



Questions & Answers

Programmatic Partnership roll out 2024

On 10 October 2023, DG ECHO presented the outcome of the rollout phase of the Programmatic Partnership model in 2023 and the updated guidance for the 2024 HIP exercise. This was, followed by a Q&A session.

This document is the compilation of new Q&A from this year information session and of Q&A published in October 2022 and still relevant for the 2024 exercise. The questions have been grouped under eight topics to facilitate the access to information.

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1. SCOPE OF PROGRAMMATIC PARTNERSHIPS

1.1. Will a Programmatic Partnership be possible across HIP, regions, and/or countries?

Programmatic Partnerships can encompass multiple regions/crises and multiple countries if in line with the 2024 HIP strategies. Multi-HIP Programmatic Partnerships (within a geographic unit unless otherwise specified in the 2024 HIP) could be considered where relevant/applicable and appropriate.

1.2. Since Programmatic Partnerships are one of the instruments used to implement the HIP strategy, does this mean that it will be an integral part of HIP? If so, can there be an overlap between the strategic priorities of HIP and Programmatic Partnerships? Or will the Programmatic Partnerships be a stand-alone instrument?

Programmatic Partnerships are mainstreamed in the geographic HIP. They will be funded under the geographic envelopes as any other projects and are expected to be in line with the country/regional/multi-annual strategies developed in the HIP, as well as with DG ECHO's respective sectoral policy or thematic guidelines. There will be no separate HIP dedicated to Programmatic Partnerships.

1.3. Which geographical context is considered appropriate for the Programmatic Partnerships? Can DG ECHO publish the list of countries where a Programmatic Partnership can be considered?

DG ECHO will not publish a list of countries/sectors for future Programmatic Partnerships. The opportunity to propose a multi-annual strategy through a Programmatic Partnership will be reflected in the relevant HIP (section 5.1.2).

1.4. Will DG ECHO consider funding a 'nexus'-type programme within the Programmatic Partnership, where the first year may be more focused on an immediate humanitarian response, with the subsequent year(s) bringing in more development or recovery type of interventions?

The Programmatic Partnership gives the predictability needed to work towards longer term results, such as reinforcing local actors' capacity to respond to crises and link up with development stakeholders.

It will be up to the partner to demonstrate the expected effectiveness gains (such as an enhanced nexus approach, better quality of aid, greater long-term impact, or benefits for localisation) compared to an annual project approach. Interested partners are expected to demonstrate the longer-term logic of intervention and its added value.. A non-compulsory Annex template (Excel format) has been uploaded on DG ECHO's Partners' website to help partners develop their multi-annual planning in terms of budget, number of beneficiaries targeted and expected efficiency and effectiveness gains (greater outcomes than through short-term projects): <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/programmatic-partnership/programmatic-partnership>.

In any case, the Programmatic Partnership must be in line with the relevant HIP strategy.

- 1.5. Will the Programmatic Partnerships be used for development initiatives, or is it applicable for ongoing response and recovery programming as well? Will DG ECHO support activities or responses that may be more longer-term in nature through this partnership which usually require longer time frames to see outcomes and impact (e.g., system strengthening, economic recovery, behaviour change, graduation programmes)?**

Programmatic Partnerships are one way to implement the DG ECHO Humanitarian Aid budget. They are not meant to implement development initiatives. The Programmatic Partnership gives the predictability needed to work towards longer-term results, such as reinforcing local actors' capacity to respond to crisis and link up with development stakeholders.

- 1.6. Concerning the encouraged innovation within the Programmatic Partnerships, would it be possible that the first year may be intended to pilot or test the innovation and subsequent years to adapt and scale it up? Or should the proposed innovative responses already have been tested and proven successful?**

Programmatic Partnerships can be used to pilot new initiatives or innovative responses and/or to scale these up, taking the opportunity of the longer time frame in line with the HIP strategies and DG ECHO policies.

2. PROPOSAL STAGE

- 2.1. Will Programmatic Partnerships have a multi-donor or single-donor basis?**

Co-financing remains the norm. Programmatic Partnerships funded 100% by DG ECHO would need to be justified.

- 2.2. How does a partner flag in the proposal that it concerns a request for a Programmatic Partnership and the preferred funding modality (staged approach or multi-year funding)? Will this be in the e-single form narrative, in addition to the Multi-annual planning Annex?**

It is recommended to announce upfront in the narrative section of the e-Single Form that the proposal concerns a Programmatic Partnership and what the preferred funding option is (staged approach or multi-year funding). What is more, by uploading the Programmatic Partnership Multiannual Planning Annex (a non-compulsory template is available on the Partners' website: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/programmatic-partnership/programmatic-partnership>), the Action will be automatically flagged as a Programmatic Partnership.

- 2.3. Can a partner submit two proposals, for instance, a Programmatic Partnership with multi-year funding and a single-year project? Will there be the possibility to submit multiple separate proposals under different geographical HIPs?**

Partners can submit as many Programmatic Partnerships as they deem appropriate under different geographical HIPs as for any "regular" project. In case a Programmatic

Partnership is not selected, DG ECHO might offer the partner the possibility to re-submit the proposal as a short-term project and vice-versa. Partners do not need to submit a Programmatic Partnership and a shorter-term “regular” project simultaneously in order for the above to happen.

2.4. Does the partner have to indicate whether they prefer multi-year funding or a staged approach within the proposal?

The Programmatic Partnership is a multiannual. Independently of the funding mechanism (multi-year or staged funding), the Programmatic Partnership is selected for its multiannual strategy and expected outcomes.

However, partners must propose a budget corresponding to the duration of the agreement they are looking for. When the agreement sought covers only the first stage of the proposed multi-annual strategy, the budget requested in the Single Form should only cover the duration of the first stage (indicative budgets for the follow-up stages should be provided in the Annex).

Proposals seeking multi-year funding (request for full funding to be provided in year 1) should include a budget covering the entire duration of the Action (an indicative breakdown on how this budget is planned to be spent per year is to be provided in Annex).

2.5. On top of the standard documentation, will a partner have to submit a “Programmatic Partnership Multiannual Planning Annex” explaining the longer-term logic of the intervention, the added value of the Programmatic Partnership, and the total programme’s budget?

Is this the only way to outline the Programmatic Partnership approach, or is there any other section in the Single Form where we should refer to it? For instance, will a specific box be created to give the space for such a justification and demonstrated added value? Or should it only appear in the Multi-Annual planning Annex?

The information provided in the Single Form must be in line with the initial duration and budget of the proposed Action (see 2.4 above).

In a Programmatic Partnership proposal requesting a staged approach, the Single Form should only refer to the Action planned under stage 1. The multi-annual planning, and expected longer-term outcomes, logic of intervention, its added value, annual milestones and intermediate targets to be achieved, should be detailed in an Annex. It is however recommended to indicate in the narrative section of the SF that the proposal relates to a Programmatic Partnership.

In a Programmatic Partnership proposal requesting multi-year funding, the multi-annual planning and expected outcomes must be described in the Single Form. Details should be provided in an Annex, in particular yearly milestones (regarding outcomes and expected budget spending).

The Single Form will not include additional sections for the Programmatic Partnerships.

2.6. What components (budget, LFA, and work plan for the entire duration of the action) must be included in the “Multi-annual planning Annex” given that there is no template?

Each partner is free to develop its own multi-annual planning annex. A non-compulsory template (Excel format) has been uploaded on the Partners’ website: <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/programmatically-partnership/programmatically-partnership>.

2.7. Will the current byte limits for certain sections in the e-Single Form would be revised upward? For instance, in the case of a multi-country Programmatic Partnership, section 3- Humanitarian organisation in the area, 4. Needs Assessment and Risk Analysis, and 11. Field Coordination?

The current Single Form section 2 already accommodates multi-country proposals. Any additional information can be provided in Country annexes.

2.8. In the case of a Programmatic Partnership with multi-year funding, would a partner be required to provide a proposal with a total period of 24 months, as well as a budget and goals that fit within that specific time frame?

Indeed, in the case of multi-year funding, the strategy, work plan, budget, logframe, and targets must be in line with the expected total duration of the Action.

2.9. NEW Is it accurate to say that there will be a new dedicated section, 5.1.2, which will outline the specific sector or type of intervention anticipated for Programmatic Partnerships in the designated country or region?

Additionally, is it correct that there will be a new section, 5.1.3, addressing the potential for multi-year funding, even for standard projects (excluding PPs)? If so, will these multi-year projects be contracted (and funded) in advance, or will they follow a staged approach similar to PPs, involving a letter of intent for Year Y+1?

Two new sub-sections have been included in the HIP 2024 template:

Section 5.1.2 will inform about the potential sectors or types of interventions that would benefit from a multi-annual strategy through a programmatic partnership (PP). The decision to fund a Programmatic Partnership through multi-year funding (funding for the total duration of the Programmatic Partnership provide in year 1) or in stages will be taken following the analysis of the proposals. It will therefore not be mentioned in the HIP.

Section 5.1.3 will inform about the type of regular (non-PP) interventions which could benefit from multi-year funding (funding provided in year 1, therefore not in stages).

- 2.10. **NEW** Is it accurate to state that when applying for a Programmatic Partnership, there isn't a designated checkbox in the eSF, and we are required to explicitly mention it in the narrative section, specifying whether it is a staged approach and/or multi-year funding?

See question and answer 2.2 and 2.5.

3. FLEXIBILITY

- 3.1. **Could DG ECHO provide additional information on the Programmatic Partnership's flexibility component? How exactly does this flexibility work in a multi-country programme? What additional advantages exist versus a "regular project"?**

Programmatic Partnerships are outcome and medium-term driven. This gives them the time to adapt and adjust to circumstances.

A flexibility mechanism can be considered which allows the transfer of funds from one country to another for multi-country programmes within the same HIP. The decision to make use of this flexibility is left to the discretion of each geographic unit. This can also apply to regional programmes and not only to Programmatic Partnerships.

Other flexibility options, such as crisis modifiers, can also apply to Programmatic Partnerships.

- 3.2. **The guidance mentions that flexibility would allow moving funding (only under multi-country HIP) from one country to the other' if agreed with the relevant geographic unit'. Would such a country change need to be done through a Modification request?**

The geographical unit will decide on the need to move funds within a HIP. The internal procedure will depend on the amount concerned (<10% /10-20%/>20% of the HIP value). In any case, if a decision is taken to move funds from one country to another, the HIPTA will be modified, and partners will be notified of this decision. On the partner's side, a Modification Request will be needed in order to adapt the result targets to the funding shift.

4. REPORTING & MONITORING

- 4.1. **Will the 8+3 reporting format be used? If so, will this be done through the e-single form? Following the reporting, shall partners also have to resubmit the e-single form in the same format?**

The narrative reporting would be based on the 8+3 template through the Single Form. Partners will only fill in the narrative questions of the Single Form corresponding to the 8+3 template, with all other narrative questions of the Single Form being "deactivated."

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.

4.2. How will the reporting materialise during the rollout phase? Will partners need to think about any additional criteria in advance? Will there be additional reporting on top of the e-single form?

Reporting will be similar to any non-Programmatic Partnership project, hence through Interim Reports. Partners will be asked to report on the added value of the Programmatic Partnership in terms of efficiency and effectiveness gains.

It will also be important to keep track of and report on the EU visibility. An enhanced dialogue in the field is expected to take place, allowing for more regular exchanges of information. Joint monitoring missions will also be encouraged.

4.3. The Interim Report only requires a very small number of mandatory modifications; everything else is optional and should only be done when absolutely necessary. However, how will the IR look like within a PP in the case of the 8+3 template?

Interim Reports are expected at regular intervals as for any Action funded through the EU budget. Please refer to DG ECHO Guidelines “Interim Report - Scope and schedule” <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/download/referencedocumentfile/248>

See also the response to question 4.1.

4.4. NEW When should partners submit the Modification Request for phase 2 at the end of the first phase in a Programmatic Partnership with a staged approach? Will this submission align with the HIP cycle, or is it expected to occur outside of the standard cycle? If it is off cycle, could you please provide specific details regarding the timing?

The Modification Request for the subsequent year of a Programmatic Partnership must be submitted before the conclusion of the first phase and may not necessarily coincide with the HIP cycle.

5. PROGRAMMATIC PARTNERSHIPS VERSUS “REGULAR” PROJECTS.

5.1. What will distinguish a Programmatic Partnership from a “regular project”, considering that the latter can also last 24 months (for EiE) and be multi-country?

The overarching objective of the Programmatic Partnership is to bring more efficiency and effectiveness to the intervention, bringing “better services to more beneficiaries”. The outcomes after a multi-annual Programmatic Partnership should be more than the addition of successive yearly projects. While regular projects translate into short to medium-term agreements (usually from 12 to 24 months), Programmatic Partnerships are based on long-term perspectives (24 or more).

The Programmatic Partnership provides the predictability to work strategically toward longer-term results. The Programmatic Partnership introduces elements of flexibility, ideally reducing earmarking, allowing regional or multi-country actions, which intend to increase the ability to adapt the action to the changing needs. It also allows for testing new approaches and innovative policies.

In the staged approach for a Programmatic Partnership, funding is committed in stages, for instance, on a yearly basis. In this case, a principle and indicative commitment is taken with selected partners through the signature of a letter of intent. This letter, not legally binding, informs the partner of the indicative amounts that could be reserved under next year's budgets for the Programmatic Partnership. The staged approach is only available to Programmatic Partnerships. It is not available for "regular" projects.

5.2. Does DG ECHO have a preference as to whether partners should submit a Programmatic Partnership or a regular single-year project?

DG ECHO strategies including possible multi-annual strategies and opportunities for longer-term interventions through a Programmatic Partnership will be described in the relevant HIP in section 5.1.2.

5.3. What are the preferred priority areas for a Programmatic Partnership, such as the suggested emphasis on localisation, the greening of HA, the nexus approach, and cash compared to the "regular" sectoral responses?

Localisation, greening, nexus, and cash are important crosscutting themes that apply to all DG ECHO funded Actions. They might, however, be more appropriate to implement in the context of multi-annual strategic programmes. Sectors of interest for multi-annual strategies will be indicated in each HIP (section 5.1.2)

5.4. Are the Programmatic Partnerships given a suggested scale, size, or scope? For instance, will "X%" of the HIP be set aside?

There is no specific budget earmarked for Programmatic Partnerships. It will depend on the quality of the proposals received.

5.5. Does DG ECHO employ Programmatic Partnership targets? If so, do you envisage increasing this target over the years?

There are no specific targets set for Programmatic Partnerships.

5.6. Is there any predetermined threshold for budget annually or overall funding period for a Programmatic Partnership?

No, there is no such threshold.

5.7. NEW Should partners assume that the HIPTA will display the "engaged" Programmatic Partnership amount as in the previous year, without indicating the potential available allocations for new Programmatic Partnerships?

The HIPTA will indeed specify an indicative amount reserved for ongoing Programmatic Partnerships. There is no specific budget earmarked for new Programmatic Partnerships.

6. FUNDING MODALITIES

6.1. How should a partner decide between the different funding modalities of the Programmatic Partnerships? Will the NGO partner decide on a staged approach or multi-year funding? How will this decision occur in

the application process? Are there already possible indications of a preferred funding modality?

The choice of the funding modality will be decided by DG ECHO based on the availability of funds in year 1 and expectations for subsequent years, as well as on the level of the budget requested for the Programmatic Partnership and any relevant consideration at the time of the decision.

DG ECHO geographic units are in charge of the selection and management of the Programmatic Partnerships.

6.2. What is the added value of a staged approach versus the current practice of a 24-months proposal + 24-months top-up? Is the only extra advantage the non-legally binding commitment letter?

A 24-month initial action whose duration would be extended by 24 months through a cost extension does not offer the same level of predictability as the staged approach as there is, in principle, no prior commitment of any sort on the part of DG ECHO to agree on such a cost-extension. On the contrary, the Letter of Intent accompanying the staged approach, although not legally binding, would give a longer-term planning perspective of 48 months.

6.3. Should the number of beneficiaries increase exponentially due to the Programmatic Partnership with multi-year funding, considering the economies of scale and cost efficiency expected within the Programmatic Partnership?

The outcomes after a multi-annual Programmatic Partnership should be more than the addition of successive yearly projects. Such an outcome could be measured by the additional number of beneficiaries reached at the end of the programme thanks to expected economies of scale or reduced support costs.

6.4. In the case of a Programmatic Partnership with multi-year funding, will the partner still receive 80% of the total budget in Y1, as is normally the case for a “regular” project?

By default, a pre-financing corresponding to 80% of the EU financial contribution is paid within 30 days of the signing of the related funding agreement. However, MGA and HACA allow for fractioned pre-financing (pre-financing paid in successive instalments). DG ECHO will determine whether fractioned pre-financing should be used and the amounts concerned after considering all relevant circumstances.

Where fractioned pre-financing would be used, a fractioned pre-financing of 50%-30% will be the default option.

In those specific situations where an initial pre-financing of 50% would appear to be manifestly insufficient or inadequate, DG ECHO may agree on an ad hoc basis on a higher level of pre-financing, taking duly into account the work plan of the action and the corresponding expenditures forecast. In the same vein, where an initial pre-financing of 50% would appear to be manifestly disproportionate, taking into account the work plan of the action, the expenditure forecast, and the volatility of the context of operation, DG ECHO may agree on an ad hoc basis on a lower level of pre-financing.

6.5. Can a single crisis be multi-year funded within a Programmatic Partnership?

A Programmatic Partnership in one country or addressing one crisis is possible if in line with the relevant HIP strategy.

7. CERTIFICATION, CONSORTIUM OF PARTNERS, IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

7.1. Can DG ECHO partners not yet certified for Programmatic Partnerships apply on time for the upcoming HIP cycle?

In order to become a certified DG ECHO Programmatic Partner, the organisation will need to fulfil the ‘additional criteria for Programmatic Partnerships’, as specified in Block 2 of the Terms of Reference. The additional requirements must be the object of an additional external audit assessment (auditors will need to confirm that the original assessment is still valid, provide an updated conclusion, and recommend your organisation for the potential PP Certificate).

7.2. Can local actors be Implementing Partners within a Programmatic Partnership?

Yes. As is already the case now for all DG ECHO funded Actions.

7.3. Can non-local and non-EU-based family members be included as IPs? Can a partner coordinate a grant with a non-EU family member as an Implementing Partner? Can this non-EU family member (but not local) be directly implementing in the designated country?

An Implementing Partner is any (legal) non-certified entity other than the certified partner (i.e., the Partner signing the grant agreement with DG ECHO), to which the Partner entrusts any task under an ECHO-funded action and transfers the corresponding financing.

In this respect, an IP is any of the following entities:

1. Entities affiliated to the grant-holder or with which the latter is affiliated (e.g., NGO families, networks, federations, etc.). Such entities may be involved in the implementation of an action, for example, with the following functions (not mutually exclusive):
 - a. Performing administrative and programmatic tasks;
 - b. Performing operational tasks, e.g., implementing the action as the registered entity in the country of implementation.
2. Local entities: entities established in the country of implementation of the action (e.g., local or grassroots organisations).
3. Non-local entities: entities that are neither affiliated to the grant-holder nor established in the country of implementation of the action.

7.4. Will joined proposals for a Programmatic Partnership among UN partners be welcomed?

Yes. Consortia are encouraged in the context of future Programmatic Partnerships, including between UN agencies.

7.5. Should UN agencies exclude from the pool of IPs all NGOs without Programmatic Partnership certificate? Since UN agencies sign the HACA, where the consortium members are other IOs, and other entities (including certified NGOs) are classified as Implementing Partners.

The cooperation between UN agencies and all NGOs remains the same as for 'regular projects'. There is no need for UN agencies to exclude NGOs without Programmatic Partnership certificate from their pool of IPs.

For the cooperation between the UN agencies and other UN agencies/IOs, there is an option to sign a multi-beneficiary HACA in the same way as for 'regular projects'.

7.6. Is there the possibility for non-Programmatic Partners (NGOs without Programmatic Partnership certificates) to join a consortium?

Consortia of partners under direct management (INGOs), including certified INGOs but not holding a 'Programmatic Partnership Certificate' are ineligible for Programmatic Partnerships, even when the lead INGO is eligible for Programmatic Partnerships.

7.7. When a consortium proposal is not relevant for a particular context or programme, will a single-actor submission still be considered?

Consortia are not compulsory, and Partners can submit proposals of their own.

7.8. NEW With reference to the process of upgrading from standard Humanitarian Certificate to Programmatic Partnership, shall the external audit cover only the additional PP requirements, or shall it include also all the requirements already assessed during the ex-ante assessment for Humanitarian Certificate?

From the submission of the new auditor's report, what is the expected timeline for ECHO to process the request of being considered potential programmatic partner?

Please see answer 7.1.

8. ONGOING PROGRAMMATIC PARTNERSHIP

8.1. How has the development of the pilot Programmatic Partnership been coordinated with other donors?

While preparing for DG ECHO's pilot Programmatic Partnerships with NGO partners in 2019, DG ECHO exchanged with various EU Member States on their own experience with programmatic/flexible agreements in response to Grand Bargain commitments. Since then, the dialogue has remained open.

The Donor Roundtable, organised last September 2022, provided for an exchange of the lessons learned from the different models, in particular in terms of more effective and efficient ways of working and aspects of the partnership that are favourable to advancing the shared commitments made under the Grand Bargain 2.0

8.2. Have there been any “lessons learned” or “success stories” published from the pilot phase? Are there specific challenges recorded in the pilot Programmatic Partnership phase that NGOs may learn from?

The first lessons learned informed the roll out phase of the Programmatic Partnerships, as explained during the presentation to partners on 10 October 2023.

8.3. Will future Programmatic Partnerships need to include a research and/or learning agenda?

While Programmatic Partnerships, like regular projects, respond to immediate needs, they have, in addition, a strong focus on supporting shared strategic priorities, gathering evidence, replicating, scaling up innovative policies, and responding to multi-annual needs. It is therefore important to report on the lessons learned from these programmes to be able to replicate and or adapt in future interventions.

8.4. Does DG ECHO anticipate the same level of engagement with the partner throughout the rollout phase as it did during the pilot phase?

Reinforced dialogue both at the field and HQ level is one of the added values of the Programmatic Partnership. This dialogue can take different forms and evolve over time. However, no specific annual bilateral “High-level Dialogue” will be organized in the context of the Programmatic Partnerships.

8.5. NEW Could you please inform me if ECHO is planning to organise a session for sharing experiences soon? Such a session would greatly assist other partners in comprehending what DG ECHO has been funding over the years, as well as gaining insight into current and future expectations. Additionally, having examples of innovations proposed by other partners within the framework of a Programmatic Partnerships would be valuable in understanding what ECHO is seeking through a Programmatic Partnership.

On DG ECHO’s website, partners can find detailed information on the pilot Programmatic Partnerships including information about the funded partner type, action title, countries, sectors involved, and the duration of the multi-annual strategy.

Considering that the Programmatic Partnership model is mainstreamed through the HIPs, insight into current and future expectations on the Programmatic Partnerships are developed by the geographic units and can be found in their respective HIP and HIPTA.