



Evaluation of European Commission's Humanitarian Activities in Colombia

Final Report

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 <p>European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection</p>	<p>The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission.</p>
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Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION.....	1
1.2	THE OVERALL EVALUATION PROCESS.....	1
1.3	THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT.....	2
2.	CONTEXT AND DG ECHO'S HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO COLOMBIA	3
2.1	THE EVOLVING COUNTRY CONTEXT.....	3
2.1.1	Overview	3
2.1.2	The evolving conflict and the occurrence of natural disasters.....	4
2.1.3	Legal and institutional responses.....	5
2.2	HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE DELIVERED BY DG ECHO	6
2.2.1	Humanitarian needs.....	6
2.2.2	Assistance delivered by DG ECHO	7
3.	METHODOLOGY.....	9
3.1	STRUCTURED EVALUATION APPROACH.....	9
3.1.1	The intervention logic	10
3.1.2	The set of Evaluation Questions	12
3.2	TOOLS AND INFORMATION SOURCES	13
3.2.1	The case studies.....	14
3.3	CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS.....	18
4.	ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	19
5.	SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS	63
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS	67

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 - EVALUATION PHASES	2
FIGURE 2 – PYRAMID OF THE EVALUATION EXERCISE.....	9
FIGURE 3 - INTERVENTION LOGIC.....	11
FIGURE 4 – MAIN INFORMATION SOURCES AND TOOLS.....	13
FIGURE 5 – LOCATIONS OF CASE STUDIES.....	14

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 - OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	12
TABLE 2 - SECTOR AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNER COVERAGE.....	15
TABLE 3 - DG ECHO TARGETING OF IDP NON-EMERGENCY NEEDS IN COLOMBIA 2007- 2012.....	23

List of Acronyms

ACH	Acción Contra Hambre (Action against Hunger) ¹
BACRIMs	Bandas Criminales (Criminal Gangs)
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CEDECIS	Corporación para el Desarrollo Comunitario y la Integración Social
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Common Humanitarian Framework
CMR/CDR	Crude mortality (or death) rates
CRC	Colombian Red Cross
C&V	Cash and vouchers
DPS	Departamento para la Prosperidad Social
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
DG ECHO	Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
EUMS	European Union Member States
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FIS	Financial Tracking Service
FY	Financial Year
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GoC	Government of Colombia
GoE	Government of Ecuador
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HDI	Human Development Index
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDA	International Development Assistance

¹ When commonly agreed English acronyms existed these were used otherwise the Spanish acronyms were kept

IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IN	Inception Note
IO	International Organisation
IP	Indigenous Populations
JC	Judgement Criteria
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NFIs	Non-food items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PNIP	Persons in Need of International Protection
RG	Reference Group
RUV	Registro Unico de Victimas
SAP	Sitios de Asamblea Permanente
SC	Save the Children
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SI	Solidaridad Internacional
SIPOD	Sistema de Información de Población Desplazada
SIRDEC	Sistema de Información Red de Desaparecidos y Cadáveres
ToR	Terms of Reference
UAO	Unidades de Atención y Orientación
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Subject and objectives

This evaluation has been commissioned by the Policy and Implementation Frameworks Unit of the Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection– DG ECHO – on behalf of the European Commission.

The evaluation assesses DG ECHO's activities in Colombia between 1 January 2007 and 30 June 2012, with special emphasis on the last three years (2010-2012). The thematic scope includes DG ECHO's humanitarian actions at both the strategic and intervention levels. Geographic coverage includes support provided in Colombia as well as the DG ECHO response to the Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries, notably Ecuador and Venezuela. A full description of the evaluation context is given in Section 2 of this report.

This evaluation aims at providing an **overall independent assessment** of DG ECHO's humanitarian actions in Colombia over the evaluation period, using the different OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and other criteria mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR) such as the "3Cs" (coherence, coordination and complementarity) and the 23 Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship. In addition, the evaluation provides **practical and operational recommendations** for future DG ECHO actions in Colombia, taking into account, among other things, the changing political and security context in the country.

Methodology

The evaluation applied a rigorous methodology based notably DG ECHO's Manual for the Evaluation of Humanitarian Aid and on the methodological framework of the European Commission external relations Joint Evaluation Unit. It designed a **three-phase approach** consisting of a desk, field and synthesis phases. The first phase was split into a structuring and a desk stage. It was dedicated to providing an inventory of DG ECHO humanitarian funding in Colombia, an overview of the context in which it took place and the construction of DG ECHO's intervention logic. Five case study interventions were also selected during this phase.

The intervention logic then informed the definition of the Evaluation Questions (see Section 3.1.2. of this report).

On this basis, data collection took place through both desk and field work. The evaluation used a **combination of tools and techniques for data collection** including the analysis of a large amount of documents, interviews with around 46 interlocutors including representatives from the Commission, implementing partners, civil society, national authorities and other stakeholders in the field. The five case study interventions were

combined with desk study, the inventory of interventions, a workshop in Bogota and six focus groups in Colombia. Further details are presented in Section 3.2 of the report.

Conclusions

The evaluation reached a total of eight Conclusions, numbered C1-C8, and summarised in the following table. Conclusions are presented in full in Section 5 of this report.

<p>C1: On DG ECHO's prioritisation of humanitarian needs</p> <p>DG ECHO support tackled the right priorities in terms of humanitarian needs in Colombia. To identify the humanitarian needs in Colombia and build its strategy, DG ECHO relied on different sources of information including national authorities, Colombian NGOs and universities. Furthermore, it used needs assessments conducted by its implementing partners, the validity of which was generally accepted. Finally, DG ECHO's follow-up of the Colombian context and its close monitoring of its interventions, allowed it to adapt its support to needs arising from unforeseen contextual changes.</p>
<p>C2: On the needs of unregistered IDPs and PNIPs</p> <p>Some populations that were in need and did not receive any humanitarian support remained out of reach, or partially out of reach, of DG ECHO's support, as an indirect consequence of DG ECHO's implementing partners choices in terms of eligibility criteria Indeed, in big urban centres, DG ECHO focused its support through its main implementing partner –ICRC– on recently displaced persons, but unregistered IDPs having displaced for over three months were ultimately not eligible for support from DG ECHO or the Colombian State. Similarly, in terms of PNIP support, DG ECHO's focus was primarily, though not entirely, on registered asylum seekers and refugees. This, combined with changes to Ecuadorian legislation which narrowed the criteria for refugee status, meant that many refugees fell out of reach for DG ECHO support.</p>
<p>C3: On the timeliness of DG ECHO's response</p> <p>On the whole, emergency response was provided in a timely manner, in particular, ECHO responded quickly to the natural disasters of 2007 and 2010. The one year timeframe created some constraints in particular cases. Overall stakeholders agree that DG ECHO support was swift and provided in a timely manner. This included also DG ECHO addressing the urgent humanitarian needs arising from the severe flooding in 2007 and 2010 via two <i>ad hoc</i> budgeting decisions specifically targeting flood victims. However, a lack of flexibility on project length was also felt by implementing partners as a constraint on coordination efforts and on the linking of relief to rehabilitation and development in some cases.</p>
<p>C4: On the link between relief, rehabilitation and development</p> <p>DG ECHO integrated LRRD in its strategy over the evaluation period and implemented hand-over strategies successfully at implementation level. Nevertheless, LRRD was hampered by the armed conflict and the fact that the government is a party in conflict. There were also missed opportunities regarding linkages with the Commission's development programmes. All DG ECHO's global plans and HIPs for Colombia explicitly devised an approach to ensure LRRD, and the</p>

evaluation observed specific success in terms of connecting DG ECHO's support to longer term assistance and hand over projects to local actors. However, government of recipient country have a key role to play in terms of linking the relief and development assistance received. This is much more difficult and challenging in armed conflicts especially when the government is a party in conflict. In addition, DG ECHO and the development services of the Commission did not design their strategy jointly nor implement their actions in concert. The suppression of the Uprooted People thematic budget line in 2006 further complicated the establishment of connections between the two organisations. Nevertheless, DG ECHO has been able to successfully implement hand-over and exit strategies.

C5: On interventions in urban settings

When DG ECHO intervened in urban settings it showed specific types of assets. DG ECHO's interventions in urban contexts addressed the right needs, were complementary to the Government of Colombia's activities, contributed to increased accountability on the part of government authorities, and generated incentives for the improvements in of non-discriminatory services. In addition, DG ECHO's community-based and 'cash & voucher' approaches have also proved useful.

C6: On donor coordination

DG ECHO was in a position to play a leading role in terms of coordination and of enhancing coherence and complementarities among humanitarian actors. However it did not fully take up this role notably because it was not in its mandate. Nevertheless, complementarities were achieved at implementation level. Among the humanitarian donors, DG ECHO was the most important actor in terms of financial volume of its aid over the evaluation period. This confers DG ECHO with a potential leverage to play a key role in terms of coordination. At policy level, DG ECHO did play a supporting role in UN OCHA's efforts to set up a common humanitarian support framework. At the implementation level, the inclusion of synergy-potential as a project selection criterion proved effective, but the one year time limit on DG ECHO engagements capped the level of coordination that could be developed within this framework.²

C7: On factors affecting timeliness and cost-effectiveness

Timeliness and cost-effectiveness have been impacted by both 'internal' and 'external' factors. The consolidation plan adopted in 2007 caused the intensification of violence in certain regions but this is no longer an issue for the timely implementation of humanitarian projects. The adoption of the Presidential Decree in 2009 blurring civilian and military distinction led to project delays with some implementing partners. There were also missed opportunities in terms of concerted action between DG ECHO and the EUD where EUD could have built on DG ECHO expertise gained in Colombia since the mid-nineties, which would have benefited the efficiency of implementation.

C8: On estimation of coverage

Estimation of coverage is very difficult both because there was no consensus on the number of IDPs and because DG ECHO only monitored beneficiary populations reached in an aggregated manner. The lack of consensus can be attributed to various causes, including: questions surrounding the recognition of victims

² No recommendation was formulated to address the one year time limit as this timeframe is imposed by regulation and cannot be changed.

of BACRIMs; the use of different databases by different organisations; specific difficulties related to determining the exact number of beneficiaries for multi-donor interventions; the fact that persons who have been repeatedly displaced are not recounted; the difficulty of counting direct beneficiaries when speaking of massive displacements; victims that remain anonymous through choice or otherwise. While DG ECHO provides disaggregated figures on targets at the planning stage, the monitoring of beneficiaries reached is not undertaken according to the same indicators.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above conclusions and the answer to the evaluation questions, 11 recommendations were made for future DG ECHO actions in Colombia. The recommendations spanned the following areas:

- Areas where DG ECHO may provide an added value in the coming 1-3 years;
- The main improvements to be considered by DG ECHO in future actions;
- Measures to reinforce DG ECHO coordination with partners and other donors;
- DG ECHO's potential role in urban violent contexts;
- Improving DG ECHO's actions addressing humanitarian needs of vulnerable groups.

The table below summarises each Recommendation, which are presented in full detail in Section 6 of this report. The table also lists the Conclusions on which each Recommendation was based.

Recommendation	Origin
Areas where DG ECHO may provide an added value in the coming 1-3 years	
R1: Increase coverage of IDPs in the short-term. The passing of the Victims Law, the institutional restructuring and high turnover of government officials in Colombia mean that there will be a transition period before Colombian government authorities can fulfil its responsibilities with regard to IDPs. Given the size of its presence in Colombia, DG ECHO would be well placed to provide additional support to IDPs during this transition period.	C1
R2: Increase coverage of non-registered IDPs in Colombia and non-registered PNIPs in neighbouring countries. Acknowledging that DG ECHO does not intend to cover all humanitarian needs in Colombia, it should nevertheless consider ways to increase the share of DG ECHO support to non-registered victims both within Colombia and in neighbouring countries in order to increase coverage of groups not reached by the authorities or other international organisations.	C2
The main improvements to be considered by DG ECHO in future actions	
R3: Improve monitoring of DG ECHO coverage. In order to better monitor DG ECHO's efficiency in reaching its strategic targets, and thus to inform future planning, a review of data collection procedures should be considered. In particular, it is recommended that DG ECHO seeks to build a consolidated database of persons supported by DG ECHO funded operations, cross-referenced against the share of DG ECHO support provided for multi-donor engagements.	C8

<p>R4: Enhance LRRD by increased coordination with the development services of the European Commission. LRRD should be addressed by focusing on government institutions. Nevertheless, it is recommended that, as part of its commitment to LRRD, DG ECHO increases dialogue and coordination with the Commission development services, not only at the strategic level, but also in terms of project-level knowledge-sharing regarding, e.g., projects funded by the Instrument for Stability and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.</p>	C4
Measures to reinforce DG ECHO coordination with partners and other donors	
<p>R5: DG ECHO should exploit the added-value that it has in pushing for coordination. DG ECHO was the most important humanitarian donor financially, the EU has committed to stronger coordination, and DG ECHO has had a key role in keeping humanitarian needs visible. These aspects confer DG ECHO an added-value in coordinating humanitarian assistance even though it does not have such mandate. DG ECHO should therefore exploit such added-value especially in the transition period before the new institutions of the Colombian government can play their leading role in this respect.</p>	C6
<p>R6: Support coordination efforts of UNHCR in neighbouring countries. The absence of a cluster system in Ecuador created a need for increased coherence and complementarity between humanitarian actors dealing with the Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in this country. The evaluation recommends that DG ECHO supports efforts by UNHCR to set up a mechanism for coherence and complementarity with other partners such as the joint WFP, UNHCR, OXFAM project.</p>	C6
DG ECHO's potential role in urban violent contexts	
<p>R7: Using DG ECHO's leverage to draw attention to the need for interventions in urban settings. The evaluation recommends that DG ECHO seeks to shape the humanitarian agenda and draw attention to the needs for interventions in urban settings. It should start to build up institutional know-how on its interventions in urban settings in the region in particular in the field of Protection. That could provide DG ECHO with an edge on addressing upcoming humanitarian trends and demonstrate leadership. To achieve this, DG ECHO resources would have to be increased to address the urban humanitarian needs portfolio whilst maintaining the rural portfolio.</p>	C5 C6
<p>R8: Consider increasing funding for support in urban contexts. In addition to the advocacy role outlined in recommendation 7 above, the evaluation also recommends that DG ECHO consider increasing its portfolio of activities in urban areas, whilst simultaneously maintaining its vital support in rural areas. The evaluation recommends that DG ECHO considers the full range of potential approaches, including, as a starting point: exploring a sectoral approach to Protection in urban contexts; learning from best practice in providing humanitarian support in urban settings; and facilitating discussions on the use of "cash & voucher" approaches.</p>	C5
<p>R9: DG ECHO should engage further in Protection interventions in urban settings. DG ECHO should strive to address protection needs in urban settings of victims excluded by the Victims Law, especially Children and Youth. It should do so by creating alternative humanitarian spaces and strengthening the so-called "Attention or Protection Roads". It should geographically base its interventions on relevant criteria measuring humanitarian consequences of urban violence.</p>	C5

Improving DG ECHO's actions addressing humanitarian needs of vulnerable groups:	
<p>R10: Continue supporting the community/neighbourhood approach to basic needs support. As noted in EQ3 and EQ5, DG ECHO interventions in urban settings used a <i>community approach to basic needs support</i> proved successful in preventing further discrimination and allowing identification of Protection cases among vulnerable groups, including in particular children and adolescents at risk of forced recruitment or abuse. The evaluation recommends that this approach is continued and prioritised in future support in urban contexts whenever appropriate.</p>	C5
<p>R11: DG ECHO should continue to encourage implementing partners to have a differentiated approach to vulnerable groups: Specific risks of discrimination arise for vulnerable groups, particularly in urban contexts. Accordingly, the evaluation recommends that DG ECHO should continue to encourage its implementing partners in designing interventions that have a differentiated approach to indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians, women, elders and disabled, in order not to reproduce discrimination and exclusion schemes.</p>	C6

Resumen ejecutivo

Tema y objetivos

La presente evaluación ha sido encargada por la Unidad de Marcos de Política y de Aplicación de la Dirección General de Ayuda Humanitaria y Protección Civil (DG ECHO), en nombre de la Comisión Europea.

La evaluación realiza un análisis de las actividades de la DG ECHO en Colombia entre el 1 de enero de 2007 y el 30 de junio de 2012, prestando especial atención a los últimos tres años (2010-2012). Entre los temas evaluados se incluyen las acciones humanitarias de la DG ECHO tanto a nivel estratégico como de intervención. La cobertura geográfica incluye el apoyo proporcionado en Colombia, así como la respuesta de la DG ECHO a los refugiados y los solicitantes de asilo colombianos en los países vecinos, especialmente Ecuador y Venezuela. En la Sección 2 del presente informe ofrecemos una descripción exhaustiva del contexto evaluado.

Esta evaluación pretende proporcionar una **valoración global independiente** de las acciones humanitarias de la DG ECHO en Colombia a lo largo del periodo de evaluación, utilizando diversos criterios de evaluación de la OCDE/CAD y otros criterios mencionados en los Términos de Referencia (TdR), como las "3C" (coherencia, coordinación y complementariedad) y los 23 Principios y Buenas Prácticas de una Buena Donación Humanitaria. Asimismo, la evaluación proporciona **recomendaciones prácticas y operacionales** para futuras acciones de la DG ECHO en Colombia, teniendo en cuenta, entre otras cosas, el cambiante contexto político y de seguridad del país.

Metodología

Para la evaluación se ha utilizado una rigurosa metodología basada principalmente en el Manual para la Evaluación de la Ayuda Humanitaria de la DG ECHO y en el marco metodológico de la Unidad de Evaluación Conjunta de relaciones exteriores de la Comisión Europea. Se ha diseñado un **enfoque de tres fases**: fase de documentación, fase de campo y fase de síntesis. La primera fase se dividió en una subfase de estructuración y una subfase de documentación. Su objetivo era proporcionar un inventario de la financiación humanitaria de la DG ECHO en Colombia, una vista general del contexto en el que tuvo lugar y el establecimiento de una lógica de intervención de la DG ECHO. Durante esta fase también se seleccionaron cinco intervenciones de estudios de casos concretos.

A continuación, la lógica de la intervención sirvió de base para definir las Preguntas de Evaluación (véase la Sección 3.1.2. del presente informe).

Sobre esta base, se realizó una recopilación de datos tanto mediante un trabajo de documentación como de campo. Para la evaluación se utilizó una **combinación de herramientas y técnicas de recopilación de datos** que incluían el análisis de una gran cantidad de documentos, así como entrevistas a alrededor de 46 interlocutores, entre ellos

representantes de la Comisión, las contrapartes ejecutantes, la sociedad civil, autoridades nacionales y otros actores de este ámbito. Las cinco intervenciones de estudios de casos se combinaron con un estudio documental, un inventario de las intervenciones, un taller en Bogotá y seis grupos de discusión en Colombia. Para más detalles, véase la Sección 3.2. del informe.

Conclusiones

La evaluación alcanzó un total de ocho Conclusiones, numeradas de C1 a C8, y resumidas en la tabla siguiente. En la Sección 5 del presente informe se presentan las conclusiones íntegras.

<p>C1: Sobre la priorización de la DG ECHO de las necesidades humanitarias</p> <p>El apoyo de la DG ECHO abordó las prioridades adecuadas en términos de necesidades humanitarias en Colombia. Con vistas a identificar las necesidades humanitarias en Colombia y establecer su estrategia, la DG ECHO se basó en varias fuentes de información, entre las que se encontraban autoridades nacionales y ONG y universidades colombianas. Por otro lado, utilizó evaluaciones de necesidades llevadas a cabo por la contraparte ejecutante, cuya validez ya había sido aceptada de forma general. Por último, el seguimiento de la DG ECHO en torno al contexto colombiano y la monitorización exhaustiva de sus intervenciones, le permitieron adaptar su apoyo a las necesidades surgidas de cambios contextuales inesperados.</p>
<p>C2: Sobre las necesidades de las PDI y PNPI</p> <p>Algunas poblaciones en situación de necesidad y que no recibieron ningún apoyo humanitario quedaron total o parcialmente al margen del apoyo de la DG ECHO como consecuencia indirecta de las elecciones que tomaron las contrapartes ejecutantes de la DG ECHO en términos de criterios de elegibilidad. De hecho, en los grandes centros urbanos, la DG ECHO centró su apoyo a través de su principal socio de ejecución – ICRC – en las personas desplazadas recientemente, pero las PDI no registradas y desplazadas durante más de tres meses no eran susceptibles de ser elegidas para recibir el apoyo de la DG ECHO ni del estado colombiano. De igual modo, en lo que a apoyo a las PNPI se refiere, la DG ECHO se centró principalmente, si bien no exclusivamente, en los solicitantes de asilo y los refugiados registrados. Todo ello combinado con los cambios en la legislación ecuatoriana, que ha limitado los criterios para obtener la condición de refugiado, lo que ha implicado que muchos refugiados queden fuera del alcance del apoyo de la DG ECHO.</p>
<p>C3: Sobre el plazo de respuesta de la DG ECHO</p> <p>En general, la respuesta de emergencia se proporcionó en un plazo oportuno; más concretamente, la ECHO respondió rápidamente a los desastres naturales de 2007 y 2010. El plazo de un año conllevó algunas limitaciones en casos particulares. En general, los actores están de acuerdo en que el apoyo de la DG ECHO fue rápido y se proporcionó en un plazo oportuno. Ello incluyó también la respuesta de la DG ECHO a las necesidades humanitarias urgentes durante las graves inundaciones de 2007 y 2010 a través de dos decisiones presupuestarias <i>ad hoc</i> específicas para ayudar a las víctimas de ambas catástrofes. No obstante, las contrapartes ejecutantes también percibieron la falta de flexibilidad en la extensión del proyecto como una limitación en los esfuerzos de</p>

coordinación y en la vinculación entre la ayuda para la rehabilitación y el desarrollo en algunos casos.

C4: Vinculación entre la ayuda, la rehabilitación y el desarrollo

La DG ECHO integró la VARD en su estrategia a lo largo del periodo de evaluación y aplicó satisfactoriamente estrategias de traspaso de responsabilidades en la práctica. Sin embargo, la VARD se vio dificultada por el conflicto armado y el hecho de que el gobierno fuera parte del mismo. También hubo oportunidades perdidas en torno a las conexiones con los programas de desarrollo de la Comisión. Todos los planes globales y los HIP de la DG ECHO para Colombia establecieron explícitamente un enfoque para garantizar la VARD, y con su evaluación se observó un éxito específico en la vinculación del apoyo de la DG ECHO a la ayuda a más largo plazo y el traspaso de los proyectos a los actores locales. No obstante, el gobierno del país receptor desempeña un papel clave a la hora de vincular la ayuda general con la ayuda al desarrollo recibida. Esta tarea es mucho más complicada y exige mucho más esfuerzo en los casos de conflicto armado, especialmente si el gobierno es parte del conflicto. Además, la DG ECHO y los servicios de desarrollo de la Comisión no diseñaron su estrategia ni pusieron en práctica sus acciones de forma conjunta. La supresión de la línea presupuestaria para Poblaciones Desarraigadas en 2006, complicó todavía más el establecimiento de conexiones entre las dos organizaciones. No obstante, la DG ECHO ha sido capaz de aplicar satisfactoriamente estrategias de traspaso de responsabilidades y de salida.

C5: Sobre las intervenciones en entornos urbanos

Cuando la DG ECHO intervino en entornos urbanos, mostró tipos específicos de ventajas. Las intervenciones de la DG ECHO en contextos urbanos abordaron las necesidades adecuadas, complementaron las actividades del Gobierno de Colombia, contribuyeron a incrementar la responsabilidad de las autoridades gubernamentales y generaron incentivos de mejora en servicios no discriminatorios. Además, también demostraron su utilidad los enfoques de la DG ECHO basados en la comunidad y "cash & voucher".

C6: Sobre la coordinación de los donantes

La DG ECHO tenía la posibilidad de jugar un papel de liderazgo en términos de coordinación y reforzar la coherencia y las complementariedades entre actores humanitarios. Sin embargo, no pudo tomar totalmente ese papel en particular porque no se encontraba en su mandato. A pesar de ello las complementariedades pudieron lograrse a nivel de la implementación. Entre los donantes humanitarios, la DG ECHO fue el actor más importante en términos de volumen financiero de su ayuda a lo largo de todo el periodo de evaluación. Ello confiere a la DG ECHO una influencia potencial para desempeñar un papel clave en materia de coordinación. A nivel político, la DG ECHO desempeñó un papel de apoyo en los esfuerzos de la OCHA para establecer un marco común de apoyo humanitario. A nivel práctico, la inclusión del potencial de sinergia como criterio de selección de los proyectos demostró ser un factor efectivo, pero el límite de un año en los compromisos con la DG ECHO restringió el nivel de coordinación que se podría haber alcanzado en este marco.³

³ No se formularon recomendaciones en torno al límite de un año, ya que este plazo está impuesto por ley y no se puede modificar.

C7: Sobre los factores que afectan a los plazos y la rentabilidad

Los plazos y la rentabilidad han sufrido un impacto debido a factores tanto "internos" como "externos". El plan de consolidación adoptado en 2007 provocó la intensificación de la violencia en varias regiones pero ello ha dejado de ser un problema para poner en práctica los proyectos humanitarios dentro de un plazo oportuno. La adopción del Decreto Presidencial en 2009, con el que se difumina la distinción civil y militar, llevó a retrasos en el proyecto por parte de algunas contrapartes ejecutantes. También hubo oportunidades perdidas en términos de acción conjunta entre la DG ECHO y la DUE. La DUE podría haber aprovechado la experiencia que la DG ECHO ha adquirido en Colombia desde mediados de los noventa, y que podría haber beneficiado la eficiencia de la implementación.

C8: Sobre la valoración de la cobertura

La valoración de la cobertura es muy compleja, tanto porque no se llegó a un consenso sobre el número de PDI como porque la DG ECHO sólo evaluó las poblaciones beneficiarias alcanzadas en conjunto. La falta de consenso se puede atribuir a varias causas, entre ellas: cuestiones sobre el reconocimiento de víctimas de las BACRIM; el uso de bases de datos diferentes por parte de las diferentes organizaciones; dificultades específicas relacionadas con la determinación del número exacto de beneficiarios de las intervenciones de donantes múltiples; el hecho de que las personas desplazadas en repetidas ocasiones no se vuelvan a contabilizar; la dificultad de contabilizar los beneficiarios directos en el caso de los desplazamientos masivos; las víctimas que permanecen anónimas por elección u otros motivos. A pesar de que la DG ECHO proporciona cifras desgregadas sobre objetivos en la fase de planificación, la evaluación de los beneficiarios realizada no se ha llevado a cabo de acuerdo con los mismos indicadores.

Recomendaciones

Sobre la base de las conclusiones arriba presentadas y la respuesta a las preguntas de evaluación, se han realizado 11 recomendaciones para futuras acciones de la DG ECHO en Colombia. Las recomendaciones abarcaron los ámbitos siguientes:

- Ámbitos en los que la DG ECHO puede proporcionar un valor añadido en los próximos 1-3 años;
- La DG ECHO debe considerar las principales mejoras en sus futuras acciones;
- Medidas para reforzar la coordinación de la DG ECHO con sus socios y otros donantes;
- El papel potencial de la DG ECHO en contextos urbanos violentos;
- Mejorar las acciones de la DG ECHO en torno a las necesidades humanitarias de los grupos vulnerables.

La tabla mostrada a continuación resume cada Recomendación. Las recomendaciones íntegras se presentan en la Sección 6 del presente informe. La tabla también incluye las Conclusiones en las que se basa cada Recomendación.

Recomendación	Origen
Ámbitos en los que la DG ECHO puede proporcionar un valor añadido en los próximos 1-3 años	
R1: Mayor cobertura de las PDI a corto plazo. La aprobación de la Ley de Víctimas, la reestructuración institucional y los altos honorarios de los representantes del gobierno de Colombia tendrán como resultado que haya un periodo de transición antes de que las autoridades del gobierno colombiano puedan cumplir con sus responsabilidades con respecto de las PDI. Dado el alcance de su presencia en Colombia, la DG ECHO estaría bien posicionada para proporcionar apoyo adicional a las PDI durante este periodo de transición.	C1
R2: Incremento de la cobertura de PDI no registradas en Colombia y PNPI no registradas en países vecinos. Partiendo del hecho de que la DG ECHO no pretende cubrir todas las necesidades humanitarias en Colombia, sí debería considerar vías para incrementar el índice de apoyo a las víctimas no registradas, tanto dentro de Colombia como en los países vecinos, con vistas a incrementar la cobertura de los grupos a los que no llegan las autoridades u otras organizaciones internacionales.	C2
La DG ECHO debe considerar las principales mejoras en sus futuras acciones	
R3: Mejorar la supervisión de la cobertura de la DG ECHO. Con vistas a supervisar mejor la eficiencia de la DG ECHO a la hora de alcanzar sus objetivos estratégicos y, por lo tanto, informar sobre planificaciones futuras, se debería considerar la posibilidad de realizar una revisión de los procedimientos de recopilación de datos. En particular, se recomienda que la DG ECHO intente crear una base de datos consolidada de personas que reciben apoyo de las operaciones financiadas por la DG ECHO, contrastada con el índice de apoyo de la DG ECHO proporcionado para compromisos de donantes múltiples.	C8
R4: Mejorar la VARD mediante una mayor coordinación con los servicios de desarrollo de la Comisión Europea. La VARD debería abordarse centrándose en las instituciones gubernamentales. Sin embargo, se recomienda que, como parte de este compromiso con la VARD, la DG ECHO refuerce el diálogo y la coordinación con los servicios de desarrollo de la Comisión, no sólo a nivel estratégico, sino también en relación con el intercambio de conocimientos a nivel de proyecto, p.ej. proyectos financiados por el Instrumento para la Estabilidad y el Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos.	C4
Medidas para reforzar la coordinación de la DG ECHO con sus socios y otros donantes	
R5: La DG ECHO debería explotar su valor añadido a la hora de fomentar la coordinación. La DG ECHO fue el donante humanitario más importante en términos financieros, la UE se ha comprometido a alcanzar una coordinación más estrecha, y la DG ECHO ha desempeñado un papel clave a la hora de mantener visibles las necesidades humanitarias. Estos aspectos confieren a la DG ECHO un valor añadido a la hora de coordinar la ayuda humanitaria incluso aunque no posea ese mandato. Por lo tanto, la DG ECHO debería explotar este valor añadido, especialmente en el periodo de transición antes de que las nuevas instituciones del gobierno colombiano puedan desempeñar su papel de liderazgo en este sentido.	C6
R6: Esfuerzos de apoyo a la coordinación de ACNUR en los países vecinos La ausencia de un enfoque temático en Ecuador creó la necesidad de buscar una mayor coherencia y complementariedad entre los actores humanitarios que tratan con los refugiados y los solicitantes de asilo colombianos en este país. La evaluación recomienda que la DG ECHO apoye los esfuerzos de ACNUR para establecer un mecanismo de coherencia y complementariedad con otros socios, como el proyecto	C6

conjunto PMA/ACNUR/OXFAM.	
El papel potencial de la DG ECHO en contextos urbanos violentos	
R7: Utilizar la influencia de la DG ECHO para llamar la atención sobre la necesidad de realizar intervenciones en los entornos urbanos. La evaluación recomienda que la DG ECHO intente configurar la agenda humanitaria y llamar la atención sobre las necesidades de realizar intervenciones en los entornos urbanos. Debería comenzar adquiriendo conocimientos específicos institucionales sobre sus intervenciones en entornos urbanos en la región concretamente en el ámbito de la Protección. Ello podría proporcionar a la DG ECHO una ventaja para abordar las próximas tendencias humanitarias y demostrar liderazgo. Para conseguirlo, los recursos de la DG ECHO deberían incrementarse con vistas a abordar las necesidades humanitarias urbanas al mismo tiempo que se mantiene la cartera rural.	C5 C6
R8: Considerar un incremento en la financiación para apoyar contextos urbanos. Además del papel de defensa citado en la recomendación 7 de arriba, la evaluación también recomienda que la DG ECHO considere un incremento de su cartera de actividades en zonas urbanas, al tiempo que mantiene su apoyo básico en las zonas rurales. La evaluación recomienda que la DG ECHO considere todo el abanico de enfoques potenciales, incluidos, como punto de partida: explorar un enfoque sectorial de Protección en contextos urbanos; aprender de las buenas prácticas existentes a la hora de proporcionar apoyo humanitario en entornos urbanos; y facilitar el debate sobre el uso de enfoques "cash & voucher".	C5
R9: La DG ECHO debería comprometerse en futuras intervenciones sobre Protección en los entornos urbanos. La DG ECHO debería esforzarse por abordar las necesidades de protección en los entornos urbanos de las víctimas excluidas por la Ley de Víctimas, especialmente los niños y los jóvenes. Debería hacerlo creando espacios humanitarios alternativos y reforzando las llamadas "Rutas de Atención o Protección". Debería basar geográficamente sus intervenciones en criterios relevantes que midan las consecuencias humanitarias de la violencia urbana.	C5
Mejorar las acciones de la DG ECHO en torno a las necesidades humanitarias de los grupos vulnerables:	
R10: Continuar defendiendo el enfoque de apoyo comunitario/de vecindario a las necesidades básicas. Tal y como se ha señalado en EQ3 y EQ5, las intervenciones de la DG ECHO en entornos urbanos utilizaron un <i>enfoque comunitario de apoyo a las necesidades básicas</i> que se había demostrado satisfactorio para prevenir una mayor discriminación y que permitía la identificación de casos de Protección entre grupos vulnerables, incluidos en particular los niños y los adolescentes en riesgo de reclutamiento forzado o abuso. La evaluación recomienda que se continúe con este enfoque y se tome como prioritario en el futuro apoyo en contextos urbanos en los casos apropiados.	C5
R11: La DG ECHO debería continuar a animar a las contrapartes ejecutantes a tener un enfoque diferenciado para con los grupos vulnerables: los riesgos específicos de discriminación afectan a los grupos vulnerables, particularmente en contextos urbanos. Por ello, la evaluación recomienda que la DG ECHO continúe a apoyar a sus contrapartes ejecutantes en el diseño de intervenciones que permitan un enfoque diferenciado a las comunidades indígenas, afrocolombianas, las mujeres, los mayores de edad y discapacitados, con vistas a no reproducir los esquemas de discriminación y exclusión.	C6

1. Introduction

This document is the Draft Final Report of the “*Evaluation of European Union’s Humanitarian activities in Colombia*”, commissioned by the Policy and Implementation Frameworks Unit of the Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection –DG ECHO.

1.1 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The **subject** of this evaluation is DG ECHO’s activities in Colombia.

The **objectives** of this evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- To provide an **overall independent assessment** of DG ECHO’s humanitarian actions in Colombia, using the different OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and other criteria mentioned in the ToR such as the 3Cs, the 23 Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship⁴;
- To provide **practical and operational recommendations** for future assessments and actions.

In terms of **scope**, the evaluation covers the following:

- *thematic scope*: DG ECHO’s humanitarian actions at both strategic and intervention levels;
- *geographical scope*: mainly Colombia, even though the field phase will also include a trip to Ecuador to address the issue of refugees and asylum seekers; *and*
- *temporal scope*: from 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2012, with a special emphasis on the last three years (2010-2012).

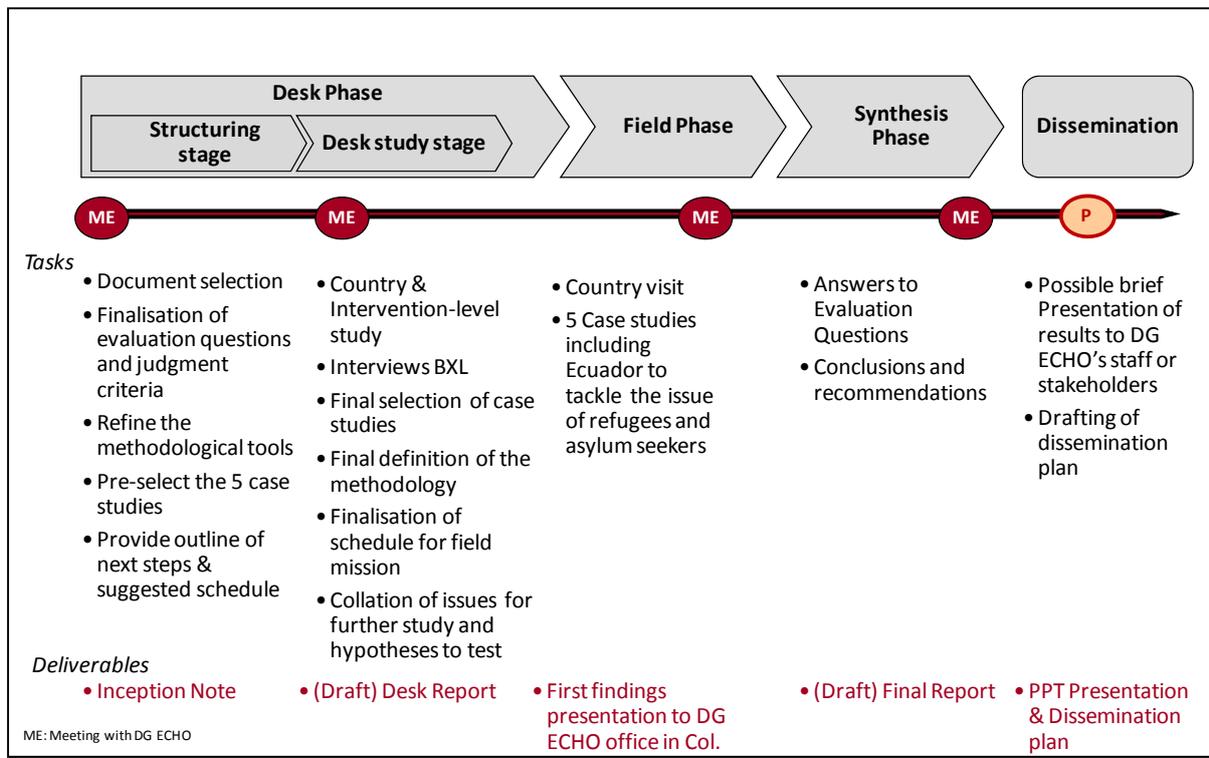
1.2 The overall evaluation process

The overall evaluation process was based on a transparent communication approach involving DG ECHO, the office of DG ECHO and the EU Delegation in Colombia and the implementing partners of DG ECHO. It was structured in four main **phases** as summarised in the figure below.

The figure presents the **activities** undertaken in the different phases; the **meetings** held with DG ECHO in Brussels and Bogotá; and the various **deliverables** produced at the different stages.

⁴ DG DG ECHO, *Terms of Reference – Evaluation of European Commission’s Humanitarian Activities in Colombia*, 2012, p. 6.

Figure 1 - Evaluation phases



1.3 The Draft Final Report

This draft final report is **structured** as follows:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction:** this chapter briefly presented the framework of this evaluation, the mandate and scope of the evaluation, and the key evaluation stages;
- **Chapter 2: Context and EU's humanitarian support to Colombia:** this chapter describes the socio-political context in Colombia and DG ECHO's approach to tackling humanitarian needs related to the scope of the evaluation;
- **Chapter 3: Methodology:** this chapter details the methodological approach, the tools and the sources of information used during the evaluation, and the limitations of the analysis;
- **Chapter 4: Answers to the Evaluation Questions:** this Chapter presents, for each of the seven EQs, a summary box and the detailed answer;
- **Chapter 5: Conclusions** of the evaluation; *and*
- **Chapter 6: Recommendations** from the evaluation.

2. Context and DG ECHO's humanitarian support to Colombia

This chapter provides a descriptive overview of the evolving country context, the humanitarian needs and the EU's humanitarian support provided over the evaluation period. It is structured as follows:

- Section 2.1 presents a concise overview of the evolving **country context** including:
 - **conflict dynamics;**
 - occurrence of **natural disasters;** *and*
 - the **legal and institutional responses.**
- Section 2.2 presents the **humanitarian needs** and the **assistance delivered by DG ECHO.**

2.1 The evolving country context

The context of humanitarian support to Colombia evolved significantly over the evaluation period. Notable changes to the conflict dynamics driving the country's decades-long period of violence occurred over the evaluation period, starting with the Consolidation Plan launched by President Uribe in 2007, and continuing through 2007-2012 with the rise of new conflict participants and sources. Serious flooding occurred in 2007 and 2010, creating a sudden and unexpected humanitarian need in the country. In addition the legal and institutional changes that followed the passing of the Victim's Law in 2010 had significant implications for the humanitarian response to internally displaced persons and other victims of the conflict.

This section provides a brief overview of these trends so as to contextualize the evaluation's analysis of the humanitarian needs and DG ECHO's response to them.

2.1.1 Overview

Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world. The Global Peace Index 2012 rankings place Colombia in a comparable position to Yemen and Chad in 2012.⁵ Despite certain improvements in security and a significant drop in homicide rates (from 64 per year per 100,000 inhabitants to 33 in 2011), violence is still a massive phenomenon in both rural and urban contexts. As described briefly in section 2.1.2. below, Colombia's violence stems from a long and complex conflict, with multiple actors and shifting dynamics.

Colombia is also prone to natural disasters, notably hydro-meteorological events. Heavy flooding occurred on two occasions during the evaluation period – in 2007 and late

⁵ Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace Index 2012. <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2012-GPI-Map-with-Rankings-and-Scores.pdf>

2010. As outlined in the following section, this creates a humanitarian need in its own right, as well as compounding the humanitarian impacts of the conflict.

The legal and institutional framework has changed significantly during the evaluation period. Since Juan Manuel Santos took over as president in August 2010, important reforms were initiated to improve the GoC's response to the longstanding humanitarian challenges that the country faces. This improvement has not yet materialised as the new institutions are still in a transition period. As explained in section 2.1.2. below, the evaluation has given extra weighting to the most recent years of the evaluation period in order to take into consideration this changing context and what it has implied or will imply for the European Union's humanitarian assistance in Colombia.

2.1.2 The evolving conflict and the occurrence of natural disasters

The Colombian crisis is characterised by a more complex and changing set of conflict dynamics than is sometimes recognised. Key elements in the conflict include:

- **A long history of conflict:** the violence in Colombia has its roots in the so-called violence decade of 1948-1958. Since that time the conflict has passed through several distinct phases, but the level of violence has remained high.
- **A wide range of conflict actors:** the major actors include the guerrilla groups that emerged in the 1960s, the paramilitary groups that began to oppose them in the 1980s, and finally the BACRIMs that formed in the mid-2000s following the demobilisation of the paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), between 2003 and 2006.⁶ In addition these groups have developed ambivalent relationships among themselves. While they may be in opposition in one region, they may "divide" the territory in another or even establish working relations - for example to deal in drugs - in yet another context.
- **Shifting conflict dynamics:** Following the Consolidation Plan launched by President Uribe in 2007 to expand State control over the territory, the traditional conflict against the FARC has moved further to the South. The guerrillas have retreated to mountainous areas that are less accessible but at the same time they have increasingly relied on hit-and-run raids with strong impact on civilians. While between 2008 and 2011 BACRIMs were those responsible for most of the unilateral violent acts, in 2011 the pattern was reversed and the FARC was again responsible for most of these acts.⁷ In addition, the conflict is still intense at the borders.
- **Changing conflict sources:** the conflict in Colombia is no longer fueled exclusively by drugs. With the global economic crisis, the price of gold and other minerals have drastically increased and they have now become another source of funding for the conflict.⁸ This also means that the conflict has intensified in these mining regions.⁹

⁶ While establishment of a link between the former paramilitaries and the BACRIMs used to be contested (hence the use of the term «BACRIM» criminal gangs as opposed to neo-paramilitaries), this link is now established by a majority of analysts and academics in Colombia. See Restrepo, Jorge et al., "Paramilitarismo: la amenaza sigue viva", *Razón Pública*, 7 March 2011; International Crisis Group, "Dismantling Colombia's New Illegal Armed Groups: Lessons from a Surrender", *Latin American Report* n°41, June 2012.

⁷ Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (CERAC), Database Colombian Armed Conflict V11.3 preliminary information subject to revisión and actualisation.

⁸ Evaluation team interview, ICRC, Cali, 8 August 2012.

Colombia is also prone to natural disasters, particularly hydro-meteorological events. Heavy flooding occurred in 2007 and late 2010. In the latter case of the La Niña phenomenon, more than 3.2 million people were affected, 1.35 million hectares of agricultural land were flooded, and thousands of roads were damaged.¹⁰ As well as exacerbating the humanitarian implications of the conflict, the flood created acute additional problems including a need for food and non-food emergency aid, provision of primary health care and access to safe water and sanitation (see below).

2.1.3 Legal and institutional responses

Since Juan Manuel Santos took over as president in **August 2010** important reforms have been initiated in order to improve the GoC's response to the longstanding humanitarian challenges that the country faces. **The State finally recognized that Colombia has an "internal armed conflict" and also acknowledged the responsibility of the State in part of the victimization.** In June 2011 a law was passed to compensate victims of civil conflict and to return land to millions of displaced people. In addition the GoC implemented important institutional reforms such as the establishment of a new office for coordination of international aid at a high hierarchical level (APC); the dissolution of Acción Social that used to be responsible for attending IDPs but which had many other responsibilities; and creation of a new institutional framework for implementing the Victims Law, that is the Victims Unit which depends on a new and empowered Department for Social Prosperity. A Risk Management Unit was also created to address emergencies in the event of natural disasters. The GoC has coupled these legal and institutional measures with significant financial efforts: with an estimated total €200 million per year at present, it is now 15 times as great as the average annual DG ECHO budget for Colombia.¹¹

These are important changes and yet, as described in this report, they have not yet impacted on IDPs and other victims of the conflict. One explanation is that these legal and institutional reforms have undermined, at least in the short-term, the capacity of the Colombian State to provide humanitarian assistance. The new Victims Law requires that local authorities be responsible for assisting IDPs during the first 90 days of displacement and this has laid a considerable administrative burden on UAOs which have had problems registering and coping with the flow of IDPs. In October 2011, the Constitutional Court upheld its 2004 ruling that the government's response to internal displacement amounted to an "unconstitutional state of affairs."¹² The Court ordered the government to adopt a wide range of measures and report on their implementation and outcomes. A congressional commission monitors implementation of the Victims Law, and there are discussions on the role of local governments and the restrictive conception of who should be considered a victim. Currently victims of the BACRIMs cannot benefit from the Victims Law.

⁹ Comparison made by CODHES between the map of mining regions in Colombia and the map of the municipalities that have expelled most people per 100 inhabitants in 2010. CODHES, "¿Consolidación de Qué?" Boletín Informativo n°77, Bogotá, 15 February 2011, Annexes 2 and 4.

¹⁰ Refugees International, Colombia: Flood Response Improves, But Challenges Remain, March 2012. <http://refugeesinternational.org/policy/field-report/colombia-flood-response-improves-challenges-remain>

¹¹ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

¹² Constitutional Court of Colombia, Auto 219, 13 October 2011.

Another important political change following the election of President Santos was the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Colombia and its neighbouring countries Ecuador and Venezuela both of whom receive large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees.

The evaluation has therefore put extra emphasis on the most recent years of the evaluation period so as to take into consideration this changing context and what it has implied or will imply for the European Union's humanitarian assistance in Colombia.

2.2 Humanitarian needs and assistance delivered by DG ECHO

2.2.1 Humanitarian needs

The violence has led to both forced displacement and confinement. **Forced displacement** here includes both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers and refugees from Colombia in neighbouring countries. According to different sources the IDPs account for between 3.9 million people (estimates from the Colombian government) and 5.2 million (Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy estimate). A disproportionate number of IDPs are either Afro-Colombians or indigenous people.¹³ Asylum requests in neighbouring Ecuador averaged almost 1,400 per month in the first six months of 2011.¹⁴ **Confinement** denotes the restriction of mobility and of access to goods and services in urban and rural areas resulting from restrictions imposed by armed groups and the widespread use of landmines. OCHA estimates that 30,000 people were affected by restrictions on goods, services and mobility in Colombia in 2010.¹⁵ Another phenomenon linked to the armed conflict and gaining importance is the **recruitment of children**. While it is difficult to have a real estimate of the number of children involved,¹⁶ there is evidence that the average age of recruitment is decreasing from 13.8 years in 2001 to 12.8 in 2005, and 11.8 in 2010¹⁷.

The most pressing acute humanitarian needs stemming from the conflict and natural disasters in Colombia are:¹⁸

- **Protection** : ensuring the physical security of the civilian populations affected by the conflict, as well as preparing for future displacements and raising awareness of weapon contamination¹⁹;

¹³ United Nations Information Centre, "A refugee in their own country: the fate of the Colombian IDPs", 2012. <http://www.unric.org/en/colombia/27002-a-refugee-in-their-own-country-the-fate-of-the-colombian-idps>

¹⁴ (European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

¹⁵ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

¹⁶ According to a 2005 estimate done by Human Rights Watch, more than 11.000 children are recruited as soldiers in Colombia. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2005/02/21/colombia-armed-groups-send-children-war>

¹⁷ Constitutional Court of Colombia, Auto 251, 6 October 2008 quoting UNICEF- Defensoría del Pueblo Bulletin n°8 "La niñez y sus derechos: la niñez en el conflicto armado colombiano", 2002 and Bulletin n°9 "Caracterización de las niñas, los niños y los adolescentes desvinculados de los grupos armados ilegales: inserción social y productiva desde un enfoque de derechos humanos.", 2006; International Crisis Group, "Mejorar la política de seguridad en Colombia", Latin American Report n°23, June 2010.

¹⁸ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

¹⁹ Protection was cited as the primary humanitarian need in Colombia by respondents to the DG ECHO survey of international humanitarian organisations conducted in August 2011.

- **Emergency food and non-food assistance** : the need to provide food, shelter and basic household items to newly-displaced populations;
- **Primary health care provision** : coverage of the health system is incomplete, with rural and displaced populations suffering particularly poor access;
- **Access to safe water and sanitation**: newly-displaced populations suffer poor access to drinkable water and sufficient sanitation²⁰, whilst maintenance of sanitation systems in rural areas is also impeded by confinement.

2.2.2 Assistance delivered by DG ECHO

DG ECHO is a significant player in the international humanitarian response in Colombia and has been active in Colombia since 1994. Total DG ECHO assistance between 1994 and 2011 amounts to €160m²¹, with an average of 160,000 people assisted annually under the DG ECHO Global Plans for Colombia²². Annual contributions have been on an increasing trend between 1994 and 2012, starting from a contribution of €2.3m in 1994²³ to an indicative allocation of €12m under the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) for 2012. Over the evaluation period 2007-2012, the HIP budgets for Colombia have averaged €12m.²⁴ These contributions make DG ECHO the biggest international donor of humanitarian aid over the evaluation period.²⁵

DG ECHO's implementation plans over the 2007-2012 period reflect the four areas of acute humanitarian need outlined above, namely protection of civilian populations; emergency food and non-food aid; primary health care provision; and access to water, sanitation and hygiene.²⁶

In addition to these four sectoral areas of engagement, DG ECHO's **annual HIPs over the period 2010-2012 have consistently outlined the following priority criteria for engagement**:²⁷

- Newly-displaced populations (i.e. those displaced within 12 months prior to aid delivery)
- Inaccessible or hard-to-reach communities, including but not limited to confined populations

²⁰ The III National Verification Survey in 2010 reported that 90% of the IDP population live below minimum dignity levels regarding sanitation provision. (III National Verification Survey conducted in 2010).

²¹ European Commission, "EU Humanitarian aid in Colombia", 2012, downloaded on 23/04/12 from http://ec.europa.eu/DG_ECHO/aid/central_south_america/colombia_en.htm

²² European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

²³ European Commission, "EU Humanitarian aid in Colombia", 2012, downloaded on 23/04/12 from http://ec.europa.eu/DG_ECHO/aid/central_south_america/colombia_en.htm

²⁴ Ibid.€13.34 including DIPECHO and response to natural disasters.

²⁵ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking System, 2008-2012.

²⁶ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP) Colombia, 2007-2012

²⁷ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP) Colombia, 2010-2012. It should be noted that in 2010 and 2007, DG ECHO supplemented these criteria with a specific response plan to the flooding experienced in Colombia in those years. Basic emergency assistance, specifically including food assistance, water and sanitation, temporary shelter, Emergency Relief Items, and Primary Health Care were prioritised. (DG ECHO/COL/BUD/2010/01000 : « Commission decision on the financing of emergency humanitarian actions in Colombia from the general budget of the European Union »)

- Colombian asylum seekers and refugees in neighbouring countries
- Populations affected by natural disasters, notably the 2010 flooding in the most affected areas (Bolívar, Magdalena, Córdoba, Chocó, Sucre, Antioquia and Atlántico)²⁸
- Coordination with local and national bodies as a step towards exit or handover strategies, and avoiding substitution for government activities
- Assistance to the most vulnerable demographic groups, namely women, children, elderly people as well as ethnic groups (indigenous and Afro-Colombian population)

The inclusion of coordination with local and national bodies in recent HIPs is of particular importance in the perspective of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).²⁹

²⁸ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2010.

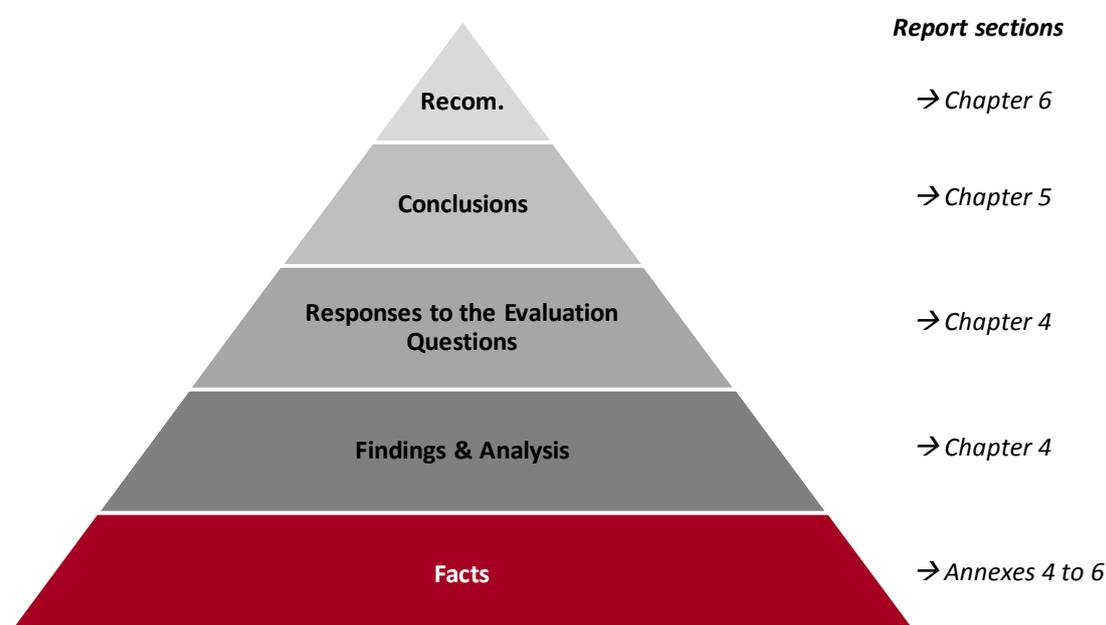
²⁹ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2012.

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the evaluation methodology, in particular (i) the evaluation approach; (ii) the tools and sources of information used; and (iii) the challenges and limitations of the exercise.

The whole exercise can be illustrated by the pyramid below. The sources of information described in this chapter provide the factual basis for the analysis, the responses to the Evaluation Questions, and ultimately the drafting of the Conclusions and Recommendations. Each stage of the exercise corresponds to a section of this Draft Final Report as indicated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Pyramid of the evaluation exercise



3.1 Structured evaluation approach

The structured sequence of the evaluation process was primarily based on the Joint Evaluation Unit's methodological framework.³⁰ The specific methodological tools used to collect data, such as the focus groups, are furthermore in line with the Joint Evaluation Unit's evaluation tools³¹ (described in section 3.2).

³⁰ European Commission, *Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance – Methodological Bases for Evaluation (volume 1)*, 2006, and updates on the Joint Evaluation Unit's website.

³¹ European Commission, *Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance – Evaluation Tools (volume 4)*, 2006.

3.1.1 The intervention logic

The intervention logic, presented in Figure 3 overleaf, is a schematic representation of the European Union's humanitarian activities in Colombia over the period January 2007 to June 2012. It has been reconstructed on the basis of several Commission communications and strategy documents on humanitarian aid, published prior to and during the evaluation period. Key documents used in this regard include:

- The European Council Regulation 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, the Commission COM(2007) 317 "Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid",
- The European Commission's Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Colombia 2007-2012 and the COM (2001) 153 "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development – An Assessment",
- The Evaluation of DG ECHO's 2001 Intervention Plan in Colombia – Assessment of DG ECHO's Future Strategy in Colombia (2002).

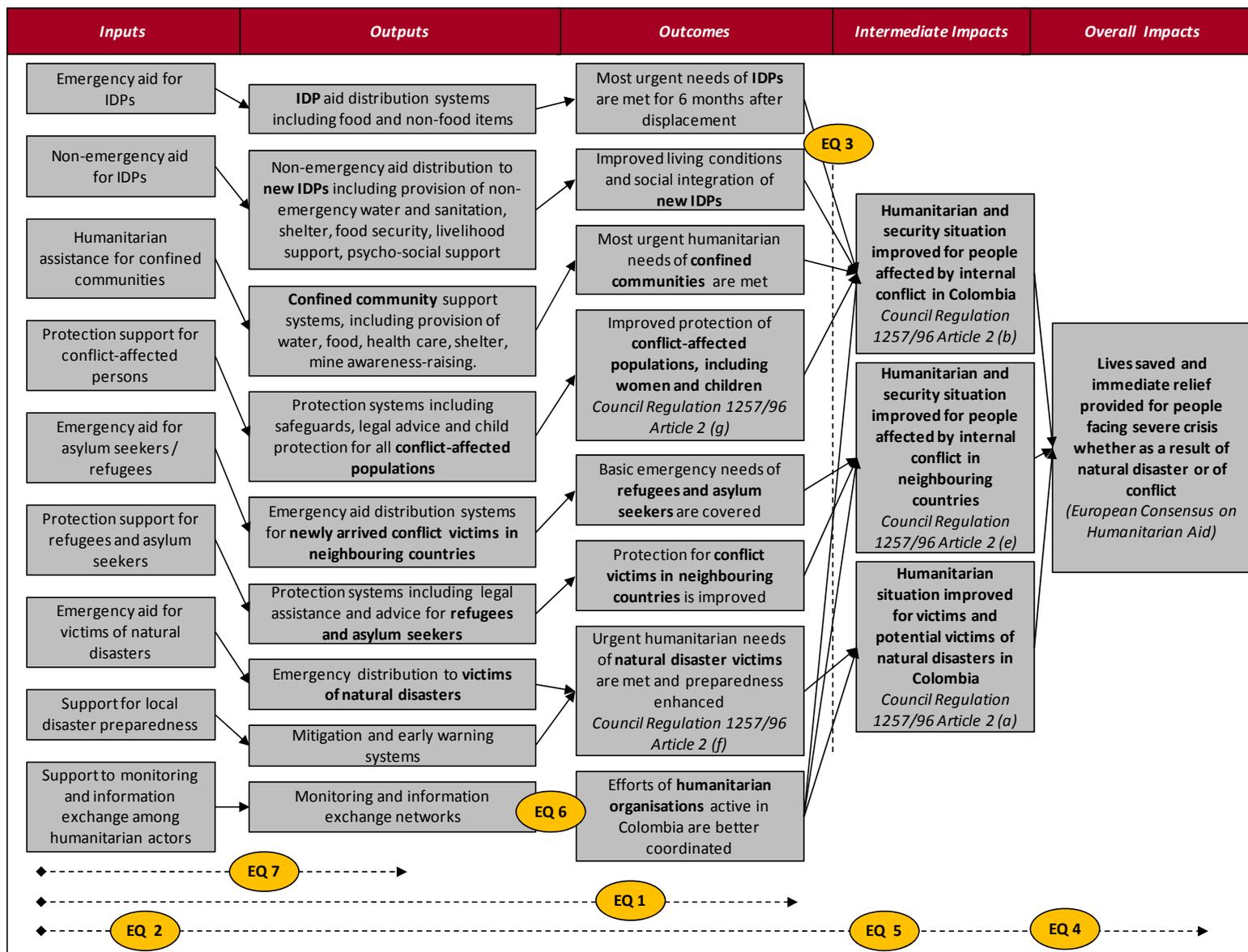
The ALNAP guide "Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria (2006)" was also used to aid the structuring of the intervention logic.

The intervention logic is presented in the form of an expected impact diagram. It differentiates five different levels:

- Commission inputs (e.g. emergency aid);
- Intended outputs (e.g. aid distribution systems);
- Intended outcomes (e.g. most urgent needs of IDPs met);
- Intermediate impacts on the target populations in Colombia (e.g. humanitarian situation for conflict-affected population improved);
- Intended overall impacts on the humanitarian situation in Colombia, in line with the objectives of Commission humanitarian activities as stated in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

In addition, the figure highlights the level at which the EQs are pitched within the intervention logic.

Figure 3 - Intervention Logic



3.1.2 The set of Evaluation Questions

The Evaluation Questions (EQ), the related Judgment Criteria (JC) and their respective indicators (I), aim at addressing the key issues with respect to the European Union's humanitarian activities in Colombia. They are derived from the intervention logic and the analysis of the main Commission policies and international policy documents relating to humanitarian assistance conducted during the Inception Phase. Table 1 lists the set of EQs which are further detailed thereafter.

Table 1 - Overview of the Evaluation Questions

EQ 1	Relevance, Coverage	To what extent did DG ECHO's humanitarian support in Colombia address the needs of the affected population in a timely manner?
EQ 2	Relevance	How have the needs of the affected populations evolved during the period covered by the present evaluation and how far are prior needs assessments valid in the light of the current situation?
EQ 3	Effectiveness, Impact	To what extent did the humanitarian activities in Colombia help people to meet their basic needs and regain a minimum of self-sufficiency?
EQ 4	Effectiveness, Connectedness, Impact	To what extent were conditions conducive for an effective LRRD? What were the main challenges/achievements?
EQ 5	Relevance, Added-value	Is DG ECHO an appropriate donor to address humanitarian consequences emerging from urban violent context in Colombia? Considering DG ECHO's mandate and timeframes, what would be DG ECHO's added value?
EQ 6	Coordination, Complementarity and Coherence (3Cs)	To what extent were DG ECHO's humanitarian activities complementary and coherent with actions of other humanitarian actors and stakeholders?
EQ 7	Efficiency	What were the major factors having an impact on the efficiency of the delivery of DG ECHO's humanitarian assistance in the country?

The proposed set of seven EQs allows coverage of the main dimensions of the European Union's intended strategy and actions in terms of humanitarian assistance to Colombia. They were developed with a view to **limiting the scope of the evaluation so as to focus the analysis on the issues deemed to be most helpful to the Commission** in developing its humanitarian assistance and programming. In this respect, EQ5 is a non-traditional EQ in the sense that it is partly future-oriented and was added to help DG ECHO in its current reflection on intervention in urban settings. The EQs also cover the different evaluation criteria defined by the evaluation terms of reference.

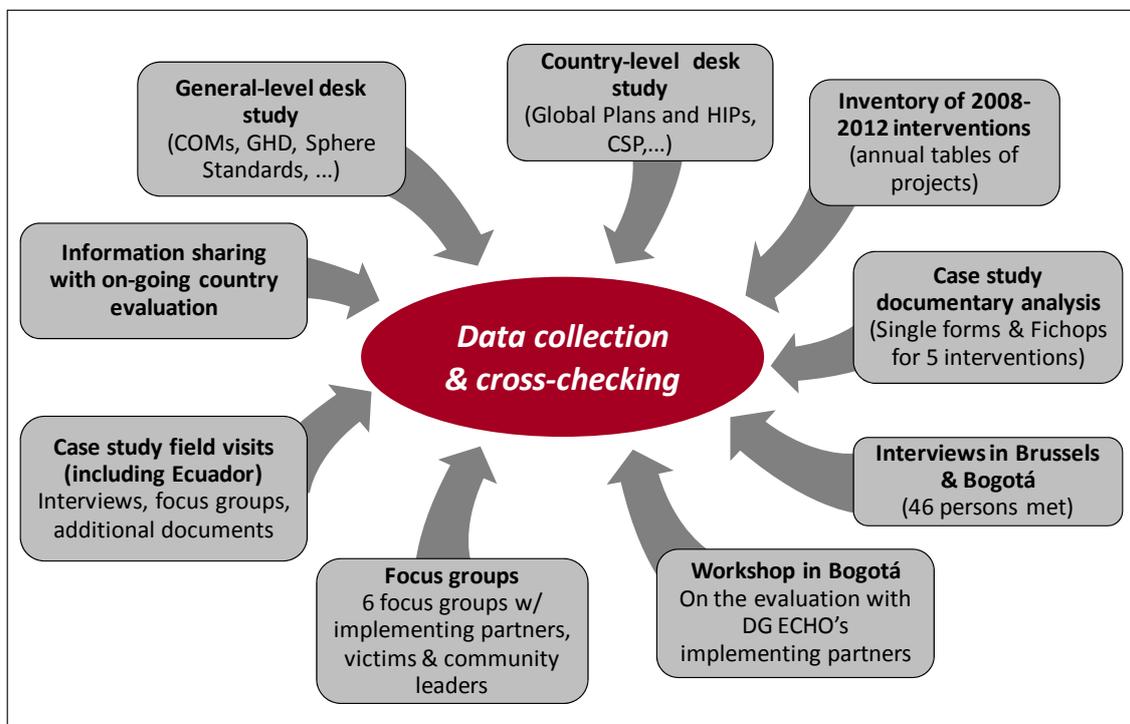
3.2 Tools and information sources

Once the structuring phase was completed, information or facts were collected by the evaluation team through specific evaluation tools. This was carried out in the data collection stage which was divided into Desk and Field phases.

Given the thematic scope of the evaluation, tools were chosen in order to ensure that the combination would yield the requisite facts at both strategic and interventions levels. Moreover, the tools used had to **allow verification and cross-checking** of the information collected. For example, the documentary analysis of the five study cases was completed and cross-checked with the field missions undertaken in each region where the interventions took place (see section 3.2.1 below on case studies).

The toolbox used for this evaluation is schematically represented in the figure below. Further details for each tool are then provided.

Figure 4 – Main information sources and tools



- **General-level Desk Study:** the evaluators screened general-level strategy and operational documents relevant to EU's humanitarian assistance.
- **Country-level Desk Study:** the evaluators screened the EU's strategy documents for Colombia and compiled the statistical data – number of interventions, number of beneficiaries, and budget - contained in the annual project tables (*Cuadro Proyecto Plan Global*).
- **Inventory of 2008-2012 interventions:** the evaluators collated information from the annual project tables for Colombia over the evaluation period.
- **Case study documentary analysis:** the evaluators conducted specific desk analysis of documents relating to the five case studies selected for the evaluation (see Table 2 below), including the Single Forms and Fichops.
- **Interviews in Brussels and Bogotá:** semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders including staff from DG ECHO, the EEAS, the EU Delegation, implementing partners, and representatives of the GoC (see Annex 5 for a more comprehensive list of persons met).

- **Workshop in Bogotá:** this workshop, which lasted half a day and was attended by 20 implementing partners, was organised with the double objective of informing implementing partners about the evaluation and collecting information from them.
- **Focus groups:** based on the guidelines of the European Commission's Joint Evaluation Unit, six focus groups were conducted in Bogotá and during the field visits. The evaluators used the focus groups to fill in information gaps and hence decided to conduct them with homogenous groups of stakeholders (as opposed to groups involving diverging points of view).
- **Case study field visits:** the evaluation team conducted field visits to ten destinations in order to cover the five selected case studies (see map under Figure 4). Field visits lasted on average four days and involved interviews with implementing partners and project beneficiaries.
- **Information from on-going country evaluation:** this information was collected through a phone interview with the team leader of the country evaluation and a sharing of the field mission's debriefing presentation.

3.2.1 The case studies

As mentioned in the European Commission's methods on evaluation tools, a case study is to provide a *"picture which is often more reliable than the outputs from other tools in context of scarcity of basic data (which is often the case in country evaluations)"*³² In the context of this evaluation, five case studies were selected for the purpose of collecting concrete information and also ensuring consistent focus for both the Desk and Field Phases.

Figure 5 – Locations visited for the five case studies



³² European Commission, *Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance – Evaluation Tools (volume 4)*, 2006, p.80.

A balance had to be found when selecting these case studies, in order to meet a variety of criteria that can be summarized as follows:

- Illustrating the « three families » with which DG ECHO works, i.e. the UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs;
- Covering different regions;
- Covering different sectors of intervention (protection, IDPs, food security, ...)
- Striking a balance between rural and urban interventions

The table below describes the sector and implementing partner coverage of the selected case studies:

Table 2 - Sector and implementing partner coverage of selected case studies

Pre-selected by the team for case study	Sector coverage	Implementing organisation coverage
Cordoba - FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food security ▪ Restoration of livelihoods ▪ Productive assets of communities 	UN Agencies
Various regions in Colombia - ICRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IDPs ▪ Coverage of basic needs and access to essential services ▪ Restoring livelihoods ▪ International humanitarian law (IHL). 	International Committee of the Red Cross
Medellin - Save the Children UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forced recruitment ▪ Urban violence ▪ Community-based Protection Systems ▪ Education 	NGO
Costa Pacifica - Solidaridad Internacional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection ▪ Indigenous, afro-descendants and vulnerable population 	NGO
Ecuador - UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Persons in Need of International Protection (PINP) in Ecuador". ▪ International Protection Regime ▪ Humanitarian assistance and reception conditions 	UN Agencies

A brief snapshot of the five case study interventions, including for each intervention its description, objective, regional coverage, start date and duration, is presented below. It should be specified that these five case studies were analysed in detail during the desk phase. During the field phase the team did not limit itself to these interventions and visited operations that were both finalised and ongoing. This approach was all the more relevant insofar as in some cases project funding had been renewed.

#1	FAO in Cordoba
Project description	<i>"Emergency support to internally displaced persons and vulnerable people affected by violence in the southern region of the department of Cordoba"</i>
Specific objective	Reduce the food insecurity and contribute to the restoration of livelihoods and productive assets of communities affected by violence in the southern region of Cordoba (Tierralta, La Apartada, Puerto Libertador and Montelibano).
Regional coverage	Department of Cordoba – Municipalities of Montelibano, La Apartada, Tierralta, and Puerto Libertador.
Start date	15 August 2010
Duration	9.5 months (originally planned for 8.5 months)
Additional comments	Monteria was visited as it hosts the FAO local Office and the department authorities. The team visited the two municipalities of Montelibano and Puerto Libertador .

#2	ICRC in various regions in Colombia
Project description	<i>"ICRC economic security and protection activities in Colombia"</i>
Specific objective	IDPs are able to cover their basic needs and have access to essential services to help restore their livelihoods; all parties to the conflict have progressed in their acceptance of and respect for international humanitarian law (IHL).
Regional coverage	Assistance to internally displaced people is delivered in 11 cities of Colombia where the ICRC has offices.
Start date	1 February 2010
Duration	11 months
Additional comments	Cali was visited as it hosts a Sub-delegation Office of the ICRC. The team visited the two municipalities of Jambaló and Toribío .

#3	Save the Children UK in Medellin
Project description	<i>"Preventing forced recruitment of children by illegal armed actors: Saving Lives, Saving Children!"</i>
Specific objective	Save the Children will work to improve the enrolment and permanence of children at school as the Save the Children experience (both globally and in Colombia) has shown that education is an effective method to prevent forced recruitment. Save the Children will work to create a protection network or community system that is adequately linked to the state protection system.
Regional coverage	City of Medellin ; Comuna: 1 (Popular) and 8 (Villa Hermosa)
Start date	1 August 2010
Duration	12 months

#4	Solidaridad Internacional in the Costa Pacífica
Project description	<i>"Protection and humanitarian assistance to indigeneous, afro-descendants and vulnerable population, affected by the armed conflict in the departments of Nariño and Valle del Cauca"</i>
Specific objective	Access will have been facilitated to humanitarian assistance and institutional care for populations affected by conflict in the territories of ethnic communities in Valle del Cauca and Nariño.
Regional coverage	Valle del Cauca and Nariño.
Start date	1 July 2010
Duration	12 months
Additional comments	Tumaco was selected for its proximity to Ecuador.

#5	UNHCR in Ecuador
Project description	<i>"Protection and durable solutions for persons in Need of International Protection (PINP) in Ecuador"</i>
Specific objective	To strengthen the international protection regime, provide humanitarian assistance and improve the reception conditions for persons in need of international protection (PNIP) in Ecuador.
Regional coverage	Ecuador: Provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura, Carchi, Pichincha, Santo Domingo, Sucumbios, Azuay, Orellana. The provinces are the recipients of the majority of Colombian refugees who look for a better life in the southern country.
Start date	1 July 2010
Duration	12 months
Additional comments	The team visited the UNHCR Office in Quito and travelled to the province of Sucumbios .

3.3 Challenges and limitations

The evaluation faced a number of challenges relating to the specific evaluation tools, the security context in Colombia, and the delivery timeframe. The following text outlines in turn each of these challenges and the response of the evaluation team.

First, the specific tools used for the evaluation presented their own challenges and limitations. As a rule the evaluation team sought to overcome any weaknesses of the evaluation tools by cross-checking information gathered from any one source against the findings from other evaluation sources, as described in Figure 4 above. Nevertheless specific challenges were posed by the use of case studies and focus group tools, both of which played an important role in the evaluation. The case studies provided the evaluation with a source of richly contextualised qualitative information on which to draw when seeking to understand the logic and rationale of engagements in Colombia. Nevertheless, information gathered from case studies cannot be generalised across all operations without careful consideration and cross-checking, and does not permit quantitative statistical interpretation. The evaluation team sought to overcome this limitation by using the case studies as illustrative contextualisers for information drawn from other sources rather than drawing generalised conclusions from the case studies as such. The focus groups were used to enlarge the reference sample by including different beneficiary groups, as well as to look for deeper explanations of and justification for strategic choices presented in the project documentation. However, the information gathered from focus groups remains qualitative in nature and subject to the opinions of the beneficiaries involved. The evaluation team sought to overcome this limitation by cross-checking information from focus groups against the documentary analysis and case study results during the evaluation synthesis phase.

Second, the security situation in Colombia presented a particular challenge during the field phase of the evaluation, with the potential of making any one of the evaluation's case studies too dangerous to complete. To prepare the team for the security risks and allow swift adaptation to any rapid change in security levels, the team underwent a specific security briefing at DG ECHO headquarters in Brussels prior to the launch of the field mission and then maintained close communication with DG ECHO throughout the field phase. In the event the team was able to conduct each of the case studies in full and without incident.

Finally, the short timeframe of the evaluation presented the team with a specific challenge in respect of information gathering, field mission logistics and synthesis of the findings. The evaluation team sought to overcome this challenge by close cooperation with the reference group during the inception phase, ensuring that time constraints were anticipated clearly during the desk, field and synthesis phases of the evaluation.

4. Answers to the evaluation questions

This chapter presents the answers to the seven Evaluation Questions. Three different levels have been used, providing three levels of presentation:

- **Answers** to each Evaluation Question (EQ) in the form of **summary boxes**;
- **Findings and analysis** on which each answer is based, as provided in the remainder of the text with indications of the Judgement Criteria (JCs) on which they are based.
- **Facts** on which the findings are based, as provided in the Data Collection Grids for general-level and case study data collection. (in Annex 4). They consist of specific information on assessment at the level of the Indicators (I) under the EQs and JCs to which the different sections of this chapter refer. In addition, statistical information on projects (Annex 6) is directly provided in each EQ where relevant.

Evaluation Question 1 on ECHO's timely response to the needs of the affected population

To what extent did the Commission's humanitarian support in Colombia address the needs of the affected population in a timely manner?

The Commission's humanitarian strategy in Colombia is expressed by the Commission's Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) in Colombia (2007-2012), as a focus on the following priority criteria for engagement: newly-displaced populations; inaccessible or hard to reach communities, including but not limited to confined populations; Colombian asylum seekers and refugees in neighbouring countries; populations affected by natural disasters, notably the 2010 flooding in the most affected areas (Bolívar, Magdalena, Córdoba, Chocó, Sucre, Antioquia and Atlántico)³³; coordination with local and national bodies as a step towards exit or handover strategies and to avoid substitution for government activities; assistance to the most vulnerable demographic groups, namely women, children, elderly people as well as ethnic groups (indigenous and Afro-Colombian population).

The question aims to evaluate ECHO's overall approach in terms of responding to the needs of the affected populations. This encompasses different aspects:

- *Addressing the needs of the affected population in a timely manner.*
- *Coverage of affected population, (in quantitative and qualitative terms), including an estimate of the affected population covered by each type of DG ECHO intervention, both in total and as a percentage of the total affected population. This will be done, on the basis of DG ECHO reporting documents and other relevant sources.*
- *Extent to which the level of funding was sufficient to address needs.*

EQ 1 on ECHO's timely response – Answer Summary Box

In line with the humanitarian needs in the country, DG ECHO responded to a diverse range of needs and target groups, namely: emergency and non-emergency needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs); protection and humanitarian needs of confined populations; protection of conflict-affected populations and refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries; and victims of natural disasters. The total levels of funding were broadly in line with programme targets and support was delivered in a timely manner.

DG ECHO's strategy targeted the most urgent needs of recently internally displaced persons (IDPs) in a timely manner and in accordance with SPHERE standards, with a targeted coverage of approximately 22% of the newly-displaced population. Evidence suggests that this emphasis was carried over to the operational level, with engagements successfully targeting these needs in a timely manner and working to mainstream SPHERE standards. In addition to emergency needs, DG ECHO also targeted improvements to the living conditions of IDPs with an average annual target coverage of 21% of the annual new IDP population. It should be noted that for the last two years of the evaluation period (2011 and 2012), DG ECHO has decided not to mention a specific target number of IDPs given the difficulties to have reliable figures on IDPs.

³³ European Commission, Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Colombia, 2010.

The needs of confined communities were also targeted, most notably in rural areas. Specific obstacles to reaching confined communities were addressed in some cases. DG ECHO's strategy and engagements also targeted the protection of conflict-affected persons throughout the evaluation period as well as the basic emergency needs of newly-arrived victims in Venezuela and in Ecuador. However, DG ECHO's assistance to refugees provided via UNCHR was largely limited to officially recognized PNIPs following a Government of Ecuador change of procedure aimed at narrowing its criteria for registration.

Finally, DG ECHO targeted both the urgent humanitarian needs arising from natural disasters via *ad hoc* budgeting decisions in response to particular emergencies, and also, to a limited extent, the consistent provision of support for disaster preparedness throughout the evaluation period. Significant funds were provided for humanitarian aid in Colombia which, the evidence suggests, were sufficient for the targeted objectives. DG ECHO's engagements were usually implemented in a timely manner.

The extent to which the most urgent needs of recent internally displaced persons for the first 6 months of displacement were targeted, in a timely manner and in accordance with SPHERE standards (JC 1.1)

DG ECHO's annual implementation plans included specific targeting of the emergency needs of newly internally displaced persons (IDPs), in line with SPHERE standards, and with a targeted coverage of approximately 22% of the newly-displaced population.

- Each of DG ECHO's Global Plans signed over the evaluation period included specific targeting of the emergency needs of newly-displaced populations for a period of six months following displacement³⁴, in addition to the longer-term needs also addressed by the Plans.
- The delineation of specific emergency needs was rather limited within the Global Plans, which provided an all-encompassing commitment to provide both food and non-food aid rather than a breakdown of support types. Nevertheless, specific reference was made to SPHERE standards and to the four core needs of WASH, food aid, shelter and emergency health provision.
- The targeted coverage rose from 50,000 persons in 2007 and 2008 to 80,000 in 2009 and 2010,³⁵ amounting to an average coverage of 22% of the annual population of 300,000 newly-displaced persons in Colombia.³⁶

³⁴ With the exception of the Global Plan 2007, which targeted the provision of emergency aid for three months following displacement.

³⁵ Disaggregated data for the most urgent needs of new IDPs (within six months of displacement) are not given in 2011 and 2012.

³⁶ The estimation of 300,000 displacements per year is presented in the *COMMISSION DECISION on the approval and financing of a Global Plan for humanitarian actions from the budget of the European Communities for people affected by the conflict and natural disasters in Colombia* (ECHO/-SM/BUD/2010/01000), 2010.

Evidence suggests that, over the evaluation period as a whole, DG ECHO engagements were successful in targeting these needs in a timely manner, whilst working to mainstream SPHERE standards.

- Some case study operations demonstrated timeliness in their response to emergency needs. The support implemented via ICRC in the Municipio of Toribío in Northern Cauca, for example, quickly addressed emergency shelter needs arising from the conflict between the FARC, the military and the police. Within eight days of an incident involving the bombing of a police station by FARC, ICRC contributed to the reconstruction of partially-destroyed houses.
- Some DG ECHO stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team noted that SPHERE standards are known by implementing partners and are used as a reference point at operational level. Moreover, stakeholders noted that specific initiatives had been taken to mainstream SPHERE standards, including the conduct of workshops and production of materials which have been taken up and used by other donors.

Final estimation of the coverage of newly-displaced persons is hampered by several factors, including constraints on estimating the total background population of IDPs. Indeed, the lack of a commonly-agreed definition of internally displaced persons, the presence of various unconsolidated IDP databases, and the under-registration of internally displaced persons, together precludes a consensus on the number of IDPs in the country.

The extent to which living conditions of IDPs were targeted, including the meeting of at least one basic need, in accordance with SPHERE standards (JC 1.2)

DG ECHO strategy targeted living conditions of IDPs throughout the evaluation period, in accordance with SPHERE standards, with an average annual target coverage of 21% of the annual newly-displaced population.

- DG ECHO's Global Plans and Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Colombia from 2007-2012 specifically targeted the meeting of at least one basic non-emergency need for the end-beneficiaries, as per SPHERE standards, in addition to the emergency needs outlined under JC1.1. above.
- Delineation of core non-emergency IDP needs to be addressed by DG ECHO operations during each annual programming cycle was provided in the Global Plans and Humanitarian Implementation Plans over the evaluation period, as illustrated in the table below:³⁷

³⁷ Adapted from European Commission, *Global Plan for Colombia, 2007-2010*; European Commission, *Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Colombia, 2011-2012*

Table 3 - DG ECHO targeting of IDP non-emergency needs in Colombia 2007-2012

IDP non-emergency needs	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Water & Sanitation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Improvement of shelter	X	X	X	X		
Access to health care	X	X	X		X	X
Psychosocial support	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food security	X	X	X	X		
Restarting basic livelihoods	X	X	X	X		
Target coverage (# IDPs)	80,000	80,000	50,000	40,000	Not given	Not given

Average targeted coverage diminished significantly over the evaluation period, with DG ECHO's emphasis moving to rural settings while a growing majority of IDPs and PNIPs moved to urban centres:

- As illustrated in the table above, the target IDP coverage diminishes over the evaluation period. No explicit rationale for this reduction is provided in the Global Plans. However, over the period for which target coverage figures are provided, namely 2007-2010, the average coverage is 62,500 IDPs on an annual basis. This amounts to 21% of the annual 300,000 estimated population of newly-displaced persons in Colombia.³⁸
- DG ECHO's priority remained provision of support in non-urban contexts over the evaluation period, while the majority of IDPs and PNIPs moved to urban centres. This gave rise to an increasingly large limit on the potential share of total IDPs being reached by DG ECHO operations aimed at improving IDP living conditions in Colombia.

At operational level, the DG ECHO implementing organizations covered in the evaluation included references to SPHERE standards in the project logframes, as well as qualitative profiles of target groups.

- The sectoral coverage of these logframe targets included many of the areas outlined in the DG ECHO Global Plans, including food assistance, short term food security and livelihood support, shelter, water and sanitation, and hygiene promotion.
- Despite difficult conditions for assessing the situation of the population in confined communities, ECHO's implementing partners were able to gather the basic data needed to draw up adequate qualitative beneficiary profiles (e.g. ICRC, Save the Children UK and Solidaridad Internacional).

³⁸ The estimation of 300,000 displacements per year is presented in the *COMMISSION DECISION on the approval and financing of a Global Plan for humanitarian actions from the budget of the European Communities for people affected by the conflict and natural disasters in Colombia* (ECHO/-SM/BUD/2010/01000), 2010.

The most urgent humanitarian needs of confined communities were targeted by DG ECHO strategy and engagements (JC 1.3)

At a strategic level, DG ECHO strategy and engagements targeted the needs of confined communities, most notably in rural areas:

- DG ECHO Global Plans for Colombia over the evaluation period include explicit consideration of the needs of confined communities, including “*the restrictions imposed by armed actors hamper access to food and productive activities (villagers cannot go to the fields to cultivate crops) and to basic goods and services such as health care. Thus, the local rural populations' livelihoods are endangered.*”³⁹
- Over the period 2007-2009 DG ECHO’s Global Plans for Colombia included provision for confined communities, specifically covering the following needs:
 - water and sanitation assistance, including construction of water points
 - shelter improvement
 - health assistance, including mobile clinics to facilitate access to healthcare
 - psychosocial support
 - food security, including livelihood support, home gardens and canteens for returnees
- From 2009-2012, DG ECHO’s strategy placed increased emphasis on support to conflict-affected rural communities, thereby reducing the strategic focus on confined communities in urban environments.⁴⁰

In addition, some DG ECHO operations contributed to making the phenomenon of confinement more visible and specifically targeted obstacles to the provision of assistance to confined communities:

- Field evidence proved that, owing to the restricted access to areas controlled by armed groups, the conduct of solid needs assessments was challenging. Furthermore, there exists neither a set of rules on how to protect these populations nor comprehensive available official data.
- Aware of this situation, ECHO funded in 2008/2009 an OCHA study on confined areas, covering 21 cases of restrictions on movement and access to basic goods and services over the period 2004-2009. The study identified women and children as the most affected groups within confined communities, owing to reductions in the quantity of food available, increases in intra-family violence, and the departure of male partners to seek other sources of income.
- DG ECHO is not authorised to conduct negotiations with illegal armed groups, thereby limiting direct access to confined communities. However, by partnering with ICRC, which is the only organisation allowed by the GoC to negotiate with all parties, it has been able to overcome this problem.

³⁹ European Commission, *Global Plan for humanitarian actions from the budget of the European Communities for people affected by the conflict and natural disasters in Colombia (ECHO/-SM/BUD/2009/01000)*, 2009, p.7

⁴⁰ European Commission, *Global Plan for humanitarian actions from the budget of the European Communities for people affected by the conflict and natural disasters in Colombia*, 2009-2010 ; European Commission, *Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Colombia*, 2011-2012

The extent to which DG ECHO targeted protection of conflict-affected persons and the basic emergency needs of newly-arrived refugees in neighbouring countries (JCs 1.4 & 1.5)

DG ECHO strategy and engagements specifically targeted protection of conflict-affected persons throughout the evaluation period:

- DG ECHO Global Plans and Humanitarian Implementation Plans throughout the evaluation period specifically targeted improvements in the protection of the conflict-affected populations, in line with current international agreements (including direct reference to International Humanitarian Law and the International Convention on Child Rights) and the Colombian legal framework (including specifically Law 387, sentence T025)
- Field evidence suggests that DG ECHO engagements also provided specific attention to protection and humanitarian assistance for indigenous, afro-descendants and vulnerable populations affected by the armed conflict (e.g. projects in the departments of Nariño and Valle del Cauca).

The basic emergency needs of newly-arrived victims in Venezuela and Ecuador were targeted by DG ECHO in the strategy documents and through implementing agencies' interventions:

- DG ECHO's strategy documents from 2007-2012 targeted protection and provision of basic emergency needs for newly-arrived victims in neighbouring countries, particularly Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama.
- Coverage targets were equal to the annual UNHCR estimates of new asylum requests from Colombians in neighbouring countries over the evaluation period (approximately 29,000 per year in 2010), yielding the targeted 100% coverage of official refugees and asylum seekers.⁴¹

At operational level UNHCR is the primary mandated agency that provides assistance to Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries. In 2011, with DG ECHO support, UNHCR offered protection to 52,461 refugees and asylum seekers, that is accomplishment of 96% of the target figure.⁴²

However, even though DG ECHO has stressed the need to maintain assistance to all PNIPs, its assistance to refugees provided via UNCHR was largely limited to officially recognized PNIPs, following a Government of Ecuador change of procedure aiming at narrowing its criteria for registration⁴³:

- During 2011 DG ECHO intervened to request UNHCR to revise its *modus operandi* following a monitoring visit which revealed gaps in coverage.
- UNHCR estimates that some 30% of new arrivals in 2011 were in need of international protection but were not being attended to properly.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, as noted by stakeholders interviewed in the field, UNHCR did address non-registered PNIPs

⁴¹ European Commission, *Humanitarian Implementation Plans for Colombia*, 2012

⁴² 00830 UNHCR Fichop 2011, p29

⁴³ 00830 UNHCR fichop 2011 p16

⁴⁴ 00830 UNHCR fichop 2011, p29.

through community programmes and specific protection interventions for vulnerable cases.⁴⁵

The extent to which urgent humanitarian needs arising from natural disasters were targeted by DG ECHO strategy and engagements (JC 1.6)

DG ECHO targeted both the urgent humanitarian needs arising from natural disasters via *ad hoc* budgeting decisions in response to particular emergencies, and also, to a limited extent, consistent provision of support for disaster preparedness throughout the evaluation period. Specifically:

- Disaster preparedness was a target of DG ECHO strategy in Colombia throughout the evaluation period, including strengthening of local preparedness and small-scale mitigation activities. However the major focus remained on the victims of the conflict, with only 10% of DG ECHO's aid targeting disaster preparedness.⁴⁶
- In addition, an *ad hoc* contribution of €2.6m was made in 2011, in response to the winter of 2010-2011 when flooding, which affected almost 2 million persons (ECHO 2010 handout "*Nuestra Acciones en 2010*"). Through the Save the Children project in Medellin, emergency plans were developed to address both complex emergencies and disasters⁴⁷.

The extent to which DG ECHO protection, emergency and non-emergency humanitarian support allocated sufficient funding to meet the targeted objectives in a timely manner (JC 1.7)

DG ECHO provided significant funds for humanitarian aid in Colombia, which the evidence suggests were sufficient for the targeted objectives:

- DG ECHO is the most significant donor of humanitarian aid in Colombia (the largest in 2012, according to Financial Tracking Service, with 13,748,629 US dollars).
- None of the projects considered in this evaluation demonstrated a major need for upward budget revision to meet their original objectives.
- In the case of the flooding during the winter of 2010, DG ECHO showed a high level of flexibility in providing extra funding to assist victims in response to this unexpected event.

DG ECHO's engagements were usually implemented in a timely manner:

- DG ECHO programmes are usually implemented within one year
- The inventory of programmes from 2009 to 2012 (*Cuadro Proyectos Plan Global*) shows that none of the programmes lasted over a year.

⁴⁵ As noted in field interview, MN 224.

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ 01017 SCUK sf 2010 p 11

Evaluation Question 2 on the evolvement of the needs of the affected population

How have the needs of the affected populations evolved during the period covered by the present evaluation and how far are prior needs assessments valid in the light of the current situation?

The political context has changed significantly in Colombia over the evaluation period. Since President Santos took power in 2010, diplomatic ties with neighbouring countries Ecuador and Venezuela have been restored, and the “Victims Law” passed in 2011 is attempting to restore land and provide compensation for those affected by the conflict.⁴⁸ Moreover, the emergence of new conflict actors, the “Bandas Criminales”, beyond the main guerrilla groups and the Colombian government, has changed the conflict dynamics since the mid-2000s. The impact of these changes, and others, on the humanitarian needs of the population must therefore be taken into account when evaluating DG ECHO’s engagements over the evaluation period.

The question seeks to assess the evolution of the needs of the affected populations over the evaluation period, as well as evaluating the monitoring of such trends by DG ECHO and the use of needs analyses to target DG ECHO’s involvement. It covers all aspects of the Commission’s engagements, viz.:

- *the extent to which DG ECHO based its intervention strategy on an analysis of the needs of conflict- and natural-disaster-affected populations in Colombia;*
- *the extent to which the needs of those populations have evolved over the evaluation period;*
- *the extent to which DG ECHO monitored these developments over the evaluation period.*

EQ 2 on evolvement of needs – Answer Summary Box

With the changes in the conflict dynamics, the populations affected by the conflict increased but their persistent needs have generally remained the same. DG ECHO and implementing partners devoted attention to assessing the needs as well as following up their evolution. Needs assessments generally provided valuable information for tracking the trends in needs, while monitoring exercises led to adaptation of activities to better respond to the evolving needs.

DG ECHO built its intervention strategy on an analysis and identification of the needs of the conflict-affected population. This assessment of the needs was done through an analysis of information received from national authorities, Colombian NGOs and universities. Furthermore, DG ECHO organised written annual consultations with the UN, the Red Cross and active NGOs. It did not conduct its own comprehensive needs assessments but the evidence suggests that this has not prevented DG ECHO from addressing the specific needs of the conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations.

The conflict dynamics changed over the period: development of BACRIMs, increased urban violence, use of communities as a tactical and economic resource, a greater number of natural disasters, and so on. These trends resulted in an increase in the population affected by the conflict and natural disasters, but globally the nature of the needs of the affected populations remained the same. The evaluation period also witnessed important institutional and regulatory changes from 2011 onwards and, despite a high level of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian

⁴⁸ European Commission, “Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Colombia”, 2012.

needs remained persistent.

DG ECHO monitored the trends in needs at strategy level through regular exchanges with the humanitarian actors in the field. At operational level DG ECHO conducted monitoring missions to track the trends and its project reporting system has allowed useful documentation of activities implemented. Moreover, implementing partners closely followed up implementation of activities in the field. Where appropriate, operations have been revised in response to monitoring results so as to better correspond to evolving needs. Finally, previous needs assessments carried out by implementing partners constituted valuable sources of information for tracking the various shifts in regional conflict and disaster hot-spots and the emergence of new conflict actors.

On the extent to which DG ECHO based its strategy on recent needs assessments of the conflict- and natural-disaster-affected populations of Colombia and on the content of these needs assessment (JC 2.1 & JC 2.5)

DG ECHO has based its intervention strategy on the humanitarian needs identified through formal annual consultations with major humanitarian actors. Its needs assessment was also based on information received from other sources such as national authorities, Colombian NGOs and universities. Its strategy has however not been based on its own comprehensive and detailed needs assessments.

- Every year DG ECHO organises a formal consultation process with the United Nations, the Red Cross and active NGOs during which the actors each present their views on the sectors, populations and geographical zones to be targeted. It uses the information gathered in that forum to build up the intervention strategy presented in its successive Humanitarian Intervention Plans (HIPs).
- DG ECHO also uses the contextual information from the questionnaires it addresses to its implementing partners, as well as from the government, in preparing its HIPs.
- DG ECHO also analysed information provided by Colombian universities and NGOs specialised in conflict and displacement
- DG ECHO has not carried out independent needs assessment exercises to inform the design of its strategy. In HIPs a specific section is devoted to identification and assessment of humanitarian needs. That section briefly presents the main affected groups and humanitarian needs to be addressed but does not constitute a thorough and detailed needs assessment. Nevertheless, as suggested below, this has not prevented DG ECHO from addressing the specific needs of the conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations.

At intervention level DG ECHO has emphasized the importance of conducting quality needs assessments prior to formulation. DG ECHO-funded interventions have been based on recurrent needs assessments carried out by the implementing partners.

- With the “Single Form for Humanitarian Aid Actions”, DG ECHO has established a general format which emphasizes the methodological and factual presentation of the intervention-related needs assessments. The detailed situation of the beneficiaries has been included in the funding requests for actions to be implemented, while the description of the change in the conflict environment has been linked to the needs of the affected population.

- As from 2010, the quality of the needs assessments prepared by the implementing partners has been defined as a standard benchmark for assessment of the proposals.
- For all case-study interventions, needs assessments of the conflict- and natural-disaster-affected populations have been carried out by the implementing partners. They consisted of both quantitative and qualitative analyses and were generally detailed, except in one case study (Save the Children).

DG ECHO strategy documents and needs assessments at operational level took into account the specific needs of the conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations.

- The successive Global Plans briefly present the needs of the population by affected population group: displaced population, conflict-affected rural population, women, children, ethnic groups (Afro-Colombians and indigenous), victims of the Colombian conflict in neighbouring countries, and host communities.
- For case-study interventions, the needs assessments generally define the needs of particular groups within the affected population (e.g. women and children). Case-study interventions have generally been designed with a view to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups. In one case study specific indicators on the vulnerable population were developed.

On the evolution of the needs of conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations of Colombia (JC 2.2)

With the evolution of the conflict dynamics the population affected by conflict increased over the period covered; but globally the nature of the needs of conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations remained the same.

- New regional and local conflict hotspots and new conflict types appeared during the evaluation period. Despite the fact that there is no consolidated database on IDPs and despite the bias created by the fact that victims of BACRIMs are not considered as victims and are therefore not registered as IDPs, the data collected during this evaluation point to an increase of the overall population affected by conflict. Key conflict trends over the period are highlighted below:
 - the development of BACRIMs has created an increase in the number of persons affected by violent acts;
 - the rise in urban violence has created a new type of conflict dynamic which increases the vulnerability of urban populations and of specific vulnerable groups in the urban environment;
 - intensified mining activities and mega-projects which increase the pressure on land tenure and the vulnerability of the local population have generated higher levels of conflict-proneness;
 - climate change resulted in a higher number of natural disasters and hence increased the number of affected communities and populations;
 - operating groups increasingly used communities as a tactical and economic resource, for example exploitation of the population as a resource, use of communities as shields, and continued elimination of community leaders;

- protection needs for children in urban settings increased, and forced recruitment of children by armed groups continued⁴⁹;
 - the traditional conflict involving the FARC has moved further South and the debilitated guerrillas have relied increasingly on hit-and-run raids.
- But these trends did not give rise to changes in the nature of the needs of the affected populations. The interviews conducted during the field mission, as well as the case-study interventions, show that there have been no fundamental changes in humanitarian needs following the changes in the conflict dynamics. For instance the needs of disaster-affected populations have been maintained since Colombia is located in a disaster-prone region. The absence of fundamental changes in the needs of the persons affected is also acknowledged by the HIP 2012 which indicates that the growing number of BACRIM causes an increase in protection needs whereas humanitarian needs remain the same.

Despite a high level of humanitarian assistance and important institutional and regulatory changes that have taken place since 2011, humanitarian needs remained persistent over the period.

- The 2007-2012 HIPs indicate a high level of humanitarian assistance but with structural gaps relating to confined communities and non-registered IDPs.
- Since the election of President Santos significant changes have taken place in the political domain and in the attention given to victims. In particular the Colombian government has recognised the existence of the internal conflict and in June 2011 passed the new Victims Law to compensate victims of the internal conflict and to return land to millions of displaced people.
- But the recent institutional and legal reforms have contributed to creating a backlog in the registration of IDPs and delayed attention to their needs. Indeed, the new Victims Law has put an administrative burden on the local authorities (UAOs) responsible for the registration of IDPs and for providing initial assistance during the 90 days following displacement. By the end of the evaluation period these UAOs had not yet developed sufficient capacities to cope with the flow of IDPs.

⁴⁹ Despite the fact that there is no reliable consolidated data on the increase in such practice, the average age of recruited children is decreasing according to certain sources (average of 13,8 yrs old in 2001 to average of 11,8 yrs old in 2011).

On the monitoring of the evolution of needs of conflict-affected and natural-disaster-affected populations of Colombia and on the validity of prior needs assessments in the light of the current situation in Colombia (JC 2.3 & JC 2.4)

DG ECHO monitored the evolution of needs at strategy level through regular exchanges with the humanitarian actors in the field.

- During the annual consultations ECHO retrieved information on local trends from its implementing partners. The field mission has shown that this type of exercise has allowed DG ECHO to monitor the trends in needs.
- Additionally, DG ECHO has maintained regular contact with the United Nations, the Red Cross and active NGOs, enabling it to track the evolution of humanitarian needs.

The evolution of needs has been monitored at operational level through visits and adequate reporting by DG ECHO and through the monitoring efforts of implementing partners. Where appropriate operations have been revised in response to monitoring results so as to better respond to evolving needs.

- DG ECHO's system of project reporting allowed useful documentation of implemented activities. It consists of two documents: (i) the Fichops – DG ECHO's operational tool for following up humanitarian aid projects, filled in by DG ECHO staff in HQ and in the field; and (ii) the Single Forms filled in by the implementing partners. The Fichops give an overview of the project from its approval up to the final report, and record the essentials of project performance.
- DG ECHO conducted field visits to monitor the implementation of its funded activities in all five case studies.
- Implementing partners have also established individual monitoring systems to follow up implementation of the projects. Sometimes they conducted joint exercises to assess the context and analyse the effects of interventions at wider regional level (e.g. joint monitoring mission with OCHA and ACNUR for the SI 2009 action).
- Overall these monitoring efforts strengthened the relevance of the operations through the regular updated information and analysis they provided. Indeed in the wake of monitoring exercises case study interventions have sometimes been revised to better fit evolving needs. For instance the FAO revised its intervention in order to adapt it to the new needs of the targeted population which was also confronted with floods (Córdoba-FAO case study).
- Implementing partners also sometimes adapted their internal structure to take into consideration the evolution of the conflict zones. The ICRC revised its structure in the country so as to ensure greater presence in zones heavily affected by the conflict while reducing its presence in others.

Previous needs assessments carried out by implementing partners constituted valuable sources of information for tracking the various shifts in regional conflict and disaster hot-spots and the emergence of new conflict actors as well as new conflict types.

By way of a brief review of each major implementing partner reviewed during this evaluation:

- ICRC, which follows a multi-sectoral approach, conducted needs assessments at multi-sectoral level, some interviewees stressing the importance of a multi-sectoral approach given the diversity of the needs;
- SI conducted regular assessments of the situation in the region through its local offices, but coordination and coverage of assessment of other humanitarian actors have nonetheless been limited; SI also has a database of families affected by the conflict useful for identifying needs and it undertook periodic monitoring which provided data on population coverage;
- UNHCR gathered independent information from the regular monitoring visits it conducted, also compiling profiling and statistics on the refugee population in Ecuador;
- OCHA generates a Humanitarian Bulletin which contains assessment components and constitutes an independent source of information; civil society actors such as indigenous community organisations have used it as a valid source of information on humanitarian needs.

Evaluation Question 3 on meeting basic needs and helping regain self-sufficiency

To what extent did the humanitarian activities in Colombia help people meet their basic needs and regain a minimum of self-sufficiency?

The Commission's humanitarian interventions in Colombia over the period 2007-2012 have included provision of both emergency and non-emergency humanitarian aid. In the latter case the Commission humanitarian implementation plans 2007-2012 specifically refer to the objective of meeting target populations' basic needs, in line with SPHERE standards, and helping displaced and confined persons achieve minimum levels of self-sufficiency. This is of particular importance in the context of the high accumulated IDP figures in Colombia (estimated at 3.7 million by the government)⁵⁰. With 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring cities,⁵¹ mostly in Ecuador and Venezuela, the humanitarian crisis has spread to the border zone, and persons in need of international protection (PNIPs)⁵² have constituted the other main target population of DG ECHO's assistance.

This question focuses specifically on the extent to which DG ECHO's actions have contributed to helping people affected by the conflict - IDPs, members of confined communities and PNIPs - to meet their basic needs and regain a minimum of self-sufficiency.

EQ 3 on meeting basic needs and helping regain self-sufficiency – Answer Summary Box

The lack of quantitative figures limits an assessment of the effectiveness of DG ECHO's interventions. Nevertheless, the results achieved in the interventions visited suggest that DG ECHO has been effective in addressing the basic needs of its target populations. However there were some limitations with respect to an improvement in the living conditions of IDPs in large city centres as well as the self-sufficiency of confined communities' members. The living conditions of refugees and asylum seekers were improved even though this outcome largely depended on the Ecuadorian legislation on asylum.

There are no clear quantitative figures on the effective coverage of DG ECHO's interventions. But it is clear that some specific categories of IDP were not reached, as was the case with unregistered IDPs displaced to big cities for over 90 days.

The results achieved in the interventions visited during this mission suggest that DG ECHO's support has contributed to meeting the basic needs of the IDPs reached by its interventions.

With respect to confined communities, DG ECHO's implementing partners were able to access the areas of confinement despite the difficult security conditions, and to address the basic needs of the populations. Taking into consideration the proximity of drug production and trafficking, often at the origins of confinement, the goal of ensuring livelihoods in these communities has been key to preventing its members,

⁵⁰ The total number of IDPs since 1997 is 3.7 million according to Acción Social, and 5.2 million since 1985 according to CODHES.

⁵¹ This is only the figure of Colombians officially recognized as refugees and asylum seekers. According to the UNHCR, there are between 150,000 and 250,000 Colombians that are in a refugee-like situation.

⁵² PNIPs include refugees, asylum seekers and people in refugee like situation such as those which did not apply for refugee status or were rejected for different reasons

especially the youth, from becoming involved in illegal activities. The success of productive projects has depended considerably on the entrepreneurial capacities of the different beneficiaries. The fact that no thorough market studies were conducted limited the positive effects of some projects.

Finally, the UNHCR, DG ECHO's implementing partner for addressing the needs of PNIPs, has based its assistance on strengthening of the receiving communities. This approach has had the double positive effect of improving the living conditions of the refugees and asylum seekers and of enhancing social cohesion, while mitigating the occurrence of violent xenophobic acts. Nevertheless the effectiveness of DG ECHO's support for refugees and asylum seekers has been strongly influenced by the national legislation of the GoE, positively between 2008 and 2010 but negatively thereafter.

The extent to which the living conditions of internally displaced persons targeted by DG ECHO's support were improved, including the meeting of basic needs as defined by SPHERE standards (JC 3.1)

Information on how effectively the targeted populations have had their living conditions improved is lacking.

From 2008 to the present day (data submitted by DG ECHO in August 2012), DG ECHO has implemented a total of 129 interventions costing € 57,999,175.⁵³ According to DG ECHO's office in Colombia, these interventions have benefitted approximately 800,000 people (all types of beneficiaries included). This is set against the background of a total IDP population of between 3.75 million⁵⁴ and 5.2 million⁵⁵; a refugee figure of approximately 395,600⁵⁶; and approximately 2.8 million natural disaster victims in 2010.⁵⁷

The lack of reliability of these figures precludes using them to provide exact figures on the number of beneficiaries covered by DG ECHO's interventions. The main sources of discrepancy are the following:

- at macro level:
 - the government does not recognize victims of BACRIMs (they do not therefore appear in official statistics) whereas other humanitarian actors such as the ICRC do include these victims;
- at meso level:
 - there are different databases – from the DPS, from the Public Ministry and from the Planes Integrales Únicos at municipal level - and these have not been consolidated;
 - there is also transition at national level from the SIPOD system still in use at the end of the evaluation period to the future RUV system (Registro Unico de Victimas);
 - the difficulty of having available the exact number of beneficiaries when intervening through multi-donor projects or through UN agencies;
- at micro level:

⁵³ DG ECHO's inventory (*Cuadro Proyectos Plan Global 2008-2012*)

⁵⁴ According to Acción Social

⁵⁵ According to CODHES

⁵⁶ According to the UNHCR

⁵⁷ Dirección de Gestión del Riesgo. This number is exceptionally high as that year the floods were the most severe recorded in the last three decades.

- there are persons who suffer from repeated displacements when living in a zone that is permanently in conflict but who are not yet willing to abandon their lands; these are not registered despite the specific needs resulting from their repeated displacement;
- when major displacement occurs, counting direct beneficiaries is also difficult;
- there are victims who are moving to larger departmental capitals (instead of a smaller city closer to their former home) precisely in order to remain anonymous - and these will not register;
- there are victims who will not register simply because they do not know how to; even though no statistics exist on this group it seems that their number is decreasing, as people seem to have become better informed in recent years.

Some specific categories of IDP were not covered by DG ECHO's interventions. That was the case with unregistered IDPs having displaced to large cities such as Bogotá or Medellín for over 90 days). Those who do not register out of fear will tend to move further away from their home to bigger urban centres precisely to preserve their anonymity. It is therefore difficult to assess whether these IDPs have managed to improve their living conditions after ceasing to be eligible for emergency support, especially considering that these displaced populations have an agricultural background and are ill-prepared for their new urban environment.

In major cities DG ECHO's assistance was focused only on addressing the basic needs of the recently displaced. This approach was based on the idea that other IDPs would be assisted by the Colombian State institutions. But, as mentioned above, one challenge in addressing the needs of IDPs is their under-registration in the official system. The GoC admits that approximately 23% of IDPs do not register, either out of fear or just because they do not know how to claim assistance. DG ECHO has been aware of this problem of registration and has addressed the needs of unregistered IDPs but, in large city centres, this assistance was limited to 90 days.

The case studies selected showed that DG ECHO's support has contributed to meeting the basic needs of IDPs:

- **ICRC in protection, food and NFIs:** the ICRC intervened in all sectors but gave added value in the sector of protection by being the only organisation allowed to negotiate with all parties to the conflict. This type of dialogue has proved paramount when searching for missing persons or helping IDPs re-establish family links. It is difficult to make a quantitative assessment of protection projects as most data such as the number of beneficiaries are confidential. Nevertheless the evaluation team was able to witness the precautions taken by both ICRC international delegates and local staff in attendance on IDPs so as to preserve confidentiality. With respect to assistance in food and NFIs, it has been twofold: (i) facilitating IDPs' access to State assistance, redirecting them to UAOs, and (ii) directly addressing the needs of IDPs, notably by distributing food and non-food vouchers. Instead of distributing food rations, vouchers that can be used in local shops were given. This contributed to preserving the dignity of the person assisted and also his or her food habits. Other items were distributed with the vouchers such as cutlery, blankets, mattresses or hammocks (again to respect the cultural habits of those assisted). According to ICRC statistics, from January to June 2012 the ICRC in Cali assisted 2,800 persons, which is significant when considering that the UAO backlog in Cali for the first six months of 2012 was 1,500

IDPs waiting to be registered.⁵⁸ Furthermore, indicators were introduced in the log-frame of the project with a view to monitoring whether the distributed items were of sufficient quantity and of good-to-excellent quality.

- **Save the Children in protection:** the project targeted urban children at risk of forced recruitment in two communes of Medellín. Medellín is the city that receives the greatest number of IDPs each year after Bogotá. The two communes targeted by the project were those with the highest displacement rates. According to official sources 73% of the total IDP population are women and children.⁵⁹ The project has met the protection needs of the children by creating a safe environment in which children could learn and play. The evaluation team was able to visit two of the communities, Comuna 8 Alticos and Vila Turbay. The projects addressed the needs of children both in and out of school and kept them away from dangerous activities by developing flexible learning methodologies for those who had dropped out of the formal system. It also included advocacy work for parents and teachers on the security risks faced by children and information on where and to whom to go if they had concerns about their protection. According to monitoring reports the project targeted a total of 2,240 beneficiaries including children, parents, teachers and public officials.
- **Solidaridad Internacional in WASH:** Solidaridad Internacional also intervened in all sectors. The project selected had a WASH component which consisted of improving access to safe water in sufficient quantities, and improved access to sanitation. The increased comfort of the families targeted as well as an improvement in their hygiene was witnessed during the field visit to Tumaco. A total of 60 families were affected by this WASH component.

The extent to which the living conditions of persons within confined communities targeted by DG ECHO's action have improved, including the attainment of a minimal level of self-sufficiency where relevant (JC 3.2)

Assisting confined communities has been another focus of DG ECHO's humanitarian assistance, mainly in a rural context. DG ECHO's assistance has sought over the evaluation period to improve access by these communities to basic goods and services and, when possible, restore their livelihoods. It has concentrated its actions in rural areas where the Colombian State is absent or only present through its security apparatus engaged in the conflict.

Although the phenomenon is much less visible than that of IDPs and more difficult to measure, there is evidence that DG ECHO's support has contributed to improving the living conditions of the confined communities targeted. In some cases a level of self-sufficiency was achieved when building on existing capacities. As emphasized in monitoring reports, DG ECHO's implementing partners were able to have access to these communities despite the difficult security conditions. The case studies selected and other projects visited showed that their support has contributed to improving their living conditions, *viz.*:

- **FAO in food security:** the project selected was to benefit approximately 3,250 people. According to monitoring reports 88 per cent of families involved in the project activities could obtain food from their plots for their own consumption. The sites

⁵⁸ As explained in Chapter 2, this backlog was created by the institutional and legal changes introduced in 2011 and 2012.

⁵⁹ Important to recall in this respect that 28.8% of the Colombian population is aged between 0 and 14 years old.

visited by the evaluation team in Montelibano and Puerto Libertador showed improvements in nutrition and food diversification.

- **ICRC in health and protection:** the ICRC has developed in Northern Cauca a partnership with the Colombian Red Cross and an indigenous health service organization with the aim of setting up mobile health care units (known as health brigades) in the different communities where medical professionals no longer wished to practice because of lack of security. With respect to protection, the ICRC along with other implementing partners such as Diakonie have been encouraging the establishment of meeting-places, Sitios de Asamblea Permanente (SAP), as an auto-protection and preparedness measure. The communities would identify for themselves a place such as a school or a community hall where they could store all the non-food items that the community members would need in the event of displacement. This has prevented them from becoming permanently displaced and has allowed them to keep control over their land which is often their source of livelihood. Furthermore it has prevented them from walking great distances, reducing exposure to mine risks. The evaluation team could visit two of these SAPs in the municipalities of Jambaló and Toribío. These places were clearly indicated and implementing partners have conducted advocacy work so that they are not occupied or exploited by the warring parties.
- **Solidaridad Internacional in livelihoods:** livelihood projects were paramount in confined communities as they constituted an alternative to illegal activities. Indeed, one of the reasons for confinement is the armed groups' need to protect their drug production site and their trafficking routes. Member of confined communities, especially young people, often find themselves enrolled in these illegal lucrative activities undertaken near their home, for want of any alternative. Some beneficiaries of aid for productive projects have stated that their earnings had allowed them to cover several needs, for example food, housing or health. However, the success of livelihood projects depended highly on the entrepreneurial capacities of the different beneficiaries. Furthermore, the fact that no thorough market studies were conducted limited the positive effects of some projects.
- **Save the Children in protection:** the interventions implemented by Save the Children have contributed to demonstrating that confinement (invisible barriers) also occurs in urban contexts. The creation of safe humanitarian space and transport has allowed child victims of these invisible barriers to have access to education.

The extent to which the living conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries targeted by DG ECHO's action have improved, including the meeting of basic needs as defined by SPHERE standards (JC 3.3)

The UNHCR, DG ECHO's implementing partner in addressing the needs of PNIPs, has based its assistance on the strengthening of the receiving communities and this approach has had positive effects on the living conditions of the populations targeted and especially on non-discriminatory access by PNIPs to services. Ecuador is the first host country for Colombian refugees, with a total of 59,100.⁶⁰ According to a UNHCR survey it is estimated that 50% of refugees live in extreme poverty (less than 1 US dollar per person per day). This population (in particular Afro-Colombians and indigenous minorities) often falls victim to discrimination which further hampers their access to the most basic rights recognised by the GoE. In the light of this the UNHCR has

⁶⁰ As per UNHCR 2012-2013 appeal. This figure does not include other PNIPs groups.

adopted a community-based approach aimed at improving the living conditions of PNIPs and their host community and at preventing violent xenophobic acts.

The UNHCR has also sought to establish partnerships with other UN agencies and NGOs in order to tackle the needs of these communities in an integrated fashion. For example, while it has addressed the needs in WASH, it has also relied on the WFP for food and on Oxfam for developing a longer-term food security project based on agriculture.

Furthermore, this type of support has been an incentive for local authorities to improve the supply of services in those communes receiving PNIPs. An illustration was the financing of school classrooms after the UNHCR had financed construction of latrines and rehabilitation of water system in schools, such as in the Escuela Hugo Ortiz visited in Lago Agrio.

Despite the capacities of the UNHCR and its knowledge of the situation of Colombians who have fled to Ecuador, refugee status is only given by the GoE, and UNHCR has had no further access to the registration centres since the new decree was promulgated. In other words the UNHCR does not have full control over the effectiveness of its interventions in the sense that it depends largely on the granting of this status.

The effectiveness of DG ECHO's support to refugees and asylum seekers has been strongly influenced by the national legislation of the GoE. In September 2008 the GoE presented its newly-adopted Policy on Asylum. It was the first country in Latin America to develop a specific policy on refugee issues. The asylum policy included the institutional strengthening and decentralization of the General Directorate for Refugees and a new Enhanced Registration mechanism to register, recognize and document refugees through mobile brigades in the relevant provinces. The policy also envisaged the legal, social and economic integration of refugees in Ecuador. As a result the UNHCR encouraged registration through this new enhanced mechanism, and the number of recognised refugees increased from 19,482 at the end of 2008 to 45,192 a year later.

However, in 2011 the General Directorate for Refugees put this enhanced registration on hold. Furthermore a new decree was adopted by the GoE with stricter criteria for registration, notably imposition of a 15-day delay after which applicants are no longer eligible.⁶¹ In the light of this change of procedure the UNHCR had to reduce the number of beneficiaries targeted by DG ECHO's intervention.

⁶¹ This change of policy may be explained by the complains from several reception provinces (San Lorenzo, Ibarra, Tulcan, Esmeraldas, Sucumbios) about the fact that Government support to the refugee registration process had not been coupled with budget increase to address the needs of this population; another element is the normalization of diplomatic relations between Ecuador and Colombia and the wish to minimize the effect of the internal conflict in Colombia.

Evaluation Question 4 on LRRD

To what extent were conditions conducive to an effective LRRD? What were the main challenges or achievements?

Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), or ensuring connectedness, has been a central theme of evaluations of DG ECHO interventions since the late 1990s.⁶² LRRD is not simply a matter of ensuring “a smooth transition from emergency to development assistance”, it also implies consideration of the broader context and the actions that can be taken as part of “an integrated approach” to a return to structural stability.⁶³ In Colombia the broader context consists of a man-made crisis that has lasted for over 40 years and a post-conflict situation that has not yet been arrived at. An approach focusing on transition is not fully relevant in such a protracted crisis. The challenge is rather how to undertake simultaneous humanitarian and development actions in a concerted way so that both types of need are addressed. The question therefore does not focus on a linear progression from relief to rehabilitation and thence to development, but rather on existing conditions that could favour LRRD. It has two dimensions: with respect to past support it aims at understanding what the achievements were in terms of LRRD, whether conditions were present for implementing an LRRD approach, and what challenges were met in this respect; from there on it also aims at assessing whether at the end of the evaluation period the conditions for an effective LRRD approach were fulfilled. Furthermore this question seeks to evaluate connectedness from both macro and micro perspectives, from the level of national institutions to that of local livelihoods.

EQ 4 on LRRD – Answer Summary Box

LRRD has been a genuine concern of DG ECHO for years and this is reflected in its strategy documents and in the selection process for its projects. However the opportunity to promote an LRRD approach based on complementarities between DG ECHO and the development services of the Commission has not been exploited. Despite this missed opportunity DG ECHO has been able to implement handover and exit strategies successfully.

DG ECHO has sought to promote LRRD in two ways, by focusing on government institutions and by developing complementarities with other Commission aid instruments. The first path through government institutions has been difficult to implement in the context of an armed conflict especially when the government is a party to the conflict. With respect to the second path, strategic planning of DG ECHO interventions has not taken into account the EU development strategy, which is missing an opportunity to develop an effective LRRD approach based on concerted actions between DG ECHO and the Commission development programmes. The possibility of developing some connection was also hampered by the use of different financing instruments and the delay in development programmes reaching an implementation phase. The problem worsened with the suppression of the Uprooted People thematic budget line in 2006.

Nevertheless at intervention level the selection process for DG ECHO interventions has created opportunities for developing an LRRD approach, even though difficult conditions have sometimes impeded implementation of the planned approach. The result is that some progress has been made with respect to LRRD in addressing the needs of IDPs, confined communities and refugees at intervention level.

Finally, the recent political changes created structural conditions favourable for an effective

⁶² ECHO, *Manual for the Evaluation of Humanitarian Aid*, 1999, p.12; ALNAP, *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies*, 2006, p.29.

⁶³ European Commission, “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development – An assessment” COM (2001) 153, pp. 3-2.

LRRD approach based on a strategy for a hand-over to the Colombian State. Nevertheless Colombia is not yet in a post-crisis situation and therefore no effective macro LRRD approach that presupposes peace can be envisaged. Furthermore, gaps in humanitarian assistance remain.

The extent to which the need for an LRRD approach was taken into account by DG ECHO at the design stage of its strategy and interventions (JC 4.1)

The strategic planning of DG ECHO interventions has not taken into account the EU development strategy, thereby missing an opportunity to develop an effective LRRD approach based on concerted actions between DG ECHO and Commission development programmes.

While the need to have an LRRD approach was explicit in the design of DG ECHO's annual strategies, no reference was made to the EU development strategy for the period 2007-2013. Nevertheless this challenge at implementation level should not have prevented DG ECHO from taking the EU country strategy into account.

All Global Plans and HIPs over the evaluation period mentioned that LRRD would be promoted mainly in two ways:

- by focusing on Government institutions, that is using assistance to build up the capacity of relevant institutions involved in the humanitarian response provided by the GoC; and
- by developing existing complementarities between DG ECHO and interventions under other Commission aid instruments such as the Development Cooperation Instrument for Latin America (DCI).

However, despite this approach no reference was made to the EU response strategy for 2007-2013. This is all the more unfortunate as the latter had a LRRD rationale and consisted of three main steps:

- to achieve a short-term impact on the conflict in Colombia, the EU would first provide assistance to the victims;
- to achieve a medium-term effect on the conflict in Colombia, the EU would endeavour to promote peace at local and national levels;
- to achieve a long-term effect on the conflict in Colombia, the EU would strive to promote development for all.⁶⁴

The CSP does mention that a *“link needs to be made between the emergency humanitarian aid provided by ECHO and bilateral cooperation funds (sector 1 of the National Indicative Programme)”*. But sector 1, namely *Peace and Stability, including Alternative Development*, which represented 70% of the NIP, is not mentioned in DG ECHO's annual strategies over that period. There was the challenge that most of the Commission development assistance was channelled through the GoC and that the latter had difficulty in accessing zones where DG ECHO operations were being implemented (mostly because of lack of security for GoC civil servants who might be targeted by illegal groups). Nevertheless, other aid modalities were used and the HIPs mention the different instruments that can be used, such as the EIDHR, the DCI thematic programmes, or the IfS; but no reference is made to the content, such as the specific objective of the EU response under Sector 1 which is to support stabilisation of

⁶⁴ European Commission, Country Strategy Paper: Colombia, 2007-2013, pp.24-25.

the socio-economic situation of people, communities and victims of the armed conflict, including displaced people and victims of mines and weapons left behind after hostilities.⁶⁵

Despite this missed opportunity to embed DG ECHO's actions in the Sector 1 response of the EU over the period 2007-2013, DG ECHO has genuinely been concerned that its emergency support should be connected to longer-term planning and in this sense has influenced the design of its implementing partners' interventions.

From 2009 onwards HIPs encouraged implementing partners to devise a handover and exit strategy and this has contributed to mainstreaming LRRD in the design of interventions.⁶⁶ The five case studies selected for this evaluation all had in their design an element favouring LRRD, even though this was not necessarily phrased as such in project proposals. To give examples:

- **FAO in the department of Córdoba:** enhancing the capacity of a local actor, in this case the Church, *the Pastoral Social de Montelibano*; and establishing partnerships with local agencies and authorities, in this case the *Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario* and the agricultural technical assistance offered by municipalities.
- **ICRC in the department of Valle del Cauca:** enhancing the capacity of both governmental (UAOs) and non-governmental actors, namely the Colombian Red Cross; and improvement of the livelihoods and resilience of targeted communities in conflict zones, notably indigenous communities.⁶⁷
- **Save the Children UK in Medellín:** strategy for handover to local authorities of education programmes for IDP children.
- **Solidaridad Internacional in the department of Nariño:** establishing partnerships with local authorities, in this case Tumaco, on development and social policies.
- **UNHCR in Ecuador:** two-stage approach to assisting refugees and asylum seekers, the first focused on relief, the second on integration with the aim of handing over to the GoE activities geared to integration. Another element was partnership with a local NGO, in this case the *Fundación Tarabita*.

In addition, implementing partners have become increasingly aware in recent years of the necessity to avoid substitution for government activities. The ICRC, which is one of the three families through which DG ECHO delivers its humanitarian assistance and which has been receiving 24% of EU funding over the evaluation period, explained in this respect that its strategy was revised approximately three years ago with a view to combining substitution with institutional capacity-building. Before then they had an agreement with Acción Social to intervene only when the institution was unable to, but this had led Acción Social to rely too much on ICRC assistance instead of developing its own capacity.

The extent to which DG ECHO has verified, prior to implementation, the fulfillment of conditions for an effective LRRD approach and progress made in terms of transition from short-term relief to rehabilitation and

⁶⁵ Idem, p.28.

⁶⁶ All the interventions selected as case studies started in 2010; it would have been interesting to compare their design with that of interventions undertaken before 2009. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that implementing partners were not receptive to indications mentioned in the HIP especially when they have described the HIP as a "reference document" during the focus group gathered for this evaluation.

⁶⁷ The evaluation team took advantage of its presence in Medellín to also visit the ICRC there. Similar LRRD approaches were witnessed taking advantage that the Colombian Red Cross is especially strong and well organized in the department of Antioquia.

development at the level of different sectors of intervention (JC 4.2 and JC 4.3)

DG ECHO's selection process for projects has allowed assessment of opportunities for an effective LRRD approach prior to implementation, but the difficult conditions intrinsic to humanitarian crises such as lack of security have sometimes impeded implementation of the planned approach. Implementing partners were requested to submit Single Forms for a detailed assessment of their proposals by DG ECHO. These forms contain two sections in which the partners had to describe the "expected level of sustainability and/or connectedness" and the "Continuum strategy (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development)". This standardized procedure has allowed DG ECHO to cross-check information received by different implementing partners, namely NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross Movement. Furthermore DG ECHO has been questioning its partners on an annual basis in respect of which projects they would consider undertaking in an LRRD perspective and of what would be the conditions for the projects being feasible.

Despite these measures to ensure that activities would be carried out in a context that takes longer-term issues into consideration, it still happened over the evaluation period that exit strategies for projects were blocked or had to be adjusted because of unforeseen developments. This was the case for the intervention implemented by Solidaridad Internacional in the department of Nariño where *"The intended process of appropriation by public institutions of the sustainability of the project has failed, due to security issues in the area of implementation."*⁶⁸ The ICRC was also considering withdrawing some of its support to Acción Social at the end of 2011 but had to revise its position following the institutional changes which took place in late 2011 and early 2012 and which placed a heavy administrative burden on UAOs, affecting their capacity to register IDPs in a timely manner.

LRRD was also hampered by a lack of concerted action between DG ECHO and the Commission's development programmes. In addition, the reform of the financing instruments undertaken in 2006 further undermined the efforts that were in place. As mentioned in the Global Plans and HIPs, one way chosen by DG ECHO of promoting LRRD was by developing existing complementarities between DG ECHO and interventions under other Commission aid instruments. But this strategic approach has not materialized at intervention level. This is a challenge that the humanitarian and development services of the Commission have been facing for a long time. The ALNAP Annual Review 2001 already noted at that time that *"the report highlights the problem of the lack of connection between ECHO and EC development departments, which has been noted in a number of ECHO evaluations.*

The main challenge has been that DG ECHO works in conflict zones where it is difficult to bring in development actors, including the Commission. The other challenge has been the timing of projects: humanitarian operations can be approved within 15 days while development interventions, even if financed under the IfS which was conceived as an emergency instrument, take about a year to reach the implementation phase. According to EUD representatives and DG ECHO's implementing partners, this problem worsened with the reform of financial instruments in 2006 and the suppression of the thematic budget line for Uprooted People (UP). Indeed this thematic budget line used to allow both to intervene in regions characterised by high levels of displacement, since their respective

⁶⁸ Fichop Solidaridad Internacional 2009 for the action : "Access and Humanitarian assistance to population affected by the conflict within the territories from ethnic communities in Valle Del Cauca and Nariño", p.48.

interventions focused on IDPs; and although different instruments were used, the implementing partners were the same. These elements used to foster regular participation (i.e. not *ad hoc*) in DG ECHO and EUD activities respectively (planning, preparation of calls for proposals, ToRs, etc) as well as in operational undertakings such as missions, sharing of information on security or humanitarian situations, and promotion of links between emergency and rehabilitation in regions or with beneficiaries covered by both interventions.

DG ECHO had sought to anticipate the gap left by the suppression of the UP budget line at the time by scheduling “regular meetings during 2007 in order to ensure coordination between actions funded by the National Indicative Programme and those funded by DG ECHO” but these apparently have not been sufficient to bridge the funding gap. In recent months initiatives have been taken by the EUD and the DG ECHO office to explore how coordination between the two might be improved during the next programming cycle and which financial instruments might be used.

Nevertheless some progress has been made with respect to LRRD in addressing the needs of IDPs, confined communities and refugees at intervention level. The ALNAP guide for evaluating humanitarian action emphasizes that too often evaluations, when assessing LRRD, focus on the strategic and macro levels when the livelihood or resilience support aspect of specific interventions is also worth taking into consideration.⁶⁹ The progress described below applied at both macro and micro levels:

- **With respect to IDPs:** DG ECHO’s interventions have created safe environments in which children and young people can return to their schools and enjoy different activities which keep them far from gangs, armed groups and illegal activities. Flexible and informal learning methodologies were conceived with and for the children and young adolescents as a viable alternative to formal education; nowadays local governments are supporting former “ECHO Houses”.
- **With respect to confined communities:** implementing partners of DG ECHO have increasingly supported identification of places for confined communities, *Sitios de Asamblea Permanente (SAP)*, as an auto-protection measure. The communities themselves identify a place such as a school or a community hall where they can store all the non-food items that the community members will need should they need to move during a conflict. This prevents them from becoming permanently displaced and allows them to keep control over their land which is often their source of livelihood. Another type of support improving the resilience of these communities was the health care brigades that have in some cases been handed over to the Colombian Red Cross.
- **With respect to refugees:** over the years, DG ECHO’s support has created an incentive for local authorities to invest in and improve the supply of services to recipient communities.

⁶⁹ ALNAP, Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria: an ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies, 2006, pp. 31-32

The extent to which conditions at the end of the period called for and were favourable to an effective LRRD approach in the future (JC 4.4)

The political changes initiated in 2010 created structural conditions favourable to an LRRD approach based on a hand-over strategy to the Colombian State. Nevertheless, Colombia is not yet in a post-crisis situation and therefore no effective macro LRRD approach based on peace can be envisaged and gaps in humanitarian assistance remain. As mentioned above, DG ECHO has sought to promote LRRD by focusing on government institutions. The government has indeed a leading role to play in connecting international humanitarian assistance with the development aid received. However, this approach has been challenging to implement in Colombia owing to the armed conflict and to the fact that the government is a party to the conflict. The election of President Santos brought about important and to some extent unexpected political changes.⁷⁰ The GoC recognized the existence of an internal conflict, even acknowledging the responsibility of the State in the victimization, and finally it acknowledged that a sustainable solution to the conflict required measures to assist the victims. In this context the GoC reaffirmed that the Colombian State must be the primary humanitarian actor in the crisis. To this end it dissolved the former Acción Social and has been developing two units – the Victims Unit and the Risk Management Unit - to address both types of humanitarian crisis. Furthermore it has adopted the Victims Law which guarantees restitution of land and financial compensation for victims of the conflict. These changes, along with the important aspect of giving legitimacy to humanitarian operations, are important structural developments on which an effective LRRD approach can be based.

Nevertheless the institutional reforms were managed in such a way that the institutional memory of Acción Social was lost, undermining the capacity of the Colombian State to address humanitarian needs, at least in the short term. In addition the Victims Law envisages IDPs being assisted during the first 90 days of their displacement by local authorities – namely UAOs - before the new Victims Unit takes up this support at national level. As noted above this has put a heavy administrative burden on UAOs that have had problems coping with the flow of IDPs. Furthermore, while the individual registration of an IDP used to last approximately one hour under the new format, the procedure can now take 3-4 hours.

Finally, the primary objective of the law is to achieve national reconciliation and lasting and sustainable peace (art. 8, 9, 11, 12, 33). The problem, as recognized by President Santos himself, is the persistence of the armed conflict, making it difficult to refer to reconciliation and peace, even less to a “lasting and stable peace” (art. 9).⁷¹ Victims of “common criminal acts” are furthermore not covered by the law. In other words the victims of the BACRIMs which were responsible for the greatest number of unilateral violent acts between 2008 and 2010 (see Chapter 2) are not officially considered victims. The humanitarian needs of this population were being covered at the end of the evaluation period by international assistance. The persistence of the conflict also means that the population is in need of protection and that the humanitarian principles of independence and neutrality must be respected, requiring the involvement of the international community.

⁷⁰ Juan Manuel Santos was Alvaro Uribe's Minister of National Defense and many observers thought that the position of the GoC vis-à-vis the internal conflict would remain unchanged.

⁷¹ PODEC, “Ley 1448 de 2011 de víctimas y restitución de tierra: Análisis y recomendaciones para la cooperación internacional” *Cuadernos de Cooperación y Desarrollo*, N°7 september 2011, p.4.

Evaluation Question 5 on urban context interventions

Is ECHO an appropriate donor to address humanitarian consequences emerging from urban violent context in Colombia? Considering ECHO's mandate and timeframes, what would be DG ECHO's added value?

Colombia has an estimated population of around 46 million, about 76% of which live in urban areas. Displacements due to the conflict took place very often towards the major cities and urban centres⁷², totalling close to 3.5 million between 2000 and 2011 according to DPS/Unidad de Atención a Víctimas⁷³. This created a number of humanitarian needs, notably due to the violent urban context in Colombia.

DGECHO's support in urban areas in Colombia has included provision of emergency assistance to IDPs (non-food items, food, shelter, cash and vouchers) and basic services (health, education, water and sanitation) to the recipient communities, for example through the interventions of the ICRC, Save the Children or UNHCR. Protection was targeted through the implementation of education and awareness actions in marginal urban areas to protect children from violence and abuse such as recruitment by illegal armed groups. Nevertheless, addressing humanitarian needs in urban violent contexts in Colombia has not so far been the focus of DG ECHO's support and was thus not prominently analysed in previous HIPs. However, as reflected by the 2010 IASC strategy on meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas⁷⁴, there is a growing recognition that the Humanitarian Community needs to adapt to the humanitarian trend of increasing urban vulnerabilities. There is also ongoing DG ECHO reflection on possible strengthened engagement in urban settings; hence the future-oriented elements of the evaluation question for Colombia and possibly the region.

This question will thus seek to assess (i) current and anticipated gaps in terms of support provided by the Government and donors to addressing humanitarian needs in urban contexts in Colombia, (ii) the appropriateness of DG ECHO's support to addressing humanitarian needs in urban contexts of different dimensions, with a focus based on lessons learnt from previous interventions in Colombia, and (iii) taking into account its mandate and timeframes, the extent to which DG ECHO would provide value added in addressing humanitarian needs in urban contexts, particularly in Colombia. Linkages with urban interventions in Ecuador and the region will be highlighted wherever they provide further arguments in the context of the question.

⁷² While secondary displacement are not accounted for, most primary displacement in rural or smaller urban centers result over time in secondary displacement to major urban centers where intra-urban displacement also frequently occur.

⁷³ OCHA Colombia Displacement chart by year 2000 - 2010.

⁷⁴ The IASC Strategy on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas and its two years action plan was approved on in Rome on 10 November 2010 by the 78th IASC Working Group Meeting. Strategic Objective 1 refers to the development of operational strategies early-on that ensure multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhanced coordination, impact and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in urban areas, and Strategic Objective 4 sets up the promotion of Protection to vulnerable urban populations against violence and exploitation

EQ 5 on urban context interventions – Answer Summary Box

Several factors plead in favour of DG ECHO as an appropriate donor for addressing humanitarian consequences of urban violence in Colombia. There is a sustained need for support in this respect: different stakeholders call for a 'neutral' actor to provide this support; it would be in line with DG ECHO's mandate; and DG ECHO has proved through past interventions that it had specific types of assets in this respect.

Different factors allow it to be stated that over the period considered there was a real need for humanitarian support in urban areas and that this will continue to be the case in the near future:

- humanitarian partners increasingly recognise that urban humanitarian needs have not sufficiently been addressed; the reasons invoked are twofold: they were insufficiently documented, which can be linked to lack of recognition of problems linked to the BACRIM; and there has been a consensus among humanitarian donors that they should concentrate their assistance in zones where government presence was limited;
- capacities to address the IDP caseloads in urban centres are stretched to the limit;
- owing to secondary displacements, IDPs' needs are continuously increased;
- some specific groups (e.g. indigenous communities) continue to face specific difficulties.

Moreover, different elements advocate a neutral and impartial alternative, notably in the context of a protection vacuum:

- the Victims Law does not cover victims of the BACRIMs, leaving a vacuum;
- humanitarian partners, government institutions and communities call for a neutral and impartial alternative, notably to cover victim groups either unable or unwilling to register with authorities;
- such interventions would also be beneficial to national NGOs.

Intervening in such a context would be in line with DG ECHO's mandate. There is indeed a wide consensus that protection should be addressed similarly to other sectors, whereby humanitarian response should be triggered based on relevant criteria for measuring the level of abuse or the humanitarian consequences of urban violence. This approach is in line with DG ECHO's mandate.

DG ECHO has proved to have several assets and provide specific added value to qualify it as an appropriate donor for addressing the humanitarian consequences of urban violence in Colombia, viz.:

- in the past DG ECHO has intervened in urban contexts in Colombia in an 'appropriate' manner, i.e. addressing the right needs, being complementary to the Government, contributing to increased accountability on the part of government authorities, and generating incentives for improvements in non-discriminatory services;
- some specific approaches such as a community approach to basic needs support or a 'cash & voucher' approach as means to ensure protection have also proved useful in this respect;
- DG ECHO is perceived as the major humanitarian donor in Colombia alongside the Government, which confers on it different types of value added, viz.:
 - its critical mass can help shape the humanitarian agenda of the Government, notably with respect to intervening in the urban context;
 - it can use its leverage to encourage other donors to intervene in these zones;
 - it can maintain a focus on need (visibility).

When undertaking interventions in urban areas, ECHO would need to tackle a number of limitations it was confronted with when implementing similar interventions in the past. These concerns both the duration of the projects and the need for improved institutionalised know-how in interventions in urban settings in the region, particularly in the area of protection.

Current and expected gaps in terms of support provided by the Government and donors to address humanitarian needs in urban contexts in Colombia (JC 5.2)⁷⁵

Several elements show that there was, and still is, a real need for humanitarian support in urban contexts, and that this will also be the case in the near future. Humanitarian partners increasingly recognise that *urban* humanitarian needs have been neglected. They call for support in this field, while acknowledging the consensus on the priority placed on vulnerable rural populations, and hence underlining the importance of having sufficient funding for both rural and urban support.

- Although the 2011-2012 Common Humanitarian Framework (CHF 2011-2012)⁷⁶ for Colombia highlights that “*the marginal neighbourhoods of big and middle – size cities receive the majority of IDPs cases*”, it nevertheless maintained a broad (though not exclusive) focus on rural support. Interviewees cited several explanations:
 - needs in urban settings in Colombia have been insufficiently documented; interviewees met linked this to insufficient recognition of BACRIM and hence of the conflict;
 - given the limited funding for humanitarian aid, donors decided to focus their response on zones where government presence was limited⁷⁷.
- Capacities to address the IDP caseloads in medium and large urban centres are stretched to the limit. Indeed with the passing of the Victims Law, the institutional restructuring of late-2011/early-2012, and the high turnover of government officials, an unprecedented burden was placed on the municipal level, while the centralized registration process itself has yet to become operational. With the increased caseload this burden even affected larger urban centres, which calls for complementary support. Local authorities in these big urban centres openly expressed this need for support.
- Moreover, owing to secondary displacements (either towards bigger urban centres or intra-urban) IDPs’ needs are continuously increased. These displacements are caused by the search for livelihoods in the current limbo of effective implementation of restitution in the framework of the Victim Law, or as a protection mechanism against abuse, gender-based violence and forced recruitment⁷⁸.
- Some groups such as indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians, women, and elderly and disabled people, face specific difficulties as insufficient attention has been placed on avoiding the reproduction of discrimination and exclusion schemes. Indeed, specific challenges are faced by those vulnerable groups when they live in an urban context for the first time and face a de-structuring of their social organization and culture. Interviewees underlined for instance that indigenous communities are strongly affected as they develop negative coping mechanisms such as prostitution and begging. Women victims of gender-based violence are additionally vulnerable as they may not trust the authorities to obtain assistance, necessitating an alternative form of support until they feel confident enough to approach official services. In this respect, the

⁷⁵ With a view to increase the readability of the answer to the question, the order of the JCs has been changed.

⁷⁶ As for August 2012, the document was yet to be approved by Government of Colombia

⁷⁷ An interviewee explained that the drafting of the CHF was more based on its potential to secure limited donors funding (for rural context) than on a complete and holistic analysis of humanitarian needs (that would highlight urban needs).

⁷⁸ According to the 2011 Red Cross Report “*efecto del desplazamiento interno en las comunidades de recepción*” p1, 5, 62% of state registered IDPs are of rural origin and settle in urban settings. More than 8% have had more than one displacement including intra-urban displacements.

presence of the State does not necessarily guarantee provision of non-discriminatory access to basic services.

There is a protection vacuum in cities, pointing to the need for a neutral and impartial alternative such as that provided by humanitarian interventions

- The current Victims Law in Colombia does not recognize BACRIMs as a party in conflict thus their victims are not entitled to support through the criteria of the victim law. These BACRIMs are highly active in urban violent contexts in Colombia and generate a range of humanitarian consequences, particularly affecting children, notably through forced recruitment, gender-based violence, intra-urban confinement or homicides. There is in this sense a legal protection vacuum. Children are also affected in the sense that, as explained by an OHCHR Medellín interviewee, it is estimated that up to 80% of members of criminal groups in the city are minors.
- The need for a neutral and impartial alternative as offered by organizations such as DG ECHO funded Save the Children and CEDECIS is widely recognized by humanitarian partners, governmental institutions and communities.⁷⁹ Indeed, protection activities such as education, psycho-social support, awareness-raising interventions on the rights of children, as well as the development of alternative Roads of Attention (“Rutas de Atención”) to orient and take victims in charge, are considered very important by stakeholders and better able to ensure coverage of victim groups either unable (victims from BACRIMs unrecognized by the law, confined persons) or unwilling (those who fear discrimination⁸⁰) to register with the authorities (operational protection vacuum).
- It was also mentioned during interviews that without international humanitarian funding, NGOs (more particularly national) would suffer from political pressure, stigmatization and possibly closure, resulting in minimization of their influence on urban conflicts⁸¹.

Finally, it should be noted that initiatives are already being taken in terms of enhancing responses to humanitarian consequences of violent conflict in the country. The ICRC is currently developing a pilot protection project⁸² in Medellín that has already identified vulnerable communes where humanitarian assistance is required, taking account of several indicators⁸³ for measuring the humanitarian consequences of urban violence including invisible borders (partial confinement), access, weapon proliferation, access to public services such as health centres and schools, forced recruitment, GBV, stigmatisation, homicides, and disappearances.

⁷⁹ That was confirmed during the roundtable evaluation team interview in Medellín on 17 august 2012 with ICBF, ICRC and Save the Children.

⁸⁰ For examples of reticence to address governmental authorities such as ICBF, see the evaluation team interview with a mother from the community in Villa Turbay on 16 august 2012 in Medellín “*I would prefer that my children do not mix with bad children, here there are many problems of sexual harassment including between children, domestic violence due to poverty, lack of food, abandon of kids, and then comes the ICBF to take the children and leave the family crying*”.

⁸¹ An interviewee stated in this respect «*if you ask me if DG ECHO funding is necessary, the suspension of funding would demotivate organizations such as Save the Children and CEDECIS on top of the stigmatization that has been operated that if they do not support the official government discourse... they would tend to disappear*”.

⁸² The project is taking place in cities of Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and Honduras. It is not currently supported by DG ECHO.

⁸³ Part of them already similar to Save the Children criteria, thus the current plans to collaborate, evaluation team interview in Medellín ICBF, ICRC, SC roundtable on 17 august 2012

Lessons learnt on the ‘appropriateness’ of DG ECHO’s support to address humanitarian needs in urban contexts in Colombia (JC 5.1)

Over the evaluation period, interventions by DG ECHO’s partners in terms of assistance (emergency and basic services) to IDPs and host communities in urban contexts in Colombia (both municipalities and major urban centres) have been addressing the right needs and are recognized as such by the Government at different levels as well as by the beneficiaries. With the institutional restructuring of late 2011 and early 2012 there was an acute need, recognised by the Government, for assistance to IDPs from DG ECHO interventions. The continued support provided via ICRC in Medellin and Cali to assist IDPs, for example, was considered key by the authorities, and resulted in extended duration of the projects in urban settings despite the initial plan for phasing-out. Furthermore, in the case of confined or semi-confined urban communities, DG ECHO’s implementing partners may have been the only provider of support as, for example, in the intervention of Solidaridad Internacional in the Barrio Nueva Esperanza in Tumaco.

There are also indications that interventions by DG ECHO’s partners have contributed to the increased accountability on the part of government authorities and generated incentives for improvements in non-discriminatory public services.

- Protection interventions in urban settings in Colombia have generated incentives for municipalities to improve their response in this field; as an example of good practice the Secretariat of Civic Culture of Medellin took over the support of “community participation spaces” initially implemented by Save the Children and called “Echo House”.
- DG ECHO’s support for UNHCR interventions in urban settings (municipalities and capital) in Ecuador have proved quite effective in terms of LRRD and have increased accountability on the part of government authorities for provision of non-discriminatory access to basic services for Ecuadorians and Colombian Persons in Need of International Protection (PNIPs). Water and sanitation projects implemented in schools by communities hosting Colombian refugees and PNIPs have stimulated intervention by the authorities to complement the provision of services.

Protection interventions by DG ECHO’s partners in urban contexts (both municipalities and major centres) have addressed specific needs and were complementary to those of the Government

- DG ECHO’s partners’ protection interventions in Colombia addressed the Protection vacuum by providing a neutral and independent alternative response on the one hand and by supporting the efforts of the government on the other. For example, DG ECHO-funded Save the Children activities specifically focused on the violence faced by children in urban settlements with high concentrations of IDPs⁸⁴ complementing the

⁸⁴ Save the Children addresses protection needs in a holistic approach in the communities hosting IDPs without distinction between IDPs and non IDPs or the status of recognition of the criminal groups they were made victims from.

offer of services from the government in education (as a mean of preventing forced recruitment and abuse).

- In Ecuador, alternative support provided by DG ECHO funded UNHCR intervention and its implementing partners to unregistered Persons in Need of International Protection (PNIPs) has also proved increasingly crucial, given the passing of a new decree in 2012 narrowing the criteria and admissibility for refugee status⁸⁵. The non-recognition of BACRIMs' victims further hindered the registration of PNIPs for official assistance.

Some specific approaches also proved useful:

- A *community approach to basic needs support* has proved successful in preventing further discrimination and allowing identification of protection needs, in particular for children and adolescents at risk of forced recruitment or abuse. Indeed, both DG ECHO interventions implemented by Save the Children in Colombia and UNHCR in Ecuador identified children by means of continuous monitoring with the communities, thanks to the access provided by their sectoral interventions (education for SC, WASH for UNHCR). Assessing and responding to protection needs necessitates an adapted methodology, given the strong potential for discrimination, and also establishment of functional referral mechanisms such as Attention Roads, which have been strengthened by DG ECHO's interventions⁸⁶.
- A *cash & voucher approach* has also proved adaptable to emergency responses to IDPs in Colombia and by PNIPs in Ecuador in urban contexts, owing to its flexibility, reduced visibility, market stimulation and lighter logistics. Cash & voucher approaches are by now an integral part of DG ECHO's partners modalities of interventions such as those implemented by WFP and ICRC in Colombia and by Tarabita Fundación in Ecuador (under UNHCR mandate). They allow fast delivery of targeted assistance in urban contexts in the initial months after displacement and complement community support interventions providing for immediate needs.

Potential value added of DG ECHO to address humanitarian needs in urban contexts in Colombia, taking into account its mandate and timeframes (JC 5.3)

While several interpretations of the conflict dynamics in urban settings in Colombia can coexist, there is evidence that, based on relevant criteria⁸⁷ measuring the humanitarian consequences of urban violence, the mandate to intervene for humanitarian organizations is fulfilled and compatible with DG ECHO's mandate. Indeed, most actors are promoting the idea of addressing protection similarly in other sectors where humanitarian responses can be triggered based on relevant criteria⁸⁸ measuring the level of abuse or humanitarian consequences of urban violence⁸⁹. That

⁸⁵ Rejection rate was about 50% according to the Direction for Refugees in Lago Agrio for 2012 at the time of study.

⁸⁶ Evaluation team interviews on 24 august 2012 coordination table with UNHCR in Lago Agrio and on 16 august 2012 with the community on Save the Children intervention in Comuna 8 Alticos in Medellin).

⁸⁷ ICRC indicators on urban violence to map high risk communes as well assessments by Save the Children and partners

⁸⁸ ICRC indicators on urban violence to map high risk communes as well assessments by Save the Children and partners

⁸⁹ For example, as expressed by UNHCR representative "a sectorial response in Protection measuring indicators of the level of abuse to trigger a humanitarian response as it exists in other sectors would be a good alternative" (see Annex 4, EQ5, JC 5.2)

approach is fully compatible with ECHO's mandate and is already the basis of the identification of DG ECHO's urban interventions such as those with Save the Children.⁹⁰

DG ECHO is perceived as the major humanitarian donor in Colombia alongside the government. This provides it with different potential assets:

- building on the critical mass it can play a key role in helping shape the humanitarian agenda of the Government ;
- it may stimulate other donors to join;
- it can play a key role in keeping attention focused on humanitarian needs, including those in urban contexts.

ECHO's support in urban areas had also limitations, notably in terms of time-frame and with respect to the availability of institutionalised know-how. This would need to be tackled when in future ECHO takes on interventions in urban areas in the region.

- The one-year duration of DG ECHO-funded projects was often sufficient either to address immediate needs or to stimulate government authorities to provide non-discriminatory services. The limited duration of assistance prevented substitution for the government and reduced potential discrimination between IDPs and impoverished hosting communities. Achievements in protection were also measurable in terms of prevention of recruitment, immediate psycho-social support and opening up of alternative humanitarian space.
- Nevertheless, despite valuable efforts from DG ECHO's partners to combine DG ECHO's short-term funding with medium-term funding from other sources, the one-year duration limit generated constraints on improved self-sufficiency, enhanced coordination, linking of relief with rehabilitation, and complementarity. Indeed, in terms of emergency assistance, institutional capacities (post-2011/2012 reorganisation) are not yet viable without external support and capacity-building. Moreover, the admissibility time for IDPs to receive assistance was too short, it therefore excluded assistance to secondary and intra-urban displacements currently unaccounted for. It also hindered the capacity to sustain advocacy, strengthen Attention Roads and initiate policy changes, elements of the protection vacuum that were compatible with DG ECHO's mandate in communes in which levels of violence generated great

⁹⁰ There is a consensus amongst humanitarian actors that armed groups including BACRIMs are widely active in urban contexts in Colombia and that their activities generate grave humanitarian consequences. As mentioned by an interviewee *"post-demobilized groups are very present, the IDPs fled towards cities to protect themselves but the conflict followed them and is now taking place in urban contexts. In terms of Protection, it is a necessity that the humanitarian community intervenes"*. In the same line another interviewee stated that *"the ICRC observed that urban actors may be different but the humanitarian conditions remain the same"*. However, humanitarian interventions to address urban violence have been caught in a political and policy debate on IHL versus IHRL or more broadly whether response to urban violence should fall under the humanitarian or development agendas. On one hand there is ample justification to advocate for an inclusion of the BACRIMs as a party in the conflict falling under IHL, thus under the scope of the Victims Law, which would provide a most adequate legal framework for humanitarian interventions in Colombian urban contexts. On the other hand, an IHRL approach may be more appropriate as it would allow a stronger public policy response beyond the Victims Law, that is to say independently of the recognition of BACRIMs (as stated by an interviewee: *"The focus on IHL may be counterproductive as it could reduce the incentive for the government to give a complete institutional response beyond the Victims Law"*). However, though the interpretation of the conflict dynamics is multiple, most partners agree to place the focus on the humanitarian consequences independently of the policy framework called upon (an interviewee explained in this respect: *"there is no framework for the response in Protection [...] the humanitarian consequences must be analyzed [...] at the intersection of IHL and IHRL and there should be a discussion that focuses on those humanitarian consequences. There are restrictions in those urban zones that have everything to do with the access from the state and humanitarian action"*.)

humanitarian consequences. Achievement of results in terms of protection greatly depended on acceptance of the humanitarian partner by the communities, government authorities and armed groups which required at least a medium-term presence. The identification of protection cases on a continuous monitoring basis with referral systems not only required longer implementation time but also a more coherent and coordinated identification of geographical areas of work. These elements illustrate that humanitarian needs, especially protection, cannot always be addressed in an emergency short-term fashion. Furthermore, if these target populations require projects that have a longer implementation time, this does not necessarily mean that they can be implemented by development actors, as per the arguments presented under EQ4 on LRRD as well as the difficulty of bringing in government and development actors in these conflict-affected areas, whether urban or rural.

- There has so far been no institutionalized DG ECHO know-how on interventions in urban settings in the region, particularly in the field of protection⁹¹. However, pilot projects have been supported, lessons learned can be identified and the possibility of adopting a sectoral approach to protection may provide DG ECHO with an edge in addressing upcoming humanitarian trends and demonstrate leadership at national, regional and global levels.

⁹¹ « *we are making pilot projects and not a know-how* » (Annex 4, EQ5, JC5.3)

Evaluation Question 6 on the "three Cs"

To what extent were the European Union's humanitarian activities complementary to and coherent with those of other humanitarian actors and stakeholders?

There is an overall consensus on the necessity to ensure that humanitarian activities undertaken by different actors and stakeholders are complementary and coherent. Indeed a lack of coordination can create gaps in the humanitarian response and have grave consequences for the targeted populations. The Council Regulation (EC) N° 1257/96 which created ECHO laid down from the outset the need to coordinate with EU MS, with international organizations and agencies (in particular the UN), and with third-country donors.⁹² This question aims at assessing (i) whether, at policy level, the European Union had an explicit approach to enhancing coherence and complementarities, (ii) whether coordination mechanisms were created, and the European Commission's role in this respect, and (iii) the extent to which the interventions of different actors were coherent and complementary with those implemented by the European Commission.

EQ 6 on the three Cs – Answer Summary Box

DG ECHO was in a position to play a leading role in terms of coordination and of enhancing coherence and complementarities among humanitarian actors. However it did not fully take up this role partly because it was not in its mandate. Nevertheless, complementarities were achieved at implementation level thanks to DG ECHO's strategy of filling gaps in the Colombian State's humanitarian response and to a careful process of selecting implementing partners and projects.

Even though DG ECHO does not have a mandate to coordinate, it could have had a leading role in coordinating and enhancing coherence and complementarities between humanitarian donors. Indeed, over the evaluation period:

- DG ECHO was financially the most important humanitarian donor;
- the EU had committed itself to stronger coordination, both within the EU (including with EU MS) and in terms of promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises;
- DG ECHO has had a key role in keeping humanitarian assistance needs visible.

However DG ECHO has not built further on this potential added value. While DG ECHO has been supportive of OCHA's coordinating mechanisms, it was not in the forefront in terms of ensuring a common international response to the Colombian crisis.

Nevertheless DG ECHO contributed to creating complementarities at implementation level:

- by filling the gaps in the Colombian State's humanitarian assistance
- by including enhanced synergies with other actors in its selection criteria for projects

⁹² Council Regulation (EC) N°1257/96, Chapter II, Article 10.

The extent to which, at policy level, the European Union (and in particular DG ECHO) had an explicit approach to ensure that coherence and complementarities were enhanced (JC 6.1)

The EU had an explicit approach in its policy framework to enhancing coherence and complementarities, and DG ECHO's planning in Colombia took that into account. The Commission Communication on a European consensus on humanitarian aid (2007) called for enhanced EU coordination and for ensuring, *vis-à-vis* other humanitarian actors, *“policy coherence, complementarity and effectiveness by using its tools and influence to address the root causes and prevention of humanitarian crisis.”*⁹³ Less than a year later the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid was adopted.⁹⁴ Since 2008 all DG ECHO's Global Plans, as well as its last HIP for 2012, have mentioned coordination with the activities of other donors as part of DG ECHO's strategy and have emphasised compliance with the European Consensus.⁹⁵

DG ECHO contributed to fostering coherence and complementarity among the different humanitarian actors and stakeholders in Colombia, notably through its participatory process for drawing up its planning documents. Furthermore DG ECHO has been key in keeping visible the need for humanitarian assistance. DG ECHO's annual planning is a participatory process in which it calls for inputs from its partners, namely NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross. This structured sharing of information has been instrumental in promoting coherence between the actions undertaken by different partners. According to participants in a focus group of partners convened for this evaluation, DG ECHO: *“fosters coordination thanks to its strategic documents”*⁹⁶. A representative of OCHA explained that the HIP was taken into consideration when OCHA decided on the allocation of CERF funds (Central Emergency Respond Fund). For this reason the organisation has sought each year to make a valuable input into the document so that it can increasingly be used as a reference by other donors. The HIP has also been accorded this importance as DG ECHO has been the largest donor (after the GoC) over the evaluation period. Based on data from the Financial Tracking Service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the European Commission has contributed an average of 31% of total humanitarian aid to the country, a figure which increases substantially when combined with assistance from individual EU Member States. DG ECHO has also played an important role in maintaining humanitarian actors' awareness of the existence of a crisis by applying its Forgotten Crisis Assessment to the Colombian case in each year of the evaluation period.

⁹³ European Commission, “Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid” COM (2007) 317, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Joint statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: “The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid” (OJ C 25, 30.1.2008).

⁹⁵ Only the HIP 2011 while mentioning coordination as part of ECHO's strategy did not explicitly referred to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

⁹⁶ Focus group organized in Bogotá on 6 August 2012. NGOs and UN agencies were represented only the ICRC could not attend.

DG ECHO's strategy aimed at complementing GoC's actions over the evaluation period. While adjustments were made following the election of President Santos in 2010, the Office of DG ECHO in Colombia has established fluid communication with the APC (*Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación*) without prejudice to the Humanitarian Principles. The APC was created as a result of the institutional changes put in hand by President Santos. It has taken on board most of the functions performed by the former Acción Social. DG ECHO regards the APC as its main interlocutor. Its annual proposal is submitted to the APC so as to keep the GoC informed of future projects. Over the evaluation period DG ECHO's strategy has been one of filling in the gaps that existed, for various reasons, in the humanitarian response of the Colombian State.

The role of the EU (and in particular DG ECHO) in the establishment of coordination mechanisms (JC 6.2)

DG ECHO contributed to the establishment of coordination mechanisms through the support it provided to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) set up by the UN in 2007 with a view to improving coordination between international actors.

- The IASC was created with the aim of improving information exchange and strengthening coordination between humanitarian actors.⁹⁷ Three thematic groups were created to promote a common response in (i) protection, (ii) assistance and basic services⁹⁸, and (iii) early recovery. A cluster approach has been adopted in these thematic groups and sub-groups.⁹⁹
- DG ECHO, as recommended by the Good Humanitarian Donorship and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid,¹⁰⁰ has supported this mechanism by being the only donor to participate, albeit as an observer, and by funding interventions under its cluster approach.

However, neither this mechanism nor any other initiative has allowed a division of labour between donors, for several reasons:

- The National Humanitarian Plenary Coordination mechanism ceased to exist with the dissolution of Acción Social, but by the end of the evaluation period the APC, created in November 2011, had still to fully take up its coordinating role in international cooperation.
- While the IASC has been in place the Humanitarian Coordinator has remained weak. Indeed the GoC has not so far allowed the UN to launch a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). A CAP involves the drafting of a Common Humanitarian Action Plan and allows not only international NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross Movement, but also donors, to work closely together. This process favours a division of labour as donors can decide which project to fund under the action plan or in which sector or geographical zone they wish to intervene.¹⁰¹ The GoC is opposed to this type of appeal because it gives more visibility to the conflict and may therefore hinder its capacity to

⁹⁷ It is headed by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and is composed of nine agencies of the UN system as well as nine international NGOs. The Red Cross Movement participates as an observer and DG ECHO is the only donor to participate in the Committee also as an observer.

⁹⁸ This thematic group is itself divided into four sub-groups: WASH, Food, Education and Health.

⁹⁹ For further information on the division of labour among the different organisations and for the leader of each group see <http://www.colombiassh.org/site/spip.php?article172>.

¹⁰⁰ "The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid" (OJ C 25, 30.1.2008), p. 8.

¹⁰¹ A Country Humanitarian Framework has been under preparation for two years but had not yet been used for a CAP process at the end of the evaluation period.

attract development and investment funding. Furthermore it may be interpreted by the international community as a lack of GoC capacity to fulfill its responsibilities.

- No formal space for the coordination of humanitarian donors exists. There are only a few humanitarian donors, yet they have so far not divided up responsibilities for the humanitarian response they provide to the Colombian crisis.¹⁰² It should be noted that:
 - El Grupo de Cooperantes, a formal group of development partners in which the EUD participates, meets on a monthly basis but no humanitarian issues are addressed within this group;
 - in recent months the DG ECHO office in Colombia has invited donors to participate in the regular consultations it organises with its implementing partners but it is too soon to make any assessment of this initiative, in particular whether it is a step in the direction of a division of labour between donors.

Coherence and complementarities of DG ECHO interventions with those of other humanitarian actors (JC 6.3)

Actions funded by DG ECHO were complementary to those of the GoC, notably in specific circumstances, viz.:

- Where there were difficulties in **accessibility**: DG ECHO's partners had indeed the capacity to enter zones and provide assistance where State agencies were not or could not be present. This was observed during visits to Tumaco, Puerto Libertador, Jambaló and Toribío.
- Where there was a **lack of capacity**:
 - This was the case in the winter of 2010-2011 when regions of the country were flooded and DG ECHO planned additional interventions with a total budget of €2m in support of government action.
 - Another example relates to the gaps in humanitarian assistance delivered by the State in the wake of the institutional and legal reforms that followed President Santos's election. As mentioned in Chapter 2 the new Victims Law has put the administrative burden on local authorities, UAOs, by requiring that they be responsible for assisting IDPs during the first 90 days of displacement before the new Victims Unit takes up longer-term assistance at national level. Over recent months local authorities have had problems coping with the flow of IDPs and registering them. This challenge was observed in the Department Capital of Cali where the UAO responsible for assisting IDPs regarded the support of the ICRC, DG ECHO's implementing partner, as "*fundamental*".
- Where **protection** was needed: despite the constant changing conflict dynamics and the different parties to the conflict (traditional actors and more recent ones), international humanitarian organisations are rather well respected. As mentioned in the focus group of DG ECHO's implementing partners, "*international presence creates a space of protection*"¹⁰³, thanks notably to their strict adherence to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence.

¹⁰² These are according to FTS OCHA 2007-2012: Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden. The US is another very influential donor but its assistance consists primarily of military and police aid.

¹⁰³ Focus group organised by the evaluation team, Bogotá, 6 August 2012.

DG ECHO's selection process for implementing partners and projects has fostered complementarity at intervention level.

Indeed the selected case studies show that DG ECHO took into consideration the past experience of the implementing partners it selected in a certain region (FAO in Córdoba) or in a specific sector (ICRC in protection, UNHCR in assistance to refugees). Such an approach has allowed DG ECHO not only to benefit from the implementing partners' expertise but also to create synergies with other projects implemented by them in a specific region or sector. This type of consideration featured clearly in the Fichops of projects and could in some cases be witnessed in the field, examples being the coordination of the UNHCR with the WFP in provision of food and NFIs, and the coordination between the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross in setting-up mobile health units.

In addition, complementarity was a systematic selection criterion whenever DG ECHO staff at headquarters recommended, or decided not to recommend, a funding intervention (Fichops Section *Recommendation by the Desk*).

Nevertheless DG ECHO's focus on rural *versus* urban settings and its lack of flexibility over the length of projects have posed some difficulties for partners' coordination efforts, *viz.*:

- For a number of DG ECHO's implementing partners the distinction between rural and urban settings is not relevant in the sense that humanitarian needs exist in both settings. DG ECHO's traditional focus on remote rural areas has prevented partners from coming forward with projects targeting major urban centres even though these would have been complementary to DG ECHO's actions.
- The timeframe for DG ECHO's projects is one year. Over the evaluation period, with the exception of the DIPECHO projects that lasted up to 18 months, none of the other projects lasted over 12 months.¹⁰⁴ This lack of flexibility has hampered implementing partners in their efforts to link relief to rehabilitation.

¹⁰⁴ DG ECHO's inventory (*Cuadro Proyectos Plan Global 2008-2012*)

Evaluation Question 7 on efficiency

What were the major factors having an impact in the efficiency of the delivery of DG ECHO humanitarian assistance in the country?

There are two key dimensions to efficiency: the timeliness and the cost-effectiveness with which support was delivered. In the context of humanitarian aid, efficiency may be more important than in other types of aid delivery in the sense that humanitarian assistance has to address acute basic needs or even protect the lives of people. Yet, while assessing the efficiency of humanitarian assistance, one must not lose sight of the challenging contexts in which, by definition, it operates. Conflicts or natural disasters at the origins of humanitarian crises often render the delivery of aid very difficult, restricting the scope for assistance in a timely and cost-effective manner.

This question thus aims at assessing (i) whether DG ECHO's interventions remained in line with planning and were cost-effective, (ii) whether specific (recurrent) factors "internal" to the European Union have enhanced or hampered the timeliness or cost-effectiveness of the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g. procedures, human resources policy, distribution of roles in terms of institutional set-up), and (iii) whether (recurrent) factors related to the Colombian context have enhanced or hampered the timeliness or cost-effectiveness of the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g. capacities of counterparts, existence of zones that are difficult to access, security aspects, etc.).

EQ 7 on efficiency – Answer Summary Box

The planning and costs of DG ECHO's interventions had to be adjusted owing to unpredictable developments. While human resources have contributed to the efficient implementation of projects, the institutional set-up of the EU and the one-year timeframe of DG ECHO's interventions have hampered synergies, potentially undermining the cost-effectiveness of individual projects. External factors such as insecurity and political measures have also undermined the efficiency of operations conducted by DG ECHO's implementing partners. The legal and institutional changes introduced in 2011 have enhanced the efficiency of humanitarian assistance at political level by giving it legitimacy, but these changes have not yet been reflected at operational level.

In several cases the planning and costs of DG ECHO's interventions had to be adjusted to adapt them to unforeseen factors linked to security issues, changes in target populations, or unforeseen developments in the political context. The following elements could be observed in the selection of case studies:

- On internal factors, while human resources – of DG ECHO and of its implementing partners - have contributed to efficient implementation of projects, the institutional set-up and the one-year timeframe have hampered efforts to create synergies, potentially undermining the cost-effectiveness of individual projects.
- On external factors:
 - The lack of security caused by the constantly changing dynamic of the conflict has been a hampering factor over the whole evaluation period, notably through temporary prevention of access to regions.
 - The election of President Santos brought important institutional and legal changes that have created real opportunities for humanitarian assistance, but in the short term these changes have undermined the Colombian State's capacity for humanitarian response, notably by putting a considerable administrative burden on the local authorities responsible for providing initial assistance to IDPs. Furthermore, the unchanged position on non-recognition of victims of BACRIMs and the sensitive issue of the visibility of the humanitarian crisis have remained limiting factors in the sense that the

first has prevented efficient collaboration with State institutions in addressing the needs of these victims, while the second has hampered the efficiency of UNHCR interventions targeting Colombian refugees in Ecuador.

Timeliness and cost-effectiveness of DG ECHO's interventions (JC 7.1)

- **Over the evaluation period there has been evidence that adjustments have had to be made in terms both of implementation schedules (even though the twelve-month timeframe was never exceeded¹⁰⁵) and of costs due to unpredictable factors.** Only one of the five study cases selected – Save the Children UK in Medellin - did not require any adjustment in terms of budget or duration.¹⁰⁶ With respect to the four other study cases, the reasons for revision varied, *viz*:
 - **FAO in the department of Córdoba:** the time for execution of the intervention had to be extended by one month. This delay was caused by the moving of the FAO office from Monte Libano to Monteria for security reasons.
 - **ICRC in the department of Valle del Cauca:** the budget was not revised but the number of beneficiaries was lowered from 45,000 to 35,310. This difference was caused by a decrease in the demand for assistance for new IDPs in 2010, while the need for protection for resident populations increased. The ICRC wished to adapt to the needs of these different target populations. It also emphasised the difficulty of counting direct beneficiaries when assisting groups or families (see Box1 under EQ1).
 - **Solidaridad Internacional in the department of Nariño:** the intervention was delayed following outbreaks of violence and the worsening of the armed conflict in the project regions.
 - **UNHCR in Ecuador:** in this intervention the number of beneficiaries was also reduced. The reason was that the initial target had become too optimistic in the light of a change in procedure required by the GoE and which aimed at narrowing the criteria for registration as refugees.

These adjustments resulted from the close monitoring implemented by DG ECHO.

DG ECHO staff travelling to the different project regions undertook close field monitoring of interventions. DG ECHO has also maintained regular interactions with its implementing partners, both formally through the annual consultations, and informally. This was highly appreciated by the implementing partners who consider DG ECHO to be demanding as a donor but at the same time mindful of developments in the country and ready to adapt project targets in the light of the changing security situation or unforeseen needs: *“One can come to ECHO office and explain the problems met for example the number of beneficiaries that is no longer the one foreseen. ECHO also comes to the field to verify what is happening and one can obtain changes as long as it is justified. ECHO is a very demanding donor which is good.”*¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ With the exception of six DIPECHO's projects.

¹⁰⁶ This intervention could target more beneficiaries than initially planned but this was due to a difference in the exchange rate (SC-UK Fichop 2010, p.30)

¹⁰⁷ Focus group organized with implementing partners in Bogotá on 6 August 2012.

Factors having enhanced or hampered the timeliness or cost-effectiveness of the delivery of humanitarian aid (JC 7.2 and 7.3)

As DG ECHO does not intervene directly in Colombia, not only factors “internal” to the European Union but also factors related to its implementing partners impact on the efficiency of its action. Both are considered here:

- **While some improvements have been made in terms of procedures, the one-year timeframe and the institutional set-up hampered efficiency.**
 - **Improved procedures:** implementing partners stated during the focus group meeting that they estimated that the time required for approval of projects had decreased by almost 50% at the end of the evaluation period. A good project can now be approved within 15 days. This apparently was achieved less by the use of new software than by better-planned and earlier submission of projects. Furthermore reporting procedures have also been simplified by reducing the number of reports from three to two.
 - **Institutional set-up:** the division of work between DG ECHO’s office in Colombia and its headquarters office had no effect, according to implementing partners, on the undertaking of individual projects or even on changes to activities within these projects, which apparently could be achieved rather quickly. However the lack of concerted actions between DG ECHO’s office in Colombia and EUD. has hampered the creation of synergies between projects, potentially reducing their respective efficiency. For example, while the Peace Laboratories were successful one can question whether more could have been achieved by coordinating their work with DG ECHO’s relief work in the same conflict zones and building on DG ECHO’s expertise gained in Colombia since the mid-1990s.
 - **One-year timeframe:** the difficulty of creating synergies between projects was further compounded by the one-year timeframe of DG ECHO’s interventions. Despite the different factors requiring adjustments as described under JC7.1, none of the 123 interventions funded by the European Union between 2008 and 2012 lasted more than a year. As mentioned under EQ6 this lack of flexibility has hampered implementing partners in their effort to link relief to rehabilitation or even merely to create synergies between the different actions they undertook. Furthermore, stakeholders challenged the rationale for this one-year timeframe since funding of certain interventions was often renewed.

- **With respect to human resources, while it has been a factor of enhancement of efficiency over the evaluation period, concerns exist with respect to the next programming cycle and the possible reduction in human resources.** As stated above, good and regular working relations have been established between the staff of the DG ECHO office in Colombia and the different implementing partners from all three families –UN, NGOs and ICRC. There is concern, however, that these resources might be reduced by the end of bilateral development cooperation, as called for by the Agenda for Change, and thus the difficult task of LRRD may be further undermined.

- **The capacity of implementing partners (notably their human resources) contributed to efficient implementation of interventions.** There was evidence from the case studies selected that while some implementing partners were asked by DG ECHO to improve the quality of their reporting and their response to monitoring questions, none was criticized for the quality of their work. Indeed intervention

documents often mentioned their human resources as a contributory factor to good performance during the projects.

▪ **The political context up until 2010 and insecurity were two external factors that have hampered the efficiency of humanitarian assistance.**

Several aspects of the Uribe's administration negatively impacted on the delivering of humanitarian assistance, *viz.*:

- The intensification of the conflict in certain “consolidation regions”: the Uribe government launched in 2007 a National Plan for Territorial Consolidation. While this plan allowed the Colombian State to extend its control over the territory, it also meant that the violence increased in certain regions with humanitarian actors temporarily unable to access confined communities.¹⁰⁸ The high number of IDPs from these zones reflect this intensification of the conflict. According to CODHES, 32,7% of the IDPs in 2010 were from the CCAI regions. The consolidation plan was no longer an issue in terms of the timely implementation of humanitarian projects at the end of the evaluation period.
- The blurring of the civil-military distinction: In March 2009 the GoC approved Presidential Directive 001 as another tool of the Consolidation Plan. It was meant to “articulate” the efforts of civilians and military actors in strategic CCAI zones. This directive contributed to violating the international humanitarian law principle of distinction that is fundamental to humanitarian actors being able to conduct their work in total neutrality and independence during conflict. DG ECHO's implementing partners, notably the UN agencies, opposed this directive at the time.¹⁰⁹

With respect to insecurity as a factor hampering efficiency, as noted in Chapter 2 the dynamic of conflict in Colombia is constantly changing, requiring humanitarian actors to adapt their projects or suspend them when violence intensifies in certain regions. In addition, even though the BACRIMs are not recognised by the GoC as a party to the internal conflict, their actions do have an impact on the humanitarian situation.¹¹⁰ Analysts of the Colombian conflict stated in this respect: *“The gravity of the violence perpetrated by the neo-paramilitaries or BACRIMs has been acknowledged late but each time with more clarity by the government and by analysts. Beyond the issue of their name, there is a consensus on the fact that these groups constitute the main threat to security in Colombia and this has been the case for over four years already.”*¹¹¹

These actors have hampered humanitarian operations in two ways: first because of the difficult security conditions they have created in the country on a national scale; and second because of the indifference they have manifested in relation to the advocacy work conducted by humanitarian actors. An ICRC representative explained: *« With the guerilla we can speak about protection; moreover if we have this type of discourse it means that we*

¹⁰⁸ The 14 zones concerned by the Plan, also known as CCAI (*Centros de Coordinación y Atención Integral*), included 86 municipalities in 17 departments and represented 16,48% of the territorial extension of Colombia. CODHES, “¿Consolidación de Qué?” Boletín Informativo n°77, Bogotá, 15 February 2011.

¹⁰⁹ With respect to the registration of Colombian refugees in Ecuador, however, the task was easier. Indeed the diplomatic relations between Ecuador and Colombia were interrupted under the Uribe administration and the GoE positioned itself as the benefactor of Colombian refugees giving visibility to the humanitarian crisis.

¹¹⁰ The BACRIMs have emerged as the group responsible for the greatest number of unilateral violent actions from 2007 to 2010.

¹¹¹ Restrepo, Jorge et al., “Paramilitarismo: la amenaza sigue viva”, *Razón Pública*, 7 March 2011.

acknowledge them as being party to the conflict and not as terrorists. Whereas it is more complicated with the BACRIMs because they do not have a political approach.”

- **The legal and institutional changes following the election of President Santos have enhanced the efficiency of humanitarian assistance at the political level by giving it legitimacy, but these changes have not yet been reflected at operational level. In addition, they have in the short term undermined the Colombian State’s capacity for humanitarian response. Finally, the sensitive issue of the visibility of the humanitarian crisis has also been and remains a limiting factor.**

President Santos has not only acknowledged the existence of an internal conflict, he has also recognised the importance of addressing the rights of victims with the passing of the Victims Law in 2011 and the creation of the Victims Unit. These political and legal changes have been paramount in the efficiency of humanitarian assistance in the sense that humanitarian actors have been able in recent months to collaborate efficiently with public authorities and redirect IDPs and victims of the conflict to the relevant public institutions, notably the UAOs, after first alleviating their basic needs. Indeed in the field they had to be active on both fronts, on the one hand helping victims in claiming assistance, and on the other supporting local authorities in addressing the victims’ needs.

Indeed the changes that have taken place at political level have not yet been reflected at operational level for the reasons already mentioned. Furthermore, new protection needs arose with the implementation of the Victims Law. This is the case for community leaders helping victims claim their lands. The procedure for claiming land is a lengthy process and this has created tensions with which humanitarian actors have had to cope. Finally, even though the GoC has recognised the existence of the conflict, the visibility of the humanitarian crisis remains a sensitive issue. As noted under EQ6, it is for precisely this reason that the GoC has been unwilling to launch a CAP that would improve the efficiency of the humanitarian actions undertaken by the international community. According to a UNHCR representative visibility is also a factor that has contributed to the reduced number of Colombians registered as refugees in Ecuador since the two countries normalised their diplomatic relations.

5. Summary of main conclusions

Conclusion 1: On DG ECHO's prioritisation of humanitarian needs

DG ECHO support tackled the right priorities in terms of humanitarian needs in Colombia

To identify the humanitarian needs in Colombia and build its strategy, DG ECHO relied on needs assessments conducted by its implementing partners, the validity of which was generally accepted. These assessments identified different categories of disaster and conflict-affected populations, namely IDPs, confined communities and refugees and asylum seekers, all of which were targeted by DG ECHO (even if some categories were not fully covered, as explained under conclusion 2). For these populations, DG ECHO concentrated its support on the so-called 'basic needs', as defined by SPHERE standards and non-emergency needs. Moreover, DG ECHO's follow-up of the Colombian context and its close monitoring of its interventions, allowed it to adapt its support to needs arising from unforeseen contextual changes.

Conclusion 2: On unregistered IDPs and PNIPs

Some populations that were in need and did not receive any humanitarian support remained out of reach, or partially out of reach, of DG ECHO's support, as an indirect consequence of DG ECHO's implementing partner choices in terms of eligibility criteria

This conclusion concerns two types of populations: unregistered IDPs in large urban areas beyond the 90 day limit, and the increasing number of PNIPs that were unable to obtain refugee status. Indeed, a large part of DG ECHO budget in Colombia has been channelled through ICRC to assist IDPs, either in large urban settings or rural zones. In big urban centres, support was focused on recently displaced persons (less than 3 months). This approach was based on the assumption that in big cities longer term support would be provided by the Colombian State. However, unregistered IDPs were not eligible for support by the Colombian State. Hence, in the end they could benefit from support of neither DG ECHO nor the Colombian State. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that after three months the needs of these populations can be addressed by development programmes. Similarly, to benefit from support from the Ecuadorian State, PNIPs needed to be granted the refugee status. DG ECHO has addressed the needs of PNIPs through the UNHCR. The UNHCR focused its support on asylum seekers and refugees, even though 'unregistered' refugees could benefit from community-based support, with smaller budgets allocated. Hence 'unregistered' refugees fell out of reach of support of the Ecuadorian State and partially out of reach for DG ECHO support. This was further aggravated by the fact that the Ecuadorian legislation on refugees and asylum seekers has narrowed the criteria of eligibility for the recognition of the refugee status so that an increasing number of these refugees remain unregistered.

Conclusion 3: On the timeliness of DG ECHO's response

On the whole, emergency response was provided in a timely manner, in particular, ECHO responded quickly to the natural disasters of 2007 and 2010. The one year timeframe created some constraints in particular cases.

Overall stakeholders agree that DG ECHO support was swift and provided in a timely manner. This included also DG ECHO addressing the urgent humanitarian needs arising from the severe flooding in 2007 and 2010 via two *ad hoc* budgeting decisions specifically targeting flood victims.

However, a lack of flexibility on project length was also felt by implementing partners as a constraint on coordination efforts and on the linking of relief to rehabilitation and development in some cases.

Conclusion 4: On linking relief, rehabilitation and development

DG ECHO integrated LRRD in its strategy over the evaluation period and implemented hand-over strategies successfully at implementation level. Nevertheless, LRRD was hampered by the armed conflict and the fact that the government is a party to the conflict. There were also missed opportunities regarding linkages with the Commission's development programmes.

DG ECHO's approach to promote LRRD was based on two pillars: a handover strategy to local actors and enhancing complementarities with Commission development programmes. All DG ECHO's global plans and HIPs for Colombia explicitly devise an approach to ensure LRRD. The evaluation also observed specific success in terms of connecting DG ECHO's support to longer term assistance. There were also examples of DG ECHO handing over projects to local actors. However, governments of recipient countries have a key role to play in terms of linking the relief and development assistance received. This is much more difficult and challenging in armed conflicts especially when the government is a party to the conflict. In addition, while DG ECHO and the development services of the Commission both committed to adopt an LRRD approach in their strategic planning, notably by developing existing complementarities, they did not design their strategy jointly nor implement their actions in concert. The suppression of the Uprooted People thematic budget line in 2006 further complicated the establishment of connections between the two organisations. Nevertheless, DG ECHO has been able to successfully implement hand-over and exit strategies.

Conclusion 5: On interventions in urban settings

Humanitarian consequences of urban violence, notably the need for protection, called for the intervention of humanitarian donors such as DG ECHO. When DG ECHO intervened in urban settings it showed specific types of assets.

Based on relevant criteria measuring the humanitarian consequences of urban violence, the mandate to intervene for humanitarian organizations is fulfilled and compatible with DG ECHO's mandate. DG ECHO's interventions in urban contexts addressed the right needs, were complementary to the Government of Colombia's activities, contributed to increased accountability on the part of government authorities, and generated incentives for the improvements in of non-discriminatory services. Moreover, there is a clear added-value for DG ECHO to support humanitarian protection interventions providing alternative humanitarian space and enhanced access in identified urban communities. Finally, DG ECHO's community-based and 'cash & voucher' approaches have also proved useful.

Conclusion 6: On donor coordination

DG ECHO was in a position to play a leading role in terms of coordination and of enhancing coherence and complementarities among humanitarian actors. However it did not fully take up this role notably because it was not in its mandate. Nevertheless, complementarities were achieved at implementation level

Among the humanitarian donors, DG ECHO was the most important actor in terms of financial volume of its aid over the evaluation period. This confers DG ECHO with a potential leverage to play a key role in terms of coordination. At policy level, DG ECHO did play a supporting role in UN OCHA's efforts to set up a common humanitarian support framework.

At the implementation level, the inclusion of synergy-potential as a project selection criterion proved effective, but the one year time limit on DG ECHO engagements capped the level of coordination that could be developed within this framework.

Conclusion 7: On factors affecting timeliness and cost-effectiveness

Timeliness and cost-effectiveness have been impacted by both 'internal' and 'external' factors.

The consolidation plan adopted in 2007 caused the intensification of violence in certain regions but this is no longer an issue for the timely implementation of humanitarian projects. The adoption of the Presidential Decree in 2009 blurring civilian and military distinction led to project delays with some implementing partners. There were also missed opportunities in terms of concerted action between DG ECHO and the EUD where EUD could have built on DG ECHO expertise gained in Colombia since the mid-nineties, which would have benefited the efficiency of implementation.

Conclusion 8: On estimation of coverage

Estimation of coverage is very difficult both because there was no consensus on the number of IDPs and because DG ECHO only monitored beneficiary populations reached in an aggregated manner.

There were several reasons behind the lack of consensus on the number of IDPs in Colombia over the evaluation period:

- The Government does not recognize victims of BACRIMs and thus these are not counted;
- Different organisations use different databases;
- Specific difficulties apply when trying to obtain the exact number of beneficiaries of multi-donor interventions or operations conducted through UN agencies;
- The fact that persons who have been repeatedly displaced are not counted (cannot benefit from support again);
- The difficulty of counting direct beneficiaries when speaking of massive displacements;
- Victims that wish to remain anonymous or those that do not know how to register.

While DG ECHO provides disaggregated figures on targets at the planning stage, the monitoring of beneficiaries reached is not undertaken according to the same indicators.

6. Recommendations

Areas where DG ECHO may provide an added value in the coming 1-3 years:

- 1. Increase coverage of IDPs in the short-term:** The passing of the Victims Law, the institutional restructuration and high turnover of government officials in Colombia mean that there will be a transition period before Colombian government authorities can fulfil its responsibilities with regard to IDPs. Given the size of its presence in Colombia, DG ECHO would be well placed to provide additional support to IDPs during this transition period. This would, however, require increased funding for humanitarian actions in Colombia during this timeframe. The evaluation recommends that this option is given consideration, both in response to the transition-phase needs outlined above, and the need for urban interventions outlined in recommendations 8-12 below.
- 2. Increase coverage of non-registered IDPs in Colombia and non-registered PNIPs in neighbouring countries:** As outlined in Conclusion 2 above, there are significant numbers of non-registered IDPs in Colombia who are not served by the authorities, e.g., victims of BACRIMs or those who cannot address the Government of Colombia through fear of discrimination or lack of neutrality. Currently the needs of these IDPs are addressed during 90 days even though they remain in a critical humanitarian situation beyond this time limit. In addition, the recent restrictions on the registration of refugees in neighbouring countries have created an increased number of non-registered PNIPs unable to access assistance from neighbouring governments and UNHCR. DG ECHO should consider ways to increase the share of DG ECHO support to non-registered victims both within Colombia and in neighbouring countries in order to increase coverage of groups not reached by the authorities or other international organisations.

The main improvements to be considered by ECHO in future actions:

- 3. Improve monitoring of DG ECHO coverage:** The challenges of estimating coverage of target populations, as outlined in Conclusion 8 above (see also EQ 1 and EQ 3), make it difficult to track the percentage of IDPs, refugees, confined communities or victims of natural disaster that have been covered by DG ECHO operations. In order to better monitor DG ECHO's efficiency in reaching its strategic targets, and thus to inform future planning, a review of data collection procedures should be considered. In particular, it is recommended that DG ECHO seeks to build a consolidated database of persons supported by DG ECHO funded operations, cross-referenced against the share of DG ECHO support provided for multi-donor engagements.
- 4. Enhance LRRD by increased coordination with the development services of the European Commission:** As noted under conclusion 5 above, DG ECHO and the Commission's development services both committed to adopt an LRRD

approach in their strategic planning. However, the evaluation finds that they did not design their strategies jointly nor implement their actions in concert. It is recommended that, as part of its commitment to LRRD, DG ECHO increases dialogue and coordination with the Commission development services, not only at the strategic level, but also in terms of project-level knowledge-sharing. The evaluators acknowledge that this is a joint responsibility and that it may be difficult regarding Commission development programmes channelled through Budget Support, but nevertheless improved consultation and coordination could be achieved regarding the use of instruments such as, for example, the Instrument for Stability and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Measures to reinforce DG ECHO coordination with partners and other donors:

5. **DG ECHO should exploit the added-value that it has in pushing for coordination.** DG ECHO was the most important humanitarian donor financially, the EU has committed to stronger coordination, and DG ECHO has had a key role in keeping humanitarian needs visible. These aspects confer DG ECHO an added-value in coordinating humanitarian assistance even though it does not have such mandate. DG ECHO should therefore exploit such added-value especially in the transition period before the new institutions of the Colombian government can play their leading role in this respect.
6. **Support coordination efforts of UNHCR in neighbouring countries:** The absence of a cluster system in Ecuador created a need for increased coherence and complementarity between humanitarian actors dealing with the Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in this country. The evaluation recommends that DG ECHO supports efforts by UNHCR to set up a mechanism for coherence and complementarity with other partners such as the joint WFP, UNHCR, OXFAM project.

DG ECHO's potential role in urban violent contexts:

7. **Using DG ECHO's leverage to draw attention to the need for interventions in urban settings.** As noted in Conclusion 6, there are significant and growing needs for humanitarian interventions in urban settings. The evaluation finds that there is a sustained need for support in this respect: different stakeholders call for a 'neutral' actor to provide this support; it would be in line with ECHO's mandate; and ECHO has proved through past interventions that it had specific types of assets in this respect. Given DG ECHO's role as a major humanitarian donor in Colombia, the evaluation therefore recommends that it seeks to shape the humanitarian agenda and draw attention to the needs for interventions in urban settings. It should start to build up institutional know-how on its interventions in urban settings in the region in particular in the field of Protection. That could provide DG ECHO with an edge on addressing upcoming humanitarian trends and demonstrate leadership at national, regional and global levels. To achieve this, DG ECHO resources would have to be increased to address the urban humanitarian needs portfolio whilst maintaining the rural portfolio, which cannot be curtailed.
8. **Consider increasing funding for support in urban contexts:** in addition to the advocacy role outlined in recommendation 8 above, the evaluation also recommends that DG ECHO consider increasing its portfolio of activities in urban areas, whilst simultaneously maintaining its vital support in rural areas. Consequently, the evaluation recommends that DG ECHO considers increasing the funding available for humanitarian support to Colombia, with the additional funding being prioritised for support to victims of violence in urban contexts. Further, the evaluation recommends that DG ECHO explores the different available approaches when considering DG ECHO operations in urban contexts, including the following points as a starting point for discussion:
 - **Explore a sectoral approach to Protection in urban contexts:** as discussed in EQ5 above, the question of establishing DG ECHO's mandate to act in urban contexts is a complex one, even if the needs are clearly present. One way to move forward in this regard would be to consider a sectoral approach to Protection, using commonly identified violence indicators as a trigger for a humanitarian response, in a similar way that DG ECHO approaches sectoral needs.
 - **Learn from best practice in providing humanitarian support in urban settings:** as noted in EQ5, there are indications that specific interventions in urban settings by DG ECHO's partners (e.g., ECHO House in Medellin or UNHCR's WATSAN interventions in Ecuador) have contributed to the increased accountability on the part of government authorities and generated incentives for the improvement of non-discriminatory public services. The evaluation recommends that DG ECHO draws lessons on these and similar interventions in urban settings that have proved to be quite effective in terms of LRRD and provision of indiscriminate access to basic services.
 - **Facilitate discussions on the use of "cash & voucher" approaches:** as discussed in EQ5 above, the growing use of cash & voucher approaches by DG ECHO's partners has proven well-adapted to the emergency response to IDPs and PNIPs in urban contexts. The evaluation therefore recommends that

DG ECHO facilitates technical discussions among its implementing partners to draw lessons-learned, strengthen coherence and coordination in this regard.

9. **DG ECHO should engage further in Protection interventions in urban settings.** DG ECHO should strive to address protection needs in urban settings of victims excluded by the Victims Law, especially Children and Youth. It should do so by creating alternative humanitarian spaces and strengthening the so-called “Attention or Protection Roads”. It should geographically base its interventions on relevant criteria measuring humanitarian consequences of urban violence.

Improving DG ECHO’s actions addressing humanitarian needs of vulnerable groups:

10. **Continue supporting the community/neighbourhood approach to basic needs support:** As noted in EQ3 and EQ5, some of DG ECHO’s interventions in urban environments have used a *community approach to basic needs support*, which has proven successful in preventing further discrimination and allowing identification of Protection cases among vulnerable groups, including in particular children and adolescents at risk of forced recruitment or abuse. The evaluation recommends that this approach is continued and prioritised in future support in urban contexts whenever appropriate.
11. **DG ECHO should continue to encourage implementing partners to have a differentiated approach to vulnerable groups:** Specific risks of discrimination arise for vulnerable groups, particularly in urban contexts. Accordingly, the evaluation recommends that DG ECHO should continue to encourage its implementing partners in designing interventions that have a differentiated approach to indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians, women, elders and disabled, in order not to reproduce discrimination and exclusion schemes.