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Evaluation of DG ECHO's Response to the Humanitarian Crises in Sudan and South Sudan (2011-2015)

02-12/2016

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGIR	Global Alliance for Resilience
C&V	Cash and Vouchers
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DFID	Department for International Development UK
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECHO	Directorate General European Commission Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection Office
EDF	European Development Fund
EMOP	Emergency Operations
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERC	Enhanced Response Capacity
EC	European Council
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFA	Food for Assets
FFT	Food for Training
FFW	Food for Work
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
FSNMS	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System
FSTP	Food Security Thematic Programme
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GBV	Gender-based Violence

HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HPC	Humanitarian Procurement Centre
HQ	Headquarter
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDDRSI	IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
INGO	International NGO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ITA	IASC Transformative Agenda
JC	Judgement Criteria
JHDF	Joint Humanitarian Development Framework
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, Practices
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MNP	Micronutrient powders
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	National NGO
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Programme Assistant
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
POC	Protection of Civilians site
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RRT	Rapid Response Team
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SHARE	Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSRRC	South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
TA	Technical Assistant
TEQ	Thematic Evaluation Question

TJC	Thematic Judgement Criteria
TSFP	Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHAS	United Nation's Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

This independent evaluation covers the 2011-2015 support provided by the European Commission (ECHO) in relation to the humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan.

The evaluation found that the support was very relevant and flexible. The support targeted the most vulnerable groups, and was mostly in alignment with European Commission policies. The support in terms of coordination, logistics and humanitarian advocacy contributed to the delivery of results, which also benefitted the wider humanitarian community. ECHO's strong stance on humanitarian principles is applauded, but also poses challenges with regard to access to crisis-affected people.

The support was implemented effectively through high-quality projects, planned outputs were largely achieved, and – when feasible – ensured sustainability of facilities. There were few activities supporting 'Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development' (LRRD) and resilience due to limited opportunities, compounded by short funding-cycles. Contracts were managed efficiently although there were delays in contract approval, and systems for documenting and utilising lessons learnt were lacking.

It is recommended that ECHO i) further strengthens its strategy for a principled approach and advocacy; ii) continues to support and strengthen coordination; iii) considers how to scale up LRRD and resilience efforts when feasible; and iv) strengthens systems for documenting and disseminating lessons learnt.

Executive Summary[1]

The purpose of this evaluation was to have an independent retrospective evaluation of the Directorate General European Commission Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection Office's (hereafter referred to as ECHO) support in relation to the humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan, from 2011-15. Based on the evaluation, four strategic recommendations for future ECHO support in the two countries were inferred.

1.1. Methodology

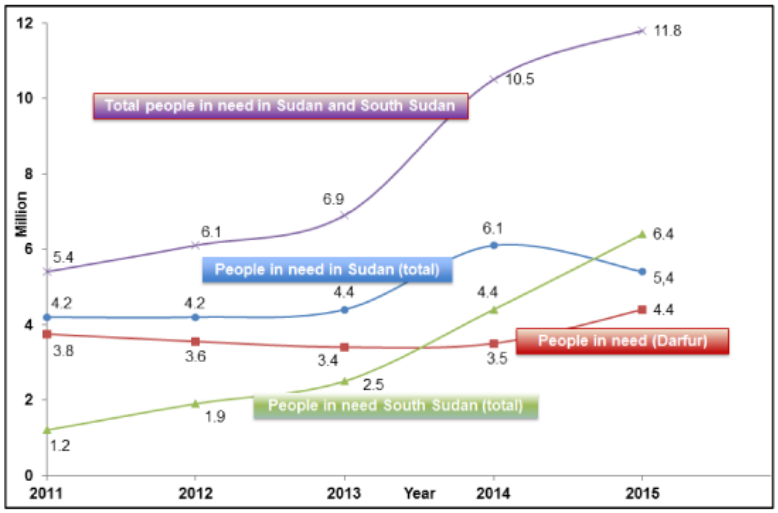
The evaluation was based on six evaluation criteria: Relevance, Coherence, EU Added Value, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability. The evaluation used primary and secondary data obtained through a number of tools, including document review, portfolio analysis, an online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries, partners, ECHO staff, etc., along with visits to project sites in Sudan and South Sudan. A team of international and national experts conducted the evaluation.

As always when conducting large-scale evaluations in dynamic and volatile settings, the evaluation experienced challenges. Due to the sheer number of projects supported, the evaluation team was not able to visit all projects nor review all project documents, and instead made a purposive selection of project documents (FichOps) for review, and of project sites to visit. In some instances, the institutional memory of relevant organisations was constrained by a high staff turnover, limiting the availability of non-written historical data. Project site visits were challenged by the inability of the international experts to travel to areas outside of Khartoum. The national consultant in South Sudan was not able to accompany the international expert to all project sites, and the evaluation team experienced a number of changes to local travel arrangements. However, thanks to the triangulation of multiple sources of information such as documents, interviews, and the online questionnaire (and in Sudan the national consultant's ability to travel to Darfur), the results of the evaluation are found to be valid.

1.2. Context and ECHO support

For decades, Sudan and South Sudan have been marred by conflict, drought, flooding and other disasters, and as a consequence millions of people have been in need of humanitarian assistance. Every year from 2011 to 2015, between 5 and 12 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and this figure has been increasing over the years

Figure 1: People in need in Sudan and South Sudan 2011-15



[1] Translations into French and Arabic are provided in annexes M and N of the main document.

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Conclusions/Rationale	Strategic recommendations
Supporting resilience	
The humanitarian imperative of saving lives first, which ECHO is a strong advocate of, and rightly so, is an important factor in deciding which activities to support; and in both countries, there are indeed unmet humanitarian needs. However, there are opportunities for the implementation of LRRD/resilience activities as also described in the 2014 and 2015 HIPs regarding the application of resilience – through support to livelihood, use of the cash and vouchers modalities, and the protection of agricultural assets. Enabling communities to better resist future shocks would be a potentially cost-effective approach, as urgent assistance would be required less, and this might even pave the way for partners to access development funding that can be used for LRRD purposes. However, ECHO's short (annual) project duration and the scarcity of funding, are not well suited if medium or longer-term activities, like those required to meaningfully embarking on resilience activities, are to be effective.	ECHO should consider engaging in a discussion about if and how it will open up its present approach of focusing purely on lifesaving activities to include also when feasible a wider resilience and/or early recovery approach. In this regard strengthening support to livelihoods, capacity building and community based activities in the camps, close to the camps, and in areas of return could be considered. Considering the context of protracted forgotten crises, economic sanctions and donors' fatigue in both Sudans, resilience can, depending on the specific context, be envisaged due to resilience's focus on strengthening affected communities and requires the support of only some local authorities – which are often more accessible and committed than national ones. In collaboration with other actors and development donors, ECHO could discuss the way forward, i.e. define what should be included in the ECHO support to resilience (and/or LRRD) and what should not. As resilience projects tend to take longer to implement due to the need to ensure ownership of the beneficiary communities, ways of defining multi-year strategies while at the same considering how to extend the project duration; or some kind of guarantee should be issued to partners that their funding will continue. Issuing multi-year contracts is not possible at present due to legal restrictions. Pending a possible change in the legal basis, lessons could possibly be learnt from the Drought Risk Reduction Action Plan (DRRAP) programme implemented in the Horn of Africa.

Conclusions/Rationale	Strategic recommendations
Using lessons learnt	
ECHO's procedures for identifying, documenting and utilising lessons learnt (mainly taking place through expert groups) are unclear and not consistently applied . Partners too, do not always pay sufficient attention to filling in the required record on lessons learnt in the final report form. Documentation and utilisation of lessons learnt is not systematised, and mainly relies on the memory of ECHO staff. However, staff members are not always retained for more than a year or two due to the dynamic and difficult contexts in the Sudans.	ECHO should strengthen its capacity to keep and disseminate lessons learnt, to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and to possibly support the implementation of more cost effective activities. Capturing lessons learnt can eventually provide the basis for innovations. Ultimately, this might lead to more effective actions, contributing to save more lives for the same amount of funding. In this conjunction, ECHO should ensure that partners provide sufficient information on lessons learnt. Lessons learnt and best practices should be captured in an easy to access and searchable manner. This could perhaps best be achieved by allowing for sector-specific searches in the existing lessons learnt records in the DG ECHO's project database (HOPE). Lessons learnt and best practices should also be shared with partners, e.g. through workshops, through the clusters, or by sharing written briefings at national or global level.

Introduction

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation of DG ECHO's response to the humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan. Both countries have experienced humanitarian crises caused mainly by conflict or natural disasters droughts, compounded by political instability with millions of people displaced internally and externally. There are likely to continue to be humanitarian needs in the foreseeable future.

As per the ToR (Annex A), the purpose of the evaluation is to have an independent overall evaluation of the ECHO support from 2011 to 2015 in the two countries, aiming to provide a comprehensive retrospective assessment of ECHO's strategy. The evaluation is expected to provide a maximum of five prospective strategic recommendations (included in chapter 0) for the future ECHO support to the crises, taking into account the volatile context, and with a view to maximising the benefits of ECHO's support.

The final report is intended to be of use not only to ECHO at local, regional and central levels, but also to ECHO partners, national and regional stakeholders and other humanitarian donors and agencies.

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consultant did not lessen the reliability of the data obtained. In Sudan the national consultant travelled to the field, and as she is very experienced and had the opportunity to spend two weeks in Khartoum with the international consultants prior to travelling to Nyala - thus getting a good understanding of the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions - the national consultant was able to obtain accurate data. Indeed, the data she obtained was possibly even more accurate than it would have been if the international experts had been present since interviews with beneficiaries were conducted more smoothly than they would have been if translation had been required for the international experts. It is therefore believed that although direct access to beneficiaries by the international experts was not possible, the approach did not significantly change the extent and quality of the data obtained.

The evaluation team believes that all translations done for this evaluation remained faithful to the meaning of the original questions and answers, taking into consideration the need to adopt the wording of the questions to the cultural and educational level of the respondents. Assessing female beneficiaries was expected to be a potential challenge, especially in Sudan, but the use of a female national consultant offset this, thus not affecting the evaluation's validity.

Considering the interviewees' high level of commitment to implementing the ECHO funded projects, the evaluation team might in some instances have collected data that was sometimes biased. However, as triangulation of data from partner staff with data from the document review and interviews with other stakeholders, such as beneficiaries and donors, showed a good match, it is believed that this did not affect the validity of the evaluation. The good rapport established with interviewees during interviews also ensured an honest and open atmosphere. The debriefings held at country level and in Brussels also contributed to ensuring that balanced data was obtained. Furthermore, the data from evaluations conducted by partners and the ECHO monitoring visits also contributed to a comprehensive assessment of the projects.

The working environment is not conducive to retaining staff in either country and the turnover of international staff was high amongst most implementing partners and UN organisations. Without being able to count exactly how long international interviewees had been in-country, it is likely that more than half of them had been there less than a year. This limits the possibilities for obtaining historical information which mainly has an impact on the validity of the assessment of past projects. The use of the online questionnaire partly offset this, as did the interviewees that had been in the Sudans for several years.

A few respondents were not available for interviews in the field, e.g. they were on annual leave, or out of the country for rest and recuperation periods, etc., but no respondents of significant importance were unavailable to the evaluation team. The use of the online questionnaire also helped offset any potential impact of the unavailability of interviewees on the validity of the evaluation.

Although the high response rate to the online questionnaire was encouraging, the respondents were not necessarily a representative sample, as the reason the respondents had for choosing to respond might differ (i.e. it could be that mainly those that were critical of the ECHO support responded, or perhaps mainly those that were in favour of the ECHO support responded). It is likely that most of the respondents to the online questionnaire were based in partner HQs and might have a different perspective of challenges related to the ECHO support compared to partner staff on the ground. As answers are relative (i.e. if something is 'good' it is typically relative in relation to something else, without always knowing in relation to what: is it in comparison to how good it could/should be, or is it in comparison to what other donors do?) caution was exercised when interpreting the answers. Overall, based on the varied responses and the extent to which the responses to the online questionnaire correspond with the data obtained during the semi-structured interviews, it is believed that the responses were valid.

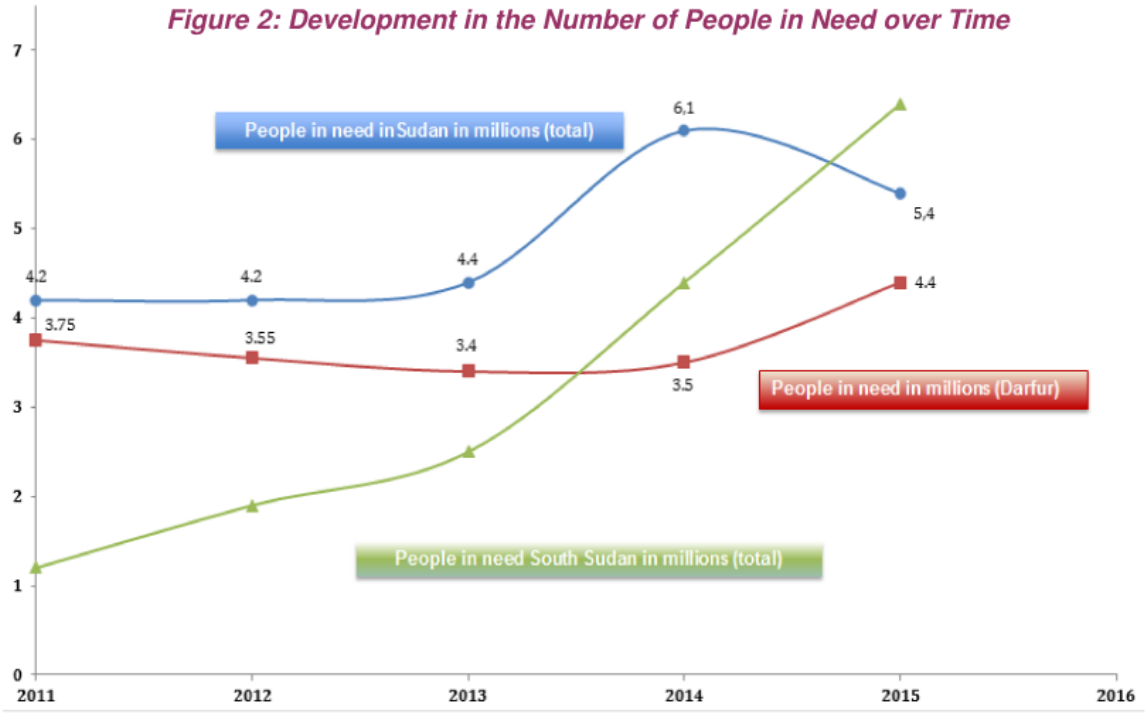
ECHO in Sudan and South Sudan

1.6. Humanitarian context

Sudan and South Sudan are in need of humanitarian assistance, and have been for decades. After decades of conflict and, in recent years, also financial crisis, Sudan has required substantial humanitarian assistance – the UN and partners' 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan required USD 1 billion. According to the 2016 Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 5.8 million people out of a total population of close to 40 million were in need of humanitarian assistance. Four million people were food insecure and 2.2 million of the internally displaced people needed assistance, 2 million of whom were in Darfur. This dire situation was further compounded by 700,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan. The fighting in Jebal Marra in Darfur displaced around 100,000 people many of whom were inaccessible. Humanitarian assistance in Sudan is controlled by the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) that approves work plans and, in recent years, has pushed hard for 'sudanisation' of the organisations providing humanitarian assistance; this includes restricting the number of international NGO staff. The HAC also enforces the involvement of national NGOs in implementation. The humanitarian space, and room for civil society, is very limited in Sudan, and movements are severely restricted with the HAC controlling the movement of NGO staff.

South Sudan has been marred by conflict for decades, and the 2011 independence did not bring about the hoped-for peace dividend. Next, a civil war fought mainly between the ruling government of SPLM and SPLM In-Opposition had displaced 2.3 million people by the end of 2015, including 1.7 million internally, and 630,000 in neighbouring countries. A total of 3.9 million people were severely food insecure and the UN asked for support to 5.1 million people out of a total population of around 12 million. The 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan asked for USD 1.5 billion, of which only USD 1 billion was funded. South Sudan also hosted 265,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. A peace agreement has been signed, but progress on the ground has been slow with fighting continuing mainly in the north-eastern part of the country

Figure 2: Development in the Number of People in Need over Time



and moving closer to Juba. Additionally, the economy is on the verge of collapsing and security in the capital Juba has deteriorated rapidly.[2]

An indication of the changes in terms of those in need over the years is shown in Figure 2 above. In South Sudan especially, there has been a substantial increase in the number of people in need. More detailed timelines, also showing the main events, are included in Annex I.

1.7. ECHO's support

ECHO's financial contribution to the humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan 2011-15 has been provided through 13 HIPs with a total value of EUR 850 million. The ECHO support constituted around 10% of the total humanitarian funding requirements as per the UN response plans over the five years, and meant that ECHO was among the top-five humanitarian donors[3].

Seven of the HIPs not only targeted Sudan or South Sudan, but were part of larger regional or global HIPs, such as the HIPs for enhancing Humanitarian Response Capacity, the Epidemics HIPs, and children-related HIPs. An overview of these additional seven HIPs and the accompanying projects is provided in Annex G. To focus the evaluation, it was decided that this evaluation should deal only with the six country-specific HIPs with a total value of EUR 696 million. The six HIPs are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: List of 2011-2015 HIPs for Evaluation

HIP no.	HIP decision title	Amount
ECHO/SDN/BUD/2011/91000	Sudan and South Sudan	140,000,000
ECHO/-AF/BUD/2012/91000	Sudan and South Sudan	157,000,000
ECHO/-AF/BUD/2013/91000	Sudan and South Sudan	97,000,000
ECHO/-AF/BUD/2014/91000	Sudan and South Sudan	112,715,000
ECHO/SSD/EDF/2014/01000	Bridging Facility for South	30,000,000
ECHO/-AF/BUD/2015/91000	Sudan and South Sudan	199,000,000
Total	-	735,715,000

Based on the HIPs, country-specific intervention logics for the ECHO-funded actions have been developed as per Annex H. The intervention logics consist of two figures illustrating the linkages between,

- the humanitarian priorities identified,
- the ECHO response,
- limiting/enabling factors,
- the expected outcomes/specific impact, and
- the expected ultimate impact.

The relevance of the two intervention logics, which were prepared during the inception phase, has by and large been confirmed by the field and survey findings. Such findings have, however, further lent credence to the prediction of the limiting factors such as limited access due to

[2] Sources: Humanitarian Snapshot, OCHA, December 31, 2015
[3] Data from Financial Tracking Service at fts.unocha.org.

insecurity and administrative impediments that challenged all four expected outcomes (restored basic livelihood, health services, protection and respect for humanitarian principles and improved resilience capacities) despite the much appreciated efforts by ECHO.

The timelines showing the development in people in need (see Figure 2 on page 4 for an overview and details in Annex I) allow a comparison over time between the intervention logic (Annex H) and the HIPs themselves, both reflecting the ECHO support to Sudan and South Sudan. The analysis in sections 1.9.1, 1.9.2 and 1.9.3 of the fit between needs assessments, the HIPs and the implemented actions, show that the needs were taking into consideration the context at any given point of time.

The situation in Sudan in 2015 for example, shows a reduction in overall "people in need" but an increase in the Darfur region due to a worsening of the Darfur crisis. This led to a twofold approach in the 2015 HIP (see also the intervention logic) of a more early recovery oriented approach in areas of protracted crisis, and emergency interventions in areas with actual fighting. An event depicted in the South Sudan timeline is the December 2013 crisis resulting in an increase in people in need from 2.5 million in 2013 to 6.4 million in 2015. This enormous increase in people in need is reflected during updates of the 2014 HIP and the bridging HIP for South Sudan, resulting in a major funding increase and a shift from LRRD to emergency interventions (see also the intervention logic). Through a comparison of the overall support to Sudan and South Sudan with the events in the timeline, it is found that support follows the events very closely and is adapted to changes, where necessary.

ECHO's response to Sudan was structured as follows:

- Focusing on emergency responses and preparedness for displaced people, refugees, returnees, host communities and nomads, in the sectors of food assistance and livelihoods, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and non-food items, and protection. It also encompassed coordination - including support to ensure the safety of humanitarian activities - and logistical support. Efforts to reduce acute malnutrition through a multi-sectorial approach were supported as well.
- In settings where the emergency was less acute, the identification of transition strategies was considered an important element.
- A focus on protection was considered particularly pertinent for all types of displaced populations (IDPs, returnees and refugees) across the country, despite implementation challenges resulting from overall access constraints and the lack of actors. Protection mainstreaming was to be increasingly promoted and improved. Targeting and diversification of aid modalities to build resilience of vulnerable communities to future shocks was expected to be of paramount importance.

ECHO's activities in South Sudan focused on lifesaving activities, including support to refugees and IDPs; they also took into account food insecurity and malnutrition which continued to be amongst the major humanitarian needs in the country. After the eruption of the armed conflict in December 2013, ECHO's response focused on four main axes:

- Support for the scaling-up of humanitarian assistance where the greatest needs are identified, including through adequate food aid and emergency medical and nutritional interventions, emergency WASH to reduce deaths, and logistical support;
- Advocacy for a better protection of civilians inside and outside UNMISS Protection of Civilians areas;
- Continued humanitarian assistance to address the basic needs of refugees; and
- Support to communities exposed to high risks of morbidity and mortality, including severe food insecurity, high malnutrition rates and outbreaks of epidemics because of shocks

linked to flooding and seasonal hunger during the lean season. Effective coordination has also been supported.[4]

In order to better understand the projects supported under the HIPs, the main features of the projects are described below.

1.8. ECHO supported Projects

This section contains a summary of the ECHO supported projects in Sudan and South Sudan with more details to be found in Annex J, the portfolio analysis.

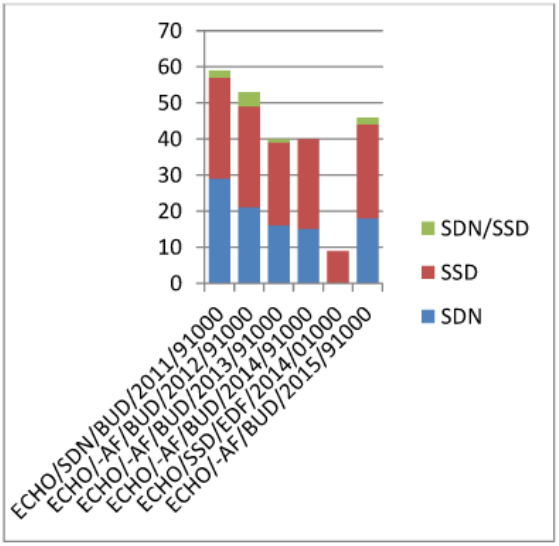
ECHO has been the third largest humanitarian donor in both countries, contributing approximately 10% of the total humanitarian response. The US has been the largest by far contributing around 40%.

Each of the five major HIPs had between 40 and 60 projects each, with 9 projects for the 2014 bridging facility. Slightly more projects were implemented under the 2011 and 2012 HIPs. The variation in the number of projects per HIP is mainly due to the differences in the amounts available to each HIP.

Geographical distribution

Slightly more than half (140) of the 247 projects were implemented in South Sudan, 40% in Sudan and 5% in both countries; the latter were implemented under the first three HIPs only, while, naturally, the 2014 Bridging Facility projects were only implemented in South Sudan. A graphical illustration of the number of projects by geographical location and HIP is included in Figure 3 to the right.

Figure 3: Projects per Country



Half of the projects implemented in Sudan were registered as implemented in Darfur. Given the concentration of humanitarian needs in Darfur coupled with (even more) limited access - thus a lack of partners - in the southern and eastern parts of the country, this distribution of project locations is understandable and reasonable. 15% of the projects in Sudan were registered as covering all of Sudan.

Just over a third of the projects implemented in South Sudan are registered as implemented in the conflict areas of Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile (also known as Greater Upper Nile) where there were clearly high humanitarian needs throughout the period covered by the evaluation.

Contracted amounts

A quarter (EUR 177 million) of the total amount contracted over the five years has been committed to Sudan, two thirds (EUR 437 million) to South Sudan and the rest (EUR 80 million) to both countries during 2011/12 when South Sudan was gaining independence.

[4] DG ECHO: Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Sudan and South Sudan 2015

The contracted amounts range from EUR 130,000 to EUR 58 million with the average contracted amount being EUR 2.8 million and the median EUR 1.3 million (see also Figure 4 to the right).

The average contracted amounts for the 2011 HIP were the lowest (EUR 2.3 million) with the average contracted amounts for the 2015 HIP being the highest at EUR 3.5 million with fluctuations over the year without a clear trend.

The average cost of projects in South Sudan was generally higher (EUR 3.1 million) than in Sudan (EUR 1.9 million) - as is shown in Figure 5 below - in line with the fact that more funds were provided to South Sudan.

Figure 4: Contracted Amounts

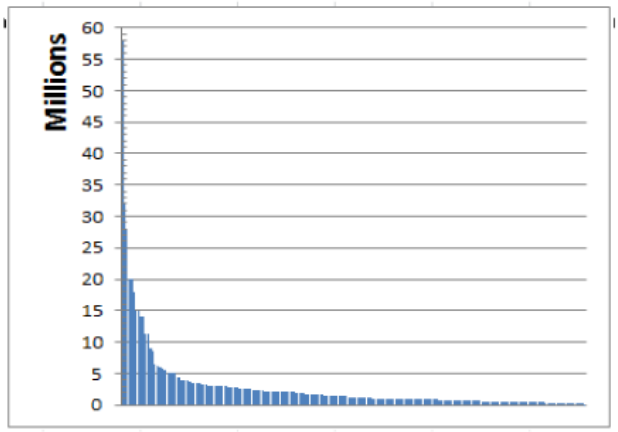
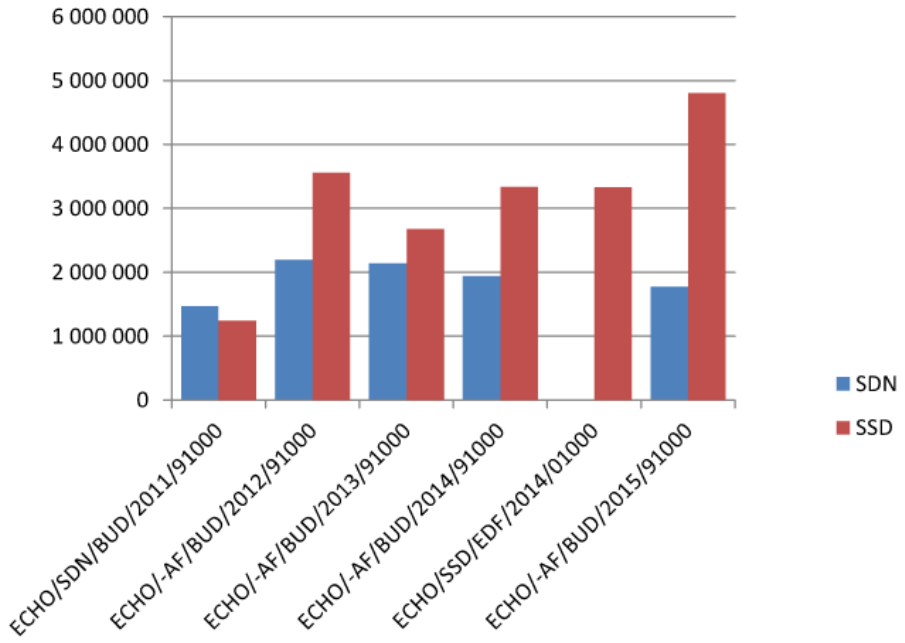


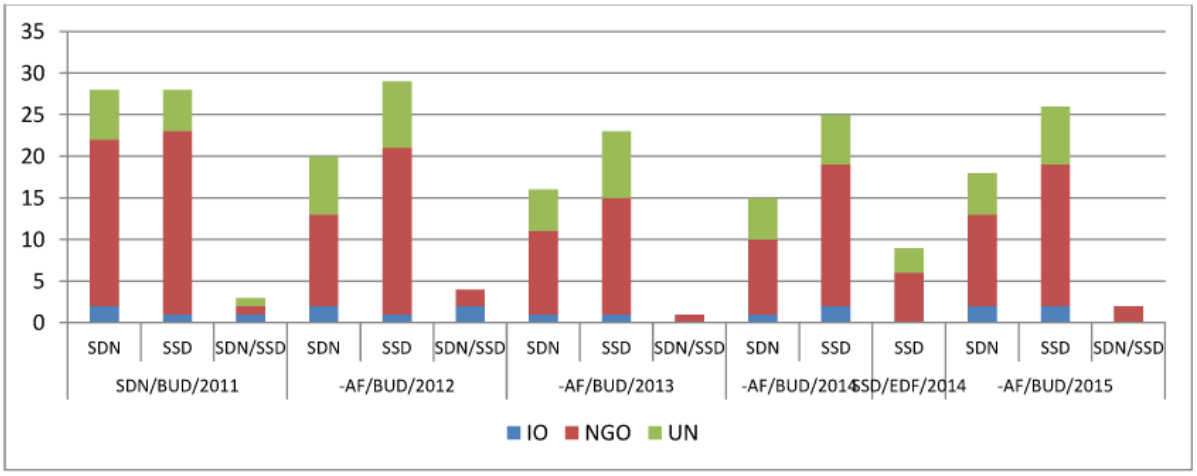
Figure 5: Average Contracted Amount per Project per HIP per Country



Partners

A total of 56 different partners were involved in the implementation of the six HIPs, 29 of which were supported in Sudan and 43 in South Sudan (one partner can be operational in both countries). WFP is by far the largest recipient with EUR 286 million (41%) of the contracted amounts received for 23 projects, receiving in total as much as the next 13 largest recipients received altogether. Second, in terms of contracted amounts, is ICRC (EUR 48 million), closely followed by UNHCR and UNICEF with more than EUR 40 million each. Of the 247 projects, 163 (66%) are registered as having been implemented by NGOs, 66 (27%) by the UN, and 18 (7%) by IOs with similar trends for every HIP, as seen in Figure 6.

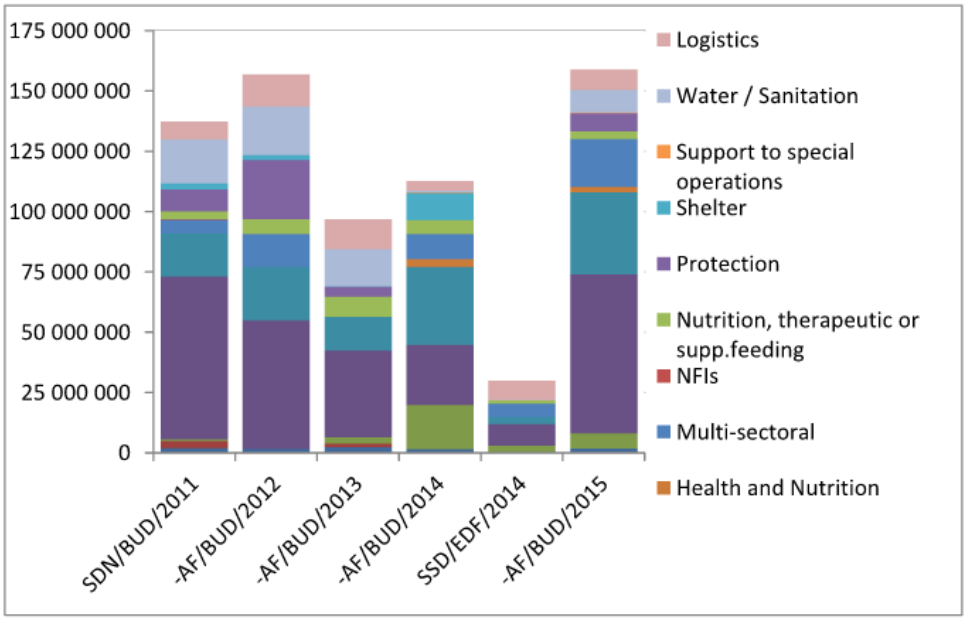
Figure 6: Type of Implementing Partner by HIP and Country



Aid type

The projects in the HOPE database are registered with eleven different "Primary Aid Types", and this was expanded by the evaluation team to include three additional types: Health and Nutrition, Multi-sectoral, and Logistics. The Food projects were the largest aid type, receiving 37% of the funds followed by Health and Nutrition and Water / Sanitation with 18 and 10% respectively. Logistics was supported with 7.8%. For a graphical presentation, please refer to Figure 7 below. It should be noted that ECHO forwarded a spreadsheet in October 2016, covering only 2015, that provides slightly different figures based on different aid types and without the complete budget: Based on the new spreadsheet, support to Nutrition and Health constitutes 32% and Water / Sanitation 13%.

Figure 7: Contracted Amounts per Primary Aid Type per HIP

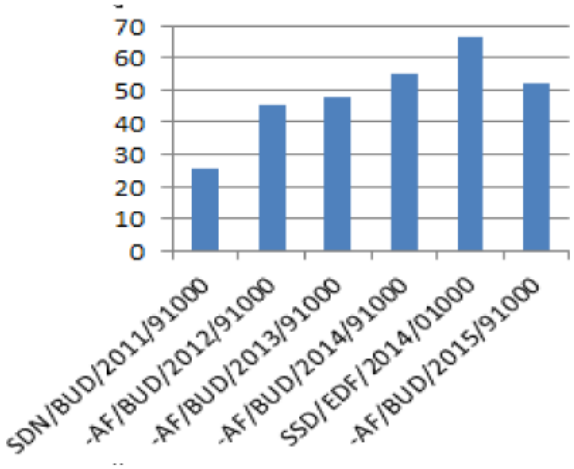


Multi-phase projects

Almost half of the projects were multi-phase with five of the projects having four phases, and one project - a Food project implemented by WFP in South Sudan - having 5 phases[5]. The relatively large proportion of multi-phase projects shows commitment not only by ECHO but also by the partners, and can form the foundation for a better understanding of the context, needs, and beneficiaries' priorities; but it can also facilitate the learning of lessons, and the application of these lessons learnt.

Multi-phase projects also have the advantage of contributing to ensuring a more reliable and steady source of income for the partners, enabling them to achieve reasonable staff retention rates and invest in more durable assets for implementation. There were between 40 and 60 multi-phase projects every year constituting between a quarter and two thirds of the total number of projects. As illustrated in Figure 8, there was an increase in the percentage of multi-phase projects over the years in question.

Figure 8: Share of Multi-Phase Projects (%)



Overall, the support is found to be in line with the objectives stated in the HIPs, and to cover relevant geographic locations. There is a mix of smaller and larger projects reflecting the difference in sizes of the partners, with larger partners being granted larger projects. A relatively large number of partners were used, including NGOs (most), UN agencies and International Organisations. All major sectors were covered (education through Children of Peace HIPs). The support thus helped alleviate humanitarian needs in terms of emergency lifesaving interventions in successive or protracted humanitarian crises. In contexts where exit strategies could not be envisaged, relevant multi-phase projects with consistent partners, locations and activities were implemented.

As pointed out in section 1.12 on the effectiveness of the ECHO support, implementation of the supported projects are overall found to be of a high standard taking into consideration the hiccups that can be expected in challenging contexts like Sudan and South Sudan. The main limiting factors were a lack of infrastructure especially during the rainy season (mainly in South Sudan), obstructions due to cumbersome administrative procedures (mainly in Sudan), insecurity that in some places hampered implementation and monitoring to some extent. As always, there was, however, a need to push for continued improvements, which ECHO is indeed supporting through its monitoring visits (see also section 1.13.1 for more on monitoring). Partners that did not perform well did not receive funding in subsequent years.

[5] Possibly more as the classification of multi-year projects is based on projects implemented by the same partner with similar project titles; some projects might have changed name significantly and are thus not captured.

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about the opportunities for transition to longer-term development due to upcoming DEVCO financing.

For South Sudan, there was a good fit between the HIP and the projects realized. The 2015 HIP did not anticipate a move towards LRRD due to the on-going conflict and limited availability of development funding, but refers to ECHO's active support of the "Joint Humanitarian Development framework (JHDF)"[6] and the EU's "Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP)"[7].

Partners in both countries generally acknowledged the fit between the assessments in the HIPs and the financed projects. Half of the online questionnaire respondents evaluated the fit as good and one in ten as excellent. While acknowledging that the funding available does not allow full coverage to be achieved, the geographical prioritisation on needs basis is generally seen as realistic and pragmatic.

Concerning cases in which changes had to be made to a project, the majority of partners appreciate the flexibility of ECHO. A large majority of partners mentioned changes in the humanitarian context as the major trigger for the adaptation of an action. Recommendations by the ECHO technical assistants, the clusters as well as budgetary constraints are also mentioned as reasons for changes to projects, but to a far lesser degree.

Partners confirmed that they referred to the HIP when developing proposals. At the same time, some partners found that the priorities put forward in the HIPs were somehow generic, which, however, in turn allowed some flexibility in the funding decisions. Changes in the humanitarian situation during the period covered by the HIP, are not continuously reflected in the HIPs, causing a degree of incertitude for some partners, but ECHO is dealing with this issue through support to rapid response teams.

1.9.3. JC 1.3: Capacity to adapt response to changing needs

The 2011-2015 HIPs for Sudan and South Sudan were each modified two to four times when additional funding was made available or when there was a shift in the budget lines as in 2011, for example when EUR 8 million was shifted to Food Aid. A total of EUR 198 million was allocated additionally over the years. Each update and the corresponding justifications are included in updated HIPs, all of which the evaluation team found to be reasonable and in line with changes in the needs.

The FichOps review revealed that modification requests were received for more than two thirds of the projects, and that 90% of these were granted. This is in line with the findings from the field where a large majority of partners confirmed that ECHO is very open, flexible and reactive with regards to changes in needs. In case of changes in needs during an on-going project, the ECHO technical assistants could be approached at any time for discussions, and if sufficient evidence for the changed needs was made available, ECHO would try to find a solution. In South Sudan, however, it was at the same time felt that a focus on priority areas could prevent support in some more local areas with pockets of needs. Partners stated that the main triggers for requesting modifications due to changes in needs was influxes of newly displaced people.

The responses to the online questionnaire also show that ECHO was perceived as flexible, with less than 10% of those respondents who answered the questions related to flexibility, stating

[6] JHDF is a strategic analysis aimed at enhancing a strategic dialogue on food security and nutrition between humanitarian and development institutions of the EU. The result was an approach to build the resilience of vulnerable populations through linking hunger relief with longer-term development in areas of protracted crises.

[7] FSTP supports activities aimed at improving food security for the most vulnerable populations through addressing structural issues in the medium or long term.

that this was poor. The main reasons for changes to the projects were contextual changes, recommendations from ECHO monitoring visits or evaluations, and budgetary changes.

1.9.4. JC 1.4: Reflection of beneficiaries' needs and adequate targeting of people most at risk

A condition in all HIPs was that the projects should target the needs of the most vulnerable and most-at-risk groups. This was more pronounced after the 2013 South Sudan crisis. Although the HIPs do not make reference to any specific vulnerability analyses or assessments beyond the IPC rating, the operational strategy in all HIPs defines refugees and IDPs as the most-at-risk with special emphasis on the population of IDP settlements in hard to reach areas of which in South Sudan for example, only half were reached according to the 2014 Bridging Facility HIP. Also pregnant and lactating women, and children under-5 specifically are considered as some of the most-at-risk groups. The provision of basic lifesaving services (food aid, nutrition, WASH, shelter, NFI) is the most important activity in all HIPs.

It is generally acknowledged in the HIPs that limitations in the provision of basic services have negative effects on protection. The host population and the additional strains it experiences due to the high IDP caseloads are also referred to. The desk study found that two thirds of the projects included a description of the needs of the most-at-risk groups to a large or very large extent (groups identified included children under-5, pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and the elderly). By status, the IDPs, refugees and returnees are considered the most vulnerable in one sixth of the projects and less than a handful of the projects reviewed were assessed as 'limited' with regards to targeting the most-at-risk groups.

The evaluation found that the partners generally provided assistance which was relevant to the needs, as confirmed by interviews with beneficiaries in the field, cluster coordinators, and other donors. This was confirmed during the field missions, during which beneficiaries stated that they were frequently involved in needs assessments conducted by the partners, e.g. in Bentiu where the population currently returning to their areas of origin were asked to prioritise services, based on which these partners provided water, education support (semi-permanent schools) and mobile clinics. The evaluation team also found that the local governmental authorities and line ministries were involved in the planning process. Nowhere did the interviewed beneficiaries state that they would have preferred different types of assistance; they considered vouchers as the best form of support as it offered a higher degree of flexibility. In some locations, beneficiaries, especially those that had been displaced for longer periods, would like to receive livelihood support too (in the form of income generating activities, agriculture, etc.) in addition to food aid.

The HIPs request partners to include vulnerability assessments in their context analysis and to consider beneficiary groups with special needs in their proposals (Gender/Age Marker, Inclusiveness etc.). The FichOps review showed that a little more than half of the projects reviewed were based on systematic vulnerability assessments. Most activities in the projects supported by ECHO target some of the most vulnerable groups with a large number of partners focusing on pregnant and lactating women and children under-5. Additionally, some partners used vulnerability criteria developed by the protection cluster for the identification of the most vulnerable. Specific protection risk analysis was done in a small part (one in ten) of the projects reviewed during the desk phase, with most focusing on child protection. Only in South Sudan did a few partners confirm that they had conducted separate protection risk analysis as part of their needs assessments - that it was not done in Sudan could be considered proof of the difficult working environment in Sudan where protection and rights issues are less freely discussed. Most partners stated that protection-related topics were mainstreamed into their needs assessments.

1.10. Coherence

Evaluation Question 2:

*What was the **Coherence** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

Judgment Criteria:

JC 2.1: HIPs are aligned with EC/ECHO humanitarian policies (as listed in ECHO's website) – if not, why not?

1.10.1. JC 2.1: Alignment of HIPs with EC/ECHO humanitarian policies

At strategy level, the HIPs for Sudan incorporate ECHO's humanitarian policies and guidelines[8], in as far as resources allow (budget, presence of skilled partners, access, cooperation of authorities) and according to the identified priority needs. The most frequently identified policy alignments concern food assistance, nutrition, WASH, health, protection, and children (rather as a cross-cutting issue). The 'Gender-sensitive aid' policy is considered in project documents as evidenced by gender targeting and provision of gender disaggregated data. Protection activities also include specific concerns about GBV and children. It should furthermore be noted that (i) the C&V modality is attempted where possible in Sudan and (ii) DRR is difficult to apply in the current chaotic contexts of Sudan and even more in South Sudan.

The evaluation found that the projects were aligned with ECHO's policies and guidelines despite the fact that generally the partner field staff were not familiar with them. This is likely because the policies are in line with standard humanitarian policies and practices and as such already are part of the partner's own guidelines, and because partner HQ staff, who contribute to developing the projects, ensure such alignment.

1.11. EU Added Value

Evaluation Question 3:

- *What was **the EU Added Value** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

JCs 3.3 to 3.6 cover also thematic question 2d) and 2f) of the ToR:

- *'To what extent has ECHO's support to the coordination of humanitarian assistance and for logistical operations supporting humanitarian assistance contributed to improving the quality of humanitarian operations?';*
- *'To what extent has ECHO's participation in humanitarian leadership inside and outside the UN system been successful?'*

Judgment Criteria:

JC 3.1: Help ensure presence of skilled implementing partners in the field

JC 3.2: Provide major funding contributions to specific sectors and activities, not adequately covered by other donors

JC 3.3: Help ensure international humanitarian logistics capacities

[8] These policies include: food assistance; nutrition; WASH; health; C&V; protection; gender-sensitive aid; DRR; and helping children in need (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines_en).

JC 3.4: Support to and dialogue with humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms

JC 3.5: Support and/or play active role in other IASC Transformative Agenda (ITA) coordination tools, (see also needs assessment tools in JC 1.1)

JC 3.6: Use all opportunities for cooperation with development donors – if not, why not?

In addition to adding value through the above judgment criteria, the evaluation found that ECHO has also added value to the efforts of alleviating the humanitarian needs in the two countries through its advocacy efforts, especially on humanitarian access, as described in section 1.12.2 on page 25.

1.11.1. J.C 3.1: Help ensure presence of skilled implementing partners in the field

As stated earlier, the ECHO support is provided in very challenging environments which includes problems of access due to conflict and logistics – this limits monitoring too - but also administrative difficulties. In South Sudan for instance, the not-yet-implemented new NGO Act is likely to impact on the INGO partners' capacities to implement humanitarian projects due to, amongst other things, limiting the percentage of expatriates employed to 20%, and leaving the decision as to where NGOs should operate to the government. ECHO has been vocal in its criticism of the NGO Act, and the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management has issued a brief statement expressing his concern. In Sudan, the issuance, or lack hereof, of travel permits and visas significantly hampers the recruitment of skilled staff, and completely prevents access to many areas.

The interviews conducted during the field visits and the responses to the online questionnaire provide a generally quite positive view of ECHO's support to the field presence of their implementing partners. More than two thirds of the respondents to the online questionnaire rate the ECHO support as "excellent" or "good" and a further fifth as "average". Comments outline e.g. the added value of ECHO staff to the humanitarian response, as well as their knowledge, professionalism, and readiness to "find good solutions within regulations".

The evaluation found that ECHO's humanitarian advocacy[9] along with support to logistics services and coordination as described below, contributed to ensuring the presence of partners and facilitating the implementation of activities in line with humanitarian principles.

1.11.2. J.C 3.2: Provide major funding contributions to specific sectors and activities, not adequately covered by other donors

Gaps in the humanitarian response often also relate to specific geographical areas or to new displacements not covered by existing interventions, or interventions of other donors that might not require large amounts of funding. An analysis of support to activities not funded by others therefore needs to consider not only the support in terms of how substantial the financial support was, but also where and when it was provided. In this regard, the evaluation found that ECHO filled geographical gaps rather than sectoral gaps in accordance with information provided to ECHO through ECHO staff's regular participation in coordination forums (sector meetings, inter-sector meetings, donor coordination meetings, etc.), close contact with partners, and frequent visits to the field. In addition to financing gaps in the geographical coverage, ECHO also financed gaps related to sudden-onset emergencies such as new displacements or flooding through highly appreciated emergency response teams, and contributed to preparing

[9] For more on humanitarian advocacy, please refer to sections 1.12.2.

partners to respond to upcoming humanitarian crises[10]. The support was possible, in part due to ECHO's flexibility in allowing modifications to on-going projects and in part through support provided to the partner's emergency response teams tasked with addressing such gaps. An interviewee in the field provided a recent example of how ECHO has funded important activities that would perhaps not usually be funded by humanitarian donors[11]. However, based on the financial data available it is not possible to identify the extent to which ECHO covered specific financing gaps.

1.11.3. J.C 3.3: Help ensure international humanitarian logistics capacities

The support to ensure logistical capacity focused on air transport (UNHAS), the Logistics Cluster[12] and infrastructure rehabilitation which accounted for 8% of the total expenditure, or EUR 54 million, over the years in question. More than a third of this was for UNHAS in Sudan and South Sudan, around half was for the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan, and most of the remainder was for infrastructure support in South Sudan through UNOPS.

The vast majority of opinions collected from interviewees considered UNHAS an indispensable service for fast and safe access to field locations; its safety and reliability is widely appreciated. Partners were also very satisfied with the UNHAS' small-cargo transportation solution. During the rainy season, UNHAS is faced with inadequately constructed airstrips at many destinations; the introduction of recovery flights has reduced the negative impact but renders the operations of UNHAS more difficult. From the evaluation team's own experience during the fieldwork as well as through statements by partners, the UNHAS system for recovery flights is generally working well with regular and timely flights to most destinations.

UNHAS Sudan has successfully implemented the majority of recommendations resulting from the 2015 visit of the ECHO regional aviation expert with a 10% reduction in budget. Further budget reductions are still needed, but partners voiced the opinion that further reductions will most likely negatively affect access and humanitarian operations. The UNHAS operations in both countries struggle with the increased need of more expensive transport options due to security risks and climatic conditions that make many destinations only accessible by rotary-wing aircraft. Partners also reported an increase in administrative hurdles by local authorities (obtaining flight clearance, cargo handling etc.).

The Logistics Cluster is active in South Sudan and provides air, land (common transport services, shunting) and barge transportation as well as common storage and coordination services. In general, partners are positive towards the Logistics Cluster. The Logistics Cluster staff in the hubs is perceived as active, cooperative and trying hard to make things work. A number of partners mentioned capacity restraints making cargo transport somewhat unpredictable. Long-term planning is necessary in order to ensure supplies are available at a certain point at a certain time. The Logistics Cluster has access to two helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft operated by UNHAS.

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[10] Partners praised the ECHO support to counter the impact of the El Nino phenomenon (although from 2016 and thus outside the scope of this evaluation) where, according to partners, no other donor had invested in similar in-depth analysis and an adapted regional response. ECHO was considered – as one interviewee mentioned – a "reference donor" in this case.

[11] The example given was the investment in heavy earthmoving equipment in Malakal, facilitating the establishment of the Protection of Civilian site (POC) and which later on allegedly facilitated securing funding from other donors.

[12] The Logistics Cluster is a coordination mechanism responsible for coordination, information management, and, where necessary, logistics service provision to ensure that an effective and efficient logistics response takes place in emergencies. The World Food Programme is the lead agency for the Logistics Cluster.

A specific concern to some partners in South Sudan was the difficulty in accessing air assets for the mobile emergency teams supported by ECHO. These teams sometimes operate in areas that are not considered a priority by UNHAS and the logistics cluster, and it can therefore be difficult to position staff and supplies. In particular their coordination can prove difficult with an example provided of staff being on the ground but waiting for two weeks for supplies to arrive. Attempts are underway to allocate air assets specifically for these teams.

ECHO supported infrastructure rehabilitation through contributions to UNOPS. The works were identified through the Logistics Cluster. Due to funding constraints and a concentration on lifesaving activities, this support was reduced over the years covered by this evaluation. For many partners this is regrettable, as the work done was perceived as well targeted, of good quality and appreciated by all stakeholders.

The online questionnaire reinforces the findings that the support to logistics capacity is highly appreciated: the ECHO support to humanitarian logistics capacities is rated good or excellent by more than half of the respondents, and only a small minority found it to be below average. The necessity of providing support humanitarian logistics capacity is unanimously acknowledged.

1.11.4. J.C 3.4: Support to and dialogue with humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms

The level of ECHO support to UN/OCHA leadership mechanisms of Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and Humanitarian Country team (HCT) has been consistent since 2014 despite criticisms from ECHO about HC/HCT shortcomings. A total of EUR 9.3 million was allocated to projects that are registered with Coordination as the primary aid type, constituting 1.3% of the total support provided over the five years.

In the current context, ECHO provides substantial and consistent financial support to humanitarian leadership in both countries. Among the projects selected for review, some included direct and unambiguous funding to and support of OCHA's role, even though the present HC in South Sudan was found to give low priority to humanitarian efforts. The 2014 evaluation of the ECHO ERC (Enhanced Response Capacity) funding mechanism found major HC dysfunctions such as late decision-making. ECHO has been vocal in addressing this at capital level, e.g. through the HCT, but also at global level, together with other actors. Concerns were also expressed about the efficiency of OCHA in Sudan in 2014 and 2015.

In addition to support for OCHA, ECHO also supports other, non-UN coordination mechanisms, such as the 'South Sudan NGO Forum Secretariat'. The risk of creating parallel coordination structures is avoided by ensuring the NGO forum coordinates closely with (i) OCHA on issues affecting humanitarian access and (ii) with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on security, and (iii) works with the NGO Steering Committee to set an agenda for the NGO community. The INGO Forum will be closing down in 2016 as the government has deemed it illegal. The Secretariat of the NGO forum in Sudan is financed by ECHO through a partner and has its office within OCHA.

There is also a regional drought coordination mechanism which ECHO participates in. At regional level, ECHO participates proactively in the regional IDDRSI (IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative) steering committee.

Despite dissatisfaction with the HC's role in prioritising humanitarian efforts, ECHO's implementing partners generally appreciated the coordination efforts of OCHA, and appreciated ECHO's support to OCHA. More than half of the respondents to the online questionnaire rated ECHO's support as either excellent, good, or average. Just over a third of the respondents did not have any opinion on this issue.

The evaluation team, along with most partners, found that the cluster system is functioning in all field locations visited despite reservations by ECHO field staff in Sudan. Cluster leads are active and are fulfilling their tasks even though most of them also have programme responsibilities in their respective organisations. As can be expected, some clusters operated better than others, but partners evaluated them as mostly effective. ECHO is funding some of the cluster coordinators and also participates in cluster meetings.

Some interviewees stated that there was a need for ECHO and its partners to strengthen its focus within the wider coordination structures, and to avoid creating separate coordination mechanisms, such as the one led briefly by NRC in South Sudan. One of the criticisms was that some partners did not appropriately inform the sector coordination structures of their activities - which may lead to overlaps or gaps– and that updated lists of ECHO funded partners are not shared regularly with the coordination mechanisms.

1.11.5. J.C 3.5: Support and/or play active role in other IASC Transformative Agenda (ITA) coordination tools

The UN Humanitarian Reform process initiated in 2005 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership, includes the IASC Transformative Agenda (ITA) launched in 2010. It focused on improving the timeliness and effectiveness of the collective humanitarian response through e.g. better leadership, improved assessment tools (MIRA) and coordination structures (HC, HCT, clusters). ECHO has been strongly supporting this approach at global level, in particular through the Emergency Response Capacity funding scheme.

ITA tools for monitoring the performance of coordination were tested in South Sudan with the support of ECHO after the civil war erupted in December 2013. In that context, ECHO provided financial support to useful surge capacity RRTs (Rapid Response Teams), which allowed highly knowledgeable regional resident staff to be deployed whilst RRTs filled in positions at the regional office.

Eight global clusters operating in Sudan and South Sudan were supported by ECHO: CCCM, Food Security, Health, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection (including sub-clusters of child protection and GBV), Shelter and WASH. As stated earlier the performance of the clusters varies and in general they provide the basic functions that are expected from them, especially at the capital level, but their performance in the field is frequently less satisfactory with some poor data collection, attempted control by authorities, or lack of collective ownership of the aid efforts.

Among ITA tools, ECHO also funded global Civil-Military Coordination, whose teams were able to effectively liaise with the military contingents from various nationalities to UNMISS in South Sudan in early 2014, and to improve their awareness of humanitarian principles.

It should be noted that the above documentary findings could not be triangulated during the field visits as interviewees were not able to identify exactly which role ECHO had played in the ITA beyond supporting the cluster coordination mechanisms.

1.11.6. J.C 3.6: Use all opportunities for cooperation with development donors

Throughout the period evaluated, the HIPs promoted LRRD[13] and set out relevant initiatives supported by EDF and other donors, despite steadily deteriorating situations in both countries. All HIPs published over the period duly outlined that LRRD opportunities were quite limited due

[13] For more on LRRD, please refer to section 1.14.2.

to volatile conflict areas and the lack of cooperation from governments – a prerequisite for development programmes. The online questionnaire shows that more than half of the respondents do not have an opinion on ECHO's relationships with development-oriented donors. Some respondents are nevertheless interested in pursuing development too or at least recovery activities: 40% of respondents found ECHO's efforts towards LRRD excellent, good, or average.

In South Sudan, until the end of 2013, a transition to development was anticipated despite significant challenges in terms of a lack of basic infrastructure and chronic food insecurity. Taking into consideration the outbreak of the civil war at the end of 2013, the HIP 2015 mentions that a revised and enhanced LRRD strategy had been adopted and that an EC Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF) had been developed in 2014, focusing on food and nutrition security as well as health (and to some extent education). The goal was to expand the JHFD to other sectors of activities and to other main humanitarian and development donors – subject to the conclusion of a peace process between the government and the opposition. ECHO was also involved in developing the EU's Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) call for proposals.

In South Sudan, the implementation of four projects under the EU Pro-Resilience Action in Greater Upper Nile (a region where DFID is also active) has been on-going since 2014 based on a joint EU/ECHO programming approach. In the HIP 2015 for Sudan, a tentative LRRD approach was again mentioned that would address long-term IDP caseloads in Darfur camps with DEVCO funding, based on a joint analysis framework with ECHO.

Several partners regret the lack of focus on resilience; capacity building, community mobilisation and livelihood – partly due to inadequately short project cycles - see also section 1.13.1 for more details on this.

1.12. Effectiveness

Evaluation Question 4:

*What was the **Effectiveness** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

JC 4.1 cover also thematic question 2c) of ToR:

'To what extent has ECHO's support to humanitarian assistance in the fields of food assistance, emergency medical and nutrition aid, WASH, shelter and NFIs been successful?'

JC 4.2 and 4.3 covers thematic questions 2a and 2.e:

Effectiveness in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy and respect and adherence to humanitarian principles;

Judgment Criteria:

JC 4.1: Planned outputs and outcomes effectively achieved in the targeted sectors – if not, why not?

JC 4.2: Consistent advocacy for the respect of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, Refugee Law and access, despite impediments and violations

JC 4.3 Adherence to humanitarian principles – if not, why not?

JC 4.4: Contribution to effective impact on the overall humanitarian response

1.12.1. JC 4.1: Planned outputs / outcomes effectively achieved in the targeted sectors

This section describes the achievements within each of the five ECHO priority sectors: Food Aid, Health, Nutrition, WASH, Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)[14]. The sectors not described here (i.e. demining, disaster preparedness, and protection) are minor, having been allocated only EUR 80 million (12%). The desk review revealed that these projects were largely also achieving their targets. For more information on coordination, please refer to section 1.11.4 and for logistics to section 1.11.3.

Food Aid

Over the five-year period 2011 to 2015, ECHO spent more than a third of its total budget on Food Aid, i.e. EUR 257 million of which EUR 120 million was for South Sudan, EUR 68 million for Sudan, and EUR 68 million for both countries (in 2011 before the independence of South Sudan and in Abyei). The support was mainly provided through WFP (94%).

Through the FichOps review, the evaluation team found that the food aid projects achieved the expected outputs to a high degree in both countries. In Sudan the food aid was previously implemented as an emergency operation EMOP, but in 2015 was changed to a two-year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) aimed at a gradual shift from relief to recovery and resilience activities. The emergency component in the PRRO remains nonetheless strong with food aid delivered through in-kind or cash/voucher based transfers depending on the functionality of markets in the areas. Generally, beneficiaries in the field praised the flexibility of the voucher system in the few locations where it is now used. According to WFP, the proportion of unconditional food aid has been decreasing, while conditional food aid (Food for Assets (FFA), Food for Training (FFT), and Food for Work (FFW)) has increased. With the move towards a vulnerability-based approach, food aid is supposedly increasingly targeting the most vulnerable.

In South Sudan, food is still largely distributed as unconditional in-kind. The food rations were reduced in 2015, but although the beneficiaries raised the issue to the evaluation team during the field mission, there were no indications that beneficiaries' malnutrition rates had increased as a result of this, implying the use of other coping mechanisms. The food distribution observed in South Sudan was conducted swiftly and in an organised manner, ensuring an effective distribution. The food aid core pipeline was generally reported to be stable although delayed funding (not ECHO funding) in 2015 led to an increase in the use of expensive air drops, illustrating the critical role played by the poor infrastructure in South Sudan, requiring careful and timely planning.

Nutrition

5% (EUR 33.5 million) of the total ECHO spending was allocated to nutrition projects over the five years, two thirds of which were for South Sudan[15]. Some of the projects were implemented by the same partners that were also implementing health projects; a total of 14 partners were supported, including NGOs and the UN. The projects were implemented in locations with high rates of malnutrition.

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[14] The figures quoted in this section is based on the 'Primary Aid Type' registration in the HOPE database which does not consider 'Secondary Aid Type' registrations, and does not include multi-sectoral projects: The figures quoted are thus only approximate.

[15] According to a spreadsheet provided by ECHO on October 6, 2016 covering only 2015 and with an incomplete budget, support to nutrition has constituted 17% in 2015.

The desk review indicated high-quality nutrition projects, which was confirmed during the field mission by both stakeholders and through visits to nutrition centres. There had, however, recently been difficulties in securing supplies.

The nutrition partners visited in South Sudan were running nutrition interventions based on Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) , including stabilization centres (SAM with medical complications), OTP sites and services (SAM treatment), TSFP (MAM treatment) and BSFP (under 2s or under 5s as well as PLWs). These were combined with IYCF and Community Nutrition Volunteers (CNV) schemes. The visits to project sites indicated that the activities were generally running well and following the appropriate guidelines.

Members of the nutrition sector in Sudan and the sector lead confirmed good progress of projects with the core pipeline normally fully operational. A pipeline break of RUTF (plumpy nut) and nutrition related drugs was, however, noticed in one region of South Sudan during the field visits. To mitigate the negative effects of such potential breaks most of the nutrition partners have included buffer stocks for nutrition supplies in their proposals. The purchase of the nutrition supplies, however, takes time as it is done at Humanitarian Procurement Centres (HPCs) in Kenya or in Europe and then shipped to the project location. Most buffer stocks therefore arrive late in the project cycle. Beneficiaries confirmed that they had been sent home from nutrition centres a number of times due to supplies being unavailable. This was confirmed by a visit to a nutrition centre that appeared to be well organised and maintained with 300 children being treated, but which was also experiencing a shortage of supplies. Partners' funding gaps due to an increase in needs did not affect the operations in the field as gaps were covered by additional donor contributions, including from ECHO. WHO supplies nutrition-related drugs to their partners. The partners however reported difficulties concerning the management of cases of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) due to pipeline breaks of CSB in 2015 caused by the refusal of two shipments by the authorities due to different interpretations of the GMO-free standards. This was mitigated by WFP by identifying and certifying local producers of CSB and plumpy nut although their capacities are insufficient to cater for the full requirement. A return to stable pipeline operations is expected during the second half of 2016. Partners and WFP have taken further mitigating measures by increasing non-food activities (Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC)) and increasing the supply of micronutrient powders (MNP). The nutrition centres were, however, kept open despite the shortage of supplies, making the resumption of activities easier once the pipeline stabilises; nonetheless the partners signalled that some beneficiaries were defaulting, i.e. were dropping out of the programme, and thus there was a risk of an increase in SAM cases due to incomplete MAM management. Early recovery food security activities as alternatives or follow-up to MAM treatment in suitable regions, were suggested by a number of partners, including activities such as the distribution of improved seeds, tools, and basic training in modern agricultural techniques, kitchen gardens etc. all of which aims to increase the households' agricultural production and to have a positive impact on the nutritional situation of children under five years. The evaluation team found that this would be a reasonable approach.

Health

Support to health activities amounted to approximately EUR 129 million, almost a fifth of the total budget over the five year period[16], with more than 80% of the funding for health activities allocated to South Sudan. This large imbalance is likely due to higher needs in South Sudan, but also due to higher costs as the health facilities in Sudan are to a large extent using local

[16] According to a spreadsheet provided by ECHO on October 6, 2016 covering only 2015 and with an incomplete budget, support to health has constituted 15% in 2015.

seconded staff whereas in South Sudan it is necessary to use a larger number of expatriate staff. Together ICRC and the MSF family have had contracts for more than half of the total health support. Interviews with stakeholders during the field mission, and information obtained during visits to health facilities supported by ECHO partners in the two countries indicated that the projects were achieving the expected outputs and that the quality of work was high. This was confirmed by the desk review.

The health facilities visited in South Sudan were well structured and maintained, and found to offer curative as well as preventive services (including health education and hygiene promotion, Vitamin A supplementation, deworming, screening for malnutrition of U5 children and measles immunisation campaigns where necessary). The medical and psycho-social care of victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) was integrated. Attracting qualified staff was a challenge for many partners, partly due to the conflict.

In Sudan, the health support was provided through clinics manned with staff seconded from the state Ministry of Health; the capacity of staff was oftentimes below expectations. Investments in the capacity development of local staff were a major concern for all health partners and according to them ECHO did not favour financially supporting training measures to the extent this would be necessary. The integration of SGBV leaves room for improvement as beneficiaries and partners seemed reluctant to report on this due to the sensitivity of the matter. Partners also encouraged ECHO to invest in the expanded program on immunization (EPI), i.e. by supporting cold chain in the health facilities, instead of accelerated campaigns. Importing essential drugs can be lengthy and sometimes lead to shortages at the clinics, forcing beneficiaries to obtain medicine from the private sector at a cost. Some partners believed they could only purchase quality medical drugs and equipment at Humanitarian Procurement Centres (HPCs) and requested that they be allowed to buy at least consumables and equipment locally if the quality is satisfactory.

WASH

Almost 10% (64 million) was spent on WASH projects[17], two thirds of which was in South Sudan. The water supply facilities visited in South Sudan (in a POC) were found to be well functioning with a steady supply of sufficient water; latrines and showers were available according to the SPHERE guidelines, and hygiene was promoted. The evaluation team found that the latrines and showers were well designed and kept clean by a rotating team of camp inhabitants; the design of the latrines was gradually being improved in order to facilitate proper use. Lack of space in the POCs was, however, found to be a constraint on the number of latrines that could be constructed. Garbage was collected and disposed of on a regular basis in the POCs. As per the desk review, the projects generally achieved their targets.

New technologies were tested in one of the WASH projects visited in South Sudan; a water purification system (flocculation and chlorination) with a filtering system was being tested - the advantage of the filtering system would be that less external supplies for purification of the water would be required, reducing the risk of clean water shortages. The water system was reported by both partners and beneficiaries to be running well and producing safe water.

As most partners are running multi-sectoral programmes combining nutrition with health, food security or WASH activities, a number of them expressed their disappointment that ECHO is funding their nutrition activities, but did not approve the WASH elements included in the same

[17] According to a spreadsheet provided by ECHO on October 6, 2016 covering only 2015 and with an incomplete budget, support to WASH constituted 13% in 2015.

proposal. According to a number of interviewees, the WASH supply pipeline seems to be working well in South Sudan.

In Sudan the situation was similar. Health and nutrition interventions were typically combined with WASH activities, especially the provision of safe drinking water to health facilities and hygiene promotion activities, reinforcing the overall impact of both types of projects. The change from public latrines to household latrines with reusable slabs was much appreciated by the beneficiaries. In agreement with ECHO a number of partners are partly introducing cost recovery mechanisms in their WASH programming, with indications that with intensive community mobilization efforts this might work in some places.

Identifying sources of water was a challenge in some locations in both countries; often camps are not established based on the availability of water, but on where people choose to flee due to security considerations, and some water sources were dry during the dry seasons.

The partners in Sudan complained to the evaluation team about complicated procedures to access the WASH pipeline and as a consequence only half of the pipeline was utilised in 2015. The cluster lead confirmed the under-usage of the pipeline and as a consequence issued a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) at the beginning of 2016 with the objective of making access to core WASH pipeline items easier. If this strategy is successful - which could not be confirmed through the partners as nobody had used the new SOP yet - the sector lead was convinced that the year 2016 will prove the functionality and the necessity of the pipeline.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items

Just over 10% (EUR 80 million) of the total budget was spent on Emergency Shelter/NFI projects, two thirds of which were in South Sudan[18]. The support was provided through more than 20 partners, including NGOs and UN agencies. In Sudan the Emergency Shelter/NFI sector is led by IOM with supplies to partners delivered through the ES/NFI pipeline managed by UNHCR based on IOM registration data. The NFI basket was jointly defined by the ES/NFI cluster. The basket includes one jerry can, one plastic sheet, one kitchen set and two blankets and mats. The emergency shelter kit consists of bamboo sticks and rope along with the above-mentioned plastic sheet. The items were issued to the beneficiaries and in use. No pipeline breaks were reported.

In South Sudan the system is similar. IOM is the ES/NFI cluster lead and manages the common ES/NFI pipeline. In general, the supplies are available in the different key hubs and field locations. To access them, partner organizations have to sign a contract with IOM. NFI kits as well as shelter kits had been distributed and were in use. In South Sudan, UNHCR is managing its own NFI supply for their refugee operation through a logistics company rather than through the Logistics Cluster as it is found to be more cost-efficient.

Overall assessment of sectoral effectiveness

The project site visits conducted by the evaluation team confirmed that the quality of outputs in terms of the breadth of services delivered and their quality (materials and approaches used) was generally high. This was further confirmed by interviews with stakeholders in the field, including with non-ECHO staff and with beneficiaries. This was also found during the evaluation team's review of selected Fichops that showed that the quality of more than half of the projects was high or very high with less than a third of the projects considered to be of average or poor quality. The expected outputs were generally achieved. Less than 10% of the projects did not

[18] According to a spreadsheet provided by ECHO on October 6, 2016 covering only 2015 and with an incomplete budget, support to WASH constituted 3% in 2015.

reach the expected quality or the expected output which is mainly due to access constraints. In cases where partners did not deliver sufficient quality despite support through monitoring visits and dialogue no new contracts were issued. Overall the evaluation found that the quality of the ECHO supported projects was high, especially when taking into consideration the difficult operational contexts with insecurity, logistical constraints, etc. Major success factors and limiting factors to the projects are included in Annex K.

The TOR request an assessment of the achievement of not only outputs, but also of outcomes. Measuring the achievement of outcomes is notoriously difficult in complex settings such as the Sudans where, in the best of situations, there is a lack of reliable statistics and a dynamic situation with frequent population movement. Measuring achievements of outcomes would also presuppose that specific expected outcomes were described in a measurable form in the ECHO documents; this is, however, not the case. Some partners do conduct their own assessments, but there is generally insufficient follow-up or comparison of assessments (e.g. KAP studies and the like) from year to year, and in some instances the data seems unrealistic or anecdotal, such as improvements in delivery attendance at health clinics to almost 100%. Nevertheless, given the high quality and level of achievement of outputs, the basis has been laid for also achieving the expected outcomes. An example of a positive outcome is the substantial and well-timed support provided by ECHO, to contain the outbreak of cholera in South Sudan in 2014.

1.12.2. JC 4.2: Consistent advocacy for the respect of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, Refugee Law and access, despite impediments and violations

In South Sudan, all partners at Juba level agreed that ECHO is their most principled donor – which is linked to ECHO's thorough knowledge through field visits. ECHO is unanimously perceived as being very vocal and effective at bringing up issues related to humanitarian space and rights with not only the government but also with other donors, the UN and other relevant stakeholders. ECHO was found to collaborate closely with other donors on issues of common concern such as access and insecurity, and often leads in joint donor advocacy actions. Within the HCT forum in particular, the fieldwork revealed that ECHO was praised for being instrumental in pushing the current Humanitarian Coordinator to take a deeper interest in humanitarian activities and principles. The desk study of FichOps testifies to ECHO's advocacy efforts with partners such as OCHA, UNHCR, ICRC, UNICEF and major NGOs. Outside Juba, however, there was limited knowledge of ECHO's advocacy in relation to humanitarian principles.

The picture is slightly less clear-cut in Sudan, where ECHO's advocacy is nevertheless much appreciated considering e.g. the crucial importance of access. ECHO in Sudan insists on only supporting projects for which access is judged effective. This is a contributing factor to why some areas, most notably in the south, do not receive funding from ECHO. Many partners, however, feel that still more could be done in synergies with other international actors. Facing a very strong government, a clear overall strategy is needed to contribute to enforcing the strict compliance with the humanitarian principles of Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence, that provide key guidance to all humanitarian actions when the equally important humanitarian imperative to save lives wherever this is necessary (principle of Humanity) is threatened to be impeded – e.g. in the White Nile state. Only in the HIP 2015 for Sudan could an approach to advocacy be found, although this does not seem to amount to a fully developed strategy as yet.

These findings were confirmed by a triangulation of the data from interviews with the replies to the online questionnaire where half of the respondents rated ECHO's effectiveness in advocating for humanitarian space as excellent/exemplary or good. Just under a third of the respondents found that ECHO's advocacy efforts were "average", while the others did not have an opinion on the subject.

In addition, ECHO regularly published 'stories' from field blogs on its website. In 2015 alone, nine audio-visual materials reachable on YouTube were presented about Sudan and South Sudan. The audience is, however, unknown and the publications are more illustrations of the results of ECHO's funded activities rather than targeted advocacy efforts to promote principled approaches and humanitarian space.

The advocacy efforts by ECHO also help to add value to ECHO's activities. For more on other aspects of ECHO's added value, please refer to section 1.11 on page 15.

1.12.3. JC 4.3: Adherence to humanitarian principles

The documentary study outlined the adherence of ECHO to the four humanitarian principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence, which are well defined and explained in §11-14 of the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, as follows.

- Humanity: saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found.
- Impartiality: acting solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations.
- Neutrality: acting without favouring any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out.
- Independence: the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

The first – and general – principle of ***Humanity*** is very broad by definition in its coverage and ambition. Its application depends however on a number of pre-conditions, which are increasingly difficult to fulfil in the deteriorating situations of Sudan and South Sudan coupled with budget constraints. As stated above, the fulfilment of Humanity can also sometimes be limited by the application of some of the three other principles, which may in some cases create conflicting situations with authorities and restrict access. As repeatedly stressed in the HIPs, in the case of South Sudan the geographical distribution of affected areas and the lack of humanitarian space (presence of skilled partners, access without 'bureaucratic impediments', support from parties to the conflict) – not to mention the huge numbers of potential beneficiaries (over two million uprooted people) – do not currently allow the full implementation of this principle.

Challenges to – and violations of – humanitarian principles in South Sudan are well detailed in the internal ECHO documents. Despite the commitments made at the high-level humanitarian conference in Oslo in May 2014, there has been little or no progress in terms of contribution by the authorities and warring parties to a safe, unhindered humanitarian access nor in terms of government investment in sectors that would alleviate the suffering of the population.

The situation in Sudan did not improve either during the period concerned. Needs are still numerous in Darfur, in transitional areas and in some eastern provinces. Humanitarian assistance to some of those areas, where very partial information shows a persistently high malnutrition rate, is almost non-existent as the international community has not been granted access by either side of the conflict. The forced closure of projects of some INGOs in 2009 and 2013 stopped independent assessments in some regions. Bureaucratic impediments can be added to conflicts, natural disasters, the lack of basic infrastructure and displacements, and many humanitarian needs cannot be assessed due to access restrictions. For instance, in early 2013, the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) issued new "Directives for Humanitarian Work 2013" which outlined the procedural requirements for humanitarian work in Sudan. Since its publication, there has been no sign of improvement in the working conditions for humanitarian organizations. International staff continue to face difficulties in getting timely

travel permits and visas, as also testified by the evaluation team members who were denied timely access to Darfur.

ECHO and all its partners seem to have duly followed the principle of ***Neutrality***, even though the environment was not conducive. In Sudan, the HIPs consistently noticed 'further deterioration of the operating environment' since 2013. Two main aid agencies (ICRC, UNHCR) were (temporarily) suspended in 2014, either officially or de facto, and others were forced to leave. ICRC is the leading international agency in matters of principled humanitarian actions in general, and neutrality in particular. After long periods of suspension, ICRC and UNHCR have been able to restore some operational capacity in certain areas of concern.

ECHO and all partners have consistently applied the principle of ***Impartiality*** in the highly challenging context of the civil war in South Sudan, which since the end of 2013 has led to the deliberate targeting of civilian populations (based on ethnicity, tribal affiliation, and gender among other things) by both parties in the conflict.

Independence is strictly applied by ECHO in Sudan but is specifically threatened in that country where various documents indicate a deterioration of the situation. This situation has not improved in more recent years; on the contrary access is hindered by a strict aid control policy by the government, an active "Sudanisation" agenda (nationalisation of international aid) and the risk to the principle of independence created by the intervention of some 'non-traditional donors' who may not apply a principled approach. In South Sudan the delivery of services has been increasingly difficult in some areas of the country since the start of the civil war in 2013.

1.12.4. JC 4.4: Contribution to effective impact on the overall humanitarian response

Although it is not possible to quantify the impact that the ECHO support has had on the overall humanitarian response, the evaluation found that the impact was high. The expected outputs were largely achieved, and all interviewees highly appreciated the impact of the ECHO interventions on the overall humanitarian response although without being able to provide precise data. The majority of interviewees also agreed that ECHO's principled and needs-based approach and support (see also previous two sections) did help save lives and that the support to common services such as coordination and logistics was indispensable[19]. ECHO, as a donor, is generally found to be setting standards on many levels other donors should be aspiring to.

Beneficiaries interviewed praised the support that they were given by ECHO. Beneficiaries reported that without this support their already difficult situation would worsen, especially for the most vulnerable such as women and children who have even less alternative ways of sustaining themselves.

The online questionnaire reinforced these conclusions: almost a fifth of the respondents considered the impact on the overall humanitarian response to be excellent, almost two thirds considered it good and more than 10% average. These very good results compound the data collected in the interviews. Only 2% of the respondents evaluated the impact as poor and 6% did not have an opinion.

[19] For more on these issues, please refer to sections 1.11.3 and 1.11.4.

1.13. Efficiency

Evaluation Question 5:

*What was the **Efficiency** of ECHO actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

Judgment Criteria:

JC 5.1: ECHO and partners have managed the contracts efficiently – if not, why not?

JC 5.2: Lessons learned and best practices are identified, documented and utilised - if not, why?

JC 5.3: ECHO's funding cycle has been adequate for implementing partners – if not, why not?

JC 5.4: In cases where Remote Management is being used, to what extent does this follow existing guidance documents and good practice, and how successful is it?

1.13.1. JC 5.1: ECHO and partners have managed the contracts efficiently

Overall, the ECHO partners interviewed in the field were satisfied with the efficiency of the management of their contracts, although some took exception to the duration of contract approval. The time required for the approval of the contracts included the regular appraisal processes, which meant passing all proposals via the regional experts which caused some delay. This was perhaps due to a large workload at the beginning of the year, but there were also delays caused by the time partners took to respond to queries from ECHO and delays in submitting revised versions of the proposals. More than half of the projects reviewed were extended, many probably due to changes in needs and/or allocation of additional funding, others because the implementation faced difficulties. The evaluation team finds this quite reasonable: as an interviewee stated, it was better to let the partners finish the projects in due course rather than insist on sticking to deadlines, and thus jeopardise the quality.

Although the partners noticed that a large number of questions and comments were provided by ECHO during the appraisal, which could cause additional delay, they also stated that ECHO's feedback was contributing to the improvement of the quality of their proposals.

During implementation, ECHO attempts to visit all projects at least once, and more if there are concerns with regards to the pace or quality of implementation. All stakeholders interviewed confirmed that the monitoring visits were very useful and helped ensure high-quality projects.

Replies to the online questionnaire show that three quarters of the 49 respondents rated "the expertise, responsiveness/flexibility in internal coordination between field and HQ and the adequacy of ECHO's contract management tools' as either excellent, good or average. ECHO field staff are overwhelmingly considered as very knowledgeable and flexible when needed, whilst there is a perceived disconnect between "what the Field Officer understands of the context and what the Desk Officer in Brussels understands". In parallel, a significant majority of respondents gave similar ratings on the adequacy of human resources within their own organisations, in terms of quality and quantity, turnover, and cost-effectiveness of staff.

1.13.2. JC 5.2: Lessons learned and best practices are identified, documented and utilised

The document review showed that in over two thirds of the FichOps reviewed, no reference was made to lessons learnt during the implementation of activities. For almost half of the projects reviewed there were no conclusions nor mention of lessons learnt. For a fifth of the projects, lessons learnt could not be evaluated as the final report had not yet been submitted. Thematically, the lessons learnt, as described in the FichOps, focused on WASH and Post Distribution Management. However, there are no tools in place for searching for e.g. WASH

themselves pre-finance the prepositioning through the use of other funds. ECHO has tried to alleviate this concern by insisting on partners co-financing projects, thereby ensuring that the partner indeed had funds available for pre-financing the project. Although the capacity to provide such co-financing is a prerequisite for obtaining an FPA with ECHO, some partners, especially the smaller ones, reported that it could be difficult due to other donors having other funding timeframes.

Respondents to the online questionnaire had similar concerns such as too much time taken to approve proposals, thereby jeopardising pre-positioning, and too short project durations failing to take into consideration that both countries are faced with protracted crises.

Although this seemed less of a concern to partners, ECHO staff were dissatisfied with the distribution of additional funding throughout the year. Such additional funding led to an additional administrative workload for ECHO and partner staff in terms of developing new project proposals or amending existing e-single forms and FichOps.

1.13.4. JC 5.4: ECHO-funded projects successfully made use of remote management according to guidelines and good practices

No project proposals reviewed by the evaluation team included remote management as their *modus operandi* in their proposals as per the criteria included in the "Instruction note for ECHO staff on Remote Management". A few projects in Sudan, however, had experienced temporary access restrictions, mainly for international/senior staff, that led to temporary remote management in the sense that international staff were briefly unable to monitor the project activities directly. The projects had all been allowed to continue as they fulfilled the seven assessment criteria as described in the instruction note, especially taking into consideration that the limited access was not expected to last long. In South Sudan, a few projects had been temporarily suspended due to fighting or bad weather, but activities were resumed at a later stage.

None of the partners interviewed on the topic were familiar with ECHO's guidelines for remote management, nor did the partners themselves have any specific procedures for how to implement activities remotely.

1.14. Sustainability

Evaluation Question 6:

*What was the **Sustainability** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

Judgment Criteria:

JC 6.1: Provision of services in camp settings is maintained as long as required – if not, why not?

JC 6.2: LRRD and resilience components had positive and lasting effects – if not, why not? (see also JC 3.6)

1.14.1. JC 6.1: Provision of services in camp settings is maintained as long as required

The EU Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries (2013-2020) includes activities aimed at designing and implementing resilience programmes for refugees, IDPs, and returnees,

through, amongst other things, addressing their "longer term developmental needs".[20] The Action Plan advocates longer term approaches and strategies to address protracted displacements.

Only the HIP of 2015 refers directly to the topic of long term provision of services in IDP and refugee camp settings in which, under the heading LRRD, it is recommended that more protracted caseloads, e.g. the population in the IDP camps in Darfur, could be addressed with an LRRD strategy "supported by possible upcoming DEVCO funding". Otherwise, the HIPs only address the problem of protracted displacement indirectly through:

- recommending that programmes include livelihood analysis for operational decision-making with regard to food assistance (HIP 2013),
- the protection of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production for the population and the displaced population (bridging facility 2014), and
- increased and strict targeting by vulnerability and not by status (HIP 2015) to be applied especially with regard to food aid.

The increasingly protracted displacement is recognised and described in the HIPs, but systematic reflections and strategic recommendations to deal with it are not yet included in them. The HIPs acknowledge that the topic is very complex with different groups displaced in different locations, e.g.

- Sudanese refugees in South Sudan,
- South Sudanese refugees in Sudan (officially registered or considered as "brothers and sisters"),
- returnees (especially returning South Sudanese),
- IDPs on both sides,
- the special situation in Protection of Civilians sites (PoCs)), and
- the focus on humanitarian needs as these were and are the most pressing.

The FichOps review found that slightly more than half of the projects reviewed were fully implemented in camp settings and a further 7% were partially implemented in camp settings. These figures show the partners' willingness and ability to deal with protracted displacement in line with the HIP. Although project descriptions indicate that longer-term needs are taken into account, the data does not allow for a detailed analysis of the extent to which ECHO funding was indeed used for longer-term as only a few of the FichOps considered the issue, but usual in relation to the continuation of a specific project and not in general.

Only slightly more than half of the projects reviewed made reference to the duration that the facilities are intended to be used for, with a third of these confirming that facilities will be for long-term use (i.e. more than one year after implementation).

In the camps/POCs visited in South Sudan, all services were fully operated and maintained by the humanitarian actors. Based on information provided by beneficiaries and partner staff, there has been a gradual shift towards semi-permanent structures as refugees/IDPs in camps are expected to stay longer, e.g. through continued improvements in the designs and replacement of tarpaulins with more durable corrugated iron sheets. The POCs are also slowly moving in that direction with the expectation/hope, however, that most inhabitants can return within a relatively short timeframe. The choice of facilities/services was generally found to correspond with the needs, taking into consideration the expected duration of the displacement insofar as the materials used were appropriate for longer term use, the level of services provided, the involvement of local actors etc.

[20] "Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries", Commission Staff Working Document, European Commission, May 2013

In Sudan most camps have existed for several years, some for more than a decade. Partners nonetheless stated that the need for the provision of basic services in the camps will continue to exist in the foreseeable future, but that changes have to be made as to how it is delivered: communities have to be involved and - where possible - contribute to the cost of delivering the services. This is being piloted in the WASH sector with the testing of cost recovery mechanisms. Better targeting and more conditional assistance such as Food for Work etc. are believed to ensure the provision of services to the most vulnerable. This will require an extensive use of household and socio-economic profiling, something which might be difficult to conduct in the present context.

Most of the health and nutrition facilities observed during the field visits were of a permanent nature, i.e. a brick structure with sheet metal roof although some were also constructed with less durable materials requiring regular costly maintenance.

In conclusion, the evaluation found that ECHO provided services for people experiencing protracted displacements for as long as it is required. It is visible through the high number of multi-phase projects covering longer term needs as well as in the way facilities are constructed and services delivered.

1.14.2. JC 6.2: LRRD and resilience components had positive and lasting effects

LRRD

LRRD and transitional approaches (i.e. more community involvement, less substitution through NGOs, exit strategies etc.) from a purely emergency setting, are integrated in some of the HIPs, subject to the current security and political context, and are plausible.

For Sudan, the HIPs 2011 to 2014 judge a transition towards development donors to be unrealistic. The context of new conflicts and insecurity, increasing administrative impediments and the subsequent exit of aid and donor organisations and difficult access to many parts of the country did not favour the realisation of LRRD approaches. The 2015 HIP on the other hand, advises that the protracted caseloads (e.g. the population in camps in Darfur) could be addressed by an LRRD strategy and a gradual shift to development-oriented activities if DEVCO support was available.

For South Sudan, two phases can be distinguished. Before the crisis in 2013, the HIP actively encouraged consolidation with other donors[21] (as well as a maximal use of LRRD components within the actions (2011)). In 2012, the active EU support to the South Sudan Development Plan led to the EU recommending to gradually transition actions in non-emergency areas of the Health, Food Aid and Food Security and Livelihood sectors to development and stability instruments. Furthermore, the EU Member States joint programming initiative published an EU Single Country Strategy paper, aligned with South Sudan's 2011–2013 Development Plan, in January 2012. In 2013, the HIP still encouraged the transition of ECHO funded activities to development funding instruments.

With the crisis in South Sudan in 2013, the process stopped due to the re-entry into the emergency phase almost all over the country. The HIP 2014 declares the situation as non-favourable for LRRD and transitional approaches. The decision concerning the 2014 bridging facility still calls for a transition of Health, Food Aid and Food Security & Livelihood actions to the development and stabilisation instruments, but with the intention to relieve the strained emergency instruments caused by the enormous humanitarian needs in South Sudan. The 2015 HIP assesses the situation (deterioration of the security situation in formerly stable regions

[21] Please also refer to section 1.11.6 on collaboration with development donors.

of South Sudan, on-going violence and political standoffs etc.) as not favourable for LRRD approaches. ECHO remains nonetheless engaged in the transitional process and will continue, once circumstances allow.

A third of the projects reviewed during the FichOps review contained some references to LRRD, but mostly in the form of more general statements rather than specific activities. This shows, that the partners are mainly in emergency mode and that the majority of partners so far have not engaged in LRRD oriented activities with ECHO funding. The reasons for this can be many, but it is clear, that the general deterioration of the humanitarian situation, especially in South Sudan, did not leave much room to do anything other than pure emergency interventions in all sectors.

The comments on the online questionnaire showed that some respondents found that there was little funding available for the implementation of LRRD and that it was anyhow difficult to do because of the relatively short duration of the grants. An exception to this is the close connection between nutrition and food security that has led partners implementing nutrition programs financed by ECHO, to enter into food security activities with other funding sources. The EU Food Security Thematic Program (FSTP) for South Sudan is one of the EU Food Security programs currently running. A partner visited in the field is implementing an FSTP project parallel to the ECHO funded nutrition activities. The results are promising as the partner is reporting a reduction by half in admissions to the Outpatient Treatment Program (OTP) sites in the FSTP project area. The distribution of improved seeds and planting material, tools and the training in modern agricultural techniques, as well as food for work activities during the lean season implemented by the FSTP project seemed to have a positive impact. One problem, however, is that, the FSTP rarely covers the same geographical area as the emergency nutrition intervention. Other examples are ECHO partners implementing nutrition programmes that also carry out simple livelihood programmes for the patients (vegetable gardening); one partner is piloting it with ECHO funding.

Resilience

Resilience is a relatively new concept in humanitarian aid. The resilience discussion within the emergency and development services of the EU, gained momentum at the end of 2012 with two regional initiatives focused on droughts in Africa: "Support to the Horn of Africa's Resilience" (SHARE) and "Global Alliance for Resilience" (AGIR)[22] in the Sahel. The first orientation towards resilience is noticeable in the 2013 HIP, which recommends the use of livelihoods analysis as the basis for operational decision-making. The 2014 HIPs for Sudan and South Sudan are the first HIPs that explicitly mention resilience and give clear instructions to partners to include resilience elements in their actions. In parallel, the resilience marker was introduced and incorporated into the e-single form as a tool to systematically include and monitor resilience in ECHO funded actions. Together with the resilience marker and the instruction for the inclusion of resilience components, the HIP 2014 includes livelihood support and the increased use of voucher systems and cash programming in Food Assistance. The decision for the Bridging Facility (2014) HIP follows the resilience argument by prioritising emergency livelihood assistance as one out of three priority interventions. This includes the protection of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production for IDPs and the population in IPC emergency phase areas. Finally, the HIP 2015 emphasizes the obligation of the partners to include resilience elements in all actions.

Only one third of the projects assessed as part of the FichOps review, included resilience components. The main resilience topics found in the reviewed FichOps focus on the provision of

[22] Building Resilience, the EU's approach, Fact Sheet, 2016.

sustainable income in camp settings, food security interventions, community based approaches (i.e. in nutrition) and food for work. The field visits only revealed a few examples of LRRD and resilience strategies being put into practice. In the more peaceful areas of South Sudan a few partners have started to integrate nutrition activities, implemented by the partners without collaboration with the authorities, into the governmental health facilities. This integration of nutritional activities into the health system is required following the national guidelines for the integrated management of severe acute malnutrition and the South Sudan primary health care and nutrition policy. One partner, working with an active County Health Department was generally quite positive about this way of working although problems such an increase in the theft of nutrition supplies now stored in the health facilities, and changing the "mind set" of the health facility staff, who consider nutritional activities as INGO/UNICEF activities, need to be addressed.

However, resilience offers a gradual shift away from the continued delivery of emergency assistance towards enabling communities to better resist future shocks by themselves. Furthermore, in the context of budget restrictions, resilience should not only be seen as a "competitor" for scarce funding with emergency lifesaving activities, but also as a potentially cost-effective approach. In the event of a new crisis, affected resilient communities are indeed likely to require new assistance less urgently and in fewer quantities than non-resilient ones. Their resilience would also enable communities to more readily access funding aimed at development or LRRD from other donors or other budget lines, provided such funding is indeed made available, which has so far not been the case to any large extent.

A regularly increasing compendium of lessons learnt and good practices23 outline that, to be effective, resilience needs to be seen as a comprehensive – the more holistic the better - framework of activities, which must be adapted to a specific situation. This framework is bound to include such a wide scope of issues that a single donor or actor can hardly cover them all with its mandate and resources. Synergies are therefore mandatory. Setting up an effective resilience framework is also likely to require several consecutive years of efforts – depending on the development level of the community and the time needed to advocate ownership of the resilience measures - thus making multi-phase projects a prerequisite.

Resilience activities can include:

- social cohesion,
- reconciliation of communities after conflict,
- improved community governance,
- land ownership,
- establishing good relations with local authorities for protection and support,
- vocational training and basic calculation,
- provision of tools,
- livelihoods,
- WFP's FFA and FFT,
- IGA (in particular through VSLA – village-level savings and loans associations),
- food security (sustainable agriculture, small cattle),
- good nutritional practices,
- good hygiene practices,
- access to water,

[23] See for example the reports compiled by ALNAP: http://www.alnap.org/search/simple.aspx?cx=002503473335972040492%3Atqtul-zyvxq&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=resilience&sa=Search

- gender equity,
- sensitisation to SGBV and relevant human rights,
- health,
- education (including for illiterate adults in key positions in the community), and
- environmental protection.

It should be noted that ECHO has been able to successfully implement such approaches with the AGIR and SHARE programmes, but also with its far-sighted and creative recent exit strategy from Ivory Coast24.

Given the context of increasingly severe and protracted emergencies, the HIPs do not foresee exiting from the two countries. Likewise, the FichOps review showed that that almost half of the projects did not contain exit strategies either. Although the quality of the exit strategies that were included in the FichOps have not been assessed in detail, it is noticeable, that most of them remain very vague envisaging a "handover" to other partners, local NGOs, the government etc. Important questions such as exit criteria and information about how a handover to communities or authorities will be prepared and take place are rarely answered in the project descriptions.

[24] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/Bookshop_Final%20report.KR%2004-15-526-EN-N.pdf

Conclusions and Operational Recommendations

This chapter includes the conclusions and the operational recommendations stemming from them, most of the latter of which are operational / organisational in scope. The first paragraph under each evaluation criteria summarises the overall assessment of the evaluation criteria. The strategic recommendations are included in chapter 0.

1.15. Relevance

Evaluation Question 1:

*What was the **Relevance** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

The evaluation found that ECHO's support to Sudan and South Sudan was very relevant with high quality needs assessments carried out in the two countries and a good fit between the needs and the projects supported, in terms of geographical coverage and the contracted amount. ECHO, furthermore, was generally strong on ensuring support to the most vulnerable parts of the populations. ECHO was also flexible in allowing for changes during implementation when warranted by contextual changes.

Quality of Needs Assessments

The evaluation found, in line with partners and others interviewed, that the quality of the assessments of the humanitarian needs in the two countries as expressed in the HIPs was high.

The partners use assessment tools based on which they and ECHO can apply an evidence-based decision-making process. If partners do not use the major standardised assessment tools, they conduct their own assessments as a basis for project proposals.

Alignment between needs assessments, HIPs and projects funded

Based on an analysis of the relevant documents and information obtained from interviews with stakeholders, the evaluation found that there was a good fit between the needs assessments in the HIPs, and the projects implemented, acknowledging that a few projects were outside or not covered by the HIPs but had other strong justifications based on vulnerability criteria. The large degree of flexibility in the HIPs allows for quick changes to the projects, in cases of changes to the humanitarian situation.

Capacity to adapt response to changing needs

ECHO was able to allocate substantial additional funds to both countries over the years with the subsequent updates of the HIPs being in line with the changed needs. Justified changes during implementation were readily approved. The evaluation therefore found that ECHO was very strong overall, in terms of adapting to changes in needs, thanks to its flexibility.

Reflection of beneficiaries' needs and adequate targeting of people most at risk

The evaluation found that the needs of beneficiaries were taken into consideration in the support provided by ECHO, both in the priorities put forward in the HIPs and in the projects implemented. Most of the projects were explicit about how they targeted some of the most vulnerable - IDPs, refugees, children, women, the elderly, etc. - and vulnerability assessments are conducted by most partners. Specific protection risk analyses were only done in a few

projects - and only in South Sudan; possibly because the oppressive regime in Sudan does not allow protection concerns to be addressed directly.

Overall, the evaluation found that ECHO was strong on ensuring support that considers the beneficiaries' needs, and targets the most vulnerable - with some gaps in Sudan.

1.16. Coherence

Evaluation Question 2:

*What was the **Coherence** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

The HIPs and the projects implemented by partners based upon them are well aligned with the EC/ECHO humanitarian policies.

Alignment of HIPs with EC/ECHO humanitarian policies

The ECHO website[25] details a list of ten key humanitarian policies. At strategy level, the HIPs incorporated the policies - as much as resources allowed and according to the identified priority needs – with a caveat concerning gender equity. More importantly, the projects implemented by partners are found to be aligned with the humanitarian policies.

Overall, the level of alignment between the HIPs and the humanitarian policies was assessed to be high by the evaluation, with consistent alignment of HIPs with the policies. It should be noted that field-based partners did not always appear properly informed about them.

1.17. EU Added Value

Evaluation Question 3:

*What was **the EU Added Value** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

The evaluation found that the added value of ECHO's support was high and that ECHO assisted in ensuring not only its own partners but also other humanitarian actors' presence in the field. This was achieved through support to coordination, logistics and humanitarian advocacy, which the evaluation found was very strong. Furthermore, ECHO successfully funded gaps in the overall assistance. Attempts to add additional value by linking activities supported by ECHO with those of development donors, were less successful, partly due to the lack of such opportunities and partly due to the limited timeframe of ECHO support.

Help ensure presence of skilled implementing partners in the field

ECHO's support to coordination, logistics and humanitarian advocacy assisted in ensuring the presence of partners. In very challenging circumstances, the knowledge, professionalism, and readiness of ECHO staff to "find good solutions within regulations" added value to the support by ensuring a continued presence of implementing partners.

[25] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid_en

Provide major funding contributions to specific sectors and activities, not adequately covered by other donors

ECHO is found to have been instrumental in providing support to activities and sectors that were not covered by other donors, through the support to ensure capacities to respond to sudden-onset emergencies.

As the ECHO share of the total humanitarian support is limited to around 10%, it is not possible to ascertain whether ECHO provided major contributions to specific sectors or activities, with gaps left by other donors. ECHO was, however, pro-active and supported activities that other donors probably would not have supported.

Help ensure international humanitarian logistics capacities

The evaluation found that the degree to which the support with humanitarian logistics capacities facilitated and improved the implementation of activities was very high. The necessity of logistics services (esp. air transport and the Logistics Cluster) was unanimously acknowledged by stakeholders and the quality of services was generally appreciated. Problems may exist, but they do not cast any doubt on the effectiveness on the support as such.

Support to and dialogue with humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms

In the current context, the evaluation found that ECHO provided substantial and consistent financial support to humanitarian leadership in both countries. Among the projects selected for review, a number concerned direct and unambiguous funding in support of OCHA's role, even though the present HC in South Sudan was found to give a low priority to the humanitarian efforts and serious concerns about humanitarian leadership were also raised in Sudan in 2014 and 2015. At the same time, interviewees stated the need for ECHO to further strengthen its focus within the wider coordination structures.

Support and/or play active role in other IASC Transformative Agenda (ITA) coordination tools

After the civil war erupted in December 2013 and an L-3 emergency was declared in early 2014, some ITA tools supported by ECHO proved quite useful, e.g. the surge capacity RRTs, the clusters, or the civil-military cooperation teams. Field visits did not provide triangulated evidence as interviewees were not informed about ECHO support to ITA with the exception of some of the cluster leads. Due to the consistent and timely support of the development of ITA tools and most clusters, ECHO's support was rated as strong by the evaluation.

Use all opportunities for cooperation with development donors

The HIPs consistently promoted LRRD and detailed relevant initiatives supported by EDF and other donors despite steadily deteriorating situations in both countries. At the same time, all HIPs published over the period duly outlined that LRRD opportunities were quite limited due to the volatile context and the lack of cooperation from governments – a prerequisite for development programmes.

The cooperation with development donors so far had been unsuccessful despite attempts made – essentially due to very limited opportunities for development cooperation in Sudan, and in South Sudan due to the civil war/ humanitarian situation. ECHO's short project cycles were found to be inappropriate for effective longer-term activities.

1.18. Effectiveness

Evaluation Question 4:

*What was the **Effectiveness** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

The evaluation found that ECHO's actions were effective in all sectors. The quality of the projects supported within all sectors was high and the planned outputs were generally achieved. Food aid projects were able to improve the food security of the beneficiaries with the increased use of cash and vouchers being especially appreciated by the beneficiaries. It was found that the nutrition projects delivered a variety of services despite difficulties in sourcing supplies and staff. The quality of the health services provided were high although the occasional shortages of supplies were a constraining factor. The WASH projects were also effective although recurrent maintenance continues to be of concern. The ES/NFI support was effective too.

Furthermore, based on interviews with stakeholders, the evaluation found that ECHO was very strong on humanitarian advocacy and was generally perceived as the leading and most principled donor in this regard. ECHO was also able to influence other donors, especially in Sudan. The evaluation, however, also found that ECHO's adherence to Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence might have an impact on ensuring that humanitarian needs are addressed in some locations.

It was not possible to measure the achievement of outcomes due to a lack of data and because no targets were set at the HIP/country level.

ECHO's support was found to have improved the lives of beneficiaries, and most likely also saved lives. ECHO's support to coordination and logistics, furthermore, had an impact not only on ECHO partners and the beneficiaries of their ECHO-funded projects, but also on other humanitarian actors and their activities and beneficiaries.

Planned outputs / outcomes effectively achieved in the targeted sectors

Overall, the evaluation assessed the quality of the ECHO-supported projects implemented in Sudan and South Sudan as satisfactory with outputs generally achieved, taking into consideration the difficult contexts. Only a few projects did not reach the expected quality outputs, and due to this some partners were not granted new contracts.

An assessment of the level of achievement of outcomes was not possible due to the lack of clear specific expected measurable outcomes, but given the outputs achieved by the projects, the foundation for the delivery of the outcomes too, was laid.

The evaluation found that the food aid projects were effectively implemented and were able to improve the availability of food for the targeted beneficiaries. Better targeting and increased use of conditional food aid (food for work, assets, training etc.) as well as cash/vouchers using market systems where possible are expected to reduce the amount of food required and the dependency on the core pipeline (i.e. mitigating the risks of pipeline breaks), and in Sudan will pave the way for early recovery activities. The increased use of food vouchers/cash is appreciated by beneficiaries, and in line with the global trend of increasingly using cash or vouchers, empowering beneficiaries and supporting the local community/market.

The nutrition projects were able to deliver a variety of nutrition services to beneficiaries despite occasional difficulties in securing supplies and in accessing experienced staff. There had been difficulties in maintaining a stable pipeline of supplies with an increased risk of beneficiaries defaulting. The move towards local suppliers of nutrition supplies and their certification is a good example of how to deal with difficulties in ensuring timely access to supplies.

Overall the quality of the health services provided was high except for the shortage of some supplies, indicating a need for better advance planning/storage management on behalf of the partners. Partners have to put considerable effort into capacity building measures for their local (seconded) staff. The expected outputs were found to have been achieved overall.

The evaluation found that the WASH projects were generally effective, achieving their targets of providing sufficient safe water to the beneficiaries. Maintenance of the facilities is a recurrent concern due mainly to unclear government policies and limited financial capacity of beneficiaries, but attempts are underway to work out at least part user-payment in some of the locations with protracted displacements.

The ES/NFI supplies are generally available in the major hubs and the core pipeline is stable. Their distribution (usually one-off) to the beneficiaries (IDPs, refugees) is done through partners and no serious complaints were registered. The composition of the basket, variations of quantities due to family size and the quality of the items seemed to be accepted. The evaluation assessed that the ES/NFI support to be satisfactory.

Recommendations

In order to measure the achievement of outcomes, ECHO should consider developing a system for clarifying exactly what the support provided by ECHO is expected to achieve. This could be in the form of targets e.g. how much is the ECHO support expected to reduce malnutrition or increase access to health services. As a minimum, ECHO could consider defining how many people it wants to reach with different services, e.g. how many people it expects to make sure are fed, how many people it expects to serve with safe water, etc. This would also facilitate the assessment of the cost-effectiveness of ECHO's support as outlined in the recent ECHO cost-effectiveness study.[26] Much of the information is expected to be readily available in the FichOps or with the partners, but it needs to be compiled in a manner whereby it can be compared and aggregated across projects, paying particular attention to issues such as the duration of support (e.g. how to compare a one month delivery of water through trucking with the provision of safe water through water points throughout the year) and some way of ensuring that there are wider outcomes in the form of improvements in health or better practices (e.g. hygiene promotion campaigns should not count those that listened in, but only those for which the information actually made a (positive) difference).

In order to increasingly move towards early recovery/resilience whenever possible, it is important to continue pushing for more targeted food aid when and wherever possible. Alternative modalities to in kind food aid, i.e. cash/vouchers, are to be continuously promoted. As cash and vouchers are essentially different in their nature, continued support should be given to partners (e.g. WFP) who are developing tools as to which modality to use. The transition towards the EU thematic programme on food security has to be actively pursued in suitable situations.

To complement the nutrition pipeline and as a mitigation measure for pipeline breaks, the establishment of local capacity to produce vital nutrition supplies should be encouraged. The results of quality assessments of possible local suppliers by partners could be included in the proposals or discussed during the review process - however, support to increase local production capacity is possibly a task for development partners and not for ECHO. A closer connection between nutrition and food security/livelihoods activities in an early recovery context should be considered.

[26] "Study on Approaches to Assess Cost-Effectiveness of DH ECHO's Humanitarian Aid Actions - Final Report"; Volume 1, August 2016, ADE, Belgium.

Additional guidance and case-based clarifications to help health partners to understand the alternative possibilities for procuring medical supplies and medical devices would be useful for some partners.

Consistent advocacy for the respect of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, Refugee Law and access, despite impediments and violations

In South Sudan, ECHO is seen as the most principled – and best informed – donor. It is very vocal and effective at bringing up issues related to humanitarian space. ECHO duly collaborates with other donors and advocates on issues of common concern such as access and insecurity and often leads joint donor advocacy actions. The picture is slightly more mitigated in Sudan, where ECHO's advocacy faces numerous constraints by a strong government. In such a case, adherence to the principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence, that are the key guide for all humanitarian actions, needs to be outlined to partners as required, and strictly enforced in situations when it may have implications for the equally important humanitarian imperative to 'address human suffering wherever it is found', according to the principle of Humanity.

Although there does not yet seem to be a consistent advocacy strategy, due to the thorough advocacy efforts and support provided to partners with advocacy capability, ECHO is found by the evaluation team to have been strong on advocacy.

Adherence to humanitarian principles

According to the evaluation's assessment, ECHO, to a high degree, consistently adhered to and supported its partners in strongly applying the principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence in both countries. However, this approach has raised concerns by some partners who stated – particularly in Sudan - that it may lead the authorities to disrupt access for life-saving interventions in some vulnerable areas. Challenges to - and violations of - humanitarian principles are well detailed in the HIPs and other programming documents. Regarding the very broad principle of Humanity – which may be, as stated above, sometimes at odds with the three other principles - it is increasingly difficult for ECHO and its partners to fulfil its requirements while facing deteriorating situations and huge needs in Sudan and South Sudan.

Recommendation

Clarifications towards partners are needed when they raise concerns about the possible implications of being limited in delivering lifesaving humanitarian assistance following the strict – and entirely necessary - compliance with the humanitarian principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence, notwithstanding the policies of a government which is not receptive to advocacy.

Contribution to effective impact on the overall humanitarian response

ECHO is found to have high humanitarian standards and a principled and needs-based approach that serves as a good example to other donors - but also to partners. The ECHO support is appreciated and has contributed to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable and is almost certain to have saved lives too. Additionally, it was found that ECHO's support to coordination and logistics ensured that the support benefits not only ECHO partners and their beneficiaries, but also the wider humanitarian community and their beneficiaries.

1.19. Efficiency

Evaluation Question 5:

*What was the **Efficiency** of ECHO actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

The evaluation found that ECHO's actions overall were efficient in terms of management of the contract. The evaluation did not reveal any instances of planned remote management. The evaluation, however, also found that ECHO could do more to document lessons learnt and best practices, and that the funding cycle can make it difficult for partners to ensure prepositioning of supplies.

ECHO and partners have managed the contracts efficiently

The efficiency of ECHO's management of partners' contracts was overall judged to be highly satisfactory. That being said, delays in approval of proposals did occur - caused both by partners and ECHO.

Lessons learned and best practices are identified, documented and utilised

Besides sharing lessons learnt and best practices in expert groups, the evaluation team found insufficient formal documentation and utilisation of lessons learnt. Identification and documentation of lessons learnt at country-level were not systematised and mainly relied on the memory of ECHO staff, in particular national staff who typically stay longer than international staff. Due to the lack of a systematic approach the evaluation found that ECHO was weak in identifying, documenting and utilising lessons learnt.

Recommendation

Given the difficult and dynamic context with numerous challenges and high staff turnover, it is recommended that lessons learnt and best practices be captured in an easy to access and searchable manner - this would possibly be best done by allowing sector specific searches in the already existing lessons learnt records in the HOPE database[27]. This can prevent repetition of previous mistakes and might eventually provide the basis for innovations. Such lessons learnt and best practices should also be shared with partners, e.g. through workshops or by sharing briefings either at national or global levels. The cluster system could also play a role in the dissemination.

ECHO's funding cycle has been adequate for implementing partners

The time taken to appraise and approve proposals is lengthy and the project duration is short, and considering that it takes months to source supplies, and to sign technical agreements with authorities in Sudan, this causes further delays and strains especially on the smaller partners' budgets. In South Sudan, the poor transport infrastructure necessitates prepositioning of supplies before the rainy season starts in May. The additional funding trickling in during the duration of the HIP is placing an additional administrative burden on ECHO and partners. Overall, the evaluation found that the suitability of ECHO's funding cycle to its partners was inadequate.

Recommendation

[27] The record could possibly be expanded to include also a box to tick if the lesson learnt is specific to the partner, to the country or globally.

ECHO should review its deadlines for proposals, possibly moving them forward to November or earlier. Given that the crises are mostly protracted, ways of extending the project duration should be considered; this might, however, be difficult considering legal restrictions and would probably require changes to ECHO's legal basis.

ECHO-funded projects successfully made use of remote management according to guidelines and good practices

Projects did not plan for the use of remote management, but temporary remote management was applied during the implementation of a few projects. The ECHO guidelines for remote management were largely unknown.

Recommendation

Given the context, the fact that project proposals did not include remote management as an explicit *modus operandi* should not mean that the need for future - at least temporary - remote management once the projects get going should be ruled out. It is recommended that more efforts are devoted to ensuring that cases of temporary remote management also apply certain minimum procedures, especially with regards to monitoring for which the ECHO instruction note has some reasonable and concrete proposals, which ECHO could request partners to report upon. Such minimum procedures could be based on the existing more comprehensive procedures.

1.20. Sustainability

Evaluation Question 6:

*What was the **Sustainability** of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period?*

In the situations and areas with protracted displacement, the evaluation found that the sustainability of activities was commensurate with the needs and the duration of the displacement. Longer-term sustainability and impact in the form of LRRD and resilience, however, were not implemented to the desirable extent.

Provision of services in camp settings is maintained as long as required

The evaluation considered that the choice of facilities/services provided in camps generally corresponded with the needs and the duration of the displacement.

LRRD and resilience components had positive and lasting effects

Even though the HIPs clearly describe and recommend the inclusion of LRRD and resilience aspects (exit strategy, resilience marker etc.), the practical implementation leaves room for improvement if there are to be significant effects.

Recommendation

ECHO should consider engaging in a discussion on if and how it will need to expand its current lifesaving approach so that in relevant contexts, it can increasingly include room for exit strategies such as more resilience approaches (targeting communities) and/or early recovery approaches (in tandem with longer-term donors). Both approaches can include livelihoods, capacity building and community based activities within or close to the camps and in areas of return depending on the specific context, e.g. rural, urban, etc. In a context of protracted forgotten crisis, economic sanctions and donors' fatigue, resilience can be more readily

envisaged as it focuses at first on communities rather than traditional development, and mainly involves some local authorities – who are often more approachable than national ones. The partners would generally welcome more flexibility and if steps are taken to move towards resilience or LRRD with ECHO funding, the application of development instruments either by the EU or other donors might be facilitated provided they ensure funds for such activities are made available. In synergy with other concerned donors and actors, ECHO should contribute to defining which activities could be included in a comprehensive resilience package adapted to the Sudan situation. Where feasible and relevant, ECHO should then systematically consider the usefulness of resilience as an exit strategy.

Strategic Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and specific recommendations presented in chapter 0, four strategic recommendations have been developed as per the below.

Conclusions/Rationale	Strategic recommendations
Principled approach	
ECHO has consistently adhered to and supported its partners in strictly applying the widely-acknowledged principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence in both countries. ECHO is perceived as being a principled and well informed donor, who is very vocal and effective at bringing up issues related to humanitarian space. ECHO often leads joint donor advocacy actions. However, the context is very detrimental to humanitarian space due to the lack of receptiveness to humanitarian advocacy by governments who either have other priorities (civil war in South Sudan) or are strongly pursuing a different political agenda of their own (Sudan). The principled approach has raised concerns in Sudan where the ECHO 'rule' of only supporting projects in areas in which access by 'diverse' teams is guaranteed while the authorities at the same time may disrupt humanitarian access in retaliation to criticisms. A potential consequence of the principled approach based on Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence may therefore be that the population most in need could be deprived of humanitarian assistance, jeopardising the other humanitarian principle of Humanity and its imperative to address human suffering wherever it is found.	ECHO should apply a two-pronged strategy to pursue the principled approach and face the political constraints to the best of its ability: (i) internally, better define with its partners the "rules of engagement" when contradictions occur between Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence on the one hand, and Humanity on the other; (ii) externally, to systematically seek synergies with other concerned EU and international actors at all levels (field and HQ), in order to promote a united response to the local authorities.
Supporting coordination	
ECHO provides consistent financial support for humanitarian leadership in both countries including in support of OCHA's role. There have, however, been concerns regarding the humanitarian leadership and the effectiveness of the UN-led coordination mechanism while some pointed to the need for ECHO to further strengthen its engagement with the wider coordination structures.	ECHO should further strengthen its support to and collaboration with the coordination mechanisms at country level, and where there are capacity constraints at country level, also by advocacy at global/HQ level. ECHO should strive for increased collaboration with the sectoral coordination mechanisms, including pushing partners to do the same, while at the same time acknowledging the gaps in the coordination mechanisms and how the funds could best be used to fill them.

Conclusions/Rationale	Strategic recommendations
Supporting resilience	
The humanitarian imperative of saving lives first, which ECHO is a strong advocate of, and rightly so, is an important factor in deciding which activities to support; and in both countries, there are indeed unmet humanitarian needs. However, there are opportunities for the implementation of LRRD/resilience activities as also described in the 2014 and 2015 HIPs regarding the application of resilience – through support to livelihood, use of the cash and vouchers modalities, and the protection of agricultural assets. Enabling communities to better resist future shocks would be a potentially cost-effective approach, as urgent assistance would be required less, and this might even pave the way for partners to access development funding that can be used for LRRD purposes. However, ECHO's short (annual) project duration and the scarcity of funding, are not well suited if medium or longer-term activities, like those required to meaningfully embarking on resilience activities, are to be effective.	ECHO should consider engaging in a discussion about if and how it will open up its present approach of focusing purely on lifesaving activities to include also when feasible a wider resilience and/or early recovery approach. In this regard strengthening support to livelihoods, capacity building and community based activities in the camps, close to the camps, and in areas of return could be considered. Considering the context of protracted forgotten crises, economic sanctions and donors' fatigue in both Sudans, resilience can, depending on the specific context, be envisaged due to resilience's focus on strengthening affected communities and requires the support of only some local authorities – which are often more accessible and committed than national ones. In collaboration with other actors and development donors, ECHO could discuss the way forward, i.e. define what should be included in the ECHO support to resilience (and/or LRRD) and what should not. As resilience projects tend to take longer to implement due to the need to ensure ownership of the beneficiary communities, ways of defining multi-year strategies while at the same considering how to extend the project duration; or some kind of guarantee should be issued to partners that their funding will continue. Issuing multi-year contracts is not possible at present due to legal restrictions. Pending a possible change in the legal basis, lessons could possibly be learnt from the Drought Risk Reduction Action Plan (DRRAP) programme implemented in the Horn of Africa.

Conclusions/Rationale	Strategic recommendations
Using lessons learnt	
ECHO's procedures for identifying, documenting and utilising lessons learnt (mainly taking place through expert groups) are unclear and not consistently applied. Partners too, do not always pay sufficient attention to filling in the required record on lessons learnt in the final report form. Documentation and utilisation of lessons learnt is not systematised, and mainly relies on the memory of ECHO staff. However, staff members are not always retained for more than a year or two due to the dynamic and difficult contexts in the Sudans.	ECHO should strengthen its capacity to keep and disseminate lessons learnt, to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and to possibly support the implementation of more cost effective activities. Capturing lessons learnt can eventually provide the basis for innovations. Ultimately, this might lead to more effective actions, contributing to save more lives for the same amount of funding. In this conjunction, ECHO should ensure that partners provide sufficient information on lessons learnt. Lessons learnt and best practices should be captured in an easy to access and searchable manner. This could perhaps best be achieved by allowing for sector-specific searches in the existing lessons learnt records in the DG ECHO's project database (HOPE). Lessons learnt and best practices should also be shared with partners, e.g. through workshops, through the clusters, or by sharing written briefings at national or global level.

Annex A - Terms of References

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION - ECHO

ECHO A - Strategy, Policy and International Co-operation
A/3 - Policy and Implementation Frameworks

ANNEX I

Terms of Reference
For the evaluation of the ECHO response to the Humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan 2011 - 2015

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FINAL

1. DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

The **legal base** for Humanitarian Aid is provided by Article 214[1] of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (HAR; No. 1257/96)[2]. The objectives of EU humanitarian assistance are outlined in these documents, and could – for evaluation purposes – be paraphrased 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 most vulnerable people affected by natural and/or manmade disasters, in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity.*

The humanitarian aid budget is mainly implemented through annual funding decisions[3] 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).

2. CONTEXT

Insecurity and multiple conflicts prevail in both countries. The mandate for the three peacekeeping operations has been extended throughout 2015: the United Nations (UN) Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS)[4]; the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNIFSA)[5] and the UN-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)[6].

2.1. SOUTH SUDAN

ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2015-2016 identified extreme humanitarian needs in South Sudan. The country scores 3 out of 3 in the crisis index and is ranked number 3 in the vulnerability index. In the UN system, the country remains at emergency level 3. The UN estimates the conflict has triggered more than 2 million forced displacements, out of an estimated population of 11.6 million

On 26 August 2015 a new peace and power sharing agreement has been signed but it is unlikely to result in an improvement of the humanitarian situation in the short term. Instability remains high and conditions for return are not yet in place. In the conflict-affected areas, the provision of basic services remains almost entirely under humanitarian aid and the livelihoods and coping mechanisms have drastically deteriorated.

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[1] 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-humantarian-aid/chapter-3-humanitarian-aid/502-article-214.html

[2] Council Regulation 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/funding-evaluations/funding-decisions-hips

[4] UNSC Resolution 1996 as last amended by 2132 (change of mandate) and lately 2155

[5] UNSC Resolution 1990 as last amended by 2205

[6] UNSC Resolution 1769 as last amended by 2228

2.2. SUDAN

ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2015-2016 identified high humanitarian needs in Sudan and is ranked no. 5 in the vulnerability index. At the same time, the Humanitarian Development Index calculated by UNDP is 0.5 (ranking 166) while the GINI index is 35.3.

The political and security environment continued to be of particular concern in 2015 with the ongoing conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The initiatives for conflict settlement such as the National Dialogue have stalled while the consequences of the conflicts have heightened insecurity in the region, already severally compounded by widespread crime and banditry. In Eastern Sudan, the political situation remains fragile and the humanitarian picture is characterized by chronic under-development and wide-spread poverty with malnutrition rates which are among the highest in the country.

Sudan's complex and protracted crisis suffers from the limited exposure of foreign media to the humanitarian suffering. Sudan is therefore considered by ECHO a forgotten crisis in 2015 for the second year in succession.

In the Abyei Administrative Area, the political and security situation remains tense and unpredictable as long as the final status of the disputed region is not settled, yet the resolution of outstanding issues between Sudan and South Sudan is not progressing.

3. ECHO RESPONSE

ECHO's response in *South Sudan* evolved during the period under review. Following the start of the crisis in December 2013, ECHO's response focused on four main axes: support for the scaling-up of humanitarian assistance where the greatest needs are identified, including through adequate food aid and emergency medical and nutritional interventions, emergency WASH to reduce deaths, logistic support; advocacy for a better protection of civilians inside and outside UNMISS Protection of Civilians areas; continued humanitarian assistance to address the basic needs of refugees; and support to communities exposed to high risks of morbidity and mortality, including severe food insecurity, high malnutrition rates and outbreaks of epidemics as a result of shocks linked to flooding and seasonal hunger during the lean season. Effective coordination has also been supported.

Sudan has been identified as a forgotten crisis. ECHO's response focussed - if access allowed - on emergency response and preparedness for displaced people, refugees, returnees, host communities and nomads, in the sectors of food assistance and livelihoods, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and non-food items and protection. It also encompassed coordination - including support to security programmes - and logistic support. Efforts to reduce acute malnutrition through a multi-sectorial approach have also been supported. In settings where the emergency is less acute, the identification of transition strategies was considered an important element. An overall focus on protection is considered particularly pertinent for all types of displaced populations (IDPs, returnees and refugees) across the country, despite implementation challenges due to overall access constraints and lack of actors. Protection mainstreaming will increasingly be promoted. Improved targeting and diversifying aid modalities to build resilience of vulnerable communities to future shocks will be of paramount importance.

ECHO funding

During the evaluation period 2011-2015 the following financial allocations have been made to address humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan:

- Financial decision: 2011 ECHO/SDN/BUD/2011/91000 140,000,000
- Financial decision, 2012 ECHO/-AF/BUD/2012/91000 157,000,000
- Financial decision 2013 ECHO/-AF/BUD/2013/91000 97,000,000
- Financial decision, 2014 ECHO/-AF/BUD/2014/91000 112,715,000
- Financial decision 2015 ECHO/-AF/BUD/2015/91000 139,000,000

In addition to these financial decisions, funding has also been allocated to address the humanitarian crises in Sudan and South Sudan including from the Epidemic HIP, the children of Peace HIP and with funds of the European Development Fund.

4. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

4.1. PURPOSE AND GENERAL SCOPE

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 actions in South Sudan and Sudan **2011 – 2015**.

Specifically, the evaluation should provide:

- A comprehensive, retrospective assessment of DG ECHO's Strategy (as formalised by the Humanitarian Implementation Plans) in Sudan and South Sudan, covering the evaluation issues of **relevance, coherence, EU Added Value, effectiveness, efficiency** and **sustainability**;

- A maximum of **5 prospective, strategic recommendations** – based on the retrospective evaluation and the related research – for a future ECHO crisis response strategy in the countries, taking account of the volatile environment, and with a view of maximizing the benefits of ECHO's initiatives on the ground. These strategic recommendations could possibly be supported by further, related, operational recommendations.

The main 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.

4.2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The conclusions of the evaluation will be presented in the report in the form of evidence-based, reasoned answers to the evaluation questions presented in the following. The questions to be addressed by the Evaluator consist of two sets: 1) General questions; and 2) Thematic questions, that partly overlap with the general questions. On the basis of the responses to the questions under both sets, the Evaluator should provide general statements on the evaluation issues as listed under sub-section 4.1 above. Furthermore in responding to the questions below, the Evaluator must appropriately reflect the different contexts of the two countries.

1. **General, generic questions**: These are based on the mandatory evaluation issues as specified under sub-section 4.1. The questions should be further tailored to the specific country context(s) by the Evaluator, and finally agreed with the Steering Group in the inception phase:

    a. What was the Relevance of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are e.g. quality of needs assessments, capacity to adapt ECHO's response to shifting needs, fit between HIPs and needs assessments, fit between projects funded and HIPs; fit between needs assessments and projects funded;

    b. What was the Coherence of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are e.g. alignment with relevant Commission policies in the humanitarian field;

    c. What was the EU Added Value of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are e.g. how ECHO has drawn on its specific role and mandate to create a specific EU added value;

    d. What was the Effectiveness of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are e.g. how successfully ECHO has implemented its strategy in the two countries, in terms of achieving required outputs and outcomes and in terms of its impact on the humanitarian response in general.

    e. What was the Efficiency of ECHO actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are e.g. use of resources, management, monitoring processes, drawing on lessons learned and good practices in funding allocations, and the impact of ECHO's funding cycle on partners' response capacity and administrative tasks.

    f. What was the Sustainability of ECHO's actions in the two countries during the evaluation period? Issues to consider are: sustainability of ECHO's support to the provision of services in camp settings, ECHO support to LRRD and Resilience, and in general to positive, lasting effects.

2. **Thematic questions addressing specific information needs**: These questions could, as appropriate, be fitted into the structure of the general questions above.

    a. To what extent has ECHO taken into account the respect and adherence to humanitarian principles to guide its operational decisions regarding funding in the two countries?

    b. To what extent has ECHO's support targeted the people most at risk affected by crises in the two countries? To what extent has ECHO's support taken into account an assessment of vulnerability, including protection risks analysis?

    c. To what extent has ECHO's support to humanitarian assistance in the fields of food assistance, emergency medical and nutrition aid, WASH, shelter and NFIs been successful?

d. To what extent has ECHO's support to the coordination of humanitarian assistance and for logistical operations supporting humanitarian assistance contributed to improving the quality of humanitarian operations?

e. How effective has ECHO been in terms of Humanitarian Advocacy (on issues like coordination, access, defending principled humanitarian space, IHL violations)?

f. To what extent has ECHO's participation in humanitarian leadership inside and outside the UN system been successful?

g. 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?

4.3. OTHER TASKS UNDER THE ASSIGNMENT

The Contractor should, mainly on the basis of the research carried out for responding to the evaluation questions:

- 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 countries over the period covered by the evaluation.

- Reconstruct the **intervention logic** for the ECHO-funded actions in South Sudan and in Sudan;

- 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.

5. METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT PHASES

In their offer, the bidders must describe in methodological approach they propose in order to address the evaluation questions listed above, as well as the other tasks.

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 Report
4. Final Report + one annexe per country

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.

5.1. INCEPTION PHASE

The inception phase starts from the moment the contract is signed. During the inception phase the evaluation team will analyse the intervention logic on the basis of official documents and propose the evaluation questions and judgment criteria. The team then will specify the indicators, and develop the final definition of the methodology and the schedule for the field visits.

Kick-off meeting

A kick-off meeting will be convened as soon as possible after the signature of the contract. The consultants will present their understanding of the Terms of Reference. The evaluation questions, either from the ToR or proposed by the evaluation team will be discussed as well as an indicative methodological design. Access to informants and to documents, as well as foreseeable difficulties will be considered.

Inception report

The Inception Report will be produced after the kick-off meeting and will contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- a finalised evaluation framework covering all evaluation questions;
- an intervention logic;
- a description of the methodology for data collection and analysis, including the chain of reasoning for responding to the evaluation questions, and indicating limitations;
- draft questionnaires and interview guides; and
- a final detailed work plan and timetable.

Desk meeting

One week after a desk report is received 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.

5.3. FIELD PHASE

Following the formal approval of the Desk Report, the evaluation team shall undertake **field visits to South Sudan and Sudan**.

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.

5.4. SYNTHESIS PHASE

The Draft Final Report should deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be clear enough for any potential reader to understand.

As a reminder, even if the evaluation will assess individual projects, 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.

The structure of the report should follow a broad classification into three parts:

- **Executive Summary**: It sets out, in no more than 5 pages, a summary of the evaluation's main conclusions and the main evidence supporting.
- **Main body**: The main report must be limited to 50 pages and present, in full, the results of the analyses and conclusions arising from the evaluation. It must also contain a description of the subject evaluated, the context of the evaluation, and the methodology used; and
- **Annexes**: These must collate the technical details of the evaluation, and must include the Terms of Reference, questionnaire templates, interview guides, any additional tables or graphics, and references and a full quotation of all sources.

Draft Report Meeting

A **meeting** will be organised in Brussels after the submission of the first draft final report. The evaluator will make a PowerPoint presentation to the Steering Committee 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. The Steering Committee will provide comments to the draft final report. The comments should be taken into account in the final report.

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.

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.

Final Report

On the basis of the comments made by the Steering Committee, the evaluator shall make appropriate amendments, insofar as these do not interfere with the independence of the evaluator in respect of the conclusions they have reached and the recommendations made. The Executive Summary should be translated into **French and Arabic** by a professional translator, once it has been approved by the Steering Committee.

The Final Report should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation in electronic form, covering the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The evaluator may be

In their offer, the bidders shall provide an indicative schedule based on the following table:

Indicative timing	Report	Meeting
T+1 week		Kick-off
T+4 weeks	Draft Inception Report	
T+5 weeks		Inception meeting
T+11 weeks	Draft Desk Report	
T+12 weeks		Desk Report meeting
T+19 weeks	Draft Field Report	
T+21 weeks		Field Report meeting
T+26 weeks	Draft Final Report	
T+29 weeks		Draft Final Report meeting
T+ 32 weeks	Final Report	

10. 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 should be presented in a maximum of **30 pages**, and must include:

1. A description of the overall understanding of the Terms of Reference, the evaluation questions and the tasks covered by the contract;
2. The methodology the bidder intends to apply for this evaluation for each of the phases involved;
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.