



Humanitarian Aid  
and Civil Protection

# **Visibility and Communication Manual for European Union- funded Humanitarian Aid Actions<sup>1</sup>**

**February 2014**

*The Manual provides general guidance on the implementation of contractual visibility and communication. The concrete application depends on and may be adapted to the specific circumstances of the individual project. Partner organisations are invited to consult DG ECHO in case of doubt.*

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<sup>1</sup> Replacing "Visibility, Information & Communication in the European Commission's humanitarian aid - Toolkit for partners" (2009).

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## 1. PURPOSE

To ensure a high level of accountability and to underpin a continued strong support among key stakeholders and the wider public, visibility of and communication about EU humanitarian assistance are priorities and a contractual obligation. To be effective it must be implemented in close cooperation between the EU's humanitarian partners and ECHO.

Pursuant to the legal basis for Union-funded humanitarian aid actions, ECHO makes available dedicated funds for Partners to meet their visibility and communication obligations when receiving EU funds.<sup>2</sup>

The present Manual should serve as Partners' primary source of orientation when planning and implementing the standard visibility and communication activities as part of their EU-funded humanitarian aid action. For more elaborate ("additional") communication – including communication actions targeting European audiences – partners are invited to consult ECHO, either the relevant Regional Information Officer (RIO) or at HQ level.

The Manual provides practical guidance and explanations on the implementation of the obligations on visibility and communication as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements, namely the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) and its annexes with Humanitarian Organisations, the general conditions applicable to EU funded humanitarian action of Member States specialised agencies, the FPA and its annexes with International Organisations, and the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) and the Indirect Management Delegation Agreement with the United Nations.

The Manual complements existing general guidelines<sup>3</sup> with advice particular to communicating about EU humanitarian aid, but does not replace or alter these. The EC-UN guidelines remain applicable for UN humanitarian partners when working with ECHO. In case of direct contradiction with this Manual, the EC-UN guidelines take priority. The same applies to the 2010 EU external actions manual.

The Manual replaces the ECHO Visibility Toolkit (2009) and is complemented by a dedicated and regularly updated website providing examples and best practices. Partners are invited to use the website for guidance and inspiration: [link]



For the individual project, the general framework may be complemented with additional visibility and communication obligations as agreed in the context of relevant project agreement. Any such additional obligations must be complied with.

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<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96, article 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions" (2010): [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm) and "Joint Visibility Guidelines for EC-UN Actions in the Field": [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international\\_organisations/other\\_documents\\_related\\_united\\_nations/document/joint\\_visibility\\_guidelines.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international_organisations/other_documents_related_united_nations/document/joint_visibility_guidelines.pdf)



Any derogation from the visibility and communication obligations is granted on a case-by-case basis and must be agreed in writing based on justification provided by the partner. The scope of the derogation must be specified in each case.

## 2. SINGLE FORM AND THE 0.5% THRESHOLD

When submitting a project proposal for ECHO's consideration, under point 9 of the Single Form, partners must indicate whether they for visibility and communication purposes intend to allocate:

(1) **between 0 and 0.5%** of the direct eligible costs (max. **€8,000**) ("standard visibility, information and communication activities")

OR

(2) **more than 0.5%** ("additional visibility, information and communication activities")

If the allocation remains at or **below** the threshold, no further approvals from ECHO are required for visibility and communication activities. However, partners are invited to provide an outline of planned visibility and communication activities, and ECHO will check on the implementation requirements during field monitoring visits and in the final report.

If the allocation **exceeds** the threshold, a communication plan must be submitted for approval by ECHO<sup>4</sup> before the grant agreement can be signed.



Regardless of the budget allocated, standard visibility in the field and in public communication remains an obligation of the ECHO Partner (unless derogation has been explicitly granted for the project in question).



Partners can normally allocate up to 0.5% of the direct eligible costs to visibility/ communication.

Costs exceeding the threshold must receive prior ECHO approval, based on a communication plan.



While not obligatory, partners are generally invited to provide an outline of planned visibility and communication actions in case of projects allocating less than 0.5% of the eligible cost to visibility and communication. This can facilitate close cooperation and dialogue with ECHO (→ RIO).




<sup>4</sup> ECHO Information and Communication Unit (ECHO.A2). See contact information (section 6).

### 3. FINAL REPORTING

When submitting the **Final Report** for liquidation, the partner should include relevant supporting information such as photos of relevant items (EU emblem on vehicles, supplies, signboards etc.), copies of/links to press releases and press cuttings, references to relevant publications, links to project related website posts, etc.

The amount of supporting evidence provided does not need to be exhaustive, but must in a credible way demonstrate that the contractual visibility and communication obligation has been respected as an integral part of the project and at different stages of its implementation.

Normally, communication and visibility expenses can only be approved when accompanied by adequate supporting material.




	When submitting the Final Reports for liquidation, partners must document that the contractual visibility and communication activities have been implemented.
	In general, expenses pertaining to internal communication needs of the partner (such as training, internal manuals, telephone costs, etc.) are not eligible for funding under visibility line.
	In the course of a project, partners are invited to inform about and share with ECHO any significant communication product pertaining an EU funded humanitarian action (→RIO). This will enable relevant joint communication (e.g. via social media) and facilitate monitoring.

### 4. VISIBILITY

Standard visibility for the EU as a donor is a contractual obligation applying to all types of EU-funded humanitarian aid projects. It entails:

- (1) display of the EU humanitarian aid field visual identity. The size and prominence of the EU visual identity will depend on the specific context (e.g. the amount and proportion of EU funding).
- (2) written and verbal recognition of the EU's role in global humanitarian aid, in partnership with the agency implementing the action, when referring to an EU funded project in media interviews, press releases, webpages, blogs, articles about the project, etc.

In visibility and communication actions, Partners should generally refer to the "European Union".

	Where a partner works through an implementing partner (within grant agreements) or a grant beneficiary (within delegation agreements), the visibility and communication obligations remain fully applicable. The responsibility for ensuring compliance and reporting remains with the ECHO contracting partner.
	Where ECHO is one of several donors on a project (multi-donor or co-financed projects), as a general rule ECHO visibility should be ensured in a manner <i>proportional</i> to the ECHO contribution. E.g. this applies to the size and prominence of the visual identity.
	In consortia, all partners - not only the partner holding the ECHO contract - should implement the visibility and communication obligations, e.g. by ensuring EU visibility on their individual homepages. It is generally advised to consult the relevant RIO for guidance (→ RIO)

#### 4.1. The EU's humanitarian aid visual identity

This is the default visual identity that should be displayed in the context of visibility, information and communication actions funded under ECHO financing agreements:



### Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

The applicable visual identity is available in 24 languages and two different resolutions from the ECHO website on: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/media/identity\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/media/identity_en.htm)

The "Graphics guide to the European emblem" (useful for printing the visual identity) is available at: <http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000100.htm>

Partners may request derogation to display the blue flag with only "Humanitarian Aid" mentioned at the bottom, or simply the blue flag without accompanying text. Generally, any request for derogation should be included in the single form, when the project application is submitted and before project start.

## 4.2. Applying visibility at project sites

The implementation of standard visibility at project sites involves the mandatory display of the EU humanitarian aid visual identity - in conjunction with the Partner's own logo, for example on :

- Signboards, display panels, banners and plaques;
- Goods and equipment (such as vehicles, food sacks, water tanks, containers, tents, plastic sheeting, individual packaging used for foodstuffs and other NFIs and supplies);
- Clothes items such as tee-shirts and caps worn by project staff (if produced with EU funding);
- Operational publications and materials such as training manuals, notebooks and posters.
- Partner's website, publications about the EU funded Action, audio-visual products

The concrete implementation depends on and must be adapted to the specific circumstances on the project and the nature of the items funded. Generally, the visual identity should be presented so as to ensure that those passing are able to understand the EU's role as a donor.

When space allows (for example, on sign boards), the visual should be accompanied by a short explanatory text or a relevant joint message on the project. Example:

**Example:**

***Title of project***

**Implemented by: [Logo of partner]**

**Financed by:**



**Relevant message [e.g. "*Acting together to help vulnerable children*"]**

## 4.1. Terminology

In visibility and communication activities the following terms should be applied:

**European Union** (and its acronym "EU") is the preferred term for basic visibility activities, when communicating with the media etc. The term "EU humanitarian aid" may also be used.

**European Commission** can be used in more specific contexts, and may be shortened to 'Commission' once the meaning is obvious.

**ECHO** should be avoided without further explanation, but can be included, e.g. "the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO)"

## 5. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION<sup>5</sup>

To maximise the impact and cost effectiveness of communication and to preserve a distinct identity for impartial, needs-based humanitarian aid, communication and information activities should be mainstreamed at different stages the project cycle - not be added as a side detail or afterthought.

The visibility and communication obligation of the Partners generally implies that the mentioning of the EU and/or the EU humanitarian aid visual identity must be included on an equal footing, when the partner mentions itself or reproduces its logo in communication activities related to EU-funded actions.



Partners are invited to coordinate the planning and implementation of communication actions in the field with the relevant ECHO Regional Information Officer (→ RIO)

ECHO encourages Partners to identify a focal point for visibility and communication in the field.

### **Note that for the EU, the following target audiences are priority:**

at EU level

- EU citizens;

<sup>5</sup> "**Information**" implies the assembly of data through various tools and products that inform about humanitarian situations and actions, the partnership between the European Commission and the implementing agencies and the role of the EU as an aid donor; "**Communication**" relates to the pro-active dissemination of data and messages to identified target audiences.



- Broadcasters, print and electronic media;
- Stakeholders like opinion leaders, elected representatives at European, national and regional levels.

at FIELD level

- European and international media;
- Beneficiary populations;
- Opinion leaders in the beneficiary countries;
- Host populations.

## 5.1. Media outreach

This section explains the application of EU visibility and communication requirements in media related activity.

### 5.1.1. Press releases<sup>6</sup>

It is generally recommended to issue a press release – as a minimum – at the start and at the conclusion of a project.

The text must clearly state that the project is funded by EU's humanitarian aid budget. If the layout allows, a box may be included containing the EU humanitarian aid field visual identity and the following text:

#### Example:

[Partner LOGO] and



and the text:

***"The European Union's humanitarian aid supports relief activities for vulnerable people in crisis zones around the world."***

or

***"Through its humanitarian aid, the European Union supports...."***

Partners are generally encouraged to share a draft of the press release with ECHO before its publication.

Where relevant, ECHO can provide a quote (for example, from the relevant experts/Head of Delegation in the field or from an ECHO representative at HQ) to be included in the press release (→ RIOs).

<sup>6</sup> In the Project proposal, detailed information on press releases is not required. Costs should be minimal if any. In the Final Report, supporting documents should be included for liquidation (copy of press releases, press cuttings, etc).

### *5.1.2. Interviews<sup>7</sup>*

When speaking to the media on EU-funded projects, the humanitarian partner should aim to acknowledge the partnership with the EU and its funding.

In emergency situations, if EU funds are envisaged, this fact should be equally acknowledged in contacts with media.

Whenever journalists visit EU-funded projects, partners must ensure that the EU's role as the donor is fully acknowledged and explained.

Partners should generally:

- ✓ inform the relevant ECHO field office in advance about media interest in the project and provide the names of the media organisations and journalists concerned;
- ✓ provide information to the journalists about who contact at ECHO (nearest field office or Regional Information Officer) for further details.

### *5.1.3. Press conferences<sup>8</sup>*

Whenever a press conference is organised in the context of an EU-funded humanitarian project, the European Commission - through ECHO headquarters, the ECHO field office or the relevant Delegation - must be invited to participate. Partners also must acknowledge the role of the EU.

### *5.1.4. Journalists' visits<sup>9</sup>*

Media visits to EU-funded project are eligible for funding under the visibility budget of projects. Partners must in these cases liaise with ECHO in advance for joint planning to maximise the impact.

For media visits funded under the visibility budget of projects, partners must ensure that:

- ✓ ECHO is informed well ahead to allow for input and to enable efficient and effective planning;

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<sup>7</sup> Interviews should not generate any direct costs as a rule. In the Final Report, the context of the interviews, names, press cuttings, video recordings, dates, etc. should be provided.

<sup>8</sup> In the Project proposal, planned press conferences should be included under "Planned Communication Activities", stating the objective, target audience and estimated cost. These costs should be included under "other costs". In the Final Reports all relevant information should be provided (date and location, media, etc) and press cuttings, video clips, dates of broadcast, etc. should be indicated.

<sup>9</sup> In the Project proposal, journalists' visits should be included under "Planned Communication Activities", stating the objective and estimated cost. These costs should be included under "other costs". In the Final Reports all relevant information should be provided (date and location, names, etc.) and press cuttings, video clips, DVDs, dates and channel of broadcast, etc. should be indicated.

- ✓ the relevant ECHO regional information officer is informed well in advance of the date of the trip and its likely focus (→RIO);
- ✓ the journalist is offered the opportunity to interview an ECHO expert in the field;
- ✓ the EU's support is visible through panels, stickers etc.

## 5.2. Web Communication

Ongoing EU-funded projects should be mentioned on the partners' websites, acknowledging the EU role as a donor and highlighting the partnership aspect.

The EU humanitarian aid visual identity and a link to ECHO's website must appear on the partner's website (for example on the page listing partners or listing donors, on the page describing financing or on pages dedicated to projects financed by the EU).

The URL address of ECHO is: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm)

Generally, costs associated with the development of partners' websites are not eligible for funding. The costs of new project-specific webpages will be supported only if these pages are part of a wider joint communication action.




Project-specific websites concerning EU-funded Actions cannot contain Partner's own fund-raising appeals (unless particularly provided for in the project agreement).

## 5.3. Social Media

In social media, the objective is to raise awareness about the activities and objectives of ECHO and its partners and where possible provide followers with an interactive and/or "real time" experience. To maximise impact on the social media platform, it is advisable to:

- ✓ send the **contact details** of the person in charge for social media to: [echo-social-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:echo-social-media@ec.europa.eu) with the subject: Social Media Contact for xxx (your organisation e.g. UNICEF, Oxfam, etc.)
- ✓ allow us to "follow you" by informing ECHO social media at the address above.
- ✓ like us/follow us/subscribe to ECHO's social platforms:
  - Facebook: <http://facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid>
  - Twitter: [https://twitter.com/@eu\\_echo](https://twitter.com/@eu_echo)
  - Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/69583224@N05/>
  - Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO>
  - Blog: <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/echo-action/>

- ✓ publish a social media post when an EU-funded project is launched in order to acknowledge funding;
- ✓ mention/tag ECHO on tweets (@ec\_echo) and Facebook posts when communicating about projects that are funded by ECHO. This will allow ECHO to share and further promote/re-tweet. ECHO will do the same on its own posts.
- ✓ ECHO also encourages you to use content from ECHO's website, social media platforms and its Flickr collection with the request that ECHO is appropriately credited/ tagged.

	<p>Tag ECHO on <b>TWITTER</b>, include in tweets about EU-funded projects the mention: <b>@eu_echo</b></p> <div data-bbox="459 817 1246 987">  </div>
	<p>Tag ECHO on <b>FACEBOOK</b>: like ECHO page, type <b>@European commission</b> and ECHO will appear on the list, click and the tag is done. Ex:</p> <div data-bbox="427 1182 1209 1637">  </div>

## 5.4. Publications

In brochures, leaflets, flyers, newsletters and other publications, printed or electronic, relating to EU-funded projects, the EU humanitarian aid visual identity should generally be reproduced wherever the partner's logo is also displayed.

When a partner's publication (including regular newsletters/magazines, leaflets and brochures) features an EU-funded humanitarian project, this fact should be acknowledged in the text.

**Example:**

*"The project, funded by EU humanitarian aid, supports 10,000 refugees living in temporary camps..."*

The role of the EU as the donor should be clearly mentioned in the text/story (including, for example, a relevant quote by an ECHO field expert or other representative). ECHO may be able to provide stories/input for partner publications (→ RIO).

When space allows and if the partner includes a **presentation box** concerning its own organisation, a box with the following text should be included<sup>10</sup>:

**Example:**

*"The EU's humanitarian aid funds relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. Aid is provided impartially, directly to people in need, without discrimination of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation."*

Information and publications, in any form or medium, including web-based, shall include the following **disclaimer**:

*"This document covers humanitarian aid activities implemented with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Union, and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains."*

## 5.5. Photos<sup>11</sup>

Communication funding can be used to employ professional photographers to cover EU funded humanitarian operations only in the framework of a specific communication project which includes the need for visuals or is based on visuals such as web-based or social media communication plans, photo exhibitions, photo-books and similar.

It is requested that copies of photos taken by an ECHO-funded professional photographer are sent to ECHO in digital format: [ECHO-INTERNET@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-INTERNET@ec.europa.eu) (preferably containing at least 5 million pixels).

<sup>10</sup> If in doubt on the wording, please consult ECHO: the contact details are provided at the end of this publication.

<sup>11</sup> [language of updated IPR clause]

The images should be accompanied by brief captions relating to the subject of the picture and an explanatory sheet giving background information about the photos (date, country, city/region, project, name and role of the person on the photo if applicable). The name of the organisation/person that owns the copyright should always be included to allow ECHO to ensure that the photos are properly credited. Whenever feasible, a signed permission from the person in the photo should also be provided.



As regards photo exhibitions, the EU should be clearly identified as the donor in all ads, programmes, invitations, websites, blogs, brochures, leaflets, etc. and at the venue of the event.

When possible this message should be added next to the visual identity:

*"Supported by the European Union's humanitarian aid."*

*The EU's humanitarian aid funds relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. Aid is provided impartially, directly to people in need, without discrimination of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation."*

## 5.6. Audiovisual

### 5.6.1. EU visibility in AV products

Audio-visual projects on humanitarian actions funded by the EU are eligible for funding. The aim is to inform EU citizens on how their tax money is being spent. The European Union's role must be clearly emphasized by integrating it into the story-line and by including e.g.:

- ✓ an interview with a Commissioner, a senior official or an ECHO expert in the field;
- ✓ images of an ECHO expert at work in the field.

ECHO does not finance audio-visual productions whose sole purpose is to promote another organisation.

**Before production:** submit to ECHO a (1) draft story board describing the themes to be covered in the production as well as (2) information about the intended means of dissemination and estimates of the expected audience.

**During production:** submit a draft of the production before the end of the project - at a point where it is still possible to make changes based on ECHO comments.

**Upon completion of the production,** ECHO must be informed of the actual distribution of the production.



The Commission is entitled to use or reproduce, wholly or in part, audio-visual productions made by a partner under a grant or delegation agreement.

## 5.7. Public events

Organisation of public events is eligible for funding, subject to prior agreement with ECHO on the specific terms and messages. Whenever an event is planned, ECHO must be consulted at the stage of preparation.

EU visibility must be ensured before and during the event: through invitations, programmes, banners and display boards, etc. in the local language where appropriate.

## 6. CONTACT INFORMATION

You are welcome to contact the ECHO Information team for any questions related to information/ communication activities at any stage. For major communication projects, you are strongly advised to contact us before the proposal is finalized.

Call the ECHO Information secretariat and ask for the Communication Officer responsible for the country or thematic area concerned by your project:

### At Headquarters in Brussels

Tel: (+32 2) 295 44 00

E-mail: [echo-comm-sec@ec.europa.eu](mailto:echo-comm-sec@ec.europa.eu)

Website: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/index_en.htm)

### In the field (as per January 2014)

ECHO has a Regional Information Officer (RIO) based in each of the six Regional Support Offices. Do not hesitate to contact them at any stage of your information and communication project:

Bangkok	+6622551035/6	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo.bangkok@echofield.eu">echo.bangkok@echofield.eu</a>
New Delhi	+911149195300	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo.new-delhi@echofield.eu">echo.new-delhi@echofield.eu</a>
Amman	+96264607030	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo-amman@echofield.eu">echo-amman@echofield.eu</a>
Nairobi	+254202972000	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo.nairobi@echofield.eu">echo.nairobi@echofield.eu</a>
Dakar	+221338698000	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo.dakar@echofield.eu">echo.dakar@echofield.eu</a>
Managua	+50522706201	e-mail: <a href="mailto:echo.managua@echofield.eu">echo.managua@echofield.eu</a>

For the list and contact details of all ECHO field offices, please refer to [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/field\\_offices.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/field_offices.pdf)

**More questions or want to see how ECHO visibility and communication is done in practice?**

To complement this general manual, ECHO has established a dedicated website with examples and best practices of visibility and communication actions implemented by partner organisations. You are invited to consult the site for inspiration and guidance and to share your own actions with other users:

[\[available soon\]](#)

**Need more information about ECHO and the European Union?**

If your local partners or beneficiaries would like to know more about the donor, ECHO has a range of explanatory leaflets, videos and factsheets in several languages to answer the basic questions.

The material is available on the ECHO website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm)