

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

In 2000 ECHO began channelling relief to Zimbabwe to save lives and alleviate the suffering caused by Cyclone Eline. With the onset of a severe and well publicized drought in 2002, ECHO stayed and eventually opened an office in January 2003. With land reform, other political and economic developments, and another drought in 2005 the crisis evolved but continued to be primarily characterized by: (i) severe shortages of staple food, drugs, water, fuel and energy; (ii) hyperinflation (200-1,200%); (iii) the collapse of government funded services and social safety nets; and (iv) deepening rural and urban poverty. Equally ECHO's portfolio evolved guided by the changing nature of the crisis and by responses based upon best practices in humanitarian aid (HA). So far, five DG ECHO humanitarian aid decisions have benefited Zimbabwe with a total commitment of Euro 80.26 million of which the first two decisions (totalling Euro 38.26 million covering the period 2002 – 2003) have since been positively evaluated in 2004.

II. Purpose and Methodology

Purpose

The subject of this Evaluation are the ECHO-funded humanitarian operations in Zimbabwe during the period 2004 and 2005, to which Euro 30 million was committed through two Decisions each with a budget of Euro 15,000,000: (i) ECHO/ZWE/210/2004/01000; and (ii) ECHO/ZWE/210/2005/01000. Total expenditure from these two decisions was Euro 29,160,758.22 (Euro 14,223,254.22 for 2004 and Euro 14,937,404.00 for 2005) apportioned approximately per sector as follows: food security 35%; food aid 15%; water, sanitation, health and nutrition 42%; IDPs 6%; HA coordination (1%); and ECHO country programme management 1%.

The evaluation fulfils Article 18 of Regulation (EC) 1257/96 which requires the Commission to “regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community” in order to (a) establish whether they have achieved their objectives and (b) produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations. The evaluation addresses these two issues at three levels of ECHO's strategy: Global; Operational; and Sector.

Methodology

The evaluation team started its mission in Brussels with a full briefing by DG ECHO, AIDCO and DG DEV during the period 3 – 6 July 2006. An in-country phase followed from 7 – 28 July 2006 during which the experts held in-depth meetings with the ECHO Technical Team, the Head of the EU Delegation to Zimbabwe and relevant professionals within the EC Delegation. Interviews were held with 13 ECHO Partners, half of which were subsequently randomly selected for detailed project follow-up through beneficiary interviews in targeted districts. At least two partners per thematic area and one district per partner were randomly selected for these field visits. Homogeneity in packages of assistance offered per thematic area enabled the team to emphasise depth, as opposed to breadth of coverage of operations. At the end of the country visit, the Team shared their preliminary findings and recommendations with ECHO Partners through a Workshop. Their comments enriched this Report.