

# GUIDANCE TO DG ECHO PARTNERS

## PROGRAMMATIC PARTNERSHIPS 2024

### Eligible partners are:

- **INGO partners holding a "Programmatic Partnership Certificate"**
- **UN agencies and bodies, ICRC and IFRC**
- **EUMS Specialised Agencies**

## 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Quality funding is at the heart of the Grand Bargain 2.0, combining, in a *quid pro quo* approach, increased efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian actions, accountability to beneficiaries, support to local actors, greater predictability of funding, flexibility and simplified reporting, to deliver a maximum of aid to vulnerable populations, as well as donor visibility.

Programmatic Partnerships are one of the instruments allowing DG ECHO and its partners to respond to the Grand Bargain commitments. Programmatic Partnerships aim to develop a **strategic partnership** over a period of at least 24 months, or longer when relevant. They are meant to support strategic and geographic priorities/initiatives of shared interest between DG ECHO and the partner (or consortium of partners), while addressing humanitarian emergency needs.

The Programmatic Partnership model should generate a clear added value, i.e., going beyond what could have been achieved through regular, stand-alone actions. The main advantages of Programmatic Partnerships are: (1) efficiency gain through economies of scale, increasing the number of direct beneficiaries; (2) more and greater outcomes (effectiveness gains) at the end of the programme than if the partner had embarked in successive but distinct annual actions without predictability of funding; (3) the opportunity for DG ECHO and its partner to jointly further promote shared priorities and strategies, with a view to influencing also the overall humanitarian response system; (4) a longer-term perspective and more predictable funding allowing sufficient time to e.g. build community trust and local actors' capacity, develop a Nexus programme, pilot innovative funding mechanisms, support the structural elements of a Rapid Response Mechanism, gather evidence when testing innovative policy approaches and/or bringing them to scale.

## 2. GUIDANCE

### 2.1 Partners eligible for Programmatic Partnerships in 2024 and consortia

The following partners are eligible to apply for Programmatic Partnership funding in 2024:

- INGOs with Programmatic Partnership Certificate;
- UN agencies and bodies;
- ICRC and IFRC;
- EU Member States' Specialised Agencies.

Consortia are encouraged. However, consortia of INGO partners working under direct management (Model Grant Agreement) can apply for Programmatic Partnership only if the consortium entirely consists of partners holding a Programmatic Partnership Certificate<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.2 Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP) and Technical Annexes (HIPTA)

The Programmatic Partnerships is an instrument – among others – to implement the HIP strategy. Opportunities for Programmatic Partnerships are mentioned in relevant HIP (section 5.1.2) and technical and administrative details provided under the related HIPTA (section 3 point e). Programmatic Partnerships need to be aligned with these. Multi-country HIP allow Programmatic Partnerships to cover more than one country, although a Programmatic Partnership in one country only is also possible.

Multi-HIP Programmatic Partnerships (within a geographic unit unless otherwise specified) could be considered where relevant/applicable and appropriate.

### 2.3 Duration of the Programmatic Partnership, multi-year funding versus staged approach

The duration of a Programmatic Partnership can range from minimum 24 months to maximum 48 months.

Funding can be awarded in year 1 for the total duration of the Programmatic Partnership (multi-year funding) or be awarded in stages (staged approach) through successive commitments of minimum 12 months. The combination of both can also be envisaged: 2 year + 1 year + 1 year or 2 years + 2 years.

Under the staged approach, a letter of intent is communicated to the partner informing them of DG ECHO's understanding with respect to the overall multiannual operation and the

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<sup>1</sup> INGO partners holding a Partnership Certificate, but no **Programmatic** Partnership Certificate cannot be part of such consortium (meaning a consortium of signatories of the Model Grant Agreement).

interaction between the latter and any possible financial support which the Commission may award to the organisation in the successive stages of the Action. The implementation of this principle and indicative commitment would depend on the Action's achievement and on DG ECHO's budget. In all cases (staged approach and multi-year funding), recovery of funds is possible in case of partial implementation of the Action.

## **2.4 Scope of the Programmatic Partnership proposal**

For Programmatic Partnerships benefiting from multi-year funding, the Single Form, the Logical Framework, the workplan, the number of beneficiaries, results, targets, activities and detailed budget should correspond to the total duration of the Action. The grant agreement will relate to the full duration of the Action. Partners – have to submit with the Single Form a “Programmatic Partnership multi-annual planning Annex<sup>2</sup>” demonstrating the longer-term logic of intervention, its added value, annual milestones and intermediate targets to be achieved<sup>3</sup>.

When a staged approach is requested by the partner, or when DG ECHO total financial contribution to the Programmatic Partnership cannot be committed upfront, the Single Form, the Logical Framework, the workplan, the number of beneficiaries, results, targets, activities and detailed budget should correspond to the contribution for stage 1 (e.g., first 12 months or first 24 months of a three- or four-year Programmatic Partnership). The grant agreement will relate to the initial allocation corresponding to the first stage of the Action<sup>4</sup>.

As for the multi-year funding modality, the longer-term logic of the intervention, the added value of the Programmatic Partnership, the annual milestones, and intermediate targets to be achieved, should be developed in the “Programmatic Partnership multi-annual planning Annex” to be uploaded with the Single Form.

## **2.5 Submission of proposals**

Proposals for Programmatic Partnerships should be submitted in APPEL under the relevant HIP using the standard Single Form with appropriate annexes, in particular the “Programmatic Partnership multi-annual planning Annex”. In case of multi-country Programmatic Partnerships, chapter 2 of the Single Form should be filled in per country.

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<sup>2</sup> This annex should be uploaded in APPEL in the “ECHO pre-defined Annex” category under the “Programmatic Partnership multi-annual planning Annex” type.

<sup>3</sup> Each partner is free to develop its own multi-annual planning Annex. A non-compulsory template (Excel format) has been uploaded on DG ECHO's Partners' website: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/programmatic-partnership/programmatic-partnership>

<sup>4</sup> The indicative amounts for subsequent stages will be reflected in a letter of intent signed by DG ECHO Director- General. This letter of intent serves as a principle and indicative commitment but is not legally binding.

The indicative date for submission of the proposals is provided in the relevant HIPTA. The Programmatic Partnership submission date will be the same as for all other projects. In case of multiple submission dates (e.g., a multi-country or multi-HIP Programmatic Partnership) the submission date will normally be the earliest.

## 2.6 Selection criteria

Programmatic Partnerships should:

- (1) focus on strategic and geographic priorities of shared interest (DG ECHO's priorities are detailed in each HIP, including opportunities for multi-annual programming);
- (2) aim at achieving greater outcomes at the end of the programme than if the partner had embarked in successive but distinct annual projects with no funding predictability (effectiveness gains);
- (3) demonstrate the benefits of their proposed multi-annual strategy in terms of efficiency gains, for instance through economies of scale, reduction of the administrative burden or the use of cash transfers as preferred modality, allowing notably an increase of the number of direct beneficiaries and their profile (e.g., focus on people with disabilities, minorities, hard-to-reach vulnerable people).

It is important that the advantages granted to a humanitarian organisation through a Programmatic Partnership, such as flexibility or predictability, trickle down to this organisation's implementing partners, inter alia in the context of the localisation agenda. In case of **multi-year funding**, this advantage should also be granted to local implementing NGOs, including the transfer of a share of the indirect support costs.

Concerning visibility and communication, the Programmatic Partnership shall:

- Ensure the full implementation of standard visibility requirements, including the compulsory display of EU Humanitarian Aid visual identity. Given the substantial funding and the possibility to do a long-term strategic planning, a detailed communication plan on standard visibility will include an overview of the mandatory standard visibility and communication actions, including on-site branding, media, and social media outreach, etc<sup>5</sup>. Compliance with the visibility obligations will be strictly monitored and taken into account in the assessment of all implemented projects, including for the decision on the allocation for the subsequent year of a Programmatic Partnership.
- In addition, partners are strongly encouraged to submit an above-standard visibility (ASV) plan, with campaigning initiatives targeting EU audiences. The plan shall identify key audiences and messages, concrete and creative communication deliverables, and suggest a measurable dissemination strategy. ASV plans should be developed in close

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<sup>5</sup> Guidelines on the visibility and communication obligations: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/download/referencedocumentfile/167>

coordination with DG ECHO and will be considered as an asset in evaluating the project proposal<sup>6</sup>.

In case of consortia, a proper governance mechanism which would include the participation of DG ECHO, needs to be put in place to take stock of the implementation progress based on the interim reports and suggest adaptations when/where needed, bearing in mind the multi-annual planning. In all cases, regular information meeting with DG ECHO in the field should also be planned.

A proposal deemed inappropriate for a Programmatic Partnership might still be selected for funding under the HIP but as a non-Programmatic Partnership project. In this case, DG ECHO will inform the partner who can decide to withdraw its proposal or agree to transform it into a non-Programmatic Partnership project. Conversely, DG ECHO may decide to offer a partner the possibility to transform a non-Programmatic Partnership project proposal into a Programmatic Partnership if deemed opportune.

## **2.7 Interim reports and modification requests**

Interim reports are expected at regular intervals as for any action. An interim report should cover 9 to 12 months of implementation. It would allow DG ECHO and its partner to assess the progress made towards the expected longer-term outcomes, based on agreed milestone targets as presented in the “Programmatic Partnership multi-annual planning Annex”.

Programmatic Partnerships are eligible for top-ups by applying to new rounds of allocations published under the relevant HIP (modification requests to be submitted in APPEL).

Programmatic Partnerships under the staged approach will have to submit a modification request to request the next instalment as per their multi-annual planning.

## **2.8 Flexibility**

In the case of a multi-country Programmatic Partnership, a shift of funding between countries could be envisaged if agreed with the relevant geographic unit.

“Crisis modifiers” can also apply to Programmatic Partnerships.

A request to add further countries to a Programmatic Partnership can be introduced via modification request, provided it is in line with the overall strategy developed for the programme.

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<sup>6</sup> Guidelines on above-standard visibility actions: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/download/referencedocumentfile/169>

## **2.9 Simplified reporting**

The reporting should be based on the 8+3 template. Next to the eight compulsory core questions (Overall Performance, Changes and Amendments, Measuring Results, Affected Persons, Participation of and Accountability to Affected Populations, Risk Management, Exit Strategy and Sustainability, and Lessons Learned), only two ad hoc questions have to be answered: Visibility and Activities or Steps toward Implementation.