

## *FPA Watch Group Meeting – Exchange with ECHO*

	<b>MINUTES DRAFT</b>
DATE	29.06.2017
TIME	14.00 – 16.00
PLACE	ECHO, Rue de la Loi 86
PARTICIPANTS	cf. List of participants

### **I. Key Results Indicators (KRI) and Key Outcomes Indicators (KOI):**

The FPA Watch Group exchanged with Charles Pirotte (Deputy HoU D1) and Daniel Clauss C1,

- One year after the launch of the new KRI and KOI, ECHO is positive about their use and interested to have partners' perception and feedback.
- Thanks to reduced number of KRIs and the automatic link to subsectors, ECHO will be able to aggregate figures. For most used KRIs this will be done in the coming months. The collected data will be used for internal reporting in order to highlight what type of actions are being implemented in different regions. Data will also be used publicly for communication purpose.
- However, ECHO notes in a few cases, the selection of subsector (and consequently the KRI) is not appropriate to the project activities. Namely, the 'other' subsectors are expected to be applicable only in very rare cases. Some technical issues linked to the eSingle Form had also been identified (values reported as % instead of absolute values etc). Overall, ECHO does not consider these issues to have a major impact on the general figures.
- Regarding the Key Outcome Indicators, ECHO is expecting partners to use one per sector. KOIs are now used on half of the projects. If partners decide not to use any suggested KOI, they should propose another outcome indicator (at least as relevant and robust) to cover the sector chosen. The objective of the KOI is to both improve the monitoring of a project through robust outcome indicators and to enable ECHO to compare projects in a specific sector.
- In the framework of the Grand Bargain, ECHO is promoting the idea of harmonized indicators to be discussed further among donors and partners, building on the experience of the KRI/KOI.

#### **KRI and KOI on Protection:**

- ECHO introduced some pilots to use KRI and KOIs on protection project. A consultation meeting is planned on Tuesday 4 July at ECHO.

#### **FPA WG feedback on KRIs and KOIs**

- The FPA WG welcomes the simplification of KRIs and KOIs. The WG would be interested in knowing how to access data and how the latter will be used.
- ➔ Once available ECHO will share the aggregated data with its partners. A first ad hoc reporting will be made through summer and first aggregated figures on KRIs are planned to be presented at the ECHO partners' conference.

- The FPA WG also shared its interest to be involved in future conversations between ECHO and others donors on harmonization of indicators.

## **2. HIP process 2017 and 2018:**

Exchange with Zudella Pimley-Smith ECHO Unit B3 Desk for the Turkey Facility and Beatrice Miège ECHO Unit C3, Team Leader for the Great Lakes.

### **The FPA WG shared its main recommendations on the HIP process:**

- Partners shared with ECHO that they would like having some visibility on the overall HIP process in order to be able to brief their teams internally and to ensure field team follow the consultation and workshops process at field level, whenever taking place. Partners would also appreciate having more visibility on the submission process.
- ➔ ECHO shared they should have an internal overview on the potential allocation before the summer break. The HIPs should be made available earlier than in 2016, even if ECHO still have to take into account the internal EC process in particular for the adoption of the World Wide Decision (WWD). No HIP will be published on Internet before the World Wide Decision (WWD) is approved but it will be made available through APPEL with a specific clause (disclosure indicating that funding allocation is pending the adoption of the WWD)
- Once HIPs are released partners are asking for a minimum of 6 weeks before the proposal submission deadline. It had been improved last year but some HIPs still had some tight deadlines. 6 weeks is considered by partners as a minimum to provide proposals of quality.
- The whole contracting phase is still very long and partners would appreciate receiving feedback more rapidly (also in case of rejection). Also partners are more and more confronted with the request to submit first proposals in January for actions starting later in the year which often results in new proposals to be submitted when top-ups are made available.
- ➔ ECHO shared that HIPs 2018 should be "published" in APPEL by the end of October. Regarding the submissions ECHO understands partners concerns and issues linked to early submission for funding taking place later in the year. But given the current budget allocation constraints for some regions/countries, ECHO can only secure funding at the beginning of the year, as there is no guarantee that additional funding will be made available later in the year to open for a second round of submission. So, the preferred option is to " earmark " funds in January for proposals starting later in the year even though the negotiation process may take place closer to the start date
- Partners appreciated having different deadlines within regional HIPs last year and would recommend spreading as much as possible the HIP deadlines in order to reduce the workload on both parties and avoid bottleneck in the contracting phase.
- Earmark funds to Education in Emergencies and DRR could be made more visible under each HIP.
- ➔ ECHO confirmed that partners should be able to see in the Technical Annex the dedicated budget for DRR. For 2018, some HIPs will be purely DRR or preparedness actions as it was the case with former DIPECHO Action plans
- ➔ On Education in Emergencies, the Commissioner is aiming at reaching the target of 10 % to EU humanitarian aid funding to EiE by the end of his mandate. Next year ECHO is aiming at 6 to 8%,

the official target will be shared internally before the summer. Regarding the allocation, ECHO will most likely affect EiE funds after the allocation of the budget per HIPs. EiE funds will come on top of basis HIPs funds and allocations will be made according to regions/crisis needs and implementing capacities. This is subject to changes.

- Multiple HIP top ups is difficult to manage for partners and create often a lot of confusion especially at the end of the year when last top-ups are made available in the same time than new HIPs are released.
- ➔ ECHO recognizes the issue of the piecemeal approach that is further exacerbated when additional source of funding is made available (e.g. in Africa with EDF funding on top of ECHO funding) but there are not so many solutions available for the time-being.
- The FPA WG asked ECHO how the cash programming new policy will be implemented within the next HIPs as well as the multiyear funding and planning (MYF-MYP) commitment taken in the framework of the Grand Bargain.
- ➔ ECHO explained that the final guidance note on cash should be published by the end of August, following a consultation period with partners.
- ➔ Regarding MYF-MYP, ECHO aims at piloting MYF in some regions or countries as of 2018. DRR projects could be part of the pilots.

**ECHO shared some information on the upcoming HIPs 2018 consultations and the current situation in Turkey:**

ECHO's internal deadline to draft the HIPs and technical annexes is set on 15 September 2017.

**Under directorate C:**

- C2: In all countries covered by the Unit, consultation meetings will take place i.e. Western Africa (Sahel), Central and Northern Africa,
- C3: In the Horn of Africa, several meetings already took place (or are planned) following the numerous top ups of the last months. Therefore, no additional consultation on the HIP 2018 is planned. For the Great Lakes a meeting will take place early September and meetings will also take place for the Sudans and Southern Africa (mainly on DRR).

**Under directorate B:**

- Turkey: ECHO shared that the Turkey HIP received additional 700 million euros (MS contributions) in May 2017 which make it the largest HIP. This top up should also run for 2018. So far the Desk has received very few applications from INGOs which is a source of concern for ECHO. ECHO Ankara office had been engaging with INGOs at field level but no consultation is planned so far for 2018. ECHO is also planning to evaluate the implementation of the ESSN programme which should reach 1million refugees by the end of the year.
- Partners shared their concerns as very few INGOs are getting the working permits from the Turkish authorities which create a serious access issue for INGOs.
- ➔ ECHO Ankara is liaising with the Turkish MoFA on that matter. But so far, the Turkish government is referring to national security concerns which make it difficult to negotiate. ECHO encourages partners to continue raising awareness on this matter at Member State and EU level.

**Improve the access to funding and the decision making process:**

- In terms of access to information, partners would appreciate having better information on ad hoc decisions to be able to apply rapidly. Moreover, EDF financing decisions were found to be less user-friendly, possibly due to the initial DEVCO document format, as they were lacking some practical information of direct relevance to partners. Partners suggested ECHO to publish EDF decision accompanied by a one pager similar to the HIP technical annexes.
- ECHO indicated that EDF decisions are made available through APPEL as for the HIPs. The only difference is that indeed the format does not provide all the very practical information as in Technical annex but it is however normally available in Appel. ECHO will look at the proposal of the one pager.
- Partners and ECHO should discuss together on how to become more strategic to compensate the funding issues in some regions (especially Latin America and Asia)
- ECHO explained partners how they proceed when reviewing and selecting proposals. Last year following major budget cuts in some regions/countries, ECHO had to take very difficult decisions including strong prioritisation, and on top of quality of proposals other elements were taken into account (including impact for partners' presence, longer term strategies, etc.). Even in case of rejection or disagreement on a project ECHO staff is encouraged to be constructive. ECHO is sometimes sending specific technical comments in order to help partners improving their proposal. Regarding the final stage before signing the grant, ECHO recognized this stage is usually long and less transparent as the project and agreements have to be validated at different level internally.
- In case proposals are kept on hold because ECHO is aware of upcoming funding it should inform the partner by a legal letter notifying them their proposal had been placed on hold. For partners with thresholds, ECHO will spread the pre-financing into a 30%-30%-20 % model as agreed last year. And if there is still a need to have a pre-overview of the proposals from threshold holders ECHO would again disseminate a request at the end of the year.
- The next FPA consultation will provide space for in-depth discussion between ECHO and its NGOs partners on those different challenges.

**3. Update on the Comprehensive evaluation on Humanitarian Aid 2012-2016:**

The FPA WG exchanged with Marzia Conte, Unit D1, who is part of the ECHO steering group for the comprehensive evaluation of the EC Humanitarian aid 2012-2016 (which is being carried out by an independent external evaluator). She is also ECHO new focal point on the EU Consensus for humanitarian aid, WHS, the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, and humanitarian reform.

The objective of the evaluation is to provide an independent, external, evidence-based evaluation of the relevance, coherence, EU added value, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Commission's humanitarian aid over the period 2012-2016. This is also expected to include some input on how to take account of the commitments of the WHS and the Grand Bargain in future EU humanitarian action (so-called "prospective" part).

**The evaluation approach includes:**

- Meta-evaluation (desk work based on various ECHO evaluations in the period covered, Incl. Consensus);
  - Rapid evaluations on various thematic aspects (less detailed than a fully-fledged evaluation);
  - Surveys;
    - o Including surveys to partners, surveys to field staff, surveys to local implementing partners
  - Field visits:
    - DRC, Tanzania, 1<sup>st</sup> week July
    - Mauritania, September (TBC)
    - Myanmar, October (TBC)
    - o Thematic focus of both surveys and missions is also based on the gaps identified in the meta-evaluation (Food security, shelter, and protection and advocacy as cross-cutting issues)
- Open public consultation:
- Will include a more general part addressed to the general public, and more specific questions for informed stakeholders;
  - It will include both open and closed questions, with opportunities for additional comments;
  - It will be possible to upload separate input/ position papers as part of the open consultation

**Timeline:**

- Meta evaluation and ECHO staff interviews completed
- Partners survey and interviews ongoing (deadline 7 July)
- Local partners survey to be launched on 5/6 July
- Open public consultation to be launched mid-July (19 July) and to be open for 14 weeks (until 3<sup>rd</sup> week in October)
- Final report by the evaluators expected by end of year
- Commission Staff Working Document expected early 2018.

**Progress with surveys:**

- 900 contacts have received the survey directly; answers have started coming in.
- Any partner that did not submit a list of contacts received a link to the survey to be forwarded to relevant staff.
- The local partners survey has been designed with a view to being different to the partners' survey but for them to be able to compare data.

**Issues raised by FPA WG and VOICE:**

- The FPA WG hopes there will be more questions on partnership. Quality of partnership has effect on effectiveness of EU aid.
- Partners shared with ECHO they had been confused between the different surveys.