



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID – ECHO

ECHO 0/1 – Policy Unit - Evaluation Sector

ANNEX I

Terms of Reference for an evaluation and review of Communication, Information and Visibility Activities in Humanitarian Aid

Contract n°: ECHO/ADM/BUD/2007/012xx

Name of consultant(s):

Firm:

1. INTRODUCTION

1. DG ECHO's task under its humanitarian mandate is to provide assistance on a non-discriminatory basis to populations of third countries that are affected by disasters, both man-made and natural, and to those affected by conflicts.

http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/presentation/mandate_en.htm

2. EU taxpayers have the right to be informed as to the use of the funds that they provide, the accountability aspect of 'Communication, Information and Visibility' activities is of high importance in modern democracies with EU citizens requiring a high level of transparency. Further, DG ECHO, as the world's largest humanitarian donor, and its partners have the moral obligation to communicate underlying humanitarian principles and values as well as the added-value of their work.

3. In an increasingly media-oriented world there is also a need to communicate pro-actively the concrete achievements of humanitarian actors. Good communication is all the more important given the challenge faced by the humanitarian aid community in preserving its "space", in many crisis zones.

4. The professionalism expected in media activities can be hard to achieve, particularly in humanitarian settings, as a result under these terms of reference DG ECHO intends to:

- carry out a evaluation of the communication, information and visibility activities managed by a sample of its partners in humanitarian aid, both at their headquarters and in the field, to generate a report setting out findings, conclusions and recommendations based on comparison with professional media and communication norms;
- Obtain through the evaluation report an independent opinion to NGO partners' understanding and compliance with DG ECHO's Communication, Information and Visibility requirements; and
- based on this evaluation work and a review of existing media and communication matters, to generate tools to assist the partners in the management of such media actions.

5. The tools to be generated are intended primarily for the officials of humanitarian NGOs that are partners of DG ECHO. The tools shall be based on the results of the evaluation of NGOs current practices and the following factors, among others:

- The obligation to be transparent, already referred to above. DG ECHO manages public funds and has a duty to inform EU citizens about how the money is spent. Few EU citizens are aware that the Commission is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors;
- “Getting closer to the citizen”. This is a Commission commitment that entails pro-active communication efforts. Most Europeans support the idea of aiding the world's most vulnerable people through relief assistance. They should be informed that this support is reflected in the humanitarian work of the Commission and its implementing partners;
- Underlining European solidarity. People living in countries affected by crises (victims, host populations and opinion leaders) should be aware of the EU's solidarity expressed in concrete terms through humanitarian aid. Messages such as the impartiality of aid, the fact that it is needs-based, and its non-discriminatory nature are particularly significant here.
- Highlighting a ‘badge of quality’: Given the stringent criteria for acceding to the DG ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), partner organisations can benefit from publicising their quality relationship with the European Commission.
- The changing framework of the European Union. In a period of change, it is important to fully inform EU decision-makers about the Commission's role in delivering effective assistance to victims of humanitarian crises.

6. This evaluation and review is intended to be a capacity building exercise in addition to the review report the consultants are to present tools to assist DG ECHO's partners to create an integrated communication strategy, by aiding them:

- to identify their desired audience, to target multipliers;
- to determine the response sought;
- to determine the message;
- to choose the media form/mix that is most appropriate;
- to collect and analyse feedback; and
- to determine the necessary budget.

The consultants shall carry out their work with due regard for the NGOs need to also raise funds from the public. Tools for communication and fund raising for NGOs in the products would be an additional positive element.

7. The review shall provide training tools for NGOs to train its personnel in-house in the following matters, the list is not exhaustive:

- how to develop an information reflex;
- how to deal with the media at news conferences and in other settings,
- how to present information; and
- how to manage visibility.

8. The consultants are required to set out in the review DG ECHO's communication, information and visibility requirements, as set out in DG ECHO's Framework Partnership Agreement http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/fpa_en.htm and DG ECHO's Guidelines for the Commission's partners on the implementation of visibility, information and communication activities relating to humanitarian aid.

9. The consultants engaged shall draw upon contacts with DG ECHO headquarters staff, in particular the 'Information Unit' at DG ECHO's headquarters Brussels, see its presentation at http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/information/index_en.htm , and contacts with the Finance Unit, which is also responsible for NGO relations. They shall communicate with DG ECHO's field staff, officials of major INGOs, officials of VOICE the NGO platform, UN bodies and the Red Cross family.

10. The consultants shall circulate a questionnaire to DG ECHO's partners in order to carry out their assessment and carry out a statistical appraisal of the responses.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW AND TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

11. Article 18 of above mentioned Council Regulation states "the Commission shall regularly assess aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved its objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of future operations".

2.1. Objectives of the evaluation and the review

12. The objective of this evaluation and review is to improve the effectiveness of DG ECHO's partners in the communication, information and visibility elements of humanitarian assistance. In doing so, DG ECHO also wishes to stimulate capacity building in the wider humanitarian community as well.

2.2. Tasks to be accomplished and timeline

13. The basis for the consultants' opinions shall be:

- their own professional qualifications and experience. In this respect, a team profile combining an academic background and experience in communication, information and visibility with humanitarian experience would be preferable;
- a desk study of most relevant research papers, reports, evaluation and lessons learnt papers, bearing in mind the donor's (DG ECHO's) perspective and interest. Consultants will carry out a comparative analysis of the conclusions and recommendations drawn in those publications;
- a desk study, on the basis of an inventory of relevant DG ECHO-funded projects, of the communication and information components;
- interviews with key DG ECHO officials, both personnel at DG ECHO headquarters (policy, evaluation, operational/geographical, financial, legal, and information units and technical assistants (TAs) based in the field;
- The consultants shall conduct interviews with representatives of other donors and humanitarian agencies;
- The consultants shall circulate a questionnaire to NGO partners and analyse the responses statistically, shall consult NGO communication materials, including also the material online; and
- The consultants shall carry out field visits to up to three locations to evaluate communication and information matters at field level. The list of countries/projects to be visited will be established jointly by DG ECHO and the consultants.

The consultants are not evaluating DG ECHO's own Communication and Information activities as the budget does not extend to this.

14. **Drafting of an inception report for submission to DG ECHO by mid-April 2007**, based on the briefings, reviews and interviews conducted during the briefing period. This inception report should demonstrate the consultants' clear understanding of the present ToR and deliverables required and contain their detailed proposals in terms of work processes, as well as clear description of scope and methodology for the deliverables, the evaluation and the review.

15. **Drafting of the evaluation report for submission to DG ECHO by the end of June 2007**. The consultants are required to submit a report on the evaluation of the communication, information

and visibility activities managed by a sample of its partners in humanitarian aid, both at their headquarters and in the field, to generate a report setting out findings, conclusions and recommendations based on comparison with professional media and communication norms and give an independent opinion to NGO partners' understanding and compliance with DG ECHO's Communication, Information and Visibility requirements. The evaluation report should contain a set of clear conclusions and recommendations and should not exceed 50 pages unless duly justified.

16. **Presentation of tools package to DG ECHO by end-September 2007**: The experts are required to produce the tools identified under paragraphs 6, 7 and 8. In addition they shall provide a bibliography of key policy and other documents and websites that are pertinent for DG ECHO's and its partners use. The information identified shall be grouped by category and ranked according to relevance for DG ECHO.

3. WORK PLAN

17. **Briefing** in Brussels (*maximum 3 days including all travel for each of the three consultants*): a briefing at DG ECHO with the responsible staff during which necessary clarifications will be provided by the requesting service and other services of the Commission. Based on their professional experience the consultants may wish to propose additional matters for the evaluation review to cover, or alternative/additional country visits to those envisaged. DG ECHO will give its agreement or not at this stage.

18. **Missions** to a number of donor countries, possibly including the UK, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden (*maximum 6 days including all travel; up to three days for Switzerland – one day for the other countries*), in order to discuss with relevant officials and NGOs. Please note the team may divide up to visit different locations independently.

19. **Field work** (*maximum 14 days including all travel for each of the three consultants*): The consultants shall undertake field visits to evaluate a number of relevant projects and to discuss with donor and humanitarian agencies' representatives on the spot. The list of projects to be visited will be established jointly by DG ECHO and the consultants. The consultants shall seek to organize workshops where a sufficient number of humanitarian actors are present in one location. (Please note that for budgetary purposes, weekends count as days worked in the field)

20. **Drafting** of documents required by the review (*maximum 20 days for each of the three consultants*). *The team leaders time includes editing, including the work on the DVD*): These days are to cover both the initial and final drafting after the presentation to DG ECHO management (see below).

21. **Debriefing** at DG ECHO (*maximum of 2 days for each of the three consultants including all travel*): the three consultants will make a presentation to DG ECHO management and key staff in 'PowerPoint' of the documents requested: the evaluation report and the review paper.

22. Further **presentations** of the evaluation and review findings may be required, as to be determined by DG ECHO (*maximum of 2 days at two events for the team leader only including all travel*).

23. **Submission** of the final version of documents requested: the two consultants are allowed a delay of 15 days to finalise and submit their work following the 'PowerPoint' presentation, based on the feedback received.

4. REVIEW REPORT

24. The process will result in the drawing up of an evaluation report and a review with tools on a DVD. All products shall be written in a straightforward manner, in English, with a maximum length (including annexes) of 50 pages for the evaluation report this length may be exceeded only with justification.

25. The document format appearing below must be adhered to for the evaluation report.

- *Cover page*
 - Title: “Evaluation of Communication, Information and Visibility Activities in Humanitarian Aid”
 - Date of the review;
 - Name of the consultants;
 - Indication that “evaluation has been and financed by and produced at the request of the European Commission. The comments contained herein reflect the opinions of the consultants only”
 - The contract number; and
 - The DG ECHO logo.
- Table of contents, which shall be established in accordance with the tasks and key issues described under section 2.

- Annexes

26. The review report shall be drawn up in 5 paper copies and transmitted to DG ECHO. One copy of those documents should have no binding to allow for scanning on reception by DG ECHO’s archives.

27. DG ECHO requires that 2000 DVDs incorporating the review’s report and other products be supplied. The design quality must be of a professional level (inter alia using software publishing tools to incorporate visual images and clickable links in the final pdf version). Examples of what DG ECHO expects to receive are: the recent DG ECHO Water and Sanitation review http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/thematic_en.htm#water ; and

the Security Review 2006

http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/thematic_en.htm#security

5. REQUIRED SKILLS FOR THE CONSULTANTS

28. DG ECHO envisages that **three** senior communication experts shall carry out the work, two will have a strong background in communications and media matters under the leadership of a senior expert with experience of humanitarian aid. DG ECHO considers that the consultants proposed shall preferably have:

- a strong background in designing and implementing communication, information and media actions;
- a strong background in training;
- experience of drafting research, guidelines or policy papers on media matters; and
- for the team leader, work experience in humanitarian aid, including at field level,

29. All experts should be able to draft in English, but knowledge of French by preferably all or at least one member of the team would constitute a definite plus.

30. If possible, at least one team member should be a woman.

6. ASSIGNMENT OF TASKS

31. Each team member is jointly responsible for the final accomplishment of the tasks; however, the separate elements of work necessary for the accomplishment of the tasks may be allocated between the consultants. The members of the team must work in close co-ordination.

32. A team leader shall be named who shall have the added responsibility of the overall co-ordination of the tasks to be completed and of the final coherence of the report and other works both in terms of content and presentation.

7. TIMETABLE

33. The tasks under this review will be undertaken in a maximum period of 45 working days for the team leader and 41 for the second and third consultants and will be completed between April and 31st December 2007. In accordance with the timeline set out under section 2 for the submission of the Inception Report (mid-April 2007), Main Report (June 2007) and Tools (end-September) to DG ECHO, the main products are to be produced and final by early October 2007, but up to two presentations in addition to the debriefing to DG ECHO management may be required of the team leader before the year-end 2007.

Guidelines for the consultants

1. Regulatory basis

The Regulatory basis for the evaluation of the aid provided by DG ECHO is established in Article 18 of Regulation (EC) 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, which states "the Commission shall regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations".

2. Terms of Reference. What are they?

The Terms of Reference set out the scope of the evaluator's mission, the issues to be considered and the evaluation timetable. They allow those commissioning the evaluation and the review to express their needs (guidance function) while providing the consultant with a clear idea of what is expected from him/her (control function).

3. Methodology

For the purpose of accomplishing its tasks, the consultants shall use inter alia information available at DG ECHO HQ, from its experts on the spot, from other Commission services, the relevant Commission Delegation, DG ECHO partners on the spot and, if necessary, at their headquarters, aid beneficiaries, local authorities and international organisations.

4. Scope of the evaluation and topics of study

In addition to the initial information contained in the ToR, the first briefing session in Brussels provides everyone involved in the review (requesting service, ECHO-Evaluation, consultants and other Commission services) with the opportunity to discuss the contents of the ToR and to establish priorities for the review. This meeting should, as well, allow the consultants to clarify any doubts they might have about the scope of their mission. Any important remark or comment on the content of the ToR at this stage will be considered an **integral** part of these and will be set out by the consultants' team leader in a note that must be submitted to ECHO-Evaluation at the end of the briefing session, and before the team's departure to other locations in Europe and elsewhere.

During the process of the review the consultants must try to follow all the items listed in the Terms of Reference. Their treatment, the relative importance given to them and their coverage in the final reports will depend, however, on the consultants' own opinion as a result of the information found, both during the desk study phase and in the field. Any decision not to cover one or more of the main task assignments described in the ToR will have to be justified in the text of the reports, if inappropriately justified DG ECHO may choose to not accept the final report.

5. The report

By commissioning an independent evaluation and review DG ECHO expects to obtain an objective, critical, readable and transparent analysis of its policy. This analysis should contain policy recommendations on future courses of action. The report should be, above all, a document that can function as a learning tool. Therefore, while writing it, the consultants should always bear in mind why the report is done, for whom, and how the results will be used.

Furthermore, the report is a working tool of value to DG ECHO only as long as it clearly reflects the consultant's independent view. DG ECHO respects this independence.