

WEBINAR QUESTIONS

The webinar took place the day of the release of the Communication of the EU's Global Response to the COVID-19 which clearly triggered the interest of the participants and directed almost all the questions to DG ECHO. Despite the efforts of the panellists, many questions remained unanswered. Listing them here gives a sense of the many challenges that will need to be further discussed in order to seek and identified adapted solutions.

Here is a selection of key questions that have remained pending (below is the full list):

- How much of the announced EU funding will be made available to INGOs, while the EU Communication specifically refers to UN and Red Cross appeals?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the financial support of front-line responders such as local actors & civil society actors?
- How will the socio-eco aspects of the crisis will be addressed in the short term, while ECHO funding is the most agile instrument for rapid response but focussing elsewhere?
- How to reconcile the need for prioritization (health, WASH, logistics) and the necessity to strengthen other sectors, such as livelihood?
- How will the funds be reallocated from previous programs to COVID-19 response without harming non COVID-19 related but still essential programs?
- What measures will be taken by DG ECHO to ensure that aid agencies are able to access, stay and deliver humanitarian aid?
- How does the narrative of the Grand Bargain fits into the EU Global response to COVID-19?
- What solution could be envisaged/supported by the EU to meet the needs and implement the Global EU Response plan on COVID19 in heavily sanctioned countries (Syria, Iran, Venezuelan, North Korea), already suffering from humanitarian/ health impacts of de-risking, chilling effect and other sanctions-related matters.
- How to meet the psychosocial challenge humanitarian workers are facing while supporting the COVID-19 response?
- Will ECHO consider adapting its rules to adapt to these exceptional circumstances and facilitate the work of aid agencies, by postponing audits, or interrupting the co-funding requirement?
- How will ECHO communicate with partners about existing funds and reprogramming? Who are ECHO interlocutors of partners in that crisis and what are channels of communication?

FULL LIST OF QUESTIONS RAISED DURING THE WEBINAR.

Questions raised were categorized in 3: 1/general questions, 2/specific thematic questions, 3/context specific questions

1. General questions

- a. Will there be some specific allocations for NGOs through the global appeal?

- b. How will ECHO and DEVCO ensure that local actors & civil society who are on the front line of responding to the virus are supported materially and financially?
- c. How much of the 502 ml of the Emergency response actions will be going to the UN (including WHO) and how much will be available for NGOs?
- d. Additionally intervening in the socio-economic aspects of the crisis is required urgently - who will be doing that knowing that ECHO is by far the fastest financial instrument.
- e. If I understand Michael correctly the 500+ M euro for Humanitarian aid has already been allocated and is to be redirected. How do we reconcile that with the necessity to continue the actions that we believed were critical just few weeks ago?
- f. If I understand there won't be any fresh money, the partners already contracted will be given flexibility to revise for COVID response?
- g. On media outrage about EU money being channelled into aid instead of economic support. What is the EU's position/defense on this? Isn't there another factor at play that relates to EU values and the conviction that issues can only be tackled in partnership?
- h. The Need for a New Strategic Partnership between Africa and Europe. Both entities, due to geographical, historical, economic, and political ties, should forge a revisited stronger bond in the aftermath of the Corona Crisis. An initiative building on pre-existing frameworks and infrastructure
- i. EUR30M is the only allocation granted up to now? Do ECHO consider it is a major contribution to the response and appeal of US2B? Also, why so little fresh money and mainly reallocation?
- j. What measures will be taken by DG ECHO to ensure that aid agencies are able to access, stay and deliver humanitarian aid?
- k. Does this mean there won't be any new programme focused on other areas than health, wash and logistics under the COVID response? Areas like food security/cash will also be critical in the near term.
- l. How will the EU (DG ECHO) ensure that the funding targets the most vulnerable (i.e. displaced people, women and girls, elderly people, disabled people)?
- m. MS planning and WHO guidelines address the key role of faith actors in mobilising community responses, education on hygiene and social distancing and the humanitarian response. How will the EU actively engage faith actors on the ground?
- n. How will the EU (DG ECHO) ensure that countries with weaker health systems will not be left behind? Will the EU consider increasing its support to North African countries such as Libya by submitting a proposal to replenish the EUTF?
- o. How does the narrative of "localization" (Grand Bargain) fit into the EU Global Response to coronavirus?
- p. You are talking about financing, funding and coordinating the aid but the crisis is about the shortage of medical supplies to fight the pandemic in order to flatten the curve. What is your plan to help to procure the masks, tests, respirators and ventilators needed in a very short timing?
- q. Question to Michael Köhler: Do you see any possibility of a response towards the crisis in Greek Refugee Camps that ECHO can take, or push for politically?
- r. I'm launching a project on COVID19 responses in heavily sanctioned countries (Syria, Iran, Venezuelan, North Korea), already suffering from humanitarian/ health impacts of de-risking, chilling effect and other sanctions-related matters. What are potential solutions in these countries?

- s. Many of you have discussed the importance of maintaining current essential health services and activities, even while we work to address the Covid-19 pandemic. Do you have any suggestions for how to keep these two as separate priorities?
- t. What practical solutions or tools can the EU offer to combat the outbreak of Covid in refugee camps specifically in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and oPt?
- u. Do you think this new covid-19 crisis could overshadow pre-existing ones, such as the migrant crisis in Venezuela and neighbouring countries, detracting already limited resources?
- v. Will be any specific call for NGOs?
- w. Is there any EU concrete plan to make a quick evacuation of the overcrowded refugee camps in the Greek Islands possible?
- x. What are some of the initiatives being taken to tackle the rise in domestic violence cases during the COVID-19 lock down?
- y. @ Mr. Rodier: Are you seeing European aid organisations collaborating / or coordinating their efforts with Chinese and or Russian entities in Central African Republic (you mentioned that only 3 ventilators would be available)?
- z. Has NRC witnessed attacks against its aid workers by local population in particular in Africa fearing that "Westerners" (or Chinese) could import SARS CoV-2 into their country?
- aa. Could you say something about flexibility from donors on requirements related to existing pledges? Many donors are showing Various degrees of flexibility, but I would like to hear your opinions on how much flexibility is needed overall.
- bb. In the background of coronavirus pandemic, what are the particular forms of exhaustion, risk and psychosocial challenge that humanitarian workers face? What can be done -- at an individual level and at an institutional level -- to mitigate these difficulties and prevent burnout?
- cc. What are ECHO priority countries for the initial response, at least?
- dd. What else could we do, other than asking EU Member States to increase humanitarian and development funding? More from Emergency Aid Reserve? (knowing we also need this for non-COVID response)
- ee. Is the idea of reallocating EU funding to ECHO to respond to this point at least during the first phase of crisis has been considered? thank you

2. Specific Technical

- a. Co-funding is particularly challenging for NGOs today. We would welcome no further request from ECHO for co-financing at this stage
- b. As mentioned, this situation is creating several delays and working impediments. Will ECHO agree to delay ongoing HQ audits (as in addition many NGO are engaged into the ex-ante audit)?
- c. Would there be a request for proposals for organisations not working with the EU but which are putting in place actions against the COVID on the field? Is the action response funding (502 M €) only for EU partners?
- d. Will ECHO IPs be authorized to increase the part of the grants allocated to support HQ, considering that the challenges of adapting response, developing SOPs, remote management, etc. require very strong mobilization from HQ ?

- e. Is it possible for example to use an existing FWC signed with the EU for provision of Expertise on something else, but to re-orient that FWC for implementing services related to COVID_19? Would the FWC in question need an addendum?
- f. Will ECHO consider to cancel the request for cofunding (as the NMFA announced couple of weeks ago)?
- g. Good afternoon, could you please clarify for your NGO partners if and how ECHO is planning to communicate with partners about existing funds and reprogramming --do we expect update of the HIP 2020 or if minor top-up of the HIPs when additional "fresh" funds are found? Thank you.
- h. What is the ECHO flexibility in terms of supporting documentations for actions carried out in this period?
- i. Will this additional money work as top up for HIP 2020, or new calls for proposal?
- j. Is fresh money via the Emergency Aid Reserve an option?
- k. How will ECHO ensure the swift allocation of funds for partners knowing that the modification process for NGOs for their existing ECHO projects entail so much back and forth between the TA in a country and the ECHO desk officer?
- l. Can NGO also benefit from further flexibility like WHO? (simplified process, less earmarked, multi-year etc = in line with GB)
- m. There are talks about DEVCO (600 ml leftover from EDF) money being redirected to ECHO. How advanced are discussions on this ? Will ECHO received a part of the 15bn announced yesterday?
- n. What are the 7 hubs that WFP has installed or is installing?
- o. is the fast track procedure to approve amendments in place and meaning INGOs do not need to wait for NCE to be approved at higher level than desks?
- p. Will we have soon confirmation about the flexibility in supporting documents that partners will need to provide for actions implemented in this period? The idea is to respect the do no harm principle but to ensure delivery of aid, with ECHO flexibility in accepting more flexible and alternative documentation.
- q. Is it possible for example to use an existing FWC signed with the EU for provision of Expertise on something else, but to re-orient that FWC for implementing services related to COVID_19? Would the FWC in question need an addendum?
- r. we need clarifications on the 'light procedure' to approve changes and the approval of the grant that were supposed to start in March and are not signed yet

3. Specific Context

- a. With the first cases of coronavirus infections recorded, the **Gaza** Strip is bracing for what could become a cataclysmic outbreak. Is the EU foreseeing specific contribution to help Gaza, i.e. stepping up its financial contribution to UNRWA?
- b. I would like to inquire whether the European Union will add Corona relief supplies, such as masks and respirators, to the humanitarian aid mission for Syrian refugees in **Turkey**
- c. What will be the impact of the COVID crisis on the **Venezuelan** migrants and refugees crisis in LAC countries?
- d. @ Mr. Rodier: You mentioned the price hike for PPE in **SYR**. What is the actual price for clinical masks or the price for latex gloves? How will the EU (DG ECHO) ensure that funding offers flexible resources, that it is not diverted or over-indexed to the COVID-19 response at the expense of other existing needs and programs?

- e. Some political prisoners in **Spain** requested to be allowed to go home during this crisis, and the Spanish government threat some prison workers in order to stop this. What will the Commission and the Parliament do in this respect?
- f. How could ECHO support the response to the crisis in **Greek** Refugee Camps?
- g. Can you say something more broadly on the role of civil society especially experience on responding to **Ebola** - disappointing that the Communication says very little about civil society. Are we not also Team Europe?