanded scale. While there is no real network of NGOs for remote management, ECHO facilitated information exchange on good practice.

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188 (Source: ECHO (2014) Framework for Cross Border Initiatives in Northern Syria.)
ECHO supported 32 CBOs during the 2012-2014 period (all during 2013 and 2014), totalling €6 billion. The breakdown by contract is presented in the following table:

Table 1 – ECHO-funded cross-border operations 2012-2014

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<th>Partner</th>
<th>ECHO-funded amount (€ m)</th>
<th>Contract #</th>
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<td></td>
<td>From Turkey</td>
<td>From Iraq</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDM FRANCE</td>
<td>2.057</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>6,166.35</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ADE analysis from ECHO HOPE database extraction.
4. Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions

**EQ 1 – Good Humanitarian Principles**

**JC1.1 ECHO deployed specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syrian crisis response**

GHD principles have been taken into account in ECHO’s framework for implementation of cross-border operations, e.g. on:

- not working through local power-holders in conflict areas (in line with GHD principle 2);
- proper targeting of beneficiaries (in line with GHD principle 6);
- specific measures on monitoring approaches (GHD principles 21-23).

ECHO’s decision to conduct cross-border operations was motivated by the four humanitarian principles (GHD principle 2) and – given the concentration of IDPs in AOG-controlled areas (Aleppo and Idlib) – provision of aid in proportion to need (GHD principle 6).

**JC1.2 There are specific examples of where the Syria response was (or was not) in line with the 23 Principles**

Cross-border operations aimed at providing food and NFIs to some of the most vulnerable IDP groups in hard-to-reach areas in Northern Syria (GHD principles 2 and 3), was based on needs assessments (GHD principle 6) which were conducted in consultation with local authorities (GHD principle 7)\(^{189}\). The politicization of the debate on cross-border operations, with the involvement of the Security Council though SC resolutions, is seen as a risky trend not fully in line with GHD principles. But it could also be seen as implementation by States of their obligations deriving from Article 1 common to the Four Geneva Conventions, in line with the strategy of the GHDI.

**EQ 2 - Consultation of local and regional communities**

**JC 2.1. ECHO or its partners deployed specific measures for involving local and regional communities**

Needs assessments for cross-border operations are based on interviews with local councils and local actors\(^{190}\) which often have a certain social representativeness. Questionnaires\(^{191}\) were used to assess needs, the assistance provided and gaps in food security and livelihoods, WASH and education. But Syrian Civil Society organisations were not well known to the majority of the current aid stakeholders. Very few Civil Society organisations were present in Syria before the conflict and, owing to the characteristics of previous regimes, the NGO network was not very well developed.\(^{192}\) One particular element derives from the level of development of Syria prior to the crisis, with a fast-developing urban middle class. Several

\(^{189}\) ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (PIN)

\(^{190}\) ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91009 (GOAL)

\(^{191}\) ibid

stakeholders mentioned that their tools, developed mostly for rural African contexts, do not necessary fit well in this modern Middle Eastern, often urbanized situation. In these situations, to quote an inhabitant from Aleppo “there is no such thing as ‘a community’; there are ‘inhabitants of a same street, people going to the same bakery, but not real community’”. In addition, one stakeholder mentioned that when trying to identify the most vulnerable people in IDP settlements, they encountered much difficulty as these IDP gatherings are often made up of people from different areas with no real “community cohesion”. Discussing with communities was thus described as “discussing with gatekeepers”.

**JC 2.2. ECHO and/or partner monitoring mechanisms took account of beneficiary views and provided appropriate feedback loops to funding officers**

Needs assessments and monitoring for cross-border operations inside Syria are by and large based on a multi-sector assessment. For instance, Handicap International’s survey covered 476 Syrian households. The needs assessment was conducted by HI in partnership with its local partner organisations, which selected and contracted Syrian social workers on the basis of their region of origin. Monitoring of this remote management project involved feedback from local leaders and population groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ3 – To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 3.1 ECHO deployed specific measures/a specific approach/strategy to make sure ECHO-funded interventions took into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region both at design and implementation stages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO strongly supported among its partners the principles of better targeting by zones and of better disaggregation of populations by specific categories linked to needs, rather by very rough grouping (IDP, host). In some areas, especially in hard-to-reach areas or areas controlled by difficult AOG (DAESH in particular), specific efforts had to be made to ensure that essential services, such as water networks or major hospitals, could continue to function and offer services for vulnerable people. ECHO supported actors already well-rooted in the area prior to the current situation, and negotiated with partners able to negotiate some margin of manoeuvre with the rulers of a given area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 3.2 The design of ECHO-funded interventions reflects well the needs of the most vulnerable people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many cross-border or cross-line operations specifically targeted IDPs in hard-to-reach areas. Fine-tuned targeting is not always easy in these areas and interventions do not necessarily target women, children or the elderly. Targeting and reporting is more linked to the level of impact of the military confrontations. WFP reporting is now much more fine-tuned in terms of geographical data (down to sub-districts), facilitating prioritization and better targeting. Several projects inside Syria encounter difficulties in fully adjusting to all requirements in terms of gender and age disaggregation, as they work through local partners which do not necessarily have the capacity or understanding required to do that according to ECHO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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193 ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91020
standards (especially the Gender and Age marker). ECHO’s internal analysis of project proposals or project monitoring reports could lead to additional requests in terms of better clarification and disaggregation. From Damascus, both the work and the capacity to target properly are undermined by the fact that everything has to go through the SARC and that cross-line operations to the most affected hard-to-reach areas are becoming more and more difficult. ICRC, for instance, with around 40 delegates, applies a lot of pressure to obtain permits to visit operations and to verify that those most in need are well targeted. Yet globally, whereas since January 2015 55 requests have been filed for cross-line visits, only 9 have been successful.

**JC3.3 ECHO took specific measures to ensure that during implementation, the needs of the most vulnerable people were taken into account**

For instance, a project by Handicap International, designed on the basis of an assessment among war-wounded, disabled, elderly and persons under psychological stress to investigate the needs for rehabilitation services, was seen by ECHO staff as insufficiently targeting women or the elderly, and HI was asked to come back with more information. Yet, given the difficult operational conditions prevailing inside Syria, ECHO did fund the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ 4: To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 4.1. : ECHO applied a specific approach/strategy to make sure that needs and interest of host populations were taken into account</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This EQ is not applicable inside Syria, where the needs of IDPs are in most cases mixed with the non-displaced war-affected populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 4.2 : ECHO took specific measures to address the needs and interest of host populations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 4.3: The measures reached their objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ 5: To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners in many cases have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JC 5.1 ECHO and its partners had a strategy to adapt their approach to the shifting needs of the region</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ECHO and its partners are supporting or participating in a series of data collection and analysis processes in order to increase the evidence base on with to design, allocate, modify and implement programmes in an ever-changing environment. ACAPS reports (SNAP), REACH and global sources of information are widely used to monitor the evolution of
needs (in terms of location, magnitude, etc.). There is a certain suspicion of how far all these initiatives (with their associated collaboration, competition and so forth) originate from similar sources, only packaged rather differently.

**JC 5.2 ECHO and its partners have revised their approaches/interventions so as to better address the shifting needs of the region**

In many instances, ECHO and its partners have been able to respond rapidly to shifting needs. For example, GOAL (ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91009 GOAL) was able to intervene rapidly, after a quick exchange of views with ECHO TA in the newly accessible areas of the Idlib governorate after frontlines shifted (following the so-called Islamic State withdrawal from that zone).

**JC 5.3 In the case of project activities that have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, ECHO partners adapted their approaches/interventions to the changed needs.**

**JC 5.4 When adapting their approaches to changing needs, ECHO’s partners introduced specific innovations**

It is not so much an adaptation to changing needs, but rather to changing and more drastic constraints, within which ECHO partners had to demonstrate a capacity to innovate. The deteriorated security situation in large parts of Syria thus implied that they had to find new ways of doing things. Agencies which were present in DAESH-controlled zones, for instance, had to find less visible ways of operating in order to be able to continue their work without exposing their partners too much. When DAESH came under much more stringent attacks by the Coalition or by another rebel movement, these attempts to innovate ran up against limits and agencies had to discontinue their programmes.

**JC 5.5 Implications for ECHO (and partner) approaches relative to expected shifts in beneficiary needs**

ECHO TAs have in all instances been in close dialogue with their partners, but with other sources of information (including other donors)? This permanent contact with different sources facilitated triangulation of information and regular discussion with partners in order to ensure that some agencies would be ready to respond to particular emerging needs.

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**EQ 6 – EU Added-Value**

**JC 6.1 ECHO employed a specific approach and took specific initiatives to ensure it could provide added value**

The distribution reports prepared by SARC seem to concern some of the most-affected areas. NGOs involved in ECHO-supported cross-border operations try to produce the best available data on their operations. While there can be no possible final reliance on any of these data, they seem to indicate some positive impacts on the affected populations. Partnership with SARC, along with multiplication of triangulation mechanisms for cross-border operations, are the best systems to hand and ECHO has been both relatively conservative in keeping monitoring and targeting at the core of its operations, and also extremely creative in providing added value on new field-based monitoring systems, in
organizing training sessions in the region and in supporting NGO-based coordination systems on cross-border operations.

**JC 6.2 ECHO was recognised as providing specific types of added value in the context of the Syrian crisis**

ECHO has been seen as significantly contributing added value is its effort to make aid inside Syria more transparent and accountable, through significant efforts in improving remote management mechanisms and related reporting. This also means promoting the idea that what it needed is not “systematic positive reporting” which is often used and affects the credibility of the aid system, but also recognition of the difficulties and demonstration of efforts to overcome them.

One very critical added value of ECHO is its capacity to keep track of when humanitarian actions are affected by spoilers and raise awareness of this danger. The frequently politicization of humanitarian aid (role of the UN Security Council), the frequent mix of humanitarian aid and anti-terrorist campaigns (or the more and more frequent linkages established between humanitarian aid to be provided inside Syria and the emerging new EU migration policies, are examples.

It is in the areas of remote management that ECHO has provided some of the most creative added value. Indeed in 2011 ECHO finalized an Instruction Note on remote management in order to offer a framework and definition for this specific operational modality for use by partners and ECHO staff (with a focus on Somalia and Afghanistan). With the intensity of the confrontation inside Syria leading to massive access issues in 2012, derogation was agreed for ECHO-supported projects inside Syria as regards application of the remote management instruction note. With additional tools created to better assess aid diversion and report on field monitoring, ECHO significantly contributed to increasing the accountability of its partners on ongoing operations inside Syria and to improving the impression given to external stakeholders, including taxpayers and politicians, of operations inside Syria.

**EQ 7 – Urban Settings**

The UN Secretary General recently announced that more than 180,000 people have been killed during the last four years of the Syrian war. The majority of these deaths have occurred in urban areas. The evolution of the warfare and the conduct of hostilities resulted into more and more “war in city syndrome” with “besieged cities”, “fragmented cities” and “abandoned cities (or parts of cities)”. ICRC and other actors had to develop strategies for each of these situations in order to obtain access to the populations and cross-lines, as well as negotiating local ceasefires to allow safe passage for convoys. While this was achieved with some success, it was very limited (see regular SG situation reports to the UNSC).

**JC 7.1 ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed urban issues within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

As a result of the conflict, humanitarian needs in urban areas are enormous but so far access and logistical constraints have made it difficult for aid agencies to respond on an appropriate scale. For relocated families in in schools, classrooms and other public buildings, and for the new coming families who have to stay outside in the playground, with a temperature reaching above 40°C in summer, water is the top priority. In Damascus, where temperatures can also reach more than 40°C in summer, NGOs such as Première Urgence –Aide Médicale
Internationale and agencies like UNICEF have organized water trucking; PU-AMI is distributing 55,000 litres of water every day to 5,000 people in ten schools while SIF is trucking water in other parts of Damascus, while rehabilitation small-scale sanitation schemes. These types of projects, however useful though they are, are expensive drops in the ocean and cannot be sustained over a long period of time. In winter, winterization programmes, including distribution of winter clothes and blankets, are essential as life in destroyed houses and in the precarious IDP settlements becomes largely unbearable during the cold Syrian winters. Yet bringing such goods in an impartial way (ie to both sides) into the urban war zones proved very difficult in view of the constraints imposed by the Syrian Government and the still ongoing military operations. ICRC has tried to negotiate with the Syrian government and insurgent groups permission for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to evacuate civilians – especially the wounded, women and children – from combat zones in Homs and Aleppo, but with limited success as many groups among the insurgents consider the SARC to be a tool of the Government. Ultimately, the government and most of the opposition groups rejected this move as it would have meant ceding control over territory and people.

**JC 7.2 The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major challenges that exist in urban settings in order to design interventions appropriate to these specific situations**

The urban challenges were further identified during the course of the operation and the increased level of understanding of the “urban challenges” was based on permanent iteration in project design and lesson-learning processes. Only ICRC was able from the beginning to deploy a proper urban approach. The advantage of ICRC, given its long presence in the country, is a good network of contacts in the Water Boards196 at central and regional levels. ICRC developed a very new operational relation with the Water Boards which identify urban projects and have them validated by ICRC engineers. ICRC then supports procurement of the material (often generators and valves), and consumables (chlorine, spare parts).

**JC 7.3 Throughout implementation, ECHO-funded projects were able to tackle the specific urban challenges (for displaced and refugees as well as for the host urban populations) and to coordinate properly with the local authorities, urban services and institutions (municipalities), in line with the good practices elaborated by the sector**

The main ECHO funded interventions in Syrian cities were based on the following three assumptions which were key to the design and implementation of the response.

- **Conflict in urban settings in Syria has had several health consequences.** Significant numbers of civilians are wounded at any given time and it is very difficult to evacuate them to acceptably equipped health centres. Treating the high number of wounded brought to the health institutions after each of the military operations requires skills, equipment, hygienic conditions, and blood. Surgical teams with specialized skills are required as well as sufficient supplies of blood, anaesthetics, drugs and disinfectant. Electricity and water must also be available to maintain cold chains and minimum hygiene standards. Capacity to stabilise a wounded patient’s condition, as well as means of evacuation, are crucially missing when cities become active battlefields. The

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196 The Ministry of Water resources, (known as national Water Board) used to work either with public or private stakeholders. It continues to pay staff even on the opposition side.
key element of the strategy here was to ensure that any single opportunity to replenish stocks was used to ensure that minimal capacity remains in place to cope with difficulties. In addition to poor sanitary and aseptic facilities, the limited availability of blood is regularly mentioned by surgeons returning from the field. ICRC, through the SARC, and a few NGOs capable of working in urban areas (MSF, MDM) have tried to ensure that whatever is needed to allow basic health and surgical care to continue to function is provided (equipment, medicine, generators, etc.).

- **Conflict in urban contexts creates many difficulties for accessing basic services:** ICRC, UNICEF and NGO have been trying to address the needs in WASH and shelters. There was a relatively sophisticated system in the cities as well as in the countryside, although a downward trend of the water table “recharge” was seen as a likely serious problem, especially for the growing urban centres. This system was based on sizeable stations, large-scale electricity and, more importantly, a rather comprehensive system of electricity distribution in the country with high tension lines. Of course these networks are often partly or totally destroyed during military operations, which means that the fall-back solution is based on large generators. The changing patterns of demography linked to population displacements are modifying the geographical distribution of demand and impose heavy demands on sometime old networks. The war itself causes much damage to the networks, meaning that a permanent repair capacity has to be in place. ICRC supports it by providing spare parts and other necessities, which is relatively expensive.

- **Conflict in urban setting often triggers various stages of displacements of different magnitude.** Assisting these IDP is a real challenge, as their locations, the rapidity and scale of their movement, and even sometimes the unpredictability of the patterns of displacements, make fast reaction difficult. Agencies have been more involved in the longer-term response to them, especially with food (WFP), NFI and shelter (NGO, UNICEF, ICRC) as well as specific WASH interventions (ICRC, UNICEF, NGOs). SARC is also involved when IDP sites are to be targeted. Several hundred collective centres are currently supported and the SARC developed an innovative system of supporting new centres, with pre-made shower systems just needing to be installed.

EQ8, (Protection): How and to what extent has Protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?

**JC 8.1. ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed protection within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

Syria’s humanitarian crisis is by and large the largest protection crisis in the world, *viz.*:  

- more than 200,000 people were killed between the start of the conflict in 2011 and August 2015;  

- IHL and HRL violations have been committed by all sides, including use of sieges as a weapon of war, indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas, and targeting of civilian infrastructure (schools, hospitals, water networks, places of worship);

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medical personnel working in non-government controlled areas are particularly targeted: 560 personnel have been killed since 2011, and 200 health facilities attacked

Protection institutions and family protection network structures have been negatively impacted by the conflict, increasing the vulnerability of displaced and communities at large.\(^{199}\) Moreover, fluctuating frontlines, increased use of force, and regionalisation of the conflict have further complicated delivery and monitoring of protection services.\(^{200}\)

ECHO-supported protection activities inside Syria over the evaluation period have been conducted by various INGOs and international organisations, in particular ICRC, with a specific focus on protection of civilians, humanitarian staff and medical missions in Syria. Mainstreaming protection in ECHO-funded projects is more complex, as there are many different views of what protection means. In November 2014 ECHO undertook a mission to Syria, which concluded that there was a need to increase ECHO’s focus on protection inside Syria including:\(^{201}\)

- taking a more pro-active approach to protection on the ground and at advocacy level;
- increasing the focus on protection and safety of aid workers;
- addressing issues such as access to neighbouring countries, restrictive internal policies and forced repatriations for security reasons.

**JC 8.2. The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major threats that exist to the physical and psychological security of humanitarian aid beneficiaries**

Most of the ECHO funded programmes implemented inside Syria are well aware of the situation of the Syrian population at large and the dangers affecting it, and not only the aid beneficiaries. Most of these programmes try to respond to some needs, but given the situation, they can only do very little in the area of security and safety of beneficiaries.

**JC 8.3. ECHO-funded project designs disambiguated protection needs per population segment and location, including identifying specific threats to vulnerable groups**

**EQ 9: In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?**

During the few first months of the conflict a handful of NGO managed to work in active front-line areas inside Syria with a certain international presence. The few aid actors able to do that, such as MSF and MDM, were working through small-scale health structures which were either very mobile or very discrete, and with networks of Syrian practitioners. These small-scale medical operations, largely of a surgical nature, were frequently assaulted by Government security forces (MDM, 2012). These NGOs had to negotiate on movement of medical teams and supplies from neighbouring countries through cross-border operations and across many checkpoints controlled by different groups, making these movements highly hazardous. This became more and more difficult and agencies started to rely more and more on local networks. What was possible in health, especially with largely self-financed agencies, is much more difficult for large-scale relief operations funded by international donors. These

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\(^{200}\) Idem., p.5

donors have much more constraining requirements in terms of accountability, fraud and aid diversion control, and thus have to put more importance on monitoring. But monitoring requires access and the capacity to move to the field and to observe and interview people. Where this is not possible directly, there comes into play the full set of options under the concept of “remote management”.

- From Damascus, field visits are a difficult issue. All field visits involving the presence of expatriate staff or NGO personnel have to be authorized by SARC. There are very few administrative obstacles in the Damascus and Rural Damascus Governorates and only security conditions linked to the level of military activities in the area could hamper field visits. Access to other governorates is far less easy and travel permits are rarely delivered. This means that vulnerability analysis, beneficiary targeting and post-distribution monitoring by NGO staff is very difficult.

- From neighbouring countries: remote management is currently the only modality, especially since the killing of some aid workers by IS. Aid agencies work either through national Syrian staff travelling in and out of the country, or through Syrian staff established inside Syria but maintaining a capacity to communicate with the head office in the neighbouring country, or through national partners, which can be local NGO, local councils, or others. There are many differences, however, between the level of engagement in cross-border operations and related remote management between Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and KIR, viz.:

  - From Turkey cross-border work has now become a strategic feature of aid to Syrian people, and several donors are engaged in it, with millions of dollars of aid being transported across the border by NGOs. Coordination mechanisms are now in place, and NGOs have developed sophisticated data collection and communication systems using geo-referenced photos and videos, third party monitoring (etc.) for monitoring and reporting;

  - From Jordan: cross-border operations are under the strict control of the Border Security apparatus which checks every single truck. It is mostly carried out by UN agencies.

  - From Lebanon: cross-border operations are kept very much under the radar in order to avoid political difficulties with the Lebanese Authorities. The easy contacts with Syrian NGOs has facilitated the emergence of a very creative operations base, well advanced in terms of monitoring and of its ability to go quite far inside Syria (Rural Damascus, Hassakeh, Aleppo).

  - From KIR: this is still at an early stage. It has become particularly important as needs for assistance in Hassakeh governorate, including for 230,000 IDPs, have become more and more problematic as XL assistance became impossible and Turkish authorities closed the crossing points mid-2013.

**JC9.1 When the instructions (notably the 7 questions with assessment criteria) were available, ECHO applied them before using remote management**

ECHO made significant efforts to help agencies to develop remote management mechanisms which would offer sufficient guarantees on an acceptable level of aid effectiveness and accountability. This entailed:
Main findings from the ECHO organized workshops in Beirut and Gaziantep on remote management:

1. Partner awareness, knowledge, understanding of and compliance with exiting DG ECHO guidance on remote management is, at best, mixed.
2. Despite an excessively difficult context, it is incorrect to qualify all operations under any single management arrangement. Partners often employ a variety of implementation modalities across sectors with varying degrees of direct and remote management, depending on the context and available partnerships.
3. Remote management operations are prone to a certain amount of institutional and operational inertia.
4. Available information (especially for needs assessments and beneficiary selection) is incomplete and highly subjective owing to a heavy reliance on local networks, key informants, etc.
5. There exists strong dependence on local staff and partners where their capacity, affiliation, and acceptance are simultaneously a key advantage and a key constraint.
6. The absence of reliable population data, baselines, movement tracking and timely information is a major limiting factor, both in terms of planning and response, but also in determining the relevance and impact of humanitarian operations. This is compounded by weak or absent coordination structures and the absence of comprehensive needs, response and gaps analysis.
7. Within cash based programming, the key concern is the safety and security of the transfers and related accountability concerns. This, in turn, limits the potential for substantial scale-up of this modality.
8. Remotely managed voucher systems are relevant where needs are predictable and time bound, but are not practical for emergency response and populations movements.
9. Opportunities to avail of third party monitoring mechanisms are limited and need to be built.
10. Until recently, aid diversion reports expected from partners have not been fully exploited.

- The wide and regular dissemination of a Remote management Guidance Note;
- Organization of several workshops (Gaziantep, Beirut) on remote management, in order to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice between the aid agencies;
- Support to coordination mechanisms on remote management,
- The inclusion of a revised version of Article 8 of the contracts, requesting additional information on the operations (how many field monitoring visits, analysis of aid diversion, etc.)
JC9.2 Before the availability of the instructions ECHO followed other guidance/good practice before using remote management

JC9.3 When remote management was used, potential risks and pitfalls of remote management were mitigated or did not adversely impact the concerned projects

As all cross-border operations used remote management, and partners were selected largely on their capacities to manage possible risks. Partners with previous positive experience and demonstrated capacities based on previous successful delivery (2013) and with clearly stipulated risk mitigation measures (such as staff training), were given priority, for instance People In Need (ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (PIN). Another interesting example is Handicap International (HI) which deployed programmes (post-operative rehabilitation care, food and essential household items and [mine] risk education) in Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and Dara’a areas via five Syrian Civil Society Organisations a using a remote management model. Mitigation measures included use of adjusted evaluation and monitoring approaches to overcome the security challenges presented by work inside Syria, establishment of partner networks including both local and international partners to ensure project continuity, and maintenance of regular contact with local authorities. One problematic aspect of remote management was noted during the previous round of funding of the project prior to 2014, namely that non-standardisation of the food and hygiene kits meant that local partners sourced items locally and were therefore dependent on local availability. ECHO encouraged HI to work towards standardisation of kits provided and development of guidelines for local partners to follow in this regard. (ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91020 Single Form).

EQ10 – Cash and vouchers

JC 10.1 The ECHO strategy for Syria considered the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities

ECHO, along with its partners inside Syria, explored the series of options and the obstacles they could encounter. For instance, inside Syria most aid is in-kind and the Damascus government is seen as totally against cash transfer, yet several local charities and NGOs have been continuously using cash transfer through all kinds of mechanism, ranging from direct cash hand-outs to cash transfers through the Hawala system. The critical element in the discussion is how far the different qualifiers are able to meet basic requirements in terms of the existing capacities of the markets and traders, the level of inflation, security, capacity to
carry out market surveys, and so forth. Owing to the highly varied and fluid situations inside Syria, resource transfer mechanism require an in-depth level of situation analysis.

**JC 10.2 The appraisal of ECHO actions took account of an appropriate analysis of the context**

The key qualifiers for cash programming (functioning markets, level of inflation relatively well controlled, security of the cash providers) have been always at the forefront of ECHO reflections on the possibility of supporting cash programming by its partners. In Syria, the high rate of inflation and the control of some areas by groups included in the EU/U terrorist list represent two significant hindrances to large-scale cash transfer operations. Some ECHO partners are however involved in localized small-scale pilot operations to test several hypotheses, including the current capacity of the Hawala system to distribute large-scale cash to targeted beneficiaries and to be able to deliver this on an appropriate scale.

**JC 10.3 ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations have been effective in the Syria context**

There is so far very little evidence that the context of Syria, although it differs significantly in terms of the usual cash programming qualifiers, is incompatible with hosting of substantial cash operations beyond the ongoing pilot projects.

**EQ 11. Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?**

**JC 11.1. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was appropriate**

**JC 11.2. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syrian crisis was proportionate**

**JC 11.3. ECHO calibrated its objectives to the available funding**

**JC 11.4. ECHO-funded activities were cost-effective**

**EQ 12: Judgement criteria and indicators**

**JC 12.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure that the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms were conducive to support sound management of ECHO-funded operations**

The best ECHO could do is to support both remote management and multiplication of tools for triangulation by its partners. ECHO invested resources in initiatives to provide information on the context, programme performance and impact as part of its support for global strategic and operational information management on the situation inside Syria. In the end the result produced by these mechanisms did not satisfy ECHO which discontinued its funding.

**JC12.2 ECHO adopted a specific approach to ensure that monitoring mechanisms were tailored to the specific needs of remote management**

ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (PIN) & ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (GOAL): & ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91020 (Handicap International): the monitoring mechanism was adapted for remote management as used in the CBO component. Additional reporting was
required from the implementing partner, including instances of misuse of aid and security considerations for expatriate and national staff.

**JC.12.3. ECHO partners implemented operations monitoring and ensured data and findings were available for ECHO's use in a timely manner**

From a contractual point of view, ECHO partners are due to provide information on the basis of regular reporting based on the single form. In the case of cross-border operations, and in view of the lower level of control in a context of remote management, new parameters have been put in place in the reporting system, through modification of Article 8 of the contractual arrangements, stipulating the need to:

- report on aid diversion;
- give comprehensive data on monitoring capacity (staff number and level of seniority, number of field visits and of interviews carried out, etc.)

**EQ 13: What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?**

**JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**

At the outset ECHO was confronted with a certain scarcity of partners: few NGOs and UN agencies had difficulty in moving from their pre-war development mode to a more emergency response mode. One of the key elements of the ECHO strategy was to increase the number of partners and improve geographical coverage. Confronted with an internal scarcity of manpower during 2012 and at the beginning of 2013, ECHO had to resort to large scale contracts, but this did not turn out to be very successful.

Several partners rightly emphasized the impossibility of predicting the evolution of crises, the security environment and the impact of such evolution on protection issues. They based their propositions on their current appreciation of the context and on possible scenarios. The multi-country approach allows better understanding of the various dynamics of the Syrian conflict and its spill-over to neighbouring countries and significantly strengthens analytical and anticipation capacities on protection of the population and security of staff. Being multi-country also allows diversification of operational options and adaptation of programmes to a possible deterioration of the situation (shifting part of the aid planned from one area to the other, in particular in areas where internal displacements and cross-border movements expose people more to aggression, violence and breach of IHL and IRL, thus increasing protection needs. If a situation allows, the regional geographical set-up is seen as significantly strengthening the position of any serious partner involved in protection in a range of difficult areas (e.g. ICRC, UNHCR and DRC).

**JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplications between countries and partner organisations**

The return to specific country contracts was made possible by an increase in staffing and a better sharing of roles between two TA, one in charge of a Damascus-based operation as well as cross-border operation with Lebanon and Jordan, and another in charge of whole-of-Syria coordination and cross-border work with Turkey and Iraq.
JC 14.1 Actions undertaken to enhance coordination

ECHO has been fully engaged in all discussions on coordination since the beginning of the crisis and even more strongly in the context of the whole-of-Syria initiative.

Yet ECHO realized that its NGO partners have not been very much supported by the UN system in Syria, in particular by the RC/HC. This situation, largely the wish of the Syrian Government, leaves a large operational space for the UN agencies and puts the NGOs in a very weak position in their negotiations with the Government. ECHO made systematic requests to both the UN and the Government for more positive engagement with NGOs, so far with only limited success.

Even if different initiatives (ACAP’s SNAP, ACTED’s REACH, US-funded IMMAP, etc.) are making available substantial documentation on the situation, most of this information has been used more in donor capitals by high-level decision-makers than by field operators for better local coordination. The number of fund-raising documents produced during the Syrian crisis and describing the humanitarian situation and related needs is also large. The area of information production and dissemination, which should have been the central pillar around which to build operational coordination, itself became an area for competition and lack of coordination. This in the end triggered the decision of ECHO to stop financing some of these initiatives.

JC 14.2 ECHO identified and took account of main actors’ activities

ECHO followed very carefully the Syrian Response Plans (SRP) developed for Syria by the UN system and the Damascus-based RC/HC. Key concerns relate to the fact that the amount of resources requested by the SRP are always on the rise, while access and the capacity to deliver remains limited, if not decreasing, owing to problems linked to security and access rather than merely to financial limitations. This implies better tuning of financial requests, with more use of reality checks on what can realistically be done. ECHO is trying to engage in a dialogue, for instance, with Iran on coordination. Discussions with Qatar MFA indicated a willingness to engage with ECHO in coordination matters.

JC 14.3 ECHO actions sought to enhance synergies and reduce duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts

ECHO has been very actively engaged in multi-donor coordination. In the Syrian crisis there is a tendency to forget and not to engage with certain non-traditional donors who play a significant role in the aid sector, the SRP for instance not paying much attention to their contribution.

The ECHO Syria team was also very active in trying to help the UN system improve its coordination. It has been playing a dynamic role in the promotion of the whole-of-Syria approach, trying to bring the different “hubs” together in a constructive dialogue with Damascus. These efforts to streamline the international coordination mechanisms have had some success, for instance the transition from CRSP to 3RP, but also ended up supporting creation of a significant new bureaucracy (114 regional coordinators at a cost of more than US$22m. The key elements expected from the revised architecture (better mapping of needs and responses, more fluid circulation of information, facilitation of collective responses) became lost in inter-agency conflicts, an internal OCHA struggle, and sundry confrontations.
As one ECHO staff said “one year has been lost” in which much energy has been diverted from important field support to time-consuming efforts to improve the aid architecture; another however mentioned that if the process had been successful, a significantly better response could have been achieved and the sense of “lost time” would have evaporated.

**JC 14.4 ECHO actions demonstrated synergies and no duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

By keeping in touch with all its partners in all hubs as well as Damascus (although the mission there are relatively rare), by actively contributing to the existing coordination mechanisms (or supporting their creation if not in place), and by engaging in a systematic manner in donor coordination, ECHO significantly contributed to reduction of duplication and of possible gaps in the response.

When required, ECHO jointly funded projects with other donors in order to place coordination upstream in the process. For instance ECHO decided to support HI’s mine action work already co-funded by SDC, MOFA Luxembourg and the Dutch MOFA. Given the Dutch MOFA’s contributions to HI, ECHO contributed to the mine action component of this programme in order to increase donor diversification in this area for HI. Moreover ECHO support for HI inside Syria filled a potential gap created by HI’s decision not to seek bilateral aid from French or American donors for operations inside Syria (as these donors are also parties to the conflict). This cross-border project was implemented by Handicap International (HI) via five different Syrian NGO partners. Synergies were built within the programme to allow access to rehabilitation care among the separate NGO partner organisations.

**EQ15 – Mainstreaming of LRRD**

**JC 15.1 ECHO coordinated with EC development actors (DG DEVCO, EEAS, and EU MS) from the earliest phases of a crisis response**

The coordination between ECHO and other EU instruments (NEAR and IfS) has been key to coping with immense needs in different areas. In Syria the war is slowly destroying all the results of previous decades of development efforts and, as the war is far from over, the key question is how to use simultaneously, and in well thought-through complementarity, the different tools available at EC and Member State level. For instance, ECHO supports food aid programmes through WFP while NEAR supports livelihood interventions through FAO. There are nevertheless some difficulties, if not divergent views, as regards the EU tools, as they do not have the same mandate. EEAS for instance is not fully involved in the humanitarian debates which take place in New York and Geneva, but fully supports the role of Staffan de Mistura, the UN special envoy especially, on freeze zones, cross-border issues, cross-line issues and the international presence in Syria. While there are many discussions on what is a freeze zone and on local ceasefire agreements, ECHO is very concerned about the possible interactions of political agendas (a ceasefire and the establishment of a freeze zone is seen as a political act) and humanitarian issues, and the possible instrumentalization of humanitarian issues for a political rationale.

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202 Handicap International ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91020
JC 15.2 ECHO deployed the various instruments available to implement stability measures in a coherent and complementary fashion with the EU toolbox

Some interviewees considered that, for a long time ECHO’s team to handle support inside Syria was insufficiently staffed to cope with the complexity and magnitude of the needs and allocated resources. Priority was given to ECHO’s own work over coordination with other EU Services and with Member States. Matters improved significantly when more human resources were allocated at both field and Brussels levels. There was further improvement with the progressive relocation of ECHO Syria Coordination from the Amman office to the Beirut office, as Beirut is only a two-hour drive from Damascus.

JC 15.3 ECHO-funded actions have been based on a strong context analysis

ECHO is now deployed with a significant set-up of TA’s, many highly experienced and connected to almost all relevant information providers (despite not financing them, at least until recently – e.g. ACAP’s SNAP). The fact that there is a dedicated team to maintain oversight of the whole context and of the internal response is a unique asset in undertaking permanent context analysis and facilitating decision-making, if not subject to overwhelming political pressures.

JC 15.4 ECHO-funded projects have been framed in the context of longer-term requirements of reconstruction and development

At this stage it is far too early to start addressing the long term in a detailed manner or to foresee what reconstruction and development will mean in the future, as new needs arise every day owing to the very active and highly volatile conflict still taking place inside Syria. Most operations are short-term interventions aimed at immediate alleviation of suffering. If post-conflict proactive planning takes place (as it should), it is not within ECHO’s remit.

EQ16 – Successfulness in terms of LRRD

JC 16.1 ECHO-funded operations have been implemented through rapid decision-making processes and flexible instruments

The capacity of ECHO network of donors and partners allows rapid spread of information about events unfolding inside Syria. Fluid and rapid discussions between donors, and consultation with institutions that are best-placed, experienced and ready to engage, have been key to emergency management when military confrontation erupts and people are on the move.

JC 16.2 ECHO provided a coordinated response strategy through its actions

The capacity of ECHO to provide a coordinated response strategy largely relies on the evolution of the overall staffing of the ECHO field operations. From one person in charge of the whole “inside Syria response” to the current set-up with one person covering Damascus and cross-border operations from Jordan and Lebanon and another coordinating the whole-of-Syria approach and covering cross-border operations from Turkey, there is significant gain in capacity for understanding the ever-changing situation and keeping the right oversight on an extremely complex humanitarian response.
JC 16.3 **ECHO engaged with a range of locally important actors through its actions**

ECHO not only coordinates with other EC Services, but also as an engaged donor present in almost all key strategic dialogue between donors on aid in Syria (with a key role for instance at donor pledging conferences), in the UN system at the highest level in New York, Geneva, and also in the MENA region, including of course in Damascus and surrounding countries in which the ECHO Syria team has direct relations with HC and RC/HC as well as with the UNCT. In Damascus the situation is less easy, but regular visits from ECHO management in Brussels facilitate access to several key levels in the Damascus administration.

**JC 16.4 ECHO-funded interventions experienced a smooth and timely phase-out, thereby avoiding “grey zones” in international assistance**

**JC16.5 ECHO-funded actions encouraged “cross-learning” of humanitarian and development experiences**

In Damascus many of the UN agencies were very much in slow development mode when the crisis developed and it took them some time to speed up their responses. “Cross-learning” has been more from development to emergency rather than the reverse.

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**EQ17, (Security) To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners' organisations? What is the scope for improvement?**

**JC 17.1. The design of ECHO-funded actions has been based on an in-depth knowledge of the security situation, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries**

Syria is one of the most violent environments in which humanitarian aid has been deployed. Security patterns related to assistance and protection in Syria are to a large extent dominated by several main threats:

- risk of humanitarian actors being caught in an active conflict zone;
- armed extremist groups who use capture (and killing) of humanitarian actors as part of their warfare strategy;
- armed criminal groups who mainly take people either for ransom or for sale to extremist groups.

Each of these security threats carries different implications. Most ECHO partners now use staff who have been trained in safety and security issues. Several partners mentioned that their dialogue on potential deterioration of the security situation with ECHO TAs in the field is ongoing, as changing security patterns in a given operational environment would imply a need to reassess the situation and reallocate activities if required. Any change to the action would then be discussed and agreed with ECHO.

ECHO supports security measures including recruitment of personnel who can constantly monitor the situation on the ground as regards military activities through an extensive network of relevant contacts across the area, and is therefore well-equipped to evaluate situations on a real-time basis in each particular locality covered by the various projects. In order to increase protection of staff in Syria, all agencies have standard security measures in place. They can become members of NGO Security Working Groups and participate in meetings at country or regional levels (for instance sub-groups for Halab and Idlib.
Governorates). They also establish specific security protocols for activities, including profile management strategy and establishment of evacuation plans for their staff.

**JC 17.2. The design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions facilitated humanitarian access for partner's organizations**

When cross-border operations are discussed between ECHO and its partners, all elements of the remote management approach, of security management and of the necessary precautions are raised. While there is no evidence in one or other direction, it is likely that this has given partners better cards to work with to negotiate access inside Syria, including areas with the highest IDP concentrations (Aleppo and Idlib) despite security constraints.

**JC 17.3. ECHO-funded actions promoted the security and safety of humanitarian personnel delivering humanitarian aid**

ECHO supports all required measures in the programmes to ensure the safety and security of the aid actors. It has for instance financially supported a security assessment conducted for cross-border operations through the Turkish border which included a risk assessment and mitigation plan for staff operating in eastern provinces close to the Syrian border.

ECHO pays specific attention to the capacity and knowledge of its partners to operate in dangerous areas. For instance, working in DAESH and Al Nusra zones is very complicated as the dangers are considerable. Only partners which had networks prior to the war and have managed to keep contact with these networks are able to operate in these areas. Some local NGOs are still present and active in Raka and Deir El Zor areas, as well as in Aleppo and Edlib, and are able to negotiate with the local powers in place.

**EQ18 (Humanitarian advocacy) How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line intervention, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)?**

**JC 18.1. Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries**

As a permanent feature, ECHO systematically advocated for the capacity for the aid system to be able to undertake monitoring, both from Damascus and for cross-border operations. But in its understanding that on this subject advocacy is not enough, it demonstrated its appreciation of the subject by engaging more in support of training local capacities to better monitor aid in the complex and sensitive environment inside Syria. Supporting the establishment of partnerships with local Syrian NGOs was seen as essential.

In addition to the ECHO-supported efforts on protection, the EU and Member States all supported UN Security Council Resolution 2139 in February 2014 demanding all parties to immediately cease attacks on civilians; end arbitrary detention, kidnapping and torture; and lift sieges of populated areas. During the months following the passing of this Resolution, civilians in Syria have witnessed ever-increasing suffering and death, while more and more restrictions have been imposed in refugees. The regular efforts by ICRC, UN special envoys,

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203 ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (PIN)
204 ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/91005 (PIN):
and EU Delegations, including ECHO, to advocate for respect for IHL, human rights laws and other instruments have so far by and large been in vain.

ECHO, together with other authorities of the European Commission, has been involved in several key negotiations to facilitate the humanitarian operations of its partners, including visa granting, registrations, and deployments to the field for monitoring. The success of these efforts has been uneven and ECHO delegations were systematically subjected to a highly political discourse from the Syrian MOFA.

Several missions from the highest levels of ECHO (General director, Head of Operations) as well as by the Commissioner, have taken place in Damascus to negotiate on the presence of ECHO staff and of its partners (visas, agreement on opening of offices, field visits). This has not always been successful, but efforts are constantly being pursued.

**JC 18.2. ECHO advocacy contributed to concrete policy changes in neighbouring countries**

The fact that ECHO organized regular exchanges between the different hubs and with Damascus helped the institution gain much improved oversight and much more easily identify areas of convergence and areas of divergence between the different zones of operation. This contributed to elaboration of much more refined advocacy messaging on access, on cross-border mechanisms, and on remote management across the whole region affected by the Syrian crisis.

**JC 18.3. ECHO advocacy contributed to changes in approach by other donors in Syria and neighbouring countries**

A critical role has been the debate between ECHO and other donors, especially DFID and USAID, on cross-border operations. This advocacy largely contributed to the joint decision of these donors to engage on a substantial scale with cross-border operations, even at a time when the UN Resolution was not yet in place to give the required legality framework to these operations.

**JC 18.4. ECHO advocacy contributed to increased coordination between donors and governments in Syria and neighbouring countries**

Evidence suggests that, on the contrary, better coordination between donors facilitated advocacy with local governments, NGOs and UN agencies.

**1. Country-specific conclusions**

With the end of the Syrian crisis not easy to forecast, and probably not happening in the near future, fighting is likely to continue on a large scale in the country, with all the associated suffering leading to population displacements, degradation of living conditions and increased population fatigue. Coping mechanisms will continue to be eroded and are probably relatively close to breaking point for many families.

Access and protection remain the most challenging issues, and with the evolution of the conflict and the growing difficulties and constraints imposed by Damascus, cross-border activities are more and more seen as a key lifeline for many Syrians. ECHO demonstrated a remarkable capacity to stay involved in these subjects, and to be permanently seeking
innovative approaches and new ways of working, even if that implies paradigm shifts both internally and within the aid system.

Above all, through the engagement of its staff ECHO has continued to prove its capacity to not only engage operationally with its network of partners, but also to regularly raise the flag of humanitarian principles when politics or “over-pragmatism” encroached on them.

In addition, the current ECHO set-up in the field and at Brussels level - probably too slowly established but now firmly in place - offers an exceptional oversight of the crisis and of the international response which on the one hand allows a rapid and coordinated response and on the other facilitates significant influence on aid practices and aid mechanisms.
Turkey Country Report

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1. Introduction

This Turkey Country report is part of the broader external evaluation process carried out on the DG ECHO response to the Syria crisis.

The major focus of the Turkey case study is related to ECHO-funded actions inside Turkey. In addition the mission discussed remote management issues with NGOs based in Turkey supporting operations in the country.

1.1. Methodology

The methodology applied for this case study is based on three pillars:

- Documents reviewed: In addition to the work undertaken during the desk study, additional documents covering context, projects, needs and impact have been gathered in the field and analyzed
- Interviews with key stakeholders
  - ECHO Field Assistants (Brussels and Turkey) and EU Delegation
  - UN Agencies (Deputy RHC, OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, IOM)
  - INGOs (DRC, IRC, IMC, MDM, CONCERN, WWH, People in Need)
  - CSOs (Support to Life, Doctors Worldwide, Turkish Doctors Association, Turkish Pharmacist Association)
  - National authorities (Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority – AFAD Urfa, Diyarbakir Governors office & Camp Managers)
  - Refugee interviews through focus group and household visits (Diyabakir camp, Batman, Mardin, Kiziltepe, Kilis, Hatay) which allowed direct observation of programmes and interviews with Syrian refugees
- Final debriefing with DG ECHO staff to validate the findings and go through the initial and tentative conclusions.

1.2. Structure of the Turkey Country Report

The structure of the Turkey country report is as follows:

Section 2: The context in Turkey
- Brief overview of the socio-economic context of Turkey
- Brief description of the specific constraints on the refugees’ situation in the country and the impact on host communities

Section 3: Overview of the ECHO approach in the country:
- Overview of ECHO’s overall approach and main priorities in the country
- Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

Section 4: Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions

Section 5: Other relevant findings of the evaluation
- Specific findings on the case study subjects
- Specific lessons with respect to the sectors concerned (water, health, etc.)
- Other relevant findings

Section 6: Issues arising
2. The context

2.1. Turkey Context

Turkey is a large middle-income country with a population of 77 million. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $799 billion makes Turkey the 18th largest economy in the world. In less than a decade, per capita income in the country has nearly tripled and now exceeds $10,000, although the GINI coefficient has remained relatively unchanged (41.4 in 2004 and 40.0 in 2011). According to the World Bank, Turkey’s economic situation remains favorable compared to the rest of Europe and the rest of the MENA region. Turkey is a member of the OECD and the G20, and an increasingly important donor to bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the general election on June 7th but lost its majority as the pro-Kurdish party reached the 10% vote threshold for entering parliament. An unstable minority government or coalition is likely to follow.

Turkey has a complex relationship with the European Union (EU). The EU remains Turkey’s largest economic partner, accounting for 46% of Turkish trade in 2011. Turkey became a candidate for full membership in the EU at the Helsinki summit in 1999. Accession negotiations began in October 2005 and continue to make progress, despite a number of political obstacles (including relations with Cyprus). However, with the rise of the AKP, Turkey has strengthened its relationship with the Middle East and North Africa.

Decades of social and economic repression of Kurdish and Alevi minorities has fuelled grievances and deepened the divide between the Kurds and the rest of Turkey. Despite improvements to the Kurds’ civil rights, a permanent solution is yet to come about and violence continues to flare up. Further deterioration of the conflict may be due to the war in Syria, given the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Syrian army from the Kurdish areas in Syria (near Turkey’s south-east border).


2.2. Outline of the humanitarian context

2.2.1. Dynamics of displacement

Over 2 million Syrian refugees have been registered in Turkey since the start of the crisis in 2011. The evolution of refugee numbers shows a different progression to that of Lebanon, Jordan or Iraq. Whilst number of refugees entering the latter countries increased sharply in early 2013, in Turkey, the number grew steadily throughout 2013 and 2014, and then increasingly sharply at the end of the evaluation period (December 2014 onwards). This may in part be due to the changing conflict dynamics across Northern Syria over that period.

**Figure 1 – Registered Syrian refugees in Turkey (Dec. 2011- Dec. 2014)**

As of end-2014, the largest concentrations of refugees have been reported in the south (Adana, Hatay, Osmaniye, and Gaziantep) and south east (Adiyaman, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Mardin, Sanliurfa) of Turkey. However, increasing numbers are understood to be dispersing to the large urban centres, including Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, in search of employment opportunities. Approximately 265,000 refugees are housed in 25 government-run refugee camps (of which 3 were completed in 2015), but the vast majority live outside camps in urban and peri-urban areas.

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2.2.2. Key humanitarian issues

Camp conditions are described as exceptionally good when judged against international standards. Refugees residing in camps are widely provided with food, shelter, education, basic services and medical assistance. No major gaps in the provision of goods and services are reported within the camps. However, the vast majority are sheltered outside the camps in towns and cities (often described as ‘urban refugees’). There is a stark divergence between the condition of refugees within and outside the camps. Although recent, comprehensive needs assessments of the out-of-camp population are lacking, many of these refugees are reported to be facing difficult conditions. The out-of-camp refugees are often left to fend for themselves with limited access to basic assistance and it is reported that their needs are to some degree similar to off-camp Syrian refugees in Lebanon or Jordan.

Current initiatives aimed at profiling their needs, a prerequisite for the organisation of assistance, are at a standstill\(^{213}\). There is an overall lack of coordinated needs assessments by humanitarian organisations. For refugees in urban areas, an AFAD assessment from 2013 provides the latest consolidated source of information – although localized agency level assessments have been conducted more recently. A range of basic needs have been identified amongst this group of refugees\(^{214}\):

- **Food:** 77.5% of Syrian women in Turkey found access to food insufficient, according to an assessment by the Turkish government.
- **Shelter:** one in four non-camp refugees are assessed to be living in inadequate conditions or in an open area, while about 62 per cent of them live together with at least seven people.
- **Health:** Syrians, whether registered as refugees or not, are entitled to the same health services as Turkish citizens. However, some unregistered non-camp Syrian refugees report difficulties accessing full services, especially hospital referrals. Some NGOs are beginning to provide health services to non-registered, non-camp refugees, but are unable to meet all their needs.
- **Education:** registered Syrian refugees are offered access to Turkish schools. There are 576,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children in Turkey. In camps, 73% attend

\(^{213}\) HIP ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/9100

\(^{214}\) ACAPS, 2015
school, whereas only 27% of refugee children in host communities have access to education.

- Water: 25% of the women living outside camps said access to drinking water was difficult (based on the AFAD study).
- Protection: half of the refugee population are children, with specific needs in terms of protection issues. 1 in 10 Syrian refugee children is working – in agriculture, restaurants and shops, as mobile vendors or begging.\textsuperscript{215}
- There is growing attention in the media to the manner in which the dire situation of the refugees is making women and girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation.\textsuperscript{216} There are media reports of commercialization of extra-legal marriages.\textsuperscript{217} While Turkey maintains an open-border policy for Syrian refugees at official crossing points, there are only two fully open points along a 900km stretch of the border; and even there, those without passports are routinely turned away unless they have urgent medical or humanitarian needs.\textsuperscript{218}

The majority of arrivals have found refuge in and around the border cities. This has created a degree of tension with the host communities, especially in the border provinces where the refugees remain concentrated (up to 50% in some areas of Kilis and Hatay). Public services such as schools and hospitals have been stretched. Refugees have also had economic effects – including competition for jobs driving down wage rates and inflating the cost of rented accommodation.\textsuperscript{219} It is estimated that 8.2 million people in refugee hosting areas are impacted by the presence of Syrian refugees.\textsuperscript{220}

Increasing tensions with local communities have contributed to the shift in public opinion regarding Syrian refugees. Public opinion in Turkey has become unwelcoming, even hostile to Syrian refugees as their length of stay in the country increases.\textsuperscript{221} In cities such as Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Killis, and Kahramanmaras, thousands of people have joined protests demanding that Syrians be sent back.

### 2.2.3. Response from the Turkish Government

The initial response of the Turkish government was very welcoming, with an “open-door policy” applied to Syrian refugees.\textsuperscript{222} This approach was accompanied by three other policy

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\textsuperscript{215} ACAPS (2015) Syria Four Years On: No End in Sight. ACAPS


\textsuperscript{220} 3RP (2014) ‘Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 - Turkey’, p3

\textsuperscript{221} Ahmed Içduygu (Migration Policy Institute), 2015 ‘Syrian refugees in Turkey – The long road ahead’, p11

\textsuperscript{222} Because Turkey accepted the 1951 Geneva Convenion on the legal status of refugees with geographical limitations, it cannot accept Syrians as legal refugees (only people coming from Europe can get refugee status in...
elements, namely ensuring temporary protection, upholding the principle of non-refoulement, and providing optimal humanitarian assistance. Syrians were originally considered guests and not granted legal asylum, though many have been able to obtain legal residence.

In 2014, Turkey implemented a new policy framework governing its response to refugees in its territory. This new framework was bounded by two key legislative developments:

- Firstly, the entry into force in April 2014 of the country’s first asylum legislation (the Law on foreigners and International Protection) which provided for the establishment of a specialized institution (the General Directorate for Migration Management (DGMM) within the Ministry of Interior) to manage protection and migration-related matters;
- Secondly, the adoption by the Turkish Council of Ministers of a Temporary Protection Regulation in October 2014, which foresaw the issuance of a TP Identification Document (TPID).

Under this policy framework, each newly registered refugee in Turkey should be issued with a TPID, and the most vulnerable groups are expected to be identified by the DGMM and then prioritized for in-camp accommodation. The TPID should then provide each refugee, in-camp or outside, with access to public services including health and education. This includes free access to primary and emergency healthcare and access to secondary and tertiary healthcare at the same fee-rate as Turkish citizens. The TPID should also provide access to certain sectors of the labour market and to social assistance.

The main response to the needs of the Syrian refugees has come from the Turkish Government. For political and security reasons Turkey has chosen to take full responsibility for funding and managing the camps rather than delegating to international actors. Given the length of the crisis and the increased number of refugees, it is a significant financial burden. By early 2015 the financial cost of the support for Syrian refugees reached US$ 5 billion, with only 3% covered by the international community.

Authorities assumed that the crisis would be resolved quickly and focused on providing aid and assistance to refugees in camps. Turkey established an efficient emergency response,

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224 The legal framework allowing to apply these policies has been implemented in 2014 (the new Law of Foreigners and International Protection has been in force since 2014, and the new Temporary Protection Regulation came into effect on October 2014), Ahmed Içduygu (Migration Policy Institute), 2015 ‘Syrian refugees in Turkey – The long road ahead’, pp8-9


226 Ahmed Içduygu (Migration Policy Institute), 2015 ‘Syrian refugees in Turkey – The long road ahead’, p11. It is not clear how this figure has been calculated and whether this refers only to camp costs or also the cost of providing access to health and education services.

227 Ahmed Içduygu (Migration Policy Institute), 2015 ‘Syrian refugees in Turkey – The long road ahead’, p11
ensuring protection and assistance in 25 camps set up by the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD).  

**Figure 3 – Location of Government Refugee Camps in Turkey**

![Map of Government Refugee Camps in Turkey](source: UNHCR Syria Portal)

However, the capacity of the camps has been overwhelmed by the subsequent scale of the refugee influx. With the increase in the number of refugees, Turkish authorities have developed informal approaches to limiting new arrivals, for political and practical reasons.

Turkey is concerned about the impact of the Syrian conflict on its security. Its government openly opposes the Assad regime and has provided assistance to Syrians fleeing into Turkey since 2011. It has given refuge to the commander of the Free Syrian Army. In late 2012, at the request of the Turkish government, in response to attacks on Turkish civilians and a Turkish jet by Syrian forces, NATO began providing air defence capabilities in major southern cities in order to boost defences against a potential Syrian missile attack. Fighting in the north Syrian region intensified in September 2014, causing 200,000 Syrians to flee to Turkey. As a result, the Turkish government has tightened border security in order to prevent local citizens from joining the battle.

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229. It is also true to say that the majority of refugees prefer life outside of the camps. There are currently approximately 55,000 empty spaces in AFAD run camps.

230. Border authorities used for instance a policy of “passage with careful control” intended notably to restrict the number of entries and prevent dangerous entries (Ahmed Içduygu (Migration Policy Institute), 2015 ‘Syrian refugees in Turkey – The long road ahead’, p7). According to Amnesty International, many individuals are being denied access to the safety of Turkish territory, and those who must cross irregularly are at risk of abuses such as push-backs, being fired on with live ammunition, or torture and other ill-treatment (Amnesty International, 2014 ‘Struggling to Survive, Refugees from Syria in Turkey’, p7)

231. NB this report was written in mid July and does not take account of subsequent developments in the security situation.

Access to Turkey is growing more difficult. Only two official crossing-points are open to Syrian refugees along 900 km of border, down from the previous 19 points. Refugees without travel documents have been turned away, and since 2015 those moving back and forth between the two countries face restrictions, and fines if they exceed their authorised stay.

The Temporary Protection Directive has not yet been fully implemented. It is foreseen that registered and documented Syrian refugees have the possibility of applying for work permits in proscribed sectors, professions and geographical areas.

2.2.4. Response from the international community

UN agencies have been active in supporting Government of Turkey (GoT) efforts in the camps, including shelter, WASH, health, food/livelihoods, protection, education and logistics/transportation services.

INGOs must undergo Turkey’s opaque and complex registration process, which can take months or even years to complete. The situation has improved; as of mid-2014 approximately 20 humanitarian INGOs were registered in Turkey, compared to only three a year earlier.

UN agencies and IOM are also incrementally engaging with the response to off-camp refugees. INGOs have been the forerunners in the international off-camp humanitarian response covering a wide geographical area in partnership with local NGOs in the south-east of the country, but also Istanbul and other big cities. However, NGOs are reportedly discouraged by AFAD from working with Syrian refugees who have not registered.

As regards the context for humanitarian response, the ability to respond differs markedly by province, with western provinces, which received refugees in the initial phases of the crisis, being an easier environment than provinces further east. This is further complicated by tensions between central and provincial governments. Kurdish political actors are reported to engage in campaigning against access of what perhaps they see as “constituents” to GoT State services – i.e AFAD camps.

Coordination between the Government and international humanitarian agencies appears to be problematic. Provincial Governorates are reported to have establish monthly coordination meetings for the response and have drawn up provincial plans to address the needs of refugees at provincial level. These plans have not yet been circulated. NGO involvement and participation in the national consultation process is reportedly minimal and not encouraged by the GoT. Parallel sectoral coordination mechanisms have been established by the UN and NGOs in Ankara – although these remain informal and informants suggest participation is patchy.

As illustrated in the figures below:

233 Amnesty International
234 FTS Extractions
The contribution of donors over 2012-2014 amounted to US$ 562 million, with a significant increase over the years. The USA has been the main donor, providing 37% of contributions, followed by Qatar (7%) and Saudi Arabia (7%). The most active EU MS have been the UK and Germany, with respectively 6% and 3% of donors’ contributions over the period.

Almost 70% of donors’ contributions were dedicated to multi-sector support. Shelter and NFIs support has represented respectively 7% and 4% of the contributions. Support in the health sector has represented 3% of contributions, the remaining being non-specified sectors (16%) and others (2%).

Figure 4 – Donor contributions in Turkey 2012-2014 (US$ million)

Figure 5 – Contributions by Donors in Turkey (US$ million)
Figure 6 – Donors’ contributions in Turkey, by sector 2012-2014 (US$ million)

There is an evolution in the international community of perceptions of the Syrian crisis, from it being a humanitarian crisis to being both a humanitarian and a development crisis. This shift has implications for the definition of adequate response both inside and outside Syria, including calls for investments in long-term development solutions and resilience-building in addition to humanitarian assistance. From the US$ 624 million planned in the 3RP for 2015, a budget of US$164 million is dedicated to the resilience component.\textsuperscript{235}

Pledges for resettlement, whereby a country offers residency and assistance to refugees, as well as humanitarian admission places which involve temporary residency and family reunification, remain very scarce. In three days in September 2014 Turkey received some 130,000 refugees from Syria, more than the entire European Union had taken for resettlement in the previous three years.

Overall the international contribution to humanitarian needs in Turkey remains very low. International funding requirements for 2015 are estimated at US$ 624 million\textsuperscript{236}. However by April 2015 only US$ 100 million had been received (16% of the request)\textsuperscript{237}. To many donors Turkey is not seen as priority given its relatively strong national capacity to respond to the crisis.


\textsuperscript{236} UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, last updated 24 April 2015

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
3. Overview of the ECHO approach in the country

3.1. ECHO overall strategy

ECHO’s initial support in 2012 was focused on the camps established by AFAD. ECHO implemented a few projects through IFRC, providing tents and NFI packages. Post-distribution monitoring proved problematic, however, given that camps were well resourced by the GoT and therefore not seen as an ECHO priority for continued funding.

The strategy subsequently shifted to accessing refugees living outside the camps and focusing on providing support to the most vulnerable refugees, namely out-of-camp refugees and newcomers. ECHO piloted support through UNHCR and NGOs, in particular using established INGO partners already delivering cross-border aid to Syria. ECHO supported operations, in line with the respective Humanitarian Intervention Plans (HIP), giving priority to in-kind provision of food, NFI, and health services, with a primary focus on:

- **Protection:** ECHO’s advocacy for a comprehensive protection and assistance strategy for the Syrian refugee caseload in Turkey, and a uniform and systematic registration system for Syrian refugees;

- **Food Security and Livelihoods:** in-kind, cash and voucher assistance for the most vulnerable families and individuals potential modalities for assistance;

- **Health:** essential health care including patient referrals, transportation services, translation and legal services;

- **NFI:** NFI support to newcomers in terms of basic needs and support for winter.

3.2. Application of the basic assistance package in border areas

ECHO has adopted a strategic goal of attempting to meet a range of needs through the provision of a single cash grant to refugees. A multi-purpose cash grant is a revolutionary approach for ECHO which has traditionally responded through sectoral programmes. In order to achieve this goal ECHO is building the potential use of unconditional cash transfers.

A number of reasons are advanced to justify this approach, in part cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Cash-based support is regarded as enabling ECHO to respond more flexibly to the different needs of the (urban) refugee population and guarantee the credibility and transparency of EU humanitarian aid. This approach builds on the experience of introducing basic needs grants elsewhere in the region – eg. Lebanon and Jordan.

Currently ECHO still works with a range of different NGOs to provide a range of services. However there has been a progressive shift in approach. An intermediate step has been a

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shift from in-kind transfers to the use of (electronic) vouchers. For example, with ECHO support, IOM\textsuperscript{240} provides cash denominated electronic vouchers for 45TL (approximately €15) per person and 40 TL (€13) per family per month. This amount is based on the meeting of food needs. The Turkish Government still prohibits the use of unrestricted cash to refugees.

3.3. Expanding coverage in the “far east”\textsuperscript{241}

No (precise) definition of the “far east” is provided in the documentation. Available information provides indications that the “Far East” refers to the area of the Turkish-Syrian border close to Iraq, including the provinces of Mardin, Diyarbakir, and Batman\textsuperscript{242}. But in principle this area has received the bulk of the more recent refugee influx originating from the IS-controlled areas of Syria and Iraq from late 2014 onwards.

ECHO has prioritized the expansion of coverage into this zone based on unmet needs. Prior to ECHO’s intervention Batman and Diyarbakir have not been covered by humanitarian responses\textsuperscript{243} and no additional INGOs are currently operating in the area except ECHO partners.

3.4. Overview of funding and activities undertaken in the country

ECHO has provided €33.4 million to the response inside Turkey over the evaluation reference period. This represents approximately 5% of the overall Syria response.

Around 70% of ECHO’s support to Syrian refugees in Turkey during 2012-2014 covered food assistance (39%) and NFIs (33%). Multi-sector support (20%), health and medical support (5%), and protection (4%) together represent the remaining 30% of ECHO’s funding over the evaluation period.

ECHO funds were channelled through a range of implementing partners, the WFP being the main one. The ten biggest implementing partners represented 99% of total commitment in Turkey.

\textsuperscript{240} Project 2014-91021

\textsuperscript{241} The term “Far East” was introduced in the ToR.

\textsuperscript{242} http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11398325/The-British-soldier-fighting-IS-with-the-Kurds.html; Syria Regional Refugee Response – Inter agency Information Sharing Portal (Map showing the refugee camps hosting Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey and their population as at 31 July 2014, and Registered Syrian refugees in urban locations in southeast Turkey as of 31 July 2014); ECHO (2015) Project 2015/00582 Fichop

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid, p21
Figure 7 – Snapshot of ECHO’s response in Turkey 2012-2014

ECHO funding per sector – Turkey

- Food (€13m) 39%
- Shelter (€10.9m) 33%
- Multi-sector (€6.55m) 20%
- Health and medical (€1.6m) 5%

Total: €33.4m

Top 10 ECHO implementing partners – Turkey

- WFP
- IOM
- IFRC
- DRC
- UNHCR
- DRC
- MDM
- CARE
- FNU
- GAA

Source: ADE Evaluation Inventory, 2015

Source: Evaluation Inventory (based on FTS extraction)

NB sector labelled “shelter” is predominantly NFIs.
4. Key findings with respect to the Evaluation Questions (EQs)

EQ 1 – Good Humanitarian Donorship

JC 1.1 ECHO deployed specific decisions and actions to ensure consistency with the 23 principles in the Syria crisis response

- NB This is an overarching question and comments relevant to performance on the 23 principles – especially positive comments - are contained within the remaining 17 EQs. This section highlights issues that are not explicitly addressed elsewhere in the report.
- ECHO has continued to support INGOs delivering aid to populations living in IS-controlled areas in accordance with the principles of neutrality and independence. Many other donors have terminated aid to IS-controlled areas.

JC 1.2 There are specific examples of where the Syria response was (or was not) in line with the 23 Principles

- ECHO has struggled to “Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments”. While allocations have taken account of the available needs assessment information, the information is inadequate.
- The large allocations to the Syria response in 2013 were reported to have had a significant impact on the budget allocations of other global ECHO programmes. This runs counter to the principle of “Striving to ensure that funding of humanitarian action in new crises does not adversely affect the meeting of needs in ongoing crises”.
- Despite the increasingly protracted nature of the crisis ECHO has not been able to “… ensure predictability and flexibility in funding to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and to other key humanitarian organisations”. There is currently significant under-funding of the operations of UN agencies leading to a lack of predictability of their response. This is exemplified by the recent large cuts in WFP operations across the region announced at short notice.

EQ 2 - Consultation of local and regional communities

JC 2.1. ECHO or its partners deployed specific measures for involving local and regional communities

- FPA partners have offices at local level which facilitates interaction with the communities.
- NGO FPA partners consult closely with communities at the local level in terms of identifying needs. They implement for instance components in close and direct coordination with partners and local authorities. They also participate in group and bilateral meetings regularly held with local authorities, community leaders (mukhtars), key community-based entities and key community members within the refugee population.

JC 2.2. ECHO and/or partner monitoring mechanisms took account of beneficiary views and provided appropriate feedback loops to funding officers

- ECHO partners have consulted the beneficiaries of actions provided up until the current date, and have rolled out a specific hotline for issues and challenges, as well
as complaints mechanism. In the framework of the same project, relevant gender and age groups have participated in the design, implementation and evaluation of the action.

- ECHO partners have also conducted direct interviews with beneficiaries or focus group with key stakeholders to ensure that beneficiary demands and feedback on past assistance are taken into account in the design of the action. In Syria and Turkey this is done through regular post-distribution monitoring surveys and focus group discussions.

### EQ3 – To what extent have the design and implementation of ECHO-funded interventions taken into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region, in particular women, children, elderly and disabled people?

**JC 3.1 ECHO deployed specific measures/a specific approach/strategy to ensure that ECHO-funded interventions took into account the needs of the most vulnerable people in the region both at design and implementation stages**

- In accordance with humanitarian principles established by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the EU seeks to address the needs of the most vulnerable people facing a crisis. A needs-based approach is therefore necessary to ensure that aid is provided in different countries according to their respective needs, independent of any pressure.

- However, no formal comprehensive needs assessment of the urban-based Syrian population exists. It is therefore difficult to quantify and identify the most vulnerable populations or determine the most appropriate larger-scale assistance programmes for implementation in cooperation with the Government.

- The establishment of the new DGMM is seen to offer some opportunities for improved needs assessment but so far this has not yet been realised. Data available from Government consists essentially only of numbers of refugees. Accompanying data on vulnerability that would normally be collected and made available is not collected or shared.

- GoT appears resistant to allowing any agency – or even academic institutions – to collect data on needs and vulnerabilities. Each individual question needs to be approved by the authorities and are often rather arbitrarily deleted.

- Current initiatives aimed at profiling their needs or registering urban refugees, a prerequisite for organization of assistance, are at a standstill. UNHCR initiated a (ECHO-funded) profiling exercise which provides critical information on the non-camp refugee population – but GoT withheld the study and instead AFAD undertook an assessment exercise.

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246 The GoT does participate in the 3RP document which includes an appeal for funding. However, this is not viewed as a comprehensive or credible assessment of needs.


248 HIP ECHO/SYR/BUD/2014/9100
**JC 3.2 The design of ECHO-funded interventions reflects the needs of the most vulnerable people**

- All partner agreements specify targeting criteria, including inclusion of specific vulnerable groups. Gender and age breakdowns are given in each SF.

**JC 3.3 ECHO took specific measures to ensure that during implementation the needs of the most vulnerable people were taken into account**

NGO FPA partners consult closely with communities at local level to target the most vulnerable. Based on project documents, it appeared for instance that:

- Based on ECHO partner assessments conducted in Kilis and Hatay, the focus would be placed on identification of: female heads of households (FHH), elderly persons with no caregivers, female survivors of torture and SGBV survivors, women with serious medical conditions, people with disabilities or coming from large families without a coping mechanism or community support;
- Beneficiaries’ identification would be through community-based focal points conducting outreach, and community leaders and other local or international NGOs working in the area;
- Families would be identified through focal persons from local communities (Syrian or Turkish) and AFAD;
- Relevant gender and age groups participated in the design, implementation and evaluation of the action;
- ECHO partner used volunteers to assess families in order to identify the most vulnerable for assistance. In recognition of the importance of this process, volunteers received a thorough three-day assessment and protection training so as to ensure that high quality assessments were completed;
- Beneficiaries would be selected following field assessment conducted by ECHO partners, local NGOs or authorities, or UN sector leads. When vulnerability criteria are not commonly agreed between sector partners, the following criteria, in line with humanitarian operations standards, are followed by the partner: 1) social vulnerability: extended family size, numbers of infants and children, numbers of pregnant or lactating women, disabled and elderly members; 2) financial loss: loss of property and belongings, current source of income and savings; 3) lack of external support: aid received from host family, local population, local authorities, aid agencies, relatives back home; 4) psychological distress: dead or injured family members, mental health.

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**EQ 4: To what extent has the ECHO intervention taken account of the host populations, and what concrete measures have been taken to address their needs and interests?**

**JC 4.1. ECHO applied a specific approach/strategy to ensure that the needs and interest of host populations were taken into account**

- The strategy was set by recognition of a) minimal resources for response in Turkey, and b) no explicit demand from authorities for a proportion of the assistance to be directed to the host population (as in Jordan); hence an explicit decision not to target host population through ECHO projects.
• However, ECHO does advocate with the EU Delegation to provide support to host populations in sectors impacted by the refugee influx, including education and health (see EQ 15).

• In strategic terms a clear distinction is made between advocating for support to host populations specifically affected by the arrival of the refugees and the needs of poor Turkish citizens who may be in a position of need equivalent to that of the refugees. EU support in relation to the refugee response does not extend to this second category.

**JC 4.2 : ECHO took specific measures to address the needs and interest of host populations**

ECHO partners seek opportunities to support host populations where possible:

- Several activities were open to Syrian refugees in Turkey, including interested host community members. As at the end of October 2013 for instance, approximately 15% of the beneficiaries of an ECHO funded project were Turkish citizens from the host communities.

- Partners recognized in their activities the need to further strengthen mid-term programming for refugee and host communities in addition to continuing lifesaving assistance. Food security support angle (in line with Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 (3RP)) was emphasized “in order to protect local communities as well as Syrian refugees in the long-term”.

**JC 4.3: The measures reached their objectives**

**EQ 5 - A) To what extent have ECHO and its partners been successful in adapting their approach and addressing gaps to the shifting needs of the region, as the crisis has evolved? B) Considering that project activities of partners have in many cases been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, to what extent have the partners been revising their approach – being innovative – to better address the needs? C) What modifications to approaches are needed for the future?**

**JC 5.1 ECHO and its partners had a strategy to adapt their approach to the shifting needs of the region**

- The provision of humanitarian assistance in Turkey was originally not high on the ECHO agenda:
  - Initially larger number of refugees were concentrated in Jordan and Lebanon.
  - The Turkish Government had greater ability to respond – and the presence of the refugees was not seen as such a threat to the stability of the State.
  - AFAD controlled the response in conjunction with the Turkish Red Cross.
    - It was unwilling to accept conditions on donations, eg. monitoring and transparency. In essence it is not familiar with humanitarian principles.

- However, there was a subsequent large growth of refugee numbers in the country. It became apparent that there was no quick solution and GoT became more open to international assistance and actively sought help. ECHO adapted to this evolving situation through two major strategic shifts:
Shifting the focus of support from the GoT-run camps to the urban refugee population. The proportion of camp-based support dropped by a third each year, to one-third of the total by 2014.

Identifying new geographical priorities. Increasing support for the influx of refugees into the “far east”.

- More recently there has been recognition that the response is shifting from addressing the immediate needs of a refugee influx – with the hope that the population would return to Syria within a few months – to a recognition that this appears to be a protracted crisis with little immediate prospect of a resolution of the conflict in Syria.
- Finally the response has had to adapt to falling humanitarian resources, despite a continued rise in refugee numbers.

**JC 5.2 ECHO and its partners have revised their approaches/interventions so as to better address the shifting needs of the region**

- ECHO was the first donor to earmark resources to off-camp refugees (WFP, UNICEF).
- ECHO has funded projects that were of high importance, as they would give both Syrian and Iraqi refugees’ access to assistance in areas where ECHO previously has not had presence and where further influx of populations could take place.
- An ECHO partner has commissioned several assessments targeting non-camp refugees, namely to evaluate needs and gaps of new arrivals and other vulnerable Syrian families, with consideration given to protection and shelter needs. In addition, the partner field teams conducted a qualitative assessment, including a house-to-house survey and focus group exercises. This exercise was followed by continuous monitoring of refugee communities by ECHO partner and its local partners' staff and volunteers.
- Continuing support in camps focuses on key areas of health and PSS where gaps are recognized by the local authorities.

**JC 5.3 In the case of project activities that have been carried over from one funding cycle to the next, ECHO partners adapted their approaches/interventions to the changed needs.**

*See evolution of modalities - EQ 10*

**JC 5.4 When adapting their approaches to changing needs, ECHO’s partners introduced specific innovations**

*See also 5.2*

- ECHO partners noted that the constant and unpredictable influx of refugees from Syria created a need for frequent programme adjustments. They noted that ECHO was an extremely flexible donor in supporting these requests. The TAs were regularly in touch with the programmes to keep abreast of changes in the context. Changes were often agreed verbally and informally through a phone call – and confirmed later through formal amendments.
JC 5.5 Implications for ECHO (and partner) approaches relative to expected shifts in beneficiary needs

- The refugee caseload is forecast to increase substantially in the next year, placing further stress on limited resources.

**EQ 6 – EU Added-Value**

**JC 6.1 ECHO employed a specific approach and took specific initiatives to ensure it could provide added value**

- ECHO is holding close dialogue with the EU Delegation and DG ENLARG to work towards a coordinated strategy. This maximizes the overall flow of EU resources in response to needs and maintains the comparative advantages of humanitarian and developmental resource flows. See 15 more more detail.
- The resources available to ECHO in Turkey were very minor compared to other donors. For example it provided $120m per year, with $70m to UNHCR alone. Therefore ECHO had to seek specific added value for its operations. Much of this is driven by a strong field presence.

**JC 6.2 ECHO was recognised as providing specific types of added value in the context of the Syria crisis**

- Funding was strategic with relatively few international donors. Turkey suffers from being seen as a ‘capacitated’ Government and therefore received little outside support. ECHO has filled gaps by providing assistance in areas where no other actors have been present (e.g. Sirnak).
- ECHO has shown great reactivity by quickly responding to new urgent needs (e.g. influx of approx. 200,000 people fleeing to Turkey from Kobane); due to the extensive geographical coverage and the number of feet on the ground.
- ECHO has also managed to play an instrumental role in terms of coordinating and liaising with other donors and partners (e.g. IcSP €12 million package).
- In terms of steering coordination and harmonization of the approaches, the capacity of many donors is limited to ‘writing cheques’. In contrast ECHO is able to engage at several levels (local, national, international) in coordination efforts. It provides support for the cluster system in cross-border operations.
- In terms of driving the cost-efficiency agenda, ECHO is also able to engage with UN agencies and other quality issues, including a focus on better targeting which is seen as critical in a context where funds have to be ‘rationed’.
- ECHO can be considered as one of the few principled donors in the advocacy field, which allows them to engage with issues such as protection offered by host countries. However, the ability of ECHO to advocate for an open border policy in Turkey is compromised by Europe’s own stance on this issue.
EQ 7 – Urban Settings

**JC 7.1 ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embed urban issues within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

- OCHA argue that urban crises require a new conceptualization of need, and of what is life-saving in such contexts. Potentially this should expand to include issues such as garbage collection, sewage systems and power supplies. Currently this remains largely off the radar for most humanitarian agencies.

**JC 7.2 The design of ECHO-funded projects identified the major challenges that exist in urban settings in order to design interventions appropriate to these specific type of situation**

- ECHO to continue to focus on unconditional cash or voucher programmes with a multi-sector approach as a primary urban response, with supplementary health projects (especially provision of rehabilitation).
- It is estimated that around 70% of all Syrian refugees live along border areas (the highest numbers are in Hatay, Gaziantep and Sanliurfa). However, increasingly Syrian refugee populations have dispersed throughout the country and are in no less than 79 of the 81 Turkish provinces. Up to 500,000 reside in Istanbul (330,000), Izmir and Ankara. ECHO is currently investigating whether support to refugees in the large cities is warranted.

**JC 7.3 Throughout implementation, ECHO-funded projects were able to tackle the specific urban challenges (for displaced and refugees as well as for the host urban populations) and to coordinate properly with the local authorities, urban services and institutions (municipalities), in line with the good practices elaborated by the sector**

- Last December ECHO chaired the first coordination meeting on urban refugees. This meeting was followed with one chair from UNHCR and recently the 3W table has been produced.

EQ8 (Protection): How and to what extent has protection been appropriately taken into account and implemented in ECHO-funded projects?

**JC 8.1. ECHO and its partner agencies employed a specific approach to embedding protection within ECHO-funded projects in response to the Syrian crisis**

- ECHO has to some extent sought to use other EU instruments to support protection activities through referral to GoT services (see EQ 15). However, several agencies note that this remains a volatile period and argue for a need to support NGOs in this area. It is “not a development moment yet”.
- Significant gaps in protection are identified by partners in Turkey:
  - Turkish medical services appear under-equipped to handle the demands of the large number of traumatised refugees, including victims of sexual abuse.
  - Issue of child protection is a large gap where few agencies are working – including issues of child labour and unaccompanied minors.
  - Mobile latrines are needed for women at border crossing points.
  - Support is needed for legal issues such as official contracts for refugees renting houses in Turkey.
EVALUATION OF THE ECHO RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS 2012-2014

- Huge rise in bombing of civilians after fall of Idlib. A need has been identified to balance delivery of relief items with advocacy efforts to reduce bombings. There is a danger of “becoming obsessed with delivery”.
- There is some evidence of mainstreaming of protection issues, for example in WFP contract avoidance of distributions to big crowds, assessments of specific needs of women and children, deliveries to the doors of the disabled, only anonymized data sent into Syria, and so on. Other partners (eg. DRC) take protection issues into account when selecting beneficiaries for their voucher programmes.

**JC 8.3. ECHO-funded project designs disambiguated protection needs per population segment and location, including identifying specific threats to vulnerable groups**

- ECHO/ EU Delegation supported the registration process. There are obvious logistical difficulties associated with registering the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who have arrived in the past 3½ years – many of them irregularly. Another significant challenge is that Syrian refugees sometimes choose not to register. Some people avoid registration because AFAD registration requires individuals to reside in the province in which they are registered, preventing them moving if work or accommodation opportunities arise elsewhere.

- Project 2013-91005 A protection consultant conducted an assessment in southeastern and southern Turkey. The report detailed recommended vulnerability criteria, and guidelines and forms to be used have been finalized. Implementation is planned to start by November-December 2013 benefiting 180 cases.

**EQ 9: In cases when Remote Management was being used, to what extent did it follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful was it?**

**JC 9.1 When the instructions (notably the seven questions with assessment criteria) were available, ECHO applied them before using remote management**

- Partner agencies widely reported participating in an ECHO-sponsored workshop in 2014 to present the remote management guidelines. However, since then there has not been much follow-up.
- Partner interviewed uniformly reported that their proposals were developed in adherence with the ECHO guidelines. However, they were not usually able to recall the specific provisions of the guidelines.
- INGO partners referred to “double standards” in the application of remote management issues. ECHO is seen to be more rigorous in the standards applied to NGOs than those applied to UN agencies. The example given is that, while NGOs are accountable for the delivery of goods to household level, UN agencies are only accountable up to delivery to warehouses in Syria.

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249 Amnesty, 2014

250 With a view to avoiding ambiguity on the period covered, we suggest to phrase the question in the past tense.
• There is current interest in using “Third Party” monitoring arrangements in Syria where an independent body is contracted to provide independent monitoring services. The issue of the cost implications is coming to the fore.

• After four years beneficiary communities are increasingly looking for livelihood interventions rather than continued distributions of NFIs etc. However, the RM guidelines are not compatible with this shift. There is a preference for CFW over NFIs except in the case of sudden displacements.

**JC 9.2 Before the availability of the instructions ECHO followed other guidance/good practice before using remote management**

- Partners have implemented a range of RM measures:
  - GPS-referenced photos of CFW outputs
  - Video of distributions
  - Beneficiary lists
  - Use of female monitors
  - Monitoring of non-beneficiaries to capture exclusion errors
  - Complaint mechanisms (e.g. Telephone-based systems)
  - Third party monitoring
  - Regular assessment in operational areas
  - Constant contact and information-sharing with rebel groups
  - Quarterly reporting to ECHO

- OCHA monitors due diligence of partners and have a centralized list of approved partners.

- However there is a sense that not enough is known about the effectiveness of these measures. There is only limited lesson-learning among agencies. Some are seen as costly and ineffective, some the opposite. Several partners are interested in an ECHO sponsored consultancy to examine RM protocols and strengthen capacity-building amongst partners.

- Inside Syria some partners (e.g. PIN) report hesitancy to use cash transfers due to risk of fraud. There is a preference for using vouchers or CFW.

- INGOs have stopped sending international staff into Syria since 2013 owing to perceptions of an increased risk of kidnapping. It can be said that the RM arrangements are acknowledged to result in the transfer of risks from INGOs to Syrian NGOs. This is an inherently risky environment in which to operate. There is a need to be overt regarding risks and have adequate insurance cover in place.

- INGOs are careful to minimize risks in the selection of partner agencies in Syria, e.g. PIN is working with their own ex-staff in Aleppo who have established their own NGO, familiar with procedures and standards.

- In terms of problems of access to besieged areas and less stable settings, all operations become complicated. RM protocols are more relevant where there is a degree of stability.

**JC 9.3 When remote management was used, potential risks and pitfalls of remote management were mitigated or did not adversely impact on the concerned projects**

- ECHO were reported to be flexible in adapting the RM guidance according to the context. For example, in IS-controlled areas the partners were not required to
conduct a household level PDM exercise. This would have created issues – the so-called Islamic State want to be seen in the role of the provider as the State does not want visibility for the NGO. Enforcing a PDM exercise would have created risks for implementing staff in these areas.

- Not all the aid going into Syria is limited to emergency supplies (e.g. food, NFIs, shelter, health, water, etc.) that the RM guidelines were designed to support. For example, aid is also provided to the education sector including rebuilding of schools. This raises new challenges for RM.
- Partners reported losses of goods promptly to ECHO and found them sympathetic to the losses. It is expected that a certain amount of diversion will occur in a war situation. If promptly reported and explained and mitigation measures are put in place, then it is accepted.

**EQ10 – Cash and vouchers**

**JC 10.1 The ECHO strategy for Syria considered the appropriate use of a range of transfer modalities**

- So far there has been a process of transition in Turkey from in-kind to paper vouchers to electronic vouchers. Vouchers are seen as preferable in terms of ease and efficiency of implementation and in providing a degree of choice to beneficiaries. It is notable that the WFP response started with vouchers – there was no initial in-kind response.
- The strategic goal of ECHO is to provide a single cash-based grant to refugees to meet a range of needs (MPCT) flexibly. This is driven by the (positive) experience of using basic needs grants in Lebanon and Jordan. It has been proved in other contexts that cash is the most appropriate form of relief. Vouchers have some disadvantages in terms of fraud.
- Partners appeared to strongly endorse the goal; physical distribution is seen as very expensive and difficult to manage. But they have as yet been unable to commence cash distributions. The main constraint is Government policy at two levels: first, the GoT is unwilling to endorse cash grants to urban refugees for fear of creating a pull factor; second, Turkish banks are unwilling or unable to open accounts for refugees.
- Currently ECHO still works with a range of different NGOs to provide a range of services. It is clear that even if a basic needs grant approach was realized, ECHO would still need to complement this with additional transfers using a range of modalities for complementary goals.
- So far a (partial) trend has been established away from in-kind provision of goods (e.g. food and NFIs); for example under project 2014-91018, the remaining beneficiaries receiving one-off support will be provided with a one-off e-card with a preloaded budget to facilitate access to food and non-food items. This change in methodology is a result of the identification and piloting of a suitable e-card system and provider.
- DRC are about to embark on a pilot cash transfer for refugees dispersed through the PTT (Turkish Post Office). This is funded by DFID. If successful it is expected that other agencies will rapidly replicate this approach.
• So far within ECHO there has been little consideration of whether humanitarian cash transfers could provide a tactic for transitioning refugees from humanitarian assistance to the national social transfer system. Ultimately this could provide an exit strategy for ECHO.
• The need for a mix of transfer modalities – not just a voucher or cash approach, even in the food sector - is recognized. For example, in-kind stocks are maintained by NGOs to provide a first response to newly-arrived refugees.
• A problem is that the ECHO SF does not accommodate basic needs grants – all results are classified within a single sector.

**JC 10.2 The appraisal of DG ECHO actions took account of an appropriate analysis of the context**

• In the Turkey context it is clear that markets are able to supply the basic goods (food and NFIs) required by refugees.
• In 2015 ECHO conducted a feasibility study of cash transfers through DKH. ECHO partners conducted a relevant analysis of suppliers to ensure price competitiveness in the choice of goods that could be purchased with the e-vouchers.
• It is surprising that there was less evidence of a rigorous comparison of the companies used to manage the e-voucher system. Consequently partners were paying these companies between 2% and 8% for providing the same service of issuing the cards and managing the payment system.

**JC 10.3 ECHO-funded cash and voucher operations have been effective in the Syria context**

• Many actors in Turkey are engaged in voucher transfers - 7-8 agencies located in different areas, working with local partners. The size of transfer is more or less standardized.
• Having introduced cash-based responses through NGOs the next step is up-scaling these responses. The mechanism for this is seen to be through WFP. As an entry point, ECHO is working with WFP on a pilot out-of-camp cash and voucher response.
• The value of vouchers is typically set in relation to either food needs or food-plus-basic hygiene items. These are not designed to meet a range of basic needs. In any case the nature of vouchers – as opposed to cash – effectively limits the potential objectives of the transfer.
• The value of transfers falls far short of meeting basic needs. In all families visited this provided a complement to other income sources such as employment and gifts from neighbours, family or friends.
• Vouchers have significant constraints on effectiveness. They cannot be used to meet beneficiaries’ needs (eg. shelter, electrical goods). There is also the problem of potential resale of vouchers reducing efficiency and effectiveness. The GoT mentioned the risk that refugees may move around and make multiple registrations for (cash) cards – fraud is seen as a bigger issue than with in-kind distributions.
• Many programmes are short-term (eg. six-month) pilot projects. However, there is no apparent strategy for what these pilot programmes will transition to. Usually pilot projects come with an expectation that they will be scaled-up if successful.
• WFP are leading efforts to upscale responses to urban refugees, subject to aiming for a 50:50 split of resources for 300,000 camp and off-camp beneficiaries. Working with NGOs and GoT to harmonize registration platforms, targeting and distribution platform. A single eCard can be used potentially by a range of agencies for voucher transfers, cash transfers and in-kind transfers.

• Underlying a basic needs grant several partners operated a case management approach to identifying and responding to urgent needs. Depending on needs, the possible response options includes referral to government services or access to additional cash transfers.

• ECHO struggles to deliver vouchers or cash in large cities (eg. Gaziantep). It is beyond the capacity of the traditional NGO partners as the scale is overwhelming and caseloads are huge. Consequently the NGOs tend to stay operational in the smaller centres. To start operations in this context need a large partner such as WFP.

**EQ 11. Is the size of the budget allocated by ECHO to the region appropriate and proportionate to what the actions are set out to achieve? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding?**

**JC 11.1. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syria crisis was appropriate**

• In crude terms the budget allocation for the response in Turkey is many times lower than in other neighbouring countries. Evidence that funds are insufficient include the large cuts being made in WFP distributions to camp and urban refugees (although this applies across the region), in both the number of beneficiaries and the amount distributed.

• The budget allocation for Turkey has been influenced by a number of considerations a) the number of refugees, b) the needs of the refugees and c) the capacity of the host government to respond to their needs and requests for international assistance.

• However comparable, country-wide needs assessments are missing, making needs-based allocations problematic. In particular a systematic needs assessment of the needs of urban refugees is lacking. This ultimately makes it hard to judge the appropriateness of the budget allocation.

• It is argued in several ECHO reports that the condition of the non-camp refugees in Turkey differs little from those in Jordan and Lebanon. In the absence of a comprehensive and updated assessment it is hard to support or refute this claim. However, it is noted that there is a substantial difference in that the strength of the Turkish economy offers significant (albeit informal) work opportunities.

• It is observed that annual funding levels have fluctuated considerably. Limited funding in 2012 was followed by an “over-generous” allocation in 2013 when funds were “hard to sink”. This “almost blew the bank” for ECHO and led to significant cuts in other global crisis responses. Funding processes are understood to be heavily influenced by politics.

• It is also noted that there are several important political drivers behind the overall EU envelope of assistance to Turkey:
  o One of the drivers of expanding coverage inside Turkey is strategic. INGOs were facing difficulties in registering in Turkey to work on cross-border
operations into Syria. Funding INGOs to respond inside Turkey was seen as a way of strengthening the case for local registration.

- Critically, further assistance in Turkey is perceived as keeping refugees closer to home, avoiding pressure on European borders.
- There is no ‘bottom-up’ calculation of the budget requirement in Turkey is. Instead it becomes a top-down cake-sharing exercise. Staff are left to argue for a share of the available resources.

**JC 11.2. The ECHO budget allocation to respond to the Syria crisis was proportionate**

- The proportionality of ECHO’s response is influenced by decision-making at different levels:
  - Burden share between the response of the Host Government and the International Community
  - Burden share of ECHO compared to other donors
  - Allocation of ECHO resources to Syria compared to other crises
  - Allocation of ECHO resources to Turkey compared to other elements of the Syria crisis response
- The data already reviewed and further interviews suggest that the Turkish Government is bearing a disproportionate responsibility for the response. At end of 2014 it was estimated that the Government had covered at least 95% of the total cost.
- ECHO’s share of the burden during 2012-14, compared to other donors, is estimated at 14%\(^{251}\). This would appear to be roughly in line with overall norms (+/- 10% of global humanitarian response from Government sources).
- The allocation of resources by ECHO between humanitarian crises is supported through the completion of an Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) on an annual basis. This is done for each country or crisis (in this case for Syria as a whole). However, interviews indicate that the capacity for cross-crisis comparison is weak. Technically this is difficult and is also seen to rely on information that is not well represented in the IAF, such as that on access, response capacity and on-going response.
- In practice allocations were found to be made mostly through a process of inheritance – that is, looking at last years’ allocation and adjusting up or down rather than really comparing between crises.
- In practice the Syria team felt that the response was underfunded but felt constrained to temper their requests in line with the overall envelope of resources available to ECHO. An ‘upper limit’ was self-imposed in formulating the budget request, rather than its being strictly needs-based.
- Within the HIP operational recommendations were drawn up to justify the allocation of funds between countries. This addresses criteria such as number of IDPs or refugees, responses of international organizations, the humanitarian agenda, new opportunities, and so forth. The perception is that the allocation procedure was fair and reasonable. Syria is seen as a pure humanitarian crisis with no development funding opportunities. Development actors are contributing to the response in other countries – lower potential support in Lebanon (no US development funding) has

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\(^{251}\) FTS data
led to this being a secondary priority. Jordan prioritized according to relative numbers of refugees, and Iraq to limited response capacity.

- Turkey receives lowest priority within the team for funding allocation. However, if the border stays open and numbers continue to increase then this allocation deserves to be revisited.
- ECHO is potentially looking for an exit strategy over the next 5-10 years. Driven in part by a expectation of waning political interest over time, the strategy is one of increasingly focusing resources on meeting needs within Syria itself and away from neighbouring countries, including Turkey.

**JC 11.3. ECHO calibrated its objectives to the available funding**

- Given the limited funding, beneficiary selection is seen as key to responding effectively to the most pressing needs. Partners are pressed for stricter targeting criteria balancing the limited resources against the increased number of refugees.
- ECHO has been pressing for targeting of available resources closely on the most ‘vulnerable groups’ (eg. Single-women-headed households) in prioritization of the use of limited funds. ‘Partners to review their targeting criteria, inclusion rates and refrain from providing blanket assistance in order to ensure that the most vulnerable are being reached’.
- ECHO partners have written well-defined and clear proposals and have proved responsive in communications with ECHO, by for example showing a high accountability commitment by applying continuous verification and reassessment of planned households in order to confirm or change the caseload in every three-month assistance cycle.
- However this approach is raising questions. Currently many partners target 30-40% of the population, potentially to target as low as the bottom 10%. This raises challenges of a) feasibility of identifying this group, b) appropriateness – if needs are present in a larger segment of the population, and c) the cost of targeting - a disproportionate amount of the budget may be used on targeting processes.

**JC 11.4. ECHO-funded activities were cost-effective**

- In the initial phase of response the priority for ECHO was meeting urgent needs. This ‘emergency phase’ persisted for a longer period than ‘normal’ and dominated decision-making over the first two years. Cost-efficiency considerations only emerged as a priority once the acute phase started to abate.
- The heart of the ECHO cost-efficiency strategy is to introduce cash-based solutions – drawing on the experience of multi-purpose cash grants in Lebanon. The entry point for this was supporting the use of eVouchers by WFP in camps. One major contribution to efficiency was funding WFP to manage food distribution in camps through the provision of eVouchers in camps in 2013.
- “WFP support in the camps has brought down costs of the food assistance by 70% in some cases, resulting in US$13.7 million savings per month compared to the provision of daily hot meals by AFAD, while also delivering food assistance through

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252 ECHO Desk Officer Mission Report, February 2015.
a means that is preferred by Syrians living in the camps. This was reported to be recognized as an effective innovation with considerable cost savings by AFAD.

- This then set the stage for out-of-camp cash based distributions - and ultimately use of cash rather than vouchers. Cash is seen as more efficient as voucher shops have higher prices and resale of vouchers at discounted prices by beneficiaries is significant. These are seen as progressive steps in greater cost efficiency. The current issues of focus are:
  - standardizing on a common platform: one major lesson from Lebanon was the inefficiency of running two parallel systems – the WFP eVoucher and UNHCR multi-purpose wallet. Trying to avoid the problem of multiple bank fees in Turkey.
  - delivering cash at scale: this battle is still being fought.
- Most recently the Syria team has introduced the use of a ‘dashboard’ to directly compare the cost-efficiency of different projects proposed for funding under the HIP. This makes explicit the administration costs and value of transfer per beneficiary.
- The proposal submitted by partners were in line with ECHO’s strategy in Turkey, especially in terms of geographic areas, focus on marginalised and most vulnerable off-camp refugees, quality programming with cost-efficiency, especially in terms of cash/e-voucher programming”.

**EQ 12: Were appropriate monitoring systems in place to support sound management of ECHO operations?**

**JC 12.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure that the quality and coverage of its monitoring mechanisms were conducive to support sound management of ECHO-funded operations**

- ECHO conducted regular and routine project visits to partners in Turkey. Most partners welcomed the level of engagement by ECHO, but some indicated that the monitoring could be intrusive and demanding of staff time. ECHO-related visits come not just from ECHO country TAs but also from regional staff, Brussels desks and consultants (such as the evaluators).

**JC 12.2. ECHO adopted a specific approach to ensure that monitoring mechanisms were tailored to the specific needs of remote management**

**JC.12.3. ECHO partners implemented operations monitoring and ensured data and findings were available for ECHO’s use in a timely manner**

- Strong PDM monitoring arrangements witnessed in all ECHO projects visited by the evaluators.
- Use of electronic distribution technology by a majority of partners allows real time monitoring of expenditure patterns of eVouchers.

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253 ECHO Trip Report, 2014
EQ 13: What has been the partners’ experience of working in consortia as well as with a multi-country approach?

**JC 13.1. ECHO undertook specific actions/commitments to ensure consortium and multi-country operations made efficient use of available resources**

- ECHO has not promoted consortia in the Syria context. Instead it has promoted multi-country contracts for individual agencies, and partnership between INGOs and national NGOs in implementing actions.

**JC 13.2. ECHO partners provided evidence that consortium and multi-country arrangements reduced coverage gaps and duplication between countries and partner organisations**

- The main benefit of multi-country contracts was in enabling ECHO to disperse funds in larger volumes when staffing levels were low at the start of the crisis. This arguably allowed some efficiencies in cross-border operations – that is, allowing flexibility in delivering within Syria according to changing needs and access opportunities.
- Monitors observed widespread negative reaction to multi-country contracts. ECHO desks had problems in following contracts that didn’t match their country-based responsibilities. It also raised the questions of legal accountability.
- The size and complexity of the contracts made quality control challenging. Contracts were in “a constant state of reworking” as one or more country element would be under review. It was judged better to follow contracts at country level.
- Relationships between INGOs and national NGOs – where they worked well – were seen to be mutually beneficial. Local partners bring understanding of local contexts while INGOs bring technical skills and standards, and financial resources.
- Partners view consortia as having potential advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages were seen as relating to lesson-learning and a clear division of geographical responsibilities. The main disadvantage was seen to be the loss of flexibility to adapt rapidly to evolving circumstances.

**EQ 14 - ECHO success to coordinate operations with other main actors**

**JC 14.1 Actions undertaken to enhance coordination**

- Coordination has been a major problem at both national and regional levels. All aspects were affected - 3Ws, learning and advocacy.
- Coordination between the Government and international humanitarian agencies in general appears to be weak and problematic. UN coordination mechanisms have not filled this gap at national level\(^\text{254}\). UNHCR is mandated to lead the coordination of a response to refugees, but is reported to have had problems in 'stepping out of the shadow of the Government'\(^\text{255}\) and is careful not to undermine the Government.

\(^\text{254}\) ECHO Monthly Report for Turkey, April 2015
UNHCR has a problem in separating coordination from its operational role. Its role in relation to other UN agencies and NGOs was characterised as one of “control not coordination”.

ECHO did successfully challenge UNHCR to fulfil its responsibilities to establish sectoral working groups in concert with the national authorities. It was acknowledged by partners to have triggered the formation of working groups. However, ECHO influence on UNHCR is very limited and UNHCR performance in the region is very uneven.

It was felt that ECHO could have done more at the very highest levels to push UNHCR to take on greater responsibility for coordination in Turkey – and where necessary challenging the Government. Opportunities at DG level to liaise with the Head of UNHCR were apparently not taken.

ECHO also contributed to establishment of an NGO coordination forum under DRC that primarily addressed coordination of cross-border relief.

While the Government, in conjunction with the Turkish Red Crescent, effectively organizes the camp-based response, there is a gap in coordinating the response to out-of-camp refugees. There is still no clear government policy towards working with the non-camp refugees and coordination is weak and rudimentary. AFAD rarely requests assistance from NGO agencies.

No mechanism has been created at strategic level for non-camp refugees and the response from international actors has been reactive in nature and has systematically coordination.

Coordination between the UN and NGOs primarily takes place in Gaziantep. Coordination between the national government and UN takes place in Ankara. The links between these levels of coordination are weak and NGOs feel disconnected from the national authorities. The GoT regards the UN as the sole humanitarian provider. The Deputy Regional HC, based in Gaziantep, has no link to Government.

The Provincial Governorates have established monthly coordination meetings and are responsible for provincial plans to address the needs of refugee presence at provincial level. Such plans, even if they are ready, have not yet been circulated. NGO involvement and participation in the consultation process is reportedly minimal.

A Cash Working Group has been established in Turkey (and supported by ECHO) to coordinate the programming of cash transfers by the UN and NGOs agencies. This appears to have become more active with the transfer of leadership from UNHCR to WFP. Overall it appears to have been slow to address basic functions such as the harmonization of transfer amounts or sharing information and experiences on the alternative electronic distribution platforms available.

A large gap in institutional mandates remains in the UN system. No one agency is in the lead on multi-purpose cash. There is a vision of a revolutionary change with one agency responsible for targeting and distributions. This would greatly simplify – and improve the efficiency of – the response. Coordination has remained at technical, rather than strategic, level.

ECHO played an important role in encouraging regional coordination, for example asking the UN to provide an overview of needs. However, it is now widely questioned if regional coordination has been effective. There is little added value; UN appeals failed to prioritize allocations across the region. It is argued that regional
coordination activities should be stripped away – with the exception of coordination of cross-border activities. The plan is to allow the response in other countries to operate autonomously. There has been little value or return on large regional coordination efforts.

- A coordination gap was also identified between the Turkey operations (coordinated by UNHCR) and the XB operations (coordinated by OCHA). There is a need for much better information-sharing to anticipate refugees flows – from Turkey into Syria and also as regards returning refugees in the other direction. XB operations are in general also weakly coordinated. There are different levels of coordination which remain intertwined. CCCM, who works with UNHCR, is currently coordinating activities in Syria including XB activities. Just starting is a regular exchange of information between Damascus and XB operations from the various neighbouring countries to develop a “whole of Syria approach”.

**JC 14.2 ECHO identified and took account of main actors’ activities**

- The focus on both urban refugees and the far east demonstrated ECHO’s focus on a gap. However this gap was not identified through coordination mechanisms, but rather in spite of the lack of coordination. It was evident that there was ‘no masterplan’ in the programming of aid. INGO concentration was in the central and western areas of Kilis and Hatay.
- Recently a 3W table has been produced on urban activities by the informal coordination group.\(^{256}\)
- Within Syria there is a problem that INGOs are unwilling to share information on who is doing what and where for security concerns. A further issue is that one agency may be taking both humanitarian and stabilization funds to co-finance one project and does not wish to be transparent over the overlap.
- This lack of transparency makes coordination very problematic and creates an inability to see gaps in coverage.
- Nor do all donors share information through the OCHA FTS. OCHA estimate that a maximum of 50% of the aid flows are captured through the system. Much of the aid comes from non-traditional donors such as the Gulf States, and many lack a tradition of sharing information on contributions with the international community. Large stabilization funds are not captured in the system.

**JC 14.3 ECHO actions sought to enhance synergies and reduce duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

- The issue is not really one of duplication. In many areas there is either an absence of NGOs or only one that is operational. ‘Emptiness of assistance’ is a problem.
- ECHO is trying to further improve the harmonization of cash and voucher responses. An evaluation is included in the coming Daikonie-led project which it is hoped will contribute to the overall harmonization effort.

**JC 14.4 ECHO actions demonstrated synergies and no duplications of effort, gaps or resource conflicts**

\(^{256}\) ECHO Mission Report, February 2015.
- Project 2015/00582 So far, despite overwhelming and growing needs in the country, donor engagement has been limited, with the consequence that ECHO in some areas has been the only international donor present. In relation to this, Diakonie covers an essential gap in terms of providing multi-purpose cash assistance as the main partner in locations – for example Batman and Diyarbakir - where access to aid is otherwise scarce.

EQ15 – Mainstreaming of LRRD

**JC 15.1 ECHO coordinated with EC development actors (DG DEVCO, EEAS, and EU MS) from the earliest phases of a crisis response**

- ECHO played close attention to how the use of humanitarian funds interplayed with other development sources. This was critical given the scale of needs. This allowed them to focus on a narrower set of sectors and beneficiaries.
- ECHO maintains a close relationship with EU Delegations to maximize synergies and avoid overlaps. This is a question of making the best possible use of the available instruments.
- ECHO has worked closely with other EU instruments to build a more integrated response to the crisis. Complementary investments from other instruments include:
  - The Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) which is a huge source of support for Turkey at around €600m per year, delivered through national institutions.
  - IPA contribution to the Syria crisis in Turkey through two main projects: €10M with UNHCR for registration and profiling of out-of-camp refugees, implementation of 12 mobile clinics, mapping of INGOs at municipality level for better coordination and €3M with AFAD for capacity-building.
  - It has proved very complicated and slow, and is relatively inflexible – it has only been able to use unspent funds from previous decisions on the emergency. It took a long time to negotiate.
  - A European Trust Fund (ETF) for the Syria crisis response is starting up under DG NEAR. This is primarily related to long-term development funding on resilience but can be used as a humanitarian aid instrument. $18m will be reallocated from IPA to ETF, while $5m has been earmarked to WFP and $11m to UNICEF.
  - Jordan and Lebanon work through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Examples of synergies are evident. A focus on education for refugees has good synergies as ECHO does not prioritize education. DEVCO focus on primary health care and ECHO focus on secondary health care. As regards WASH support, DEVCO handles large infrastructure, and ECHO works at HH level.
- There is potential for ECHO to advocate for other EUMS to contribute humanitarian funds under ECHO management in Turkey (external accrued revenues). However, this has not yet been pursued. It could be an alternative to contributing to the EUTF which has a more ambiguous responsibility for humanitarian response.
- EUTF has been useful in allowing EUMS which would not otherwise contribute development funds to Turkey, for example the UK, Italy and Germany, to do so.
The main possibility for an exit strategy in Turkey appears to be a combination of i) the right to work for those with the ability to work, complemented by ii) inclusion in a safety net of those who are chronically poor and unable to work. ECHO strategy does not yet specifically contribute to achieving this transition. Other agencies are exploring this option (WFP, UNICEF). The EU Delegation is open to further exploring support to the national safety net over the next 2-3 years, including support to refugees.

An alternative is resettlement in Europe – especially for certain groups such as the Yazidi whose return is particularly risky and problematic. However, there is little progress in that regard at European level.

**JC 15.2 ECHO deployed the various instruments available to implement stability measures in a coherent and complementary fashion with the EU toolbox**

- The IcSP supported two projects in Turkey: UNHCR training AFAD on camp management and UNICEF education to mitigate child recruitment and radicalisation.
- The IcSP is also being looked to as source of funds for refugee “community centres” that will address a range of protection issues.
- Questions were raised on the appropriateness of using IcSP funds to support protection and it was argued that protection should remain a core humanitarian responsibility.

**JC 15.3 ECHO-funded actions have been based on a strong context analysis**

- A Joint Humanitarian Development Framework has been developed for Turkey. ECHO also invested heavily in supporting the EU Delegation to develop the IPA strategy for Turkey. The specific role of ECHO has been in helping to identify priority sectors of support, geographical areas of need and implementation partners.
- This collaboration in Turkey is viewed by the EU Delegation as a model of collaboration – collaboration of ECHO and EU Delegation is traditionally weak. ECHO has helped the EU to present an integrated “one EU” response.

**JC 15.4 ECHO-funded projects have been framed in the context of longer-term requirements of reconstruction and development**

- ECHO has supported the immediate education needs of refugees through the ‘Children of Peace’ initiative. While not a traditional humanitarian responsibility this is seen to have worked well. The flexible ECHO funding has allowed rapid start-up of educational programmes. This has been followed up through longer-term funding by development instruments which take time to mobilize.
- In facilitating the return of refugees to Kobane the ECHO contribution has been limited to supporting de-mining operations. Further rehabilitation actions are expected to be funded through other EU instruments.
- Through establishment of community centres in Hatay and Sanliurfa, DRC Turkey has supported the development of the following two core areas for beneficiaries:

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257 From March 2014, the Instrument for Stability (IfS) was succeeded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)
resilience capacities that strengthen individual, family and community psychosocial coping mechanisms, and capacities to enhance useful skills such as problem-solving, communication, computer skills, and languages. Obtaining new knowledge and skills has helped refugees develop themselves in their places of displacement and prepare themselves to become productive in their country of origin when the time is appropriate.

**EQ16 – Successfulness in terms of LRRD**

**JC 16.1** ECHO-funded operations have been implemented through rapid decision-making processes and flexible instruments

**JC 16.2** ECHO provided a coordinated response strategy through its actions

**JC 16.3** ECHO engaged with a range of locally important actors through its actions

**JC 16.4** ECHO-funded interventions experienced a smooth and timely phase-out, thereby avoiding “grey zones” in international assistance

- ECHO partners recognize the need to further strengthen mid-term programming for refugee and host communities in addition to continuing lifesaving assistance. The protracted crisis in Syria and its increasing impact on neighbouring countries urgently requires assistance for strengthening the resilience and self-help ability of the affected population.
- Education initiatives started by ECHO have been smoothly transitioned to GoT authority. Initially GoT was reluctant to invest in education for fear of sending the wrong message to refugees – that they were staying in Turkey. It has now accepted responsibility and is rapidly bringing this up to an adequate level.

**JC16.5** ECHO-funded actions encouraged “cross-learning” of humanitarian and development experiences

**EQ17, (Security)** To what extent have the ECHO-funded projects taken into account the security situation in the field for the partners’ organisations? What is the scope for improvement?

**JC 17.1.** The design of ECHO-funded actions has been based on an in-depth knowledge of the security situation, both in Syria and in neighboring countries

**JC 17.2.** The design and implementation of ECHO-funded actions facilitated humanitarian access for partner’s organizations

**JC 17.3.** ECHO-funded actions promoted the security and safety of humanitarian personnel delivering humanitarian aid

- ECHO are reportedly supportive when agencies have had to slow down operations owing to security concerns (eg. WFP in Syria)
EQ18 (Humanitarian advocacy) How effective and active has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, open borders, cross-line intervention, INGO registration, work permits, etc.)?

JC 18.1. Advocacy has been a priority of ECHO response strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries

- ECHO advocated heavily for a response to under-served areas (far east), based on a field presence capable of identifying evolving needs. Other donors depend on partner proposals – but in this case partners were not present in these areas. ECHO identified the need and encouraged partners to establish a presence in these areas.

JC 18.2. ECHO advocacy contributed to concrete policy changes in neighbouring countries

- In general ECHO advocacy to the GoT has been delivered through the EU Ambassador. This has greater traction with the Turkish authorities. However it has been harder to advocate on some core humanitarian issues, for example open border policies, given the EU’s own policies.
- ECHO has contributed to opening up the policy space from the GoT to respond to the needs of urban refugees, especially in the far east. Prior to this NGOs had been reluctant to work in this area. Effective use of small funding grants demonstrated that concerns over operating in this area were overstated.
- ECHO advocated for respect for humanitarian principles within Turkey. For example it reported advocating with the GoT for the registration of INGOs. However, details of the form that this advocacy took are not clear. It was also reinforced by advocacy by the EUMS embassies, which was reported to be very effective.
- ECHO intervened with the local Kurdish authorities when partners had problems with local authorities which wanted to take control of humanitarian resources and credit for the response. Active intervention provided partners with important support for continuing operations.
- ECHO advocated to GoT in specific cases in support of work permits for NGOs. The recent rule limiting NGOs to issuing a maximum of five Syrian employee with authorization to travel back and forward across the Syrian border has proved a particular constraint.

JC 18.3. ECHO advocacy contributed to changes in approach by other donors in Syria and neighbouring countries

- DG ECHO has advocated with EUMS for increased assistance to the response in Turkey. However some EUMS are withdrawing assistance (eg. DFID) as they reprioritize towards a response inside Syria. Turkey seen as a middle-income country that is ‘able to cope’.

JC 18.4. ECHO advocacy contributed to increased coordination between donors and governments in Syria and neighbouring countries
• There are limited opportunities for donor coordination at field level as so few donors are present. Essentially ECHO, USG (BPM and FFP) and Germans. DFID is concentrating on cross-border operations.
• ECHO sits as one of three donors on the HLG which sets coordinated donor policy. It is seen as an effective member of this group.
5. Other relevant findings for the evaluation

5.1. Allocation of resources to Refugees in the Far East

The evaluation ToR highlight questions relating to the allocation of resources by ECHO to the influx of refugees in the far east of the country. A number of observations can be made in relation to this issue, although it is hard to disentangle this specific question from the overall question of how ECHO allocated resources to the Turkey response. In terms of the general challenges of resource allocation for ECHO:

- the expectation is that as a humanitarian organization that ECHO should provide assistance according to need; the absence of a current, comprehensive and credible needs assessment (in the far east or nationally) undermines the ability of ECHO - and the evaluators - to conclusively assess the appropriate level of resources required;
- even if better information on needs were available there is an apparent corporate constraint to appropriate resource allocation. Budget allocation processes are a process of “cake splitting” in which arguments are advanced for a share of the available resources. At no point is the field level requested to define an appropriate resource request in response to needs.

Related to this point is the relative inflexibility of total EU humanitarian resources. Increased allocations to the Syria crisis are understood in terms of the implications for a diminished capacity to respond to other global crises. Consequently, decisions tend to factor this in rather than allocating purely on the basis of need.

There is an added complication in the Turkey context as a middle-income country (MIC). The appropriate response to needs has to take into account the ability of the State to respond. This has proved contentious, with the State first declining outside assistance and then requesting it, but then donors being unwilling to respond. The role of ECHO in meeting these needs also should be contextualized by an appreciation of the evolving capacity of the government to meet these needs (both directly and indirectly, eg. through opening up the labour market).

In the far east it is evident that the ECHO country team took a strategic decision to expand humanitarian aid, where a Kurdish majority area is also underserved for several reasons, including the highly politicized environment and challenging dynamics between local actors (municipalities) and local government. In addition the situation in Syria remains unstable and major refugee flows may be anticipated in future, for example from Raqqa City should access improve.

It was apparent during the field mission that many out-of-camp refugees remain underserved and the most vulnerable have high levels of need. In many locations ECHO remains the only active donor in this region. Consequently, attempts to “fill the gap” may need to be complemented by further advocacy for other donors to carry a larger share of the burden.

The appropriate division of responsibility between ECHO and other EU Instruments needs to be factored in to determination of the appropriate budget. Much of the argument for supporting refugees in Turkey is essentially political rather than humanitarian – for example
stemming the flow of refugees to Europe, countering terrorism objectives, and others. In this case it is appropriate that political objectives should be responded to with the use of development funds.

5.2. Basic Needs Approach

This country study examined the appropriateness and proportionality of the basic assistance package provided by ECHO-funded operations to out-of-camp refugees, including obstacles to success and lessons learned from implementation. Specific related issues were identified as follows:

- ECHO-funded operations in Turkey have converted a large proportion of operations from delivery of in-kind transfers to electronic vouchers. This move has been accepted as an efficient and effective response by all actors: UN, NGOs, Government and beneficiaries.

- However, these transfers do not yet represent a ‘basic needs grant’ as they are still designed to meet sectoral food needs – in some cases supplemented by NFIs. Nearly all actors agree that a further transition to cash transfers is desirable. The main dissenting voice is from the GoT although some space for experimentation is emerging.

- The arguments advanced for the use of cash include:
  - the ability to meet a wider range of needs (eg. rent, schooling costs, health, consumer durables, etc.)
  - beneficiary choice and dignity
  - efficiency – it allows beneficiaries to shop at cheaper outlets
  - the ability to save (vouchers expire at the end of each month).

- There is a struggle to deliver vouchers or cash in big cities (eg. Gaziantep) Beyond the capacity of NGO partners as needs overwhelming – stay in smaller centres. To start operations in this context a new strategy is needed, such as working through a big UN agency.

- A cash-based basic needs grant presents opportunities for medium-term linkages to national social transfer systems. In order to exploit these linkages it is logical that various elements of the cash grants should be standardized – and as far as possible in line with the standards of the national system. This includes a standardized registration list and targeting criteria, and agreement on a common Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and transfer amounts.

5.3. Other issues

Sectoral Focus:

- Shelter is consistently and repeatedly reported by beneficiaries to be the top priority need. DRC assessments revealed that the priority needs are cash for food and rent. Households reported that they would go without food to ensure that rent payments are made. Also inconsistent with ECHO responses elsewhere in the region where shelter is a priority.

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258 ECHO (2013) Project 2013-91005 eSingle Form
• However ECHO does not support the shelter sector in Turkey, partly on the grounds that ‘no proposals were forthcoming’. NRC – a shelter specialist – is establishing itself in Turkey and the situation may well change in future. However, in contrast to this position, the lack of an established shelter programme in the far east was not used as a reason by ECHO not to engage in this area,
• Education is a clear refugees’ priority that does not fall within the normal humanitarian mandate. ECHO is providing initial support to schools through the Children of Peace Initiative. Four different projects (UNICEF, CONCERN (two), People in Need) are investing in developing school infrastructure and services. This supports the two-shift system, with Turks educated in the morning and Syrians in the afternoon. This experiment is being viewed positively, aided by a rapid transition to support through development instruments.

**Partnership issues:**

• In the case of Turkey few of ECHO’s FPA NGO partners had an established presence and very few had established relationships with local NGOs. However such relationships are critical to effective delivery. There is no clear strategy as to how these relationships could be quickly established to facilitate implementation. There were a number of “arranged marriages” – several suggested by ECHO – which proved to have mixed success.
• There is potential for learning from this issue and for having a preparedness plan for similar situations in which ECHO commences operations in new contexts. This might involve preparedness measures, support for capacity-building of CSOs and consideration of whether under exceptional circumstances ECHO might directly fund high-quality local NGOs.

**Visibility:**

• There is very little visibility of ECHO operations in Turkey. Derogations for operations inside Syria have been widely used in Turkey. Consequently at the beneficiary level there is little understanding of where these resources come from – beneficiaries often stated that the aid came from the local Mukhtars. The issue needs to be followed up closely.

**Rapid response:**

• Preparedness for rapid influxes of refugees and a rapid response to new access opportunities inside Syria is central to the humanitarian response. While ECHO is a flexible donor there is no stand-by arrangement for preparedness measures.
• ECHO is not supportive of the OCHA-managed Pooled Fund which does offer rapid access to funds for pre-approved Syrian NGOs.

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259 This was established with the proceeds of the Nobel Prize awarded to the EU.
260 This may require changes to the requirement to fund only European registered NGOs.
### Annex IV: Bibliography

The following bibliography presents the list of documents consulted during the evaluation. It is presented by order of author (alphabetical) and then year (ascending).

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