

Key points from the EC training “Acting in transition”

Brussels, 18-20 July 2011

1. Objectives and programme

This training seminar was addressed to **EC/EU staff working in transition situations** (such as man-made, natural post-disaster situations, or economic, political, environmental post-crises). Around **twenty people attended the seminar**, from headquarters (EuropeAid and ECHO), delegations and ECHO offices in five countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Sri Lanka and Yemen).

Three **main objectives** were given for the training: (i) provide participants with better understanding of the EC/EU policies, regulations and procedures relating to transition situations; (ii) introduce the joint humanitarian-development framework (JHDF)¹; and, (iii) facilitate the exchange of experiences and learn from case studies and good practices.

This three-day seminar consisted of **eight modules** organised as follows:

Module 1 set the context of the seminar. It helped (i) introduce key concepts, (ii) build a common view of transition process among participants, and (iii) provide a broad perspective of the EU response to transition situations (with the contribution of different services from the DG ECHO, EuropeAid and the EEAS).

Module 3 provided an overview of the main regulatory aspects guiding EC external assistance in transition situations. A toolkit being developed by EuropeAid was presented. It aims to facilitate more effective interventions by helping EU/EC staff identify and use the right procedures for programming and implementation of the EU instruments.

Modules 2 and 4 focused on the joint humanitarian-development framework in the context of the FSTP 2011-2013. Module 2 presented the main objectives and the methodology developed to design the JHDF (a five-step process). An illustration was provided, inspired by the recent flooding in Burkina Faso². A second example—maternal and child undernutrition in the Sahel— was presented on Day 2. Module 4 presented a rough guide intended to help those running and participating in workshops for the elaboration of the JHDF.

For **modules 5 to 8**, participants worked in two groups to design a JHDF following the five-step process. Two case studies were selected from among the countries represented by participants: Sri Lanka and Yemen. Both groups developed a causal model on a specific problem in each country (steps 1 to 3). Then participants worked together on the Sri Lanka study case (steps 4 and 5)³. This work provided valuable input to improve the methodology, guidance materials and support needed.

¹ The recently approved EC food security thematic programme (FSTP 2011-2013) states that a Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework should be prepared to help tackle the issue of coherence, coordination and complementarity between humanitarian operations and development interventions.

² A [short video presentation](#) prepared jointly by ECHO and EuropeAid is available on ROSA's website.

³ The JHDF formulation exercises are available on ROSA's website.

2. Building a shared and common view of transition situations

The term of “transition” refers to a **process**. It covers a broad spectrum of activities, which are not necessarily sequential and compartmentalised. This is not a “one size fits all” concept. It could refer to a **linear transition from relief to recovery** (*continuum*). However, very often, different phases do not follow in a linear, chronological process but take place **at the same time** (*contiguum*)⁴. In this “grey transition zone”, particular attention must be given to ensuring better coordination and synergy between humanitarian assistance and development aid. Discussions stressed the need to have a good understanding of instruments and legislation that could help to ensure rapid and flexible assistance where and when needed without compromising future developmental procedures. A strategic framework for acting in transition should be built and adapted to each context. It should include a joint definition of priorities and a “who does what” presentation. This framework sets out the basis on which each actor will programme its interventions.

3. Acting in transition in a comprehensive approach

The EU response to situations of fragility and transition combine political, diplomatic, development, security and humanitarian instruments. Through three different presentations, the second part of the module 1 gave a broad perspective on specific issues: (i) policy and implementation frameworks (beyond food security), (ii) specific tools already used for needs assessments and recovery planning in post-disaster and post-conflict situations, and (iii) conflict prevention.

*Policy and implementation frameworks*⁵

Discussions on the link between humanitarian and development interventions are not new. Despite progress in the field, development and humanitarian actors still work separately, “in silos”. It is a key time to put this issue at the top of the agenda as several important changes are under way such as the elaboration of the JHDF under the FSTP 2011-2013 and the new multi-annual financing framework (MFF). ECHO would like to be actively involved in the JHDF design process.

There are three main issues to improving the EC response to transition situations:

- **Establishing a platform for common analysis** leading to **joint programming**. The preparation of a JHDF could be very useful at the earlier stages. The experience under way in the food security sector could serve as a practical basis for policy formulation and decision-making in transition strategies.
- **Building adequate procedures and instruments** to respond to increasingly multiple and complex crises. This could be done by (i) increasing flexibility in a systematic rather than merely *ad hoc* manner and (ii) ensuring comprehensive funding through existing or new specific instruments.
- **Sharing successful experiences** from past and recent experiences with special attention to ECHO-EuropeAid joint experiences⁶.

*The development of Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) and Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs)*⁷

In 2008, the European Commission, the UN and the World Bank decided to develop coordinated international support for needs assessments and recovery planning in

⁴ An example from Sudan (2007) illustrated that continuum and contiguum could happen at the same time.

⁵ This presentation was given by Henrike Trautman, DG ECHO.

⁶ For example, ECHO and DEVCO are working on a common approach to food security in the Sahel.

⁷ This session was presented by Claes Andersson, EuropeAid, Services on Foreign Policy Instruments. Crisis response planning team on PDNA and PCNA.

post-disaster and post-conflict situations. Formulated through a government-led process, the PDNAs and PCNAs provide a platform for common understanding and coordination among different bilateral and multilateral actors/donors. They pull together information on the impacts of a conflict/disaster and the resulting recovery needs and priorities.

Regarding EC involvement, several key issues were raised:

- The EC has supported the **development of joint methodologies and tools**, mainly through the Instrument for Stability (IfS). Several improvements are in progress and will be ready for the second half of 2011⁸. This includes **new funding modalities**.
- There is a need for **stronger EU involvement** in the PDNA/PCNA within the EU/WB/UN framework. The role of the EC vis-à-vis the WB and the UN needs to be clarified.
- The **joint concerted assessment process** is highly valuable for coordination. Within the EC, this process has, in some cases (e.g. the PDNA in Haiti), served as a platform for a common analysis.
- But much attention should be paid to **outputs**, in particular to improve articulation with disaster risk reduction strategies, and for appropriate use of results for programming and follow-up.
- The **participation of humanitarian actors** should be ensured in such exercise, in order to effectively integrate information gathered during the emergency phase.

*Conflict prevention*⁹

The EC promotes an integrated policy combining defence, diplomacy and development (3D approach). In recent years, particular attention has been paid to conflict prevention as part of a comprehensive strategy to respond to crisis situations and address cross-cutting issues that generate or contribute to conflict. A specific division has been created within the European External Action Service (EEAS) to mainstream conflict prevention in EU external policies. Several points were raised, in particular on the way forward:

- A **conflict prevention group** at the EEAS is being established, with the participation of EuropeAid and ECHO. All relevant actors are invited to participate. This group is intended to provide rapid conflict risk analysis and proposals for EU action.
- Much progress needs to be made on **early warning**. A lot of information is available but there is a need to better use this information to prevent crises.
- A strategic plan for **strengthening EU capacity for mediation and conflict resolution** will be adopted. It will be built on recent experiences and will provide training at different levels.

4. Better understanding of the EU legal and institutional regulations for transition situations

Over the last fifteen years, the EC has developed several tools and strategies. As a result, the EU legal and institutional framework has been modified, either by the promulgation of treaties, instruments, regulations and guidelines or by the adoption of amendments to existing ones. To provide quick and easy access to core aspects of the **existing EC regulatory framework**, a **handbook** is being prepared for the use

⁸ Much work needs to be done on the methodology for the PCNA.

⁹ This presentation was made by Johannes Schachinger, EEAS, Division for conflict prevention, mediation and peace building.

of staff in EU Delegations, ECHO offices and HQs who deal with fragile countries and those subject to natural and man-made disasters.

The idea is to **raise awareness of the appropriate tools** available at EC level. It covers both the legal and political aspects as well as operational aspects, and places particular emphasis on project cycle management¹⁰. A draft version was presented and distributed to the participants for comments. It is designed as a living document and the links to relevant legislation will be updated regularly. This document will be published and widely disseminated in the coming months.

5. Acting in transition: A JHDF in the context of food security

The recently approved EC Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP 2011-2013) provides for the elaboration of a **Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework** (JHDF). The objective is to help ensure coherence, coordination and complementarity between humanitarian operations and development interventions in situations of transition and fragility (under strategic priority No. 3). The elaboration of the JHDF involves EU delegations, experts from ECHO, colleagues from both EuropeAid and ECHO headquarters and if possible, other stakeholders.

A **five-step process** defined to elaborate a JHDF was presented during the training session¹¹. Two examples were also provided to illustrate this process: one inspired by a post-natural disaster situation in Burkina Faso, and one on the problem of maternal and child undernutrition in the Sahel. They both presented a cause-effect analysis from a different focus: (i) from a specific problem through different levels of intervention, and (ii) from the individual to the supra-national level.

The **methodology** for the elaboration of a joint framework is based on the development of a causal model (step 3). The objective is to identify the interactions between the various causes of the crisis and their effects at different levels (individuals, households, communities and local authorities, national and regional levels). Priorities for EU action are defined on the basis of this joint analysis and the EC interventions already in place (step 5). A coherent plan of action¹² is elaborated to guide implementation of the EU response that integrates humanitarian assistance and development actions.

During the discussions, several issues were raised:

- Particular attention is given to the **common process** of elaborating a joint framework. The JHDF could be a valuable tool to promote a shared analysis of a particular situation and better understanding of how different EU interventions oriented toward specific objectives could contribute to food and nutrition security. The work done in Burkina Faso with colleagues from ECHO and delegations (cf. the example inspired by a post-natural disaster situation) showed the advantages of having a shared process and common understanding of the crisis.
- There is a need to develop a **common methodology** to follow the same process, even if outputs could be different from one exercise to another. It will be important to provide further support (specific technical assistance and training) for

¹⁰ At least 25 special modalities for increased flexibility are foreseen within the project cycle.

¹¹ Step 1) discussion on the overall nature of the crisis; Step 2) identification of target populations; Step 3) joint analysis of the causes of the target population's food insecurity; Step 4) identification of EU responses; and Step 5) assessment of the coherence of EU interventions, definition of strategic priorities and design of an action plan.

¹² This is not a programming plan but an action plan defining the timing of the various interventions and their respective logics (some interventions may require the completion of another intervention to be effective).

the EU Delegations and ECHO experts that will lead this process with the support of HQs.

- One of the main outputs of the JHDF is the preparation of a **joint response** designed as a result of this shared exercise. In this sense, the JHDF could help define a comprehensive and coherent EU response not driven by available instruments or procedures.
- The JHDF should be **open to other partners** (outside the EC) to ensure complementarity of actions and a comprehensive response covering all causes leading to food insecurity. This is of particular relevance in several countries in Asia and Latin America (e.g. most non-ACP countries) where the EC is not a major donor and most of EC funding goes through global budget support.

In working groups, participants elaborated a JHDF following different steps proposed in the methodology and using two countries as case studies (Sri Lanka and Yemen). Several issues were raised along with recommendations for improvement (this list is not exhaustive):

On the causal model:

- There are different ways to present it as illustrated by case studies: (i) horizontally (by sector) and (ii) vertically (by level going from individual to supra-national level or vice-versa).
- In terms of methodology, participants used cards to elaborate the causal model. Several suggestions were made relating to (i) the presentation of problems and causes (negative formulation), and (ii) the use of white cards and colours to show linkages between different levels.
- There is a lot of information and many databases that could be used in preparing the joint frameworks (CRIS, HOPE, country reports).

On the process:

- The main objective and target population need to be clearly defined in steps 1 and 2.
- The objective of steps 4 and 5 is not to analyse all strategies and interventions but rather to identify gaps, overlaps and contradictions, and improve the overall coherence of the EU response.
- Particular attention needs to be given to the analysis of timing and sequencing, as well as ensuring a coherent exit strategy for different types of interventions.

On the way forward:

- This is the first JHDF training and part of an evolving process. All comments and feedback will be used to improve the methodology and guidance materials (rough guidelines).
- Awareness of the importance of elaborating joint frameworks and joint processes needs to be increased at both EuropeAid and ECHO. In Asia for example, a seminar will be held in October for financing contract staff and heads of missions; one day during this seminar could be devoted to the JHDF.