

Work stream 1 – Transparency

1. Progress to date

Spain is part of the IATI and defends this initiative in international fora and policy documents.

The info@od website has been recently updated, as the main tool of the Spanish Cooperation for access to ODA data, also related to humanitarian aid (Spain also reports to EDRIS and DAC).

AECID and its Humanitarian Aid Office provide regular and transparent information to the general public by means of press releases and publications on AECID's web (<http://www.aecid.es/ES/ah>) and social networks (https://twitter.com/AECID_es).

In accordance with the Spanish transparency Law, the grants and contributions made by AECID are publicly released in the “National Grants Database” (<http://www.infosubvenciones.es/bdnstrans/GE/es/index>). Humanitarian call for proposals are also published on AECID's electronic site (www.aecid.gob.es)

The Humanitarian Aid Office has an open and constant dialogue with civil society, the humanitarian NGOs' network and international organizations.

AECID elaborates an annual report of activities, which includes humanitarian action. The Humanitarian Aid Office elaborates specific humanitarian biannual memories which are electronically available to the general public. Spain's Grand Bargain and WHS reports are also published on OCHA PACT's website and shared with regional and local governments.

The Humanitarian Aid Office has developed a new programming instrument, the Spanish biannual humanitarian strategies for its five priority crises, that are also published on AECID's website.

2. Planned next steps

AECID will also continue to publish its annual reports and to update as frequently as possible the information on AECID's webpage and social networks.

AECID will remain open for dialogue and exchange with civil society, academia and media. In this sense, a new humanitarian strategy for the Spanish cooperation will be drafted in a participative way in 2018 and presented to the general public at the end of the year.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

The Spanish Cooperation has recently completed its “Humanitarian Aid Strategy Assessment” from 2007-2017 with the civil society, academia and regional and local governments (http://www.cooperacionspanola.es/sites/default/files/eahce_completo_online_es.pdf) which has proven to be an extremely enriching exercise for the work of the Humanitarian Aid Office and the rest of humanitarian actors of the Spanish cooperation.

Work stream 2 – Localization

1. Progress to date

Following a restrictive interpretation of what is considered as local actors, we have considered only direct financing to local organizations (with no intermediaries) and funding to local actors through OCHA's pooled funds. Thus, in 2017 AECID allocated at least 4.134.675 € to local actors (10.3 % of its total humanitarian funding, up from 4.5% in 2016).

However, the actual amount of funding to local actors cannot be accurately estimated since there are other indirect ways of funding local actors by means of AECID's grants to international or Spanish NGOs or organizations. Complications in terms of reporting on the part of the local actors -who have difficulties in understanding the Spanish legislation and praxis- limit the possibilities of increasing direct localization on a large scale.

2. Planned next steps

AECID considers that the target of 25% funding to local actors in 2020 is very ambitious, but it is committed to increasing this percentage, if the context and legislation allow it. This issue will be discussed with humanitarian partners in the drafting of the new Spanish Cooperation Humanitarian Strategy.

Its priority is to support local actors, mainly governments from Latin America, on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In our formulation documents of the 2018 proposals, we will collect data on the level of execution through local actors to systematize the information and make a diagnosis for future exercises.

In 2017, the humanitarian agreement that AECID has with Spanish regional governments was revised and, among other things, the possibility of financing local actors has been included for the first time.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

In 2017 AECID initiated a project with the Directorate General for Water and Sanitation of Haiti to strengthen its response capacities in WASH. Water purification facilities were delivered and a training and maintenance plan was developed with the Haitian and Spanish Red Crosses.

AECID's INTERCOONECTA project promotes training programs with local authorities focusing on WASH and health issues and several workshops were recently held with Central and South American authorities in these fields. In October 2018, an INTERCOONECTA exercise will include a simulation in a field hospital with experts from Latin America that will come to Spain to exchange knowledge with Spanish counterparts.

Work stream 3 – Cash

1. Progress to date

AECID has designated in 2017 a cash focal point to coordinate cash data, provide inputs to cash discussions and disseminate learning documents for the team in order to build in-house capacity for cash-based programming.

AECID has trained its staff last year on cash based assistance. Specifically, CaLP gave a cash transfer session to the humanitarian team both at headquarters and field in order to improve knowledge related to cash transfer project cycle, clarify duties of cash transfer teams, understand pre-conditions needed to use cash transfer and discuss the ECHO approach to multipurpose cash assistance.

Spain has actively participated in discussions on Cash based transfers (CBTs) at the World Food Program reiterating the call for WFP to improve cash and voucher data provision (cost efficiency and effectiveness of different modalities; expenditures for cash and voucher transfers, etc.).

The Spanish cooperation also took part in the review of ECHO guidelines on Cash Based programs.

In 2017, a minimum of 9.25 % of AECID's humanitarian funding was allocated to Cash Based Transfers projects mainly through its United Nations partners (UNHCR, WFP and UNRWA) and humanitarian NGOs in the Caribbean, Colombia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Palestine, Sahrawi Refugee Camps and Syria. However, the real figures are likely to be higher, as we have also contributed to partners such as ICRC that do cash assistance but do not provide specific reporting details on the matter for each donor. As far as we know, through our contributions to ICRC, we have reached 1.38 million people in 2017 through cash transfer programming.

2. Planned next steps

Spain supports the multipurpose cash transfer approach led by ECHO and encourages this modality of CBTs if circumstances allow.

AECID is open to increase its percentage and this issue will be analysed with humanitarian partners in the drafting of the new Humanitarian Strategy for the Spanish Cooperation. It also encourages the different UN agencies, especially WFP and UNHCR, to work together on common platforms of CBTs distribution.

Over the next two years, the Humanitarian Office is planning to keep training its staff in order to strengthen its capacity in this modality. By the end of 2018, internal guidelines for cash programming will be updated.

AECID would also like to maintain its percentage of CBTs funding in some humanitarian contexts such as the Sahrawi refugee camps and the Syrian Crisis.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

AECID has funded an innovative project on cash based transfers (CBTs) of the Algerian Red Crescent with 285.000 € that promotes for the first time the use of vouchers to improve nutritional status of people with special needs (disabled children) in the Sahrawi refugee camps.

Work stream 4 – Management costs

1. Progress to date

AECID is working internally so that all departments (humanitarian and development) set the same indirect costs in dealing with international organizations. We have also encouraged during the last years the different international organizations to reduce management costs. Moreover, Spain is reviewing some of its partnership agreements with international organizations willing to simplify and harmonise some of the procedures and management costs, as is the case with the WFP and IFRC.

Progress is also being made in reviewing the single grant model for the entire agency.

Last year Spanish Cooperation assessed its humanitarian strategy, which has been its main reference framework for the last ten years. After this assessment, it will draft a new humanitarian strategy in 2018 for the years to come where management costs aspects will be duly taken into consideration.

The Spanish Cooperation has also prioritised CBT as they are cost-efficient.

AECID also has different emergency deposits or capabilities in Panamá, Madrid and Las Palmas de Gran Canarias as a way of also saving transport costs when facing emergencies.

Finally, the co-financing of interventions under the agreement AECID has with regional governments directly affects the reduction of management costs (in 2017 three interventions were co-financed under this scheme).

2. Planned next steps

AECID wants to promote innovation in humanitarian affairs in order to increase efficiency. In this regard it also encourages public-private collaboration, taking into consideration that the private sector has an added value in these issues.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

The Shire Alliance experience in Ethiopia (to deliver energy solutions to refugee camps) is a good example of close collaboration between different agents, from private and public sectors to civil society and international organizations. The results of this experience show a high level of efficiency and cost-saving.

Work stream 5 – Needs Assessment

1. Progress to date

The Humanitarian Office usually integrates its field staff in its priority contexts in the joint needs assessments led by the HCT and its humanitarian interventions are based on the needs identified by the UN humanitarian coordinator.

Thus, AECID's humanitarian context-specific strategies are coherent with the HNO, HRP and HRR led by OCHA or in the absence of OCHA, with needs assessments led by ICRC (for example, in Venezuela) or UNHCR (Sahrawi refugee camps).

In case of rapid emergencies, the Spanish humanitarian aid monitors OCHA or UN agencies sit-reps when assessing its possible response or interventions. AECID also supports the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team with financial and human resources and encourages the use of this international emergency response system and their need assessments. Several members of the Humanitarian Office have received the UNDAC training and could thus be deployed in emergencies.

2. Planned next steps

The leadership of OCHA and the United Nations in humanitarian crises and emergencies will continue to be supported by AECID. It is key that all big donors and partners also move in this direction.

Work stream 6 – Participation Revolution

1. Progress to date

Spain is fully aware of the importance of participation and believes that all intervention should take into account the voices of the people affected by a humanitarian crisis or emergency.

The Spanish Cooperation already integrates the beneficiaries' opinion in the single form of the identification process and in the different call for proposals it publishes. All AECID's humanitarian partners are obliged to have feedback mechanisms so that beneficiary's opinions can also be taken into consideration in the monitoring process and all Spanish NGOs have a code of conduct with specific obligations in relation to beneficiaries.

AECID has an internal ethical and behaviour code in order to avoid possible abuses and bad practices.

In 2017, Spain adhered to two important humanitarian initiatives: the "Call to Action" on sexual violence in emergencies and the "Humanitarian Disability Charter" related to disabled people, so that the specific needs of these two groups of beneficiaries are taken into consideration.

AECID also promotes unconditional cash transfers that support the freedom of choice of the beneficiaries, where appropriate.

Finally, Spain actively supports the implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), launched in 2014 and its humanitarian partners were required to become independently verified in line with CHS criteria.

2. Planned next steps

AECID will continue to encourage its partners to include the beneficiaries' voice as much as possible.

Work stream 7 - Multi-year planning and funding

1. Progress to date

Many of AECID's humanitarian interventions last more than a year (usually 18 months).

However, due to the principle of “budgetary annuity”, nowadays Spain allocates most of its humanitarian funding annually. Some exceptions include:

- NGO emergency or resilience agreements: AECID has emergency or resilience agreements with Spanish NGOs that last for 4 years.
- DREF and IFRC appeals: Spain also allocates multiyear funding through its agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and general appeals by the organization.
- UNHCR - AECID bilateral fund. This fund makes it possible to transfer the execution of funds from one year to another.

2. Planned next steps

The Humanitarian Office is analysing the options and possibilities of humanitarian multi-year funding, specifically for chronic crises that have regularly received Spanish support and for international organizations, which have a framework agreement with Spain.

AECID plans to increase in 2018 its 4-year funding emergency agreements in line with the Grand Bargain commitment. In addition, it is foreseen that a new multiyear planning agreement for the Syrian Crisis will be approved for Spanish NGOs this year.

Humanitarian biannual strategies are implemented as well in the five priority contexts with biannual commitments.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

The 4-year emergency agreements with NGOs have proved to be a fundamental tool for achieving a multi-year and flexible commitment with humanitarian organizations.

Work stream 8 - Earmarking/flexibility

1. Progress to date

In 2017 Spain allocated 6,044,862 € to non-earmarked contributions (15.07 % of its humanitarian funds, up from 9% in 2016).

Spain allocates unearmarked humanitarian funds through the following instruments:

- NGO emergency agreements: AECID has emergency agreements with three Spanish NGOs: OXFAM, Spanish Red Cross and Action Against Hunger. The agreements last for 4 years and include a fixed amount for each NGO. NGOs have the total freedom to allocate the funds wherever and whenever they deem appropriate. They only have to submit a very simple proposal to AECID, which is approved in a very short time.
- OCHA: The Humanitarian Office regularly contributes to OCHA coordination and to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to provide immediate and flexible funding for life-saving humanitarian action anywhere in the world. Last year, Spain increased its contribution to OCHA CERF from 2 M€ in 2016 to 3 M€ in 2017.
- For the first time in years unearmarked funds were allocated to ICRC and UNHCR to support their operations with flexibility.

2. Planned next steps

Spain would like to increase its non-earmarked contributions and its Humanitarian Office predicts that more possibilities may emerge when its budget increases, hopefully in the years to come.

Spain considers that the target of 30% un-earmarked funds by 2020 is very ambitious, but it is committed to increase this ratio, if the context and legislation allow it. This topic will be addressed in dialogue with humanitarian partners in the drafting of the new Humanitarian Strategy.

In terms of transparency, Spain would like to have more information on the decision process of the non-earmarked fund's allocation. For example, on the decisions taken at the CERF's advisory board, since Spain is not currently member of this board. The information and minutes of these meetings could be shared in order to understand the decision process and build confidence and trust.

Also, visibility and reporting are important constraints in terms of non-earmarked allocations. If partners could improve these two items, there would be more possibility of increasing non-earmarked contributions.

Work stream 9 – Reporting requirements

1. Progress to date

In 2017, for the first time, our legal services recognized the primacy of the single audit principle when it comes to monitoring the interventions and reporting of projects. This means that the control or audit exercised by the international organizations themselves is sufficient and prevails over the one exercised by our administration, a fact that provides stability and legal security to humanitarian agencies.

Since then, a review has been made of the different audits carried out with international organizations with the objective of interpreting this principle in a favourable light for them and retroactively.

Our country has reiterated the importance of reporting in the different boards or executive committees where it sits (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, ODSG...). It has also incorporated this matter in its strategic frameworks that are under negotiation.

2. Planned next steps

AECID has been following the reporting format exercise led by the Global Public Policy Institute and Germany and it is currently configuring a simpler report model, adapted to this Grand Bargain commitment.

This issue will also be discussed with international organizations, regional governments and the humanitarian NGOs network.

As the main beneficiaries of our grants are international organizations and we have recently recognized the possibility of submitting their own technical and economic reports, our progress in this commitment also depends on the commitment of these organizations with this pilot exercise.

Work stream 10 – Humanitarian – Development engagement

1. Progress to date

Since the Humanitarian Office is a directorate within AECID, it is well placed to promote progress on this objective. It is able to maintain its independence while at the same time humanitarian aid is integrated in the overall cooperation structure, making coordination easier both at headquarters and in the field.

One positive step has been the inclusion of humanitarian officers in the cooperation offices in the field. By doing so the interaction with development colleagues has been enhanced with remarkable effects.

At the same line, humanitarian country strategies have been shared and discussed with the development departments and their point of view has been integrated. Nevertheless, humanitarian issues were not included in the negotiations of the MAPs (Spain's country strategic frameworks) since they are negotiated with the host governments, a fact that may erode humanitarian principles.

The Master Plan for the Spanish Cooperation 2018-21 includes resilience as an overall and cross-cutting objective.

In 2017, AECID actively joined the discussions in Brussels on the EU Council Conclusions on Resilience and the EU Council Conclusions on the humanitarian-development nexus.

The "Humanitarian call for proposals for NGOs in 2017" emphasized the need to link humanitarian aid and development, as a way of improving action coherence and establishing synergies between different instruments and modalities.

2. Planned next steps

AECID has recently appointed a nexus focal point to coordinate humanitarian-development engagement, determine the main nexus areas, and provide policy and operational guidance for this objective.

The evaluation of Spain's Humanitarian Aid Strategy (2007) published in early 2018 includes evidence about some efforts to create a humanitarian-development nexus, but it also indicates that Spain lacks an overall articulated approach on how to advance. An internal position paper by AECID on the issue is expected over the coming months.

AECID expects to increase its support on DRR in Latin America, in coordination with the development agenda.

The Humanitarian Office is also participating in the trust funds of the EU in the sector of resilience and in general increasing its collaboration with the EU.

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In our formulation documents of the 2018 proposals, we will collect the resilience impact of our interventions to systematize the information and make a diagnosis for future exercises.

3. Good practices and lessons learned

Within AECID, there have been a number of initiatives to link humanitarian assistance and development in various contexts, for instance with regards to the issue of migration which is a common priority. In Central America, both the humanitarian and development departments are working with victims of violence and there is interest in strengthening synergies.

In Colombia, where the Peace Agreement has opened a new scenario, Spain continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of violence which continues to affect large zones of this country, while at the same time it contributes to implementing various components of the agreement with a more long-term, development focus. Although these are separate tracks, Spain looks for opportunities to make connections, so that, for example, people living in or near transitional areas (where demobilized FARC members are concentrated) can transit to more sustainable conditions.

In the case of the Sahel region, two concrete examples of collaboration in food security are the “national mechanism for crisis prevention and management in Niger” and the “Malnutrition control cell in Senegal” which were funded by both departments. A centre for mental support for women in Gaza (Palestine) initially funded by the Humanitarian Office was later on assumed by the Development department.