

## BRIEFING

# Humanitarian Partnership Watch Group: 2023 in review

### 2023 IN NUMBERS

- > 4 HP Watch Group meetings (including exchanges with DG ECHO)
  - > 16 HP Task Force internal meetings
  - > 5 HP Task Force meetings with DG ECHO
  - > 3 HP sub-working group meetings on DG ECHO's SEAH yearly reporting
  - > 1 HP sub-working group meeting on the sharing of overhead cost
- Find here the link to [HP Watch Group-related documentation](#)

## 1. A dialogue platform between DG ECHO and NGO partners.

The Humanitarian Partnership (HP) Watch Group is a unique dialogue platform between DG ECHO and its certified NGO partners for about 30 years. In 2023, the HP Watch Group met four times. All meetings included timely exchanges with DG ECHO on topics of concern for NGO partners.

- > In April, the group met the DG ECHO audit team to discuss the consequences of DG ECHO's new audit strategy. The group put forward issues encountered in the audit process and discussed potential measures to improve. Find here [DG ECHO's presentation](#) shared during the meeting.
- > In July, a discussion on the operationalisation of the [DG ECHO Guidance note on Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings](#) took place in the presence of DG ECHO. The main elements raised by the HP Watch Group pertained to DG ECHO's engagement with L/NAs in the HIPs consultations, compliance requirements, overhead cost sharing, budget implications, and changes in the Single Form, among other items.
- > Discussions on the operationalisation of the [Guidance note](#) continued in October during the HP Watch Group's yearly in-person day at DG ECHO premises. On this occasion, DG ECHO presented the expected Single Form changes in relation to the application of the Guidance, ahead of the launch of the HIPs 2024. Find the [power point presentation](#) here. In the framework of the Minimum Environmental Requirements, DG ECHO and partners discussed the DG ECHO presentation "[Reducing the environmental impact of ECHO field operations - Practical aspects ahead of the HIP 2024 process](#)".
- > In December, discussions with the DG ECHO audit team continued. DG ECHO presented the corrective measures foreseen to tackle the issue of the high error rate and opened the floor to partners for questions, setting the basis for a longer-term conversation in the months to come.

In addition to HP Watch Group meetings, the dialogue with DG ECHO is reinforced throughout the year by the work of the HP Task Force, composed of seven elected members from the HP Watch Group.

- > At the beginning of 2023, the HP Task Force and five DG ECHO unit representatives met to discuss the [HP Watch Group Work Plan for 2023](#), setting the basis for constructive collaboration throughout the year.
- > On the HIP processes and best practices, conversations continued in 2023, building on previous years' work. In September, a meeting between the HP Task Force and DG ECHO took place to discuss the first two sections of the [Good Practices around DG ECHO HIPs and contracting cycle document](#), with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the HIPs cycle.
- > The HP sub-working group on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) met DG ECHO in mid-June, to discuss the results of DG ECHO's analysis of the yearly SEAH reporting, and to exchange about reporting simplification opportunities.

Another interactive exchange has been established in 2023, the DG ECHO Partners' Segment:

- The first-ever DG ECHO Partners' Segment took place on 22 March, right after the European Humanitarian Forum. Thanks to the intense advocacy work of VOICE and its members, after three years without the former DG ECHO Partners' Conferences, DG ECHO has reinstated the exchange, with the Partners' Segment as one of the two annual key moments that replaces the former Conference. The second one is the strategic exchange in the autumn, the DG ECHO's Directors' meeting on policy and programmatic priorities.

## 2. A partner's hub for expertise sharing.

The HP Watch Group constitutes a hub for exchange of information and expertise between peer organisations.

- During each HP Watch Group meeting, time was reserved for internal discussions and collective brainstorming. The result of these exchanges set the basis for the continuation of the Watch Group's work on topics of interest.
- The HP Watch Group Teams' chat has been introduced. It offers a collaborative space to foster and speed up the sharing of information among the members of the group on practical issues related to the Humanitarian Partnership.
- HP sub-working groups have been created to facilitate the advancement of specific objectives:
  - The HP sub-working group on SEAH continued its efforts in engaging with DG ECHO to provide feedback on the yearly SEAH reporting template and to influence DG ECHO's approach to safeguarding. Some of the group's members were interviewed by the consultant in charge of the development of DG ECHO's SEAH donor policy.
  - The HP sub-working group on the sharing of overheads with local partners kick-started in October. It provides a platform for Watch Group members to share good practices and set collective objectives, in the context of DG ECHO-funded projects.

## 3. A collective and evidence-based voice at EU level

To ensure that the asks of the group are evidence-based and built on collective feedback, different tools are used during the year to collect inputs and develop joint analyses.

- Around the HIPs:
  - Every year, the HP Task Force monitors the average timeline of the contracting process. You can find here the HIPs contracting process monitoring analysis for [2022](#), and [2023](#).
  - The HP Watch Group [HIPs 2023 survey](#) has been run to gather evidence on partners' experience with the HIPs 2023, providing DG ECHO with practical suggestions to improve the HIPs consultation and negotiation phases, Multi-Year Funding, Programmatic Partnerships, and the Minimum Environmental Requirements.
  - The survey complements the [Good Practices around DG ECHO HIPs and contracting cycle document](#) drafted by the HP Watch Group in 2022.
- Following the Partners' Segment 2023, the [HP Watch Group feedback on the event](#) has been shared with DG ECHO, suggesting to adapt the format of the event for more inclusive and participative discussions. Towards the end of the year, VOICE proposed to DG ECHO the organisation of a [workshop on Equitable Partnerships and fair risk sharing](#) that will take place at the Partners' Segment 2024.
- Ahead of the exchange with the DG ECHO audit team in April, feedback from the HP Watch Group was gathered through an online questionnaire, allowing the identification of the main audit-related issues encountered collectively.
- The document "[Challenges and suggestions regarding the operationalisation of DG ECHO's Equitable Partnerships Guidance](#)" shared with DG ECHO after the HP Watch Group meeting in July aims at clarifying the challenges INGO partners might encounter when implementing the Guidance. It provides suggestions to DG ECHO on possible solutions to overcome these difficulties.

---

[www.VOICEeu.org](http://www.VOICEeu.org)

+32 (0) 2 541 13 60 ■ [voice@VOICEeu.org](mailto:voice@VOICEeu.org) ■ [@VOICEeu\\_](https://twitter.com/VOICEeu_)  
VOICE asbl ■ Rue Royale 71 ■ 1000 Brussels ■ Belgium  
Company number: 0475213787 ■ RPM Brussels

BRIEFING

