

The following is a series of answers to questions asked by several DG ECHO partners in response to the publication of the ESOP 2018. In the principle of transparency, these questions and answers are shared with all ECHO partners.

1. Under the ESOP 2018, are humanitarian projects operating in other countries within the EU, including autonomous cities (eg Melilla), eligible for funding?

The Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) has been activated in response to the current refugee crisis within the EU. Emergency support can be provided in EU Member States where the refugee crisis has reached an unprecedented scale and only where no other financial instrument is available to the Member State or the EU to sufficiently respond. Thus the ESI is potentially available for funding of operations in other Member States, as an instrument of last resort.

In 2016 and 2017, the Commission has only been funding operations in Greece, based on the assessment that it was the only Member State for which the requirements of the Emergency Support Regulation were met. If proposals for other Member States are submitted, the Commission would first assess whether the criteria are met for the use of the ESI within the given Member State. In this context DG ECHO would also like to highlight that actions financed under this instrument are in support of, and complementary to, the actions of the affected Member State. To this end, close cooperation and consultation with the affected Member State should be ensured. All this considered, Spain does not seem to qualify to be a recipient of the ESI support.

2. What are the minimum and maximum values per funding application?

Under the ESOP 2018, no funding ceiling for project proposals has been applied. ECHO partners, with whom a financial threshold has been applied by DG ECHO, are requested to take this into consideration in their budget design. Project proposals are needs-based and will be evaluated using principles such as: quality of needs assessments, relevance of the intervention and coverage, feasibility, implementation capacity and knowledge of/presence in the affected Member State.

3. Where can one find detailed information related to eligibility criteria of contractors and partners, i.e. Instructions to Tenderers?

The ESOP 2018 is not a call for Tender, and cannot be considered as procurement. Instead, the Commission seeks the submission of proposals from all accredited ECHO partners.

All ECHO partners are encouraged to consult the General Conditions for the obligations relating to procurement processes.

4. While costs are eligible as of 1 January 2018 when would be the likely timing for award notification and contract commencement? It is important to know when the contracts would start so as to plan activities in a realistic manner within 2018.

For the assessment and evaluation process, DG ECHO has established indicative internal deadlines for the various stages of the appraisal procedure. In light of proposals to be received under the ESOP 2018, every effort will be made to ensure the pre-selection phase will be undertaken before the winter break, and that contracts are signed within the shortest timeframe, realistically by the end of January or later. Should a proposal be pre-selected, a series of negotiations shall take place over the course of January 2018 in an open dialogue between DG ECHO and partners.

Please note that pre-selection of a project does not constitute in any way the acceptance or commitment of the European Commission/DG ECHO to fund the proposed action. The final decision

to award funding (or not) will be based on the negotiated e-Single Form and its subsequent analysis by ECHO as well as the availability of funds.

5. Please provide clarity on the scope of activities ECHO for unaccompanied minors, is ECHO still willing to providing funding in 2018? Will you continue to include safe zones? Would DG ECHO consider supporting semi-independent living and/or guardianship?

As per the Financial Planning 2017, financial responsibility for the provision of places for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) has been assumed under the Greek national programme. Therefore, in 2018, DG ECHO will only continue to provide financial support for the continuation of the 10 existing safe zones until either the closure date of the camp where the safe zone is located or, at the maximum, 31 December 2018. Other forms of community based care arrangements for unaccompanied minors are considered important elements of a robust national child protection system. In this light, DG ECHO will continue to advocate with the Greek authorities for the swift adoption of the draft national guardianship law to allow for the establishment of a national guardianship system and the establishment of semi-independent living for unaccompanied minors.

6. The academic school year starts in September and ends in June the next year. Does it mean DG ECHO's support to formal education will end mid-scholastic year, in December 2018? And/or we could think of pushing it to June 2019?

DG ECHO's support to the formal education sector will continue until the end of the academic year 2017-18. For the academic year 2018-19, DG ECHO's support will include only administrative support to register in formal school and support to a wide range of non-formal education, including Greek language classes and mother-tongue language classes for children and adults.

7. Building the capacity of frontline workers in Greece is critical in ensuring a smooth transition and handover to national players, government/civil society, at national/sub-national levels by the time the ESI is phased out. Will capacity building be considered under the ESOP 2018?

The main purpose of the Emergency Support Instrument is to support the Members States and address the needs of the populations affected by the crisis. The ESI is not meant to primarily address the capacity-building needs of national players, government/civil society, at national/sub-national levels. However, as mentioned in the ESOP 2018, in order to support the phasing out of the assistance under the ESI and to ensure a smooth transition, capacity building and institutional strengthening are needed. However, this should not represent the single most important component of a project proposal but rather a mainstreamed activity. Priority will therefore be given to a structured phase out approach in all areas throughout 2018.

8. As the deadline for submission of proposals is Sunday 10 of December, and the timeline is so tight to submit on Friday 8 of December, is it possible to submit Monday 11 in the morning?

As indicated in the ESOP, we invite all partners to submit proposals by 10 December 2017. This will allow DG ECHO to have a comprehensive picture of the needs, capacities and funding requirements for the provision of emergency support in Greece. The day following this deadline, DG ECHO shall proceed with the assessment and evaluation process for all project submissions received. It is therefore in the partners' interest to submit funding requests as early as possible. We cannot therefore indicate any alternative deadline.

However, as per all other operations of ECHO worldwide, partners are free to apply for funding at any time. ECHO will evaluate and consider such requests on the basis of the relevance, justification and availability of funds.