Subject: Guidance note on the implementation of transport support under the Emergency Support Instrument

Introduction

The Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) was activated on 16 April 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this ESI activation, a flexible and broad financial envelope of EUR 2.7 billion has been made available by the EU to support EU Member States’ healthcare actors.

The Financing Decision adopted on 24 April 2020 covers a first set of four actions for a total budget of EUR 320 million:

1. Cargo transport (e.g. assistance and relief items) from third countries into the EU and within the EU;
2. Transfer of patients within the EU and from the EU to third countries;
3. Transport of medical personnel and teams, within the EU and into the EU from third countries, as well as operational support for mobile medical response capacities;

DG ECHO is responsible for the implementation of the first three actions, while DG SANTE will be in charge of the fourth action.

This note intends to inform Member States about the conditions and procedures to apply for support under the three actions implemented by DG ECHO. The Commission has designed these in a way to minimise administrative burden on Member States. Due to the dynamic nature of the situation and therefore the response needs, the Commission


3 Operational support is defined as operating costs. Such costs can be funded for any mobile medical response capacities, defined as any mobile unit of medical personnel, as appropriately supported by all required equipment and supplies, capable of delivering the intended medical assistance and relief. This funding can be for an initial maximum duration of 3 months (renewable under express approval from the Commission). Operating costs will include all the costs of running a capacity during an operation that are necessary to make it operationally effective. Such costs may encompass, as appropriate, costs related to personnel, transport, logistics, consumables and supplies, maintenance, as well as other costs necessary to ensure the effective use of such capacities.
reserves the right to update the applicable conditions and procedures. In such cases, Member States will be informed without delay.

I. Funding modalities

Under the ESI support, the Commission may bear up to 100% of the eligible costs, where requested, depending on the available budget and in line with sound financial management.

Although the Financing Decision allows for the use of indirect management for operations related to transfer of patients and transport of medical teams, the Commission will focus on the direct management modality (grants and procurement). The two main support modalities depending on the Member States’ needs are:

- Grant Agreement: Reimbursement of costs incurred for transport (and operational support for mobile medical response capacities) organised by MS (via direct grant agreements);
- Donation of procured services: In cases where the direct implementation of a transport operation by the Member State is not possible, the Commission can explore the possibility to offer it via its broker, paid directly by the Commission.

II. Conditions for eligibility

In order to be eligible for ESI support under the three actions, operations must:

- be directly related to the response to the COVID-19 emergency;
- be of public benefit and fit into the national response plan;
- be cross-border;
- be consistent with sound financial management;
- have not received any other EU funding.

Requests can be made for past or future actions, but expenditure will only be eligible for transport that arrived at the country of destination on or after 24 April 2020 (the date of

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4 Grants for all actions will be awarded without a call for proposals. Direct award will be done on the basis of the exceptions provided in Article 195(a) or (f) of the Financial Regulation – grants awarded for the purposes of emergency support operations, or the specific characteristics of the actions that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative powers.

5 Should the Commission not be in a position to offer transport via its broker, this will be communicated to the relevant Member State as soon as possible. This is particularly relevant for the transport of patients as options are limited. Furthermore, cargo operations under this modality will only be approved once the deadline for submission has passed so Member States should consider other options in case of emergency operations.

6 As defined in the Financial Regulation, Article 2 (59): “‘sound financial management’ means implementation of the budget in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.

7 Including transfer of patients and associated eligible costs.
entry into force of the Financing Decision). In addition, for cargo transport, expenditures will only be eligible with respect to items ordered after 1 February 2020 (date from which the Council Regulation activating the ESI allowed retrospective application).

For actions related to cargo, expenditure will only be eligible regarding transport that will arrive at its final destination within two months from the deadline given to Member States for submission of applications. This deadline - see section V for further details - does not apply to transfer of patients or of medical personnel.

The Commission reserves the right to update the conditions/criteria\(^9\), if necessary.

### III. The use of national focal points

Member States were requested in the note of 20 May 2020 to either confirm Civil Protection authorities as national focal points to channel requests from all applicants to the Commission, or else appoint an alternative focal point, by 26 May 2020. In all cases, the Member State should inform the Commission of the relevant contact details.

The Commission will perform an overall assessment of the eligibility of the request. In the application form, the national focal points will be asked to give an opinion confirming whether the proposed actions are of public benefit and fit into the national response strategy. The Commission will take this element into consideration in its assessment.

The requests for funding will be submitted via the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS). CECIS is a software platform provided by the Commission for national civil protection authorities to communicate, supported by the 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). Requests will therefore be visible to all Member States in real time, ensuring transparency. The time the request is sent in CECIS will be considered the official submission time.

### IV. Eligible beneficiaries

**Member States**

Funding under the three actions covered by this note will only be made available to the 27 EU Member States\(^{10}\) in line with Article 1(2) of the Emergency Support Instrument, under which emergency support provided must be in support of, and complementary to, the actions of the affected Member States. The United Kingdom will also be eligible during the transition period under the Withdrawal Agreement (until 31 December 2020).

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\(^8\) In the case of mobile medical response capacities, operational support (in the form of operating costs) will only be eligible for operations starting on or after 24 April 2020.

\(^9\) Including potential beneficiaries.

\(^{10}\) Any Member State authority (national, regional and local authorities and other public bodies; or: private law bodies with a public service mission as defined in footnote 3 of the document *Conditions for Awarding Grants Without a Call for Proposal – Activation of Emergency Support Instrument in Response to the COVID-19 pandemic*).
In addition, transport support for future initiatives directly implemented by the Commission for the benefit of Member States will remain an option.

V. Funding allocation

The Commission has reserved EUR 220 million for the Mobility Package which will be allocated between the three actions based on the needs signalled by Member States. The provisional indicative distribution will be as follows: EUR 100 million for cargo; EUR 100 million for transport of medical staff and teams and mobile medical response capabilities’ operating costs; and EUR 20 million for patient transfer. However, the Commission reserves the right to decide the final allocation for each action according to an assessment made by the Commission of the needs received from Member States, in line with the conditions for eligibility and available funding. The Commission also reserves the right not to allocate the full amount available.

Under this funding, there can be two types of requests:

Requests for cargo transport:

- Applications for reimbursement via grants (or if not possible, use of the Commission’s transport broker) must be entered into CECIS by the Member State from 19/06/2020 09:00 CET until 03/07/2020 17:00 CET.

- An indicative repartition of the available funds will be calculated between Member States that have applied and for which at least one application meets the conditions for eligibility set out in this note. This aims to ensure an equitable distribution of funds between Member States, in line with needs resulting from the COVID-19 emergency.

- If requests for reimbursement via grant(s) total more than the calculated amount for a Member State, the Commission may reimburse only a proportion of what is requested. If a request to use the transport broker exceeds the calculated amount, the Commission may decide to proceed if considered to be in line with sound financial management.

Requests for transfer of patients and transport of medical personnel and teams:

- Given the emergency nature of funding for transport of medical staff and teams and of patients, funding requests under these actions will follow the procedure as set out in point VI, and funding will be allocated to applications that meet the conditions for eligibility set out in this note in the order in which they are received in CECIS.

- Applications can be sent at any time and will be processed as quickly as possible.

The Commission may give priority to those requests where EU added value is demonstrated. The Commission may also prioritise present and future operations.

\[11\] There will in principle automatically be EU added value in the case of patient transfer and transport of medical personnel and teams, and their operations. With regard to cargo transport, this will in principle be understood as referring to actions involving more than one Member State, and may include but is...
The Commission will regularly report on the distribution of ESI funding.

VI. Procedures for applying for support

All the relevant templates for application and technical documents can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/emergency-support-instrument_en.

Please note, when applying for support for actions related to transfer of patients and transport of medical personnel and teams, the Commission’s Guidelines on EU Emergency Assistance in Cross-Border Cooperation in Healthcare related to the COVID-19 crisis apply. Taking this into consideration, prior to the encoding of the request for transport support in CECIS, the competent authority of the Member State in need of assistance notifies the Member States and the European Commission through the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), which national health authorities have access to. Please note that in cases where Member States have already arranged a transfer/transport bilaterally, they will still be required to enter this into EWRS to be eligible for transport support.

VIII. Further consideration

DG ECHO encourages Member States’ authorities to:

- Flag spare transport capacity to other Member States in order to foster efficient solutions with a clear EU-added value;
- Consider ESI support for transport of items purchased under the Joint Procurement Agreement; and
- Seek to give visibility to the EU nature of ESI funded actions beyond the compulsory contractual requirements.

For any questions, please contact DG ECHO at: ECHO-ESI@ec.europa.eu.

not limited to actions such as joint operations between Member States, sharing of transport capacity, and use of transport for the transport of items procured under the Commission’s Joint Procurement initiative.
ANNEX: Visibility requirements for emergency support actions under the Emergency Support Instrument

Effective visibility and communication is crucial to display and stress the EU nature of the funding awarded as emergency support. Appropriate contractual stipulations will therefore be included in any agreements to be signed by the Commission under the Financing Decision of 24 April 2020. Those stipulations will either include or refer to the following provisions so as to make them binding on the grant beneficiaries. Where transport is arranged for Member States through the broker, and therefore no grant agreement is signed, Member States must nonetheless implement the following visibility actions, to support public awareness of the Emergency Support Instrument and the use of the EU Budget.

Communication and visibility for emergency support actions under the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) supporting the transport of cargo, transfer of patients and transport of medical personnel and teams aims to:

- ensure that the public is aware of how the EU is helping;
- provide accountability as to where the funding is going to; and
- foster continued strong support for the EU’s coordinated response to COVID-19 among key stakeholders and the general public.

For communication to be effective, it must be undertaken in close cooperation between the entity responsible for the operation and the EU’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (henceforth, for the purposes of this document, DG ECHO). This entity will also ensure throughout their communication that they grant visibility to the EU in both written and visual communication.

Displaying the European Union emblem
Grant beneficiaries will ensure appropriate public awareness of interventions funded by the EU by consistently using the European Union emblem.

The EU emblem with the accompanying text can be accessed via the following link:
http://www.echo-visibility.eu/standard-visibility/visual-identity/

Whenever the EU funding decision / agreement to engage the transport broker is communicated to the entity responsible for the operation before the operation takes place, the EU emblem must be maintained, for example:
• Through stickers on the delivered cargo or means of transport (e.g. aeroplane, truck), banners and plaques, clothing items (EU vests, t-shirts, caps worn by involved personnel), EU flags.

**Deliverables**

The entity receiving a grant from the European Commission / the services of the transport broker paid for by the Commission will be in charge of the following communication activities. If needed, these activities are to be subcontracted to the cargo service provider or other partners. For operations where funding is provided retroactively, only points 2 and 3 below apply, and no costs for visibility and communication requirements will be eligible):

1. A series of **high-resolution photographs, as well as video footage if possible**, of the operations under the Emergency Support Instrument (departure and/or arrival and discharge of the cargo), with a clearly recognisable visual EU branding of the activities:

• **Technical requirements**

    **Photos** must be provided in high resolution (300 dpi) and accompanied by brief captions relating to the subject of the picture and an explanatory sheet with background information (date, country, city/region, project, name and role of the person in the photo, if applicable). Only a selection of the best, already edited photos will be sent to the Commission.

    **Video footage** should ideally include:

    a) Clear broadcast footage in 16:9 aspect ratio that can be easily re-edited into a video. In case of interviews, transcripts in the original language and in English will also be provided.

    b) Whenever possible, a short (max. 60 seconds), ready-to-use social media video in 1:1 aspect ratio, in English, with English subtitles where applicable, containing comprehensible messages for a non-specialist public, delivered as .mp4 in the standard web resolution (720p).

    Ideally the audio-visual material will be produced up to professional broadcast or publication standards from a conceptual, editorial and technical point of view. The graphic logo “Funded by European Union” must appear at the end of each video.

• **Timeline**

    The photos will be made available within 12 hours after the departure/arrival. Video footage should follow as soon as possible within 72 hours following the departure/arrival. The link to download the material will be sent to echo-comm-cp@ec.europa.eu
• **Intellectual Property Rights**

The Commission will be authorised to use or reproduce the audio-visual material based on the video/photo material licences that must be duly filled in, signed and sent to the Commission together with the audio-visual material.

Whenever feasible, a consent form signed by any person whose image or voice is identifiable in the results should also be provided.

Both the licenses and consent forms are available here in all EU languages: [https://echocloud.echofield.eu/index.php/s/JHNCYqe5PBQ5D8W](https://echocloud.echofield.eu/index.php/s/JHNCYqe5PBQ5D8W)

All forms are available in all EU languages upon request.

2. An announcement of the operation under the ESI to the **national and regional media in the Member State**. The press text must clearly state that the action is funded by the European Union, and can include, where relevant, a quote from a Commission representative. This national press communication, as well as examples of subsequent media coverage, should be sent to echo-comm-cp@ec.europa.eu

3. When promoting the operations on the authority’s **social media channels**, the relevant Commission’s social media accounts should be tagged (@eu_echo for Twitter and Instagram; @ec.humanitarian.aid for Facebook). However, in any social media communication, the Commission should always be referred to as the **EU or the European Union**.