

MEETING OF THE FPA WATCH GROUP
BRUSSELS, 12 JULY 2005
ECHO, rue de Genève

VOICE MINUTES OF MEETING APPROVED BY DG ECHO

1. Introduction

Stefan De Keersmaecker (SdK), new Head of ECHO 4, Sector 2, introduced himself. After thanking Pablo Ibanez (PI) for his work, he explained that the FPA was contributing to the professionalism of Partner NGOs. He said that one had to take into account that there is a public pressure (and scrutiny) on how public funding is being spent (transparency and accountability).

2. Update on the Financial Regulation Implementing Rules revision (Fast Track Procedure)

Martine Fouwels, desk manager at ECHO 4, Sector 2, made a presentation on the above issue. In this context, SdK said that the Annex V would be subject of revision before the end of this year. Although there is no clear time table yet, the FPA TF and WG will be consulted in this process. PI indicated that this revision process will not be the occasion to dismantle Annex V.

3. Approval of the minutes of March 15th 2005 procurement meeting

VOICE originally drafted the minutes. ECHO provided a “reference document” on the issues discussed during the meeting. A discussion between VOICE, WG members and ECHO followed. Eventually, it has been agreed that the reference document would not be considered as the minutes of the meeting of March 15th, but that it would be a reference document from ECHO. ECHO would adapt it adequately. VOICE said it would not put this document on its website, as it was an ECHO document.

(Please contact ECHO 4, if more information is needed regarding the ECHO document “FPA Annex V – Procedures for the award of contracts. Some issues of concern to ECHO NGO partners”).

4. Update on FPA supporting documents

SdK presented the state of play concerning the FPA supporting documents:

- Guidelines: the guidelines need to be updated; the ones concerning the budget and the single form should be updated by the end of the month and will be put on the ECHO website in the summer; the other ones are planned to be put around September-October. Information concerning Annex V will be put into the Fact sheets and the FAQ.
- Fact sheets (1-2 pagers): are in the process of being drafted;
- FAQ: are being drafted; there will be one group of FAQ concerning procurement and another group of FAQ concerning other issues; they will also ultimately be put on the web site;
- A Glossary is also planned and will be put later on the web site.

SdK said that the production of these documents was an ongoing process, and that the supporting documents are “living” documents subject to regular revisions and updates.

5. Representativity of the FPA Watch Group

KS handed the list of the 100 ECHO Partner NGOs, which sent the form recognising the legitimacy of the new FPA TF/WG, to SdK.

6. Presentation of the “E-request”

Luis-Angel Nieto-Moreda, ECHO project manager, presented the new system, which will enable the electronic use of the Single Form and the electronic submission of Grant, project applications. The next step is that this system is planned to be fully operational in the second quarter of 2006. ECHO will draft a note of this issue to the attention of the ECHO partners. A number of NGOs will be invited to participate to the test phase of this project

7. Other issues

- SdK briefly presented the members of ECHO 4, Sector 2. An updated task assignment list will be transmitted to VOICE for its diffusion to ECHO partners;
- SdK took due note of the letter sent by VOICE – on behalf of the FPA WG - to the Member States Humanitarian Aid Committee. The letter is describing the concerns of ECHO Partner NGO’s concerning the implementation of the new FPA. SdK said that should this letter be discussed at the HAC meeting on July 14th, ECHO will give the necessary explanation.
- SdK concluded the meeting by restating his optimism in the collaboration with the ECHO partners and said that his team was always available for questions and contacts.

8. Annexes

- List of participants.

ADRA	Mario Oliveira Thomas Petracek
Alisei	Paolo Giuffreda
AVSI	John Makoha
CARE International	Jerome Lebouc
CESVI	Stefano Piziali
CORDAID	Robert van der Wolff
DanChurchAid	Rikke Holm Mrs. K. Wogensen
EU-CORD Network	Diana White
German Agro Action	Mrs. Annette Wulf
ICCO	Kees Klijs
IRCUK	Karine Penrose-Theis
Mission East	Mags Bird
MSF (B)	Inma Vazquez
Red Cross/ EU Office	Harri Hiekkanen Jeannette Adriaenssens Kathrin Schick
VOICE	Gilles Van Moortel

KS/GvM
11 August 2005