Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union-funded Humanitarian Aid Actions

January 2016

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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1. PURPOSE

To ensure a high level of awareness and 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 undertaken 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.¹

The present Manual should serve as Partners' primary source of orientation when planning and implementing the "standard visibility" activities as part of their EU-funded humanitarian aid action. For more elaborate ("above-standard") communication 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 guidelines² 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 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: www.echo-visibility.eu

Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with visibility requirements in accordance with the applicable contractual arrangement as well as with specific visibility requirements agreed-upon in the Single Form, forming an integral part of individual agreements.

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¹ Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96, article 4.

2. **STANDARD VISIBILITY**

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

A. Prominent display of the EU emblem with accompanying text on project sites, relief items and equipment.

B. 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 press releases, social media, webpages, blogs, media interviews or articles about the project, etc.

| ! | 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 to a project (multi-donor or co-financed projects), as a general rule EU visibility should be ensured in a manner proportional to the ECHO contribution. |
| ! | In consortia, all partners - not only the partner holding the ECHO contract - should implement the visibility and communication obligations, for example by ensuring EU visibility on their individual homepages. |

3. **VISUAL IDENTITY: THE EU EMBLEM**

The implementation of standard visibility at field level as well as communication actions targeting European audiences involves the mandatory and prominent display of the **European Union emblem** with the below accompanying text (as relevant in conjunction with the Partner's own logo):

![Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid](image-url)
The concrete implementation should be adapted to the specific circumstances on the project site and the nature of the items funded. Adjusted versions with the same logo and accompanying text are also admissible:

In the field, this logo must be applied on items such as:

- Stickers, signboards, display panels, banners and plaques
- Supplies and equipment (such as vehicles, food sacks, water tanks, containers, tents, plastic sheeting, individual packaging used for foodstuffs or NFIs)
- Clothing items such as T-shirts and caps worn by project staff (if produced with EU funding)
- Operational publications and materials such as training manuals, notebooks and posters

For signboards and similar, the visual identity should be presented so as to clearly explain the EU's role as a donor. In that respect, the visual part should be accompanied by a short explanatory text or a relevant joint message on the project.

Example:

[Title of project]

Implemented by: [Logo of partner]

[Logo of partner]

Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid

Joint message [e.g. ”Acting together to help vulnerable children“]
The EU emblem with accompanying text must also be applied when producing visibility and communications material for dissemination beyond the beneficiary country, including for example:

- websites
- videos
- social media post
- posters and other campaign material
- publications (excluding training manuals and similar operational material)

The EU emblem must also be used in all "above standard" actions (see section 5.2).

Further information about the use of the EU emblem in the context of EU programmes can be found here:


While the accompanying text "Funded by European Union" is mandatory for all actions, depending on the type action "Humanitarian Aid" may be replaced by "Civil Protection" or "Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection", e.g.
4. TERMINOLOGY

In visibility and communication activities the following terms should be applied (in prioritised order):

**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. SINGLE FORM AND THE 0.5% THRESHOLD

Visibility is covered in the Single Form (SF) under Chapter 9 with two points: 9.1 "standard visibility" (mandatory) and 9.2 "above-standard visibility" (optional). The formal distinction derives from the size of the budget allocated.

5.1. Standard Visibility

All partners must complete section 9.1 with indications of the concrete **standard visibility** activities foreseen under both mandatory subcategories: A and B. For these standard visibility activities, partners can allocate a budget of up to 0.5% of the direct eligible costs of ECHO's financial contribution (with a ceiling of EUR 8,000).

Under section 9.1.A (Display of EU visual identity) **both** boxes must be selected.

Under section 9.1.B (Written and verbal acknowledgement) **at least 4 boxes must be selected**. The partner must also provide information as to what is concretely foreseen under each option (including B7 as applicable) in the comments box. For example, location of signboards, type of supplies, where the visual identity will be displaced, etc.

If a box in section 9.1.A and/or more than three boxes in section 9.1.B are deselected, a **derogation** must be requested under chapter 11 of the Single Form.

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).
5.2. Above-standard visibility

In addition to standard visibility, partners can opt for "above-standard visibility" under SF section 9.2. The purpose of such more elaborate communication actions is to raise awareness of humanitarian issues particularly among defined audiences in the EU Member States and to showcase the tangible results of EU-funded humanitarian aid.

Above-standard visibility could for example include audio-visual productions, journalist-visits to project sites, billboard campaigns, exhibitions or other types of events with an important outreach to the European public and media. Larger actions may also entail joint dissemination at key points of the action.

For above-standard actions, ECHO can provide budget exceeding the standard 0.5% of the direct eligible costs. To this end, a separate communication plan, including a budget with breakdown of main activities, must be submitted and approved by ECHO prior to the signing of the contract. The plan must be inserted as an annex in the Single Form. A standard template is available on the visibility website: http://www.echo-visibility.eu/above-standard-visibility-template/

The proposed communication plan will be evaluated by ECHO's Communication Unit (ECHO.A2), including as regards the feasibility and estimated impact/outreach of the action.

During the implementation of above-standard actions, regular contact should take place between ECHO and the partner at the partner's initiative to ensure mutual benefit and maximum impact.

6. Monitoring and Final reporting

The indications made in the Single Form at application stage will serve as benchmark when monitoring and reporting on standard visibility in the project. Deviations must be explained and justified.

When submitting the Final Report for liquidation, the partner should include relevant supporting evidence 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.

In addition to the final report, for above-standard visibility actions the partner should also provide ECHO with regular updates during the project and until the action is completed. The final report will need to be compliant with the separate communication plan.

The amount of supporting evidence provided does not need to be exhaustive, but must in a credible way demonstrate that the activities committed to in the Single Form have been implemented as an integral part of the project and at different stages.

Communication and visibility expenses can only be approved when accompanied by adequate supporting material. Failure to comply may result in the application of a penalty at the liquidation stage.

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

7. **COMMUNICATION**

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

There is no one-size-fits-all. Communication actions must always be designed to fit the target audiences, the key messages, the concrete project and the capacity of the partner.

The visibility and communication obligations generally imply that the mentioning of the European Union and/or display of the EU emblem must be
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;
- 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.

7.1. Media outreach

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

7.1.1. Press releases

It is highly recommended to issue a press release – as a minimum – at the start and at the conclusion of a project. A press release can be issued inside the EU and/or in the beneficiary country/region as relevant for the concrete project.

The press release may display the EU emblem alongside that of the partner.

The press release text must clearly state that the project is funded by the European Union. Preferably, the text includes tangible figures/examples of the (expected) impact of the project, such as the number of beneficiaries. Technical language should generally be avoided.

Where relevant, press releases can include a quote by an ECHO representative (for example, the relevant experts/Head of Delegation in the field or from an ECHO representative at HQ), in close coordination with ECHO’s Communication Unit via the relevant Regional Information Officer.
Where relevant, press releases can include a quote by an ECHO representative (for example, the relevant experts/Head of Delegation in the field or from an ECHO representative at HQ), in close coordination with ECHO’s Communication Unit via the relevant Regional Information Officer.

Partners are generally encouraged to share a draft of the press release with ECHO before its publication. Quotes by ECHO representatives must always be approved before publication.

Press releases may also include the contact details of a relevant ECHO representative for follow-up questions by media (expert, Head of Office or RIO). The contact person must be approved by ECHO.

Partners are also invited to include the following text at the end of joint press releases:

*The European Union with its Member States is a leading global donor of humanitarian aid. Through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the EU helps over 120 million victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, ECHO provides assistance to the most vulnerable people solely on the basis of humanitarian needs, without discrimination of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.*

### 7.1.2. Interviews

When speaking to the media on EU-funded projects, the humanitarian partner should aim to acknowledge the partnership with the European Union and explain the tangible results achieved with the EU-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 to contact at ECHO (nearest field office or Regional Information Officer) for further details.

### 7.1.3. Press conferences

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.
7.1.4. Journalists' visits

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

Partners are generally encouraged to share with ECHO relevant press clippings following an EU-funded media visit.

7.2. Social Media

Social media are a low-cost, high-impact way of communicating and creating visibility with targeted audiences. They should therefore be an integral part of the communication strategy related to any project, and complementing all other planned visibility actions.

Partners are expected to make full use of this channel, as well as incorporate ECHO related posts and tweets throughout the life-cycle of projects to provide followers with an interactive and/or "real time" experience.

To maximise the impact, partners should:

- send the contact details of the person in charge for social media to: 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
  - Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/69583224@N05/
  - Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO
✓ publish a social media post when an EU-funded project is launched in order to acknowledge funding

✓ mention/tag ECHO on tweets (@eu_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 the use of content from ECHO's website, social media platforms and its Flickr collection with the request that ECHO is appropriately credited/ tagged.

### 7.3. Web Communication

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

The EU emblem and a link to the ECHO 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/](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/)

Generally, costs associated with the general 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.

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

### 7.4. Publications

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

When a partner's publication 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 a donor should be clearly mentioned in the text/story. ECHO may also be able to provide stories/input for partner publications, and encourages the use of quotes by its field experts or other representative (in coordination with the 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:

**Example:**
The European Union and its Member States are a leading global donor of humanitarian aid. Through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the EU helps over 120 million victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, ECHO provides assistance to the most vulnerable people solely on the basis of humanitarian needs, without discrimination of 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."

### 7.5. Photos

Partners are encouraged to promote project photos on social media with a clear acknowledgement of the EU partnership, as explained in section 7.2.

In the course of a project, partners are also invited to send to ECHO good quality photos in the form of photo stories – i.e. a series of 6-9 photos with short explanatory captions. ECHO can use the photo stories on its website. The photos should be accompanied by brief captions relating to the subject of the picture and an explanatory sheet with background information (date, country, city/region, project, name and role of the person on the photo if applicable). The Commission reserves the right to edit the text of the provided photo captions so as to fit the editorial style of ECHO's website.

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.

The visibility budget can be used to employ professional photographers to cover EU funded humanitarian operations only in the framework of a specific

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3 If in doubt on the wording, please consult ECHO: the contact details are provided at the end of this publication.
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.

Photos taken by an ECHO-funded professional photographer should be sent to ECHO in digital format: ECHO-INTERNET@ec.europa.eu (preferably containing at least 5 million pixels).

At 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:

The European Union with its Member States is a leading global donor of humanitarian aid. Through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the EU helps over 120 million victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, ECHO provides assistance to the most vulnerable people solely on the basis of humanitarian needs, without discrimination of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

The Commission is entitled to use or reproduce photos made by a partner under a grant or delegation agreement.

7.6. Audiovisual products

The aim is show-case to EU citizens the tangible impact of EU-funded humanitarian aid. 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.
- Images of items displaying the EU humanitarian aid visual identity.

Generally, shorter videos (not exceeding 2 minutes) are better suited for dissemination.

Videos must display the EU emblem with accompanying text at the beginning and/or the end.
**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.

Audio-visual projects on humanitarian actions funded by the EU are eligible for visibility funding. ECHO does not finance audio-visual productions whose sole purpose is to promote another organisation.

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.

### 7.7. Public events

The organisation of public events – such as conferences, roundtables, information events or artistic performances – 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.
8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Call the ECHO Communication 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

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en

In the field (as per January 2016)

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

Bangkok +6622551035/6 e-mail: echo.bangkok@echofield.eu
Amman +96264607030 e-mail: echo.amman@echofield.eu
Nairobi +254202972000 e-mail: echo.nairobi@echofield.eu
Dakar +221338698000 e-mail: echo.dakar@echofield.eu
Bogotá +571 742 5956 e-mail: echo.bogota@echofield.eu

For the list and contact details of all ECHO field offices, please refer to 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 runs 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:

www.echo-visibility.eu

You can also consult FAQs or submit questions to the visibility helpdesk.