



International humanitarian aid

Policy document



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Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe
AFDRU	Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CivMil	Civil Military Cell
CMCoord	Civil Military Coordination
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate
DCA	Development Cooperation Act
EADRCC	Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department
EU	European Union
FDAF	Foreign Disaster Aid Fund
FMAFEWM	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management
FMH	Federal Ministry for Health
FMEIA	Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
FMI	Federal Ministry of the Interior
FMD	Federal Ministry of Defence
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Committee of the EU
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSOCC	Virtual Operations On-Site Coordination Centre of UN-OCHA
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VENRO	Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations
WFP	World Food Programme



Summary

Humanitarian crises following armed conflicts and natural or technological disasters can result in

- the destruction of economic resources;
- the destruction of livelihood;
- disruption of development programmes;
- a detrimental influence on the investment climate;
- acute economic pressure on the informal sector of the economy;
- acute political destabilisation.

These effects have a negative impact on the development perspectives of a country and can put back development progress by years. The current Three Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy therefore provides for humanitarian aid during and after an acute emergency to enable the population of the countries affected to quickly restore humane living conditions.

By providing needs-based humanitarian aid, Austria helps to protect human lives in crisis and disaster situations, to alleviate and avoid hardship and to safeguard the integrity and dignity of the persons affected. The humanitarian aid offered by the Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC) is aimed at the civilian population in need, especially those groups that are particularly vulnerable in crisis situations and therefore require support most urgently (women and children, sick and disabled persons, refugees, internally displaced and homeless persons). It is based on the definitions and guidelines of the European Union (EU) and the OECD-DAC¹, and on the international principles and legal foundations for humanitarian aid. It is subsidiary, i.e. it is offered if the required aid cannot be provided by the local civil society or government bodies, and is committed to the basic values of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination.

The ADC humanitarian budget is designed primarily for project interventions in ADC priority and partner countries but is also guided by the existing requirements of international coordination and solidarity in the face of international humanitarian crisis situations.

ADC humanitarian aid does not take place in isolation but takes account of a continuum that includes international disaster relief (coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior), emergency humanitarian measures, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development cooperation. This continuum also allows for preventive aspects through targeted measures in the areas of disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness. ADC has the necessary administrative structures to ensure an efficient procedure for the provision of effective humanitarian aid. It is based on a rapid decision-making mechanism and rapidly available financial resources. It provides aid primarily through multilateral and qualified bilateral organisations as implementing partners.

¹ See also OECD publication of 30 May 2005 DCD/DAC/STAT(2005)6: Identifying a common definition of humanitarian work for statistical and reporting purposes.



1. Introduction

The collapse of public order as a result of armed conflicts is responsible in many parts of the world for want, destruction and massive refugee movements. Apart from these complex crises, natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcano eruptions) and extreme weather (tornadoes, flooding, desertification and long periods of drought) cause great suffering for the civilian population of the country concerned.

In view of the forecast increase in natural disasters in the coming years and the much greater complexity of violent conflicts, the need for humanitarian aid is growing worldwide. The socioeconomic impact of these disasters is felt most by developing countries: in a relatively short time, disasters and humanitarian crises can undo decades of development efforts. In disaster situations people's individual possibilities for maintaining their livelihoods are considerably reduced. Moreover, there is a close connection between a country's susceptibility to disasters and its degree of poverty: most of those affected see their livelihoods destroyed from one moment to the next and their vulnerability to secondary risks such as epidemics and famine increases abruptly. The capacity of government actors and local civil society is not usually sufficient to secure the survival of the population affected, and the serious psychological and human dimensions of the destruction have enormous socioeconomic and economic consequences. Whereas material damage in industrialised countries can generally be made good through government measures or insurance, people in developing countries have few resources to face the emergency. Reconstruction deprives states in the medium term of important human and financial resources and the already existing poverty is further exacerbated as a result.

Humanitarian aid in ADC is based on the principles of coherence, coordination and integration in the aid efforts of the international community. ADC measures and programmes in the humanitarian field are coordinated in advance with international humanitarian actors, particularly the appeals from the United Nations (UN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC/IFRC) as a means of strengthening national and international coordination of aid activities by the international community.

At the national level the complexity of the issues involved in humanitarian aid calls for close collaboration by all actors that can offer their assistance. In addition to the mandate for international disaster relief coordinated in Austria by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (FMI), several other actors (including government departments, provincial governments, municipalities, private foundations and NGOs) can finance humanitarian aid measures themselves. Against this background, ADC's contribution to humanitarian aid consists of financing necessary priority and provisional measures along the continuum of disaster relief, reconstruction and development cooperation, and of exploiting the existing capacities and resources as well as possible to ensure the rapid restoration of normal and dignified living conditions.

To ensure that Austrian humanitarian aid is coherent with the quality standards of the international community (see chapter 5.2), Austria aligns itself to the guidelines of the EU, OECD-DAC, international humanitarian conventions and the basic principles of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative.

Austria needs to act in a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility and to take account of the growing importance of the humanitarian dimension in international relations. This policy document on international humanitarian aid provides Austrian Development Cooperation with an internal guide for the strategic design and implementation of cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners in reaction to

international humanitarian crisis situations. It also positions ADC in the framework of dialogue with developing and transition countries, the international donor community and other development policy actors in Austria.

2. Definition of terms

The following definitions are based on those of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. This “lowest common denominator” of internationally recognised humanitarian actors is used by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for statistical and reporting purposes.²

2.1 Disaster/crisis situation

International humanitarian aid in ADC reacts to exceptional crisis situations resulting from one or several of the following disasters:

- wars, armed conflicts, civil war-like confrontations and exceptional social events that result in the complete or partial breakdown of public order and cause movements of refugees and internally displaced persons;
- natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, volcano eruptions, inundations, rock falls, landslides, desertification, drought) and secondary disasters such as epidemics, famine and over-exploitation of natural resources;
- technological disasters (nuclear, biological and chemical disasters), disasters as a result of terrorist activities, environmental disasters such as burst dams or oil spills.

A disaster is a sudden disruption of the functioning of a community caused by loss of human life and/or property and/or infrastructure including essential services, which the community concerned can no longer cope with on its own in spite of coordinated use of all locally and regionally available resources.³

In temporal terms, “disaster” refers to an intensive period characterised by a certain degree of chaos and urgently required life-supporting measures. Whereas the disaster phase is clearly defined by the direct threat to life, health and property, a crisis situation (often referred to as an “emergency situation”) is a longer period of exceptional living conditions in which the coping strategies of individual groups or communities are clearly restricted. In most crisis situations, coping strategies can be maintained only through exceptional measures by a group, community or external actors. This restriction adversely affects the development potential of the community affected, often permanently, and in many cases results in increased vulnerability and even greater poverty. It may also lead to an increased conflict risk and secondary disasters.

During the phase immediately following a disaster, international disaster relief instruments, generally of a short-term nature, are employed. Humanitarian aid instruments by contrast are used throughout the entire period of a crisis situation (i.e. from the occurrence of the disaster until the restoration of normal living conditions).

² OECD-DAC Working Party on Statistics: Improving Statistical Reporting on Humanitarian Aid. DCD/DAC/STAT(2005)6, May 2005.

³ Austrian Standards Institute Rule (ONR) 192320 — “Crisis and disaster management — Integrated operation control with particular consideration of different management methods”.



2.2 Disaster relief

The disaster relief phase is the period immediately during or shortly after the occurrence of an acute disaster, in which exceptional measures are required to identify and localise the survivors and to ensure a basic supply of water, food, shelter and medical care.

Disaster relief is normally provided only in the first hours, days and occasionally weeks of a disaster situation. It typically includes activities such as search and rescue, emergency medical care, fire fighting, the provision of temporary shelter and emergency supplies of drinking water and food. Depending on the nature of the disaster, relief often includes technical aid (e.g. fire-fighting planes in the case of fires, pumping systems in floods, decontamination facilities, temporary equipment to restore telecommunications) and the dispatch of international teams of experts (e.g. forensic pathologists, psychologists). In the framework of Austria's international cooperation with countries affected by disasters, the FMI is responsible for coordinating this phase of international disaster relief.

In contrast to this rapid intervention by international experts, humanitarian aid (see chapter 2.3) is provided over a longer period, guided by the principles of participation and support of self-help capacities. As the crisis situation progresses, attempts are increasingly made to incorporate measures in the design of projects for a longer-term improvement in living conditions. At the institutional level the distinction between humanitarian aid and emergency/disaster relief is based on the mandates and structures in the European Commission, in which ECHO (which is part of the Directorate-General for Development) is responsible for humanitarian aid and the Directorate-General for the Environment is responsible for disaster and civil protection. According to the EU definition, emergency/disaster relief can be provided both within and outside the EU while the term "humanitarian aid" is used only for non-member countries.

2.3 Humanitarian aid

With reference to the findings of the OECD-DAC Working Party on Statistics, "humanitarian aid" or "humanitarian assistance" in ADC is understood as follows:

The aim of humanitarian aid is to protect life, reduce suffering and safeguard the human dignity of the persons affected during and after a humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian aid is guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. During the first six months following an acute crisis it usually involves the basic provision of drinking water and food, shelter and health care facilities, medical assistance and the protection and care of refugees and the homeless. Apart from these core areas, humanitarian aid also entails the provision of other services to help restore normal living conditions. In the multiphase continuum from short-term disaster relief to long-term development cooperation, humanitarian aid therefore also includes rehabilitation, reconstruction and disaster prevention measures.

2.4 Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation includes decisions and measures after the acute disaster phase designed to restore the livelihoods in the affected regions and communities. At the same time, efforts are made to adapt society to the changes caused by the disaster. The rehabilitation phase is usually shorter than the reconstruction phase and often includes a mixture of temporary and permanent measures.

2.5 Reconstruction

The reconstruction phase includes all activities designed to permanently restore the living conditions that existed prior to the disaster. It overlaps increasingly with the

rehabilitation phase and starts with the dismantling or conversion of temporary structures installed after the disaster (e.g. tent camps, field hospitals, field kitchens, temporary schools). Typical measures include the construction of permanent housing, the full restoration of the communal infrastructure and as much as possible the return to life as it was before the disaster.

2.6 Disaster prevention

Disaster prevention is planned to take place before a disaster occurs. It involves disaster mitigation and containment of the destruction in the face of acute risk factors. Apart from disaster mitigation and risk reduction, disaster prevention also includes disaster preparedness measures.

Disaster mitigation consists of activities taking place before the occurrence of unavoidable disasters and is designed to minimise and reduce the damage caused by such impending risks. Disaster mitigation measures also reduce risks by lessening the vulnerability of households, infrastructure and natural or economic resources.

Disaster preparedness includes activities that prepare communities for a possible disaster and anticipate and improve the reaction of the various actors to such an event. As these measures, like disaster mitigation measures, reduce the extent of the disaster, disaster preparedness is viewed by some authors as being part of disaster mitigation. There is an essential difference, however: disaster mitigation measures often involve a reduction in the disaster risks themselves (e.g. by strengthening vulnerable population groups or by averting physical risks through construction measures); disaster preparedness, on the other hand, assumes that a disaster will actually occur. The aim of disaster preparedness is thus to ensure that the various stakeholders are not caught unprepared by the disaster and that assistance is provided in a coordinated manner.

3. ADC humanitarian aid in the Austrian context

3.1 Actors

The complexity of the issues involved in humanitarian aid demands close cooperation among all relevant actors. In Austria many organisations are active in cooperation with developing countries and can also become actively involved in humanitarian aid projects in the event of a disaster. The following actors are of particular significance:

- Federal Ministry of the Interior (FMI)

The 2003 amendment to the Federal Ministries Act, which entered into force on 1 May 2003, transferred the coordination of government disaster management as well as the responsibility for international disaster relief from the Federal Chancellery to the FMI. According to a decision of the Council of Ministers in January 2004, these areas were then combined under the heading “National Crisis and Disaster Protection Management (SKKM)”. Various departments, provinces and aid organisations are represented in a coordination committee set up for that purpose. Within the Federal Ministry of the Interior, department II/4 (Civil Protection, Crisis and Disaster Protection Management) and unit II/4/b (International Civil Protection and Disaster Relief Affairs) are responsible for coordinating the Austrian response to international requests for assistance.



In the event of an international disaster, a request for assistance is passed on to the FMI Federal Warning Centre by the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), the operational heart of European civil protection, operated by the European Commission in Brussels. The Federal Warning Centre then contacts the provincial warning centres, the departments concerned in the relevant federal ministries (FMI, FMD, FMEIA, FMH, FMAFEWM), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and Austrian actors experienced in disaster relief (Austrian Red Cross, Austrian NGOs, mountain rescue service, Federal Fire Brigade Association, etc.), which in turn report their available standby capacities. After clarification within the FMI of available budget resources, a standard administrative and logistical process is set in motion to transport relief teams and materials to the site of the disaster, normally within five days of its occurrence.

This initial response by the FMI is generally completed within a few days or weeks of the occurrence of the disaster. The FMI regards the FMEIA as having responsibility for longer-term international humanitarian aid, and this is indeed exercised by the FMEIA, even if this responsibility is not explicitly specified in the Federal Ministries Act of 2003 mentioned above, or in the subsequent 2004 decision of the Council of Ministers. In accordance with international requirements, a clear definition of national competencies is essential. These guidelines are designed to assist in this process.

- Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (FMEIA) and Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

The FMEIA drafts the Three Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy, which also provides the basis for the work of ADA. Department VII.3 of the FMEIA is responsible for the strategic orientation of international humanitarian aid, taking account of the fact that humanitarian aid is becoming increasingly structured internationally and needs to be viewed more than ever as an integral part of development policy. ADA is responsible for the operational implementation of ADC programmes and projects, including humanitarian aid. A position devoted to humanitarian aid was set up on 1 January 2004 in ADA, and within the agency's corporate concept humanitarian aid is defined as one of ADA's areas of responsibility.

In the event that the FMEIA is notified of a disaster by the Federal Ministry of the Interior Federal Warning Centre, the FMEIA and ADA decide whether humanitarian aid can be provided in that specific case and how it should be structured (see chapter 5.2). This initial decision is based on the annual ADC budget for humanitarian aid. Subsequently, the selection and thematic adaptation of ADA funding instruments, communication with suitable bilateral and multilateral implementing organisations and the incorporation of the corresponding aid measures in the activities of other Austrian and international actors take place.

- Federal Ministry of Defence (FMD)

Since 1960 the Austrian armed forces have been involved in peacekeeping operations and aid operations throughout the world. The training, seconding, personnel administration and care of members of the armed forces sent on peace support operations (FUO) is currently the responsibility of the International Operations Command (KdoIE), a task to be taken over in future by the Armed Forces Command (SKKdo) and, as far as international humanitarian disaster relief (IHKH) is concerned, by the ABC Defence Training School. The Austrian armed forces abroad are commanded by the KdoIE (in future SKKdo).

In a specific instance the FMD can become involved outside the existing international operations (UN, EU, NATO) through the Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit (AFDRU) and can send specialist troop units (e.g. for logistics, water treatment,

health care, food supply, telecommunications, bridge building) to international disaster areas. However, because of the political mandate of military forces and the OECD criteria for ODA accountability, these activities are not always regarded as humanitarian aid. In order to avoid the inadmissible mixing of politico-military and humanitarian goals, the cooperation between civilian and military actors is subsidiary (if civilian forces are not sufficient) and based on the relevant rules and regulations for the use of military resources⁴.

Apart from OCHA, the coordination instruments of particular relevance to the FMD are the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) within NATO and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and EU Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). Through these institutions the international requests for assistance are coordinated with the assistance offered by international military and non-military actors. The Civil Military Cell (CivMil) within the EU Military Staff is also likely to become increasingly important in disaster reaction capability activities, particularly with regard to the coordination of military resources for immediate disaster relief.

The operation command posts responsible for Civil-Military Coordination (CIMCoord) and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) within the FMD are of particular importance in terms of humanitarian aid. The basic idea behind CIMIC is the cooperation and coordination of civilian and military forces at all command levels. The Operations Command department is responsible for planning CIMIC within NATO operations, EU operations outside the EU and CMCoord within the UN. At the international level, military assistance is provided only in response to an official request of the country concerned and under the responsibility of civilian authorities. Nevertheless, the military forces are led by military commanders.

- Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management (FMAFEWM)

The FMAFEWM (Ministry of Life) has an annual budget for international food aid, which is used according to the criteria for implementation of the 1999 international Food Aid Convention. Section III/3 within the Ministry is responsible for its implementation. The annual programming for aid measures financed from this budget is drafted and proposed by the FMEIA and then coordinated with the FMAFEWM for the following three categories of food crisis: 1. foreseeable crises, 2. forgotten crises, 3. acute crises.

The FMAFEWM may commission ADA to implement all or part of the annual programme.

- Other federal ministries, provinces and municipalities

Other ministries such as the Federal Ministry of Health provide support on an ad hoc basis, e.g. through the financing and provision of medical and hospital expertise. Provincial governments sometimes provide resources from their development cooperation budgets for disaster relief, humanitarian aid and reconstruction, for example in the aftermath of the tsunami in 2005.

All federal ministries may in principle appeal to the Foreign Disaster Aid Fund (FDAF) to finance humanitarian aid measures.

⁴ <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/mcda/refman/>



■ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

National and international NGOs have a special role to play in humanitarian aid as they often have local structures and partner organisations as well as years of professional experience in carrying out humanitarian operations. Moreover, aid organisations in Austria have been very successful at informing the population about humanitarian crises and mobilising aid and additional donations. The various organisations have different competencies and regions where they are operational. In many cases several organisations will be operational in a disaster, with their efforts normally being coordinated at the international level.

NGOs are part of civil society and therefore have an important social function. When they work together with partner organisations from the South and East — on humanitarian aid, for example — they also perform an advocacy function for the people affected by the emergency situation. Cooperation with NGOs helps to strengthen democratic structures worldwide in the long term and to provide humanitarian aid that is sustainably anchored in civil society.

■ International actors

Apart from their importance in terms of international quality control and standardisation or direct implementation of logistically complex operations, international organisations such as UN-OCHA, ECHO and ICRC/IFRC play a major role in identifying humanitarian needs and defining a coordinated international aid profile. In the initial phase after the occurrence of an international crisis situation, UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams normally carry out initial assessments of the extent of the disaster and identify the most urgently required aid. This information is also incorporated in the ADC's internal appraisal of a disaster: ADA normally compiles a review of international situation reports in connection with appeals for assistance by the country affected. The dispatches by the EU-MIC, NATO-EADRCC, flash appeals by UN-OCHA and the ICRC/IFRC and situation reports by national and international NGOs are very important sources of information in this regard. This makes it possible to correlate the documented humanitarian need with the corresponding measures (see chapter 5.2).

In view of the frequent overlapping of disaster relief and humanitarian aid, coordination with the European Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) as part of the Commission's civil defence mechanism is particularly vital.

3.2 Programming

The Austrian Development Cooperation Act does not explicitly mention humanitarian aid. However, the approach formulated in the Three Year Programme is legitimated by section 1(2) of the Act: "Development policy shall comprise any measure by the Federal Government that aims at promoting sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries or preventing any impairment to such a development."

As humanitarian aid projects are normally a reaction to a specific topical event, instead of detailed resource programming in advance (as is the case with the annual planning for ADA country and regional programmes), a basic regional focus is set with account taken of the following factors:

- necessary additional resources for crisis situations from the past programme year;
- programmable resources for humanitarian interventions in ADC key regions or priority countries;
- programmable resources for humanitarian interventions in non-key regions.

As every crisis situation has specific causes and requires specific responses adapted to the needs of the population concerned and to their immediate situation, a decision of principle is made first of all by ADA and the FMEIA as how best to structure the humanitarian response. The selection and thematic adaptation of the ADA funding instruments and the incorporation of the corresponding emergency humanitarian measures in the activities of other Austrian and international actors are based on this decision.

Within its area of responsibility and in accordance with its statutory mandate (§8 Development Cooperation Act, Legal Gazette I no. 49/2002 as amended by Legal Gazette I no. 65/2003), ADA can provide operational capacities for the implementation of humanitarian measures to federal ministries other than the FMEIA, when such humanitarian measures are financed from the Foreign Disaster Aid Fund.

3.3 Coordination and coherence

■ Interministerial communication

In addition to its role as the leading federal department for international disaster relief, the FMI organises regular interministerial meetings, e.g. a “jour fixe” for international civil defence and disaster relief, in which the federal actors involved in humanitarian aid (normally FMI, FMEIA, FMD and ADA) discuss the coordination and latest developments in the individual federal departments.

■ Crisis team for international humanitarian aid and disaster relief

There is also the possibility of setting up a crisis team led by the FMI in which coordinated humanitarian interventions, from short-term disaster relief to longer-term reconstruction, can be discussed and specific measures adopted for the exchange of assessment information, the use of logistic synergies and the communication of financial requirements to the Federal Government.

■ Foreign Disaster Aid Fund

If in a specific case there are insufficient funds available for humanitarian interventions in the earmarked budgets of the individual federal departments, the Council of Ministers can approve additional federal government finance for the Foreign Disaster Aid Fund. This fund is located in the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (FMEIA).

The Federal Law on the Foreign Disaster Aid Fund was adopted by the National Council in January 2005 in response to the tsunami disaster in December 2004. Submissions to the Council of Ministers are generally prepared by the individual federal departments on their own responsibility.

■ International information networks

The actors governed by public law in Austria that are involved in international humanitarian aid have access to various information networks, e.g. the EU Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) of the European Civil Protection Cooperation Mechanism (Environment Directorate-General), NATO’s Euro-Atlantic



Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), the UN-OCHA Virtual Operations On-Site Coordination Centre (OSOCC) or flash appeals and situation reports by UN-OCHA and ICRC/IFRC, which are published and regularly updated on the organisations' websites. The situation reports by national and international NGOs that are often circulated informally among the actors after a disaster has occurred are also an important source of information for an appraisal of the situation and for the coordination of a concerted Austrian aid profile.

■ EU Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC)

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Committee is made up of delegates from all EU Member States, including an Austrian representative from section VII.3 of the FMEIA. The Committee generally meets once a month. In addition, every EU Council Presidency normally convenes an informal HAC meeting for substantive in-depth discussion on aspects of humanitarian aid, e.g. better donor coordination. At the HAC meetings the Member States review the Annual Global Plans and individual decisions of ECHO, which also uses the HAC framework to obtain information about programme decisions and to present and discuss its annual strategy.

■ Participation in international donor conferences

The financing of short-term and medium-term humanitarian measures in the event of an international disaster is beyond the capacities of individual countries, and for this reason the aid has to be coordinated at the international level. One way of doing this is through international donor conferences at which the participating states indicate the extent to which they are willing to contribute to the international aid efforts.

4. Basic principles of humanitarian aid in ADC

The basic principles described below are based on international standards, conventions and agreements. They apply equally to all areas of intervention and all ADC humanitarian aid instruments.⁵

■ Humanity, neutrality, impartiality, non-discrimination

ADC humanitarian aid is provided exclusively on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination, i.e. regardless of the ethnic, religious and political affiliations of the people affected. Aid that is not provided in accordance with these principles — even if well-intended or effective — is *not* classified as humanitarian aid.

According to the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, humanitarian aid must be impartial, i.e. “without any adverse distinction”. This impartiality is an essential prerequisite for access to the affected civilian population on all sides of a conflict and for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel in the field. It is ensured, among other things, by the primary role that civil organisations play in the implementation of Austrian humanitarian activities, as they are accepted by all parties to a conflict as being neutral.

■ Needs orientation

Humanitarian aid must provide a direct response to the needs of the population concerned. ADC funding for humanitarian aid is provided on the basis of needs

⁵ The statutory instruments, international conventions and standards are listed in the annex.

assessments and in coordination with the aid efforts of the international community. The cultural characteristics of the places where humanitarian aid is provided are to be taken into account at all times and aid efforts are to be adapted accordingly. Only culturally adequate aid will reach the people affected and be accepted by them.

■ Guarantee of minimum standards/evaluation

To guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian aid programmes, all ADC-funded humanitarian measures must comply with minimum standards set forth in the Humanitarian Charter and the Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. An important principle of humanitarian aid in disaster and crisis situations is “do no harm” (conflict sensitivity), i.e. the avoidance of negative effects of humanitarian interventions. According to this principle unintended consequences of humanitarian aid should be examined critically and the undesired exacerbation or prolongation of a conflict (or the possibility of humanitarian aid causing a conflict) must be identified, avoided and attenuated. This calls for a review of the content and operational aspects of humanitarian projects and programmes in terms of their conflict relevance, conflict risks and actual impact. At ADA, the relevant technical expertise for such reviews can be provided, *inter alia*, by the unit for quality assurance and knowledge management (particularly by the desks for human rights, democratisation and peace-building). The environmental impact of aid, in particular in environmentally sensitive areas, must also be considered.

■ Strengthening coordination

ADC humanitarian aid is based on the principles of coherence, coordination and integration into the aid efforts of the international community. ADC humanitarian projects and programmes are coordinated in advance with international humanitarian actors, considering particularly the reports and appeals of the EU, UN and ICRC/IFRC, in order to better coordinate aid efforts by the international community. At the same time coordination between international partners, national governments, existing civil society organisations and the affected population itself must also be ensured.

5. Strategic orientation of humanitarian aid in ADC

5.1 Thematic positioning

The aims of international humanitarian aid in ADC supplement the international disaster relief mandate coordinated in Austria by the FMI. The main aim of FMI international disaster relief (in many cases accompanied by disaster relief measures provided by the FMD and diverse Austrian NGOs) is generally to identify the survivors of a disaster and to provide them with vital services to safeguard their survival. The speed with which aid is provided and the professionally coordinated provision of external experts are critical factors in this regard.

The instruments of international disaster relief are not usually sufficient to bridge the gap between the acute disaster phase and the longer-term development context in the country concerned, as they are dependent on many external resources that are normally available only in the short or medium term. It is therefore essential for a donor state to make provisions in its humanitarian aid for longer-term support of the “self-help capacities” of an affected community and for a gradual transformation away from external interventions towards the affected community’s individual initiative and self-reliance. With this approach ADC humanitarian aid complements the international disaster relief efforts of the FMI, since it permits systematic support



to be provided not only for the immediate disaster phase but also for the subsequent rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, as well as for disaster prevention.

5.2 Thematic areas/scope of application

The thematic areas of ADC international humanitarian aid can be summarised as follows (see fig. 1, page 16).

■ Emergency humanitarian measures

Emergency humanitarian measures are the first way of providing humanitarian aid in an international disaster situation. They are carried out in close coordination with international aid efforts and with existing Austrian structures or those created in the course of disaster. This usually involves an exchange of information derived from assessments, the use of transport synergies and a certain amount of budgetary coordination between the individual federal departments. The emergency humanitarian measures are carried out in close cooperation with local partners and structures in an attempt to enable short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction measures to be instituted within the first six months of the disaster (particularly with regard to infrastructure and equipment) so as to facilitate incoming aid, prevent the impact of the disaster from worsening and gradually to restore a minimum level of self-sufficiency. In this phase, the long-term development goals should already be taken into account as far as possible.

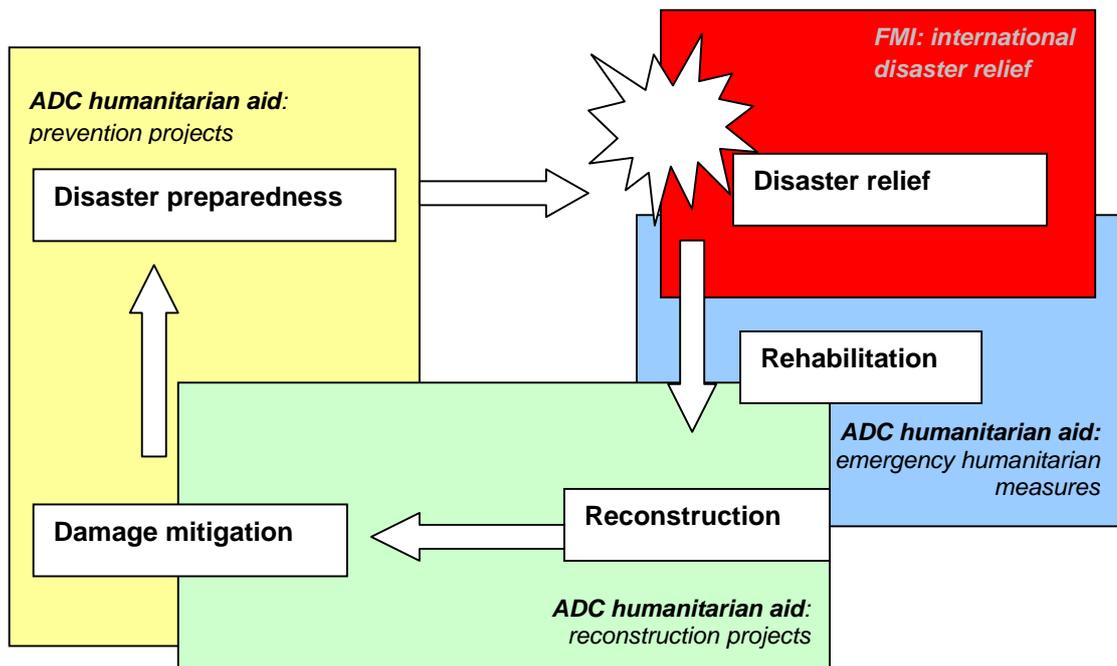


Fig. 1: Phases and definitions of international humanitarian aid in ADC

■ Reconstruction

After the first six months and an analysis of the project and evaluation reports and international appeals available until then, reconstruction projects can be initiated to follow the emergency measures. Reconstruction involves the transfer from temporary facilities to a permanent infrastructure and any measures that enable the population to return to normal living conditions and exercise their options for self-determination and coping with the crisis. The long-term development goals must already be considered at this phase, since the reconstruction stage is a particularly suitable moment for establishing a basis for reducing future vulnerability. Moreover,

accompanying development measures can be implemented using the various financial resources that may be available at this stage. This is also a particularly opportune time to initiate appropriate building measures to establish a degree of sustainable management of natural resources.

■ Prevention

Preventive measures are usually relevant during/after the reconstruction phase but can also take place in the regular context of development work without a prior crisis situation. Disaster mitigation and preparedness projects are always assessed in the context of regional ADC approaches and linked with the programming in priority countries and key regions. ADC humanitarian aid does not provide for any preventive measures outside ADC key regions.

5.3 Target groups

ADC humanitarian aid operates on the principle of non-discrimination of the people affected by a disaster or crisis. Aid is provided irrespective of ethnicity, religion, society, nationality, social status or political creed, first and foremost on the principle of need. ADC humanitarian aid is oriented primarily towards:

- civilian population in need;
- population groups who are particularly vulnerable in emergency situations and therefore most urgently require support (women and children, poor, sick and disabled persons);
- refugees, IDPs and the homeless.

Vulnerable groups can vary depending on the disaster situation itself. They must therefore be identified in each case on the basis of needs assessments.

5.4 Target countries

ADC humanitarian aid is oriented primarily towards the following target countries:

- ADC priority and partner countries and their neighbouring states;
- other developing countries and regions affected by major humanitarian crises that are given priority by international donor conferences;
- transition countries as defined by OECD-DAC affected by major humanitarian crises and for which Austria has a particular humanitarian mandate in the framework of international and European solidarity.

Humanitarian aid interventions in ADC priority countries are coordinated with development cooperation sector priorities so as to ensure continuity and continued financing through longer-term structural development cooperation programmes. Humanitarian aid in countries in which ADC has no local structures and national development cooperation budgets is provided exclusively by partner organisations with local structures, a long-term development cooperation commitment and a diversified financial basis. This ensures that the aid financed by Austria is incorporated in the programme portfolio of the partner organisations and is maintained after the Austrian humanitarian resources have been phased out and that a transition to long-term development cooperation can be effected. Particular attention is paid to “forgotten crises” in ADC partner countries regardless of whether these crises attract media attention or not.



With reference to the areas of activity described in chapter 5.2 the geographical orientation of ADC international humanitarian aid can be described as follows:

	Thematic activities		
	Emergency relief	Reconstruction	Prevention
ADC priority countries/ key regions			YES
non-priority countries		YES	NO

Tab. 1: Scope of application of international humanitarian aid in ADC

5.5 Implementing partners

Humanitarian aid measures are carried out primarily by humanitarian NGOs⁶, multilateral organisations⁷ and civil partner organisations in the target countries affected.

Financing instruments can be in the form of earmarked contributions or co-financing of NGO aid projects that are also funded by own and/or third-party resources. Also possible is contract financing of humanitarian aid projects in accordance with section 5 of the Development Cooperation Act. Implementing partners for ADC humanitarian aid normally fall under the following categories:

■ International and multilateral organisations

Through its non-earmarked core contributions to UN organisations involved in humanitarian aid (e.g. OCHA, UNHCR, WFP) and to the ICRC and with the employment of Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) in UN aid organisations, Austria helps to ensure that UN aid organisations and the ICRC can provide aid in crisis and disaster situations in a rapid and coordinated manner.⁸ If necessary, further resources from the ADC humanitarian aid budget can be earmarked for UN aid organisations. These allocations are of importance in particular when UN aid organisations or the ICRC are managing and directing the aid in the target country and are in a position to ensure the rapid and unbureaucratic implementation of the measures that Austria funds in accordance with its guidelines⁹. Multilateral organisations can also submit specific project proposals for funding.

■ National and international NGOs

The cooperation with NGOs and civil contract partners is based on the principle of partnership. Project management (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) of the aid is the responsibility of the contract partners, which are required to operate in accordance with the basic principles of humanitarian aid and international standards. As professional humanitarian aid calls for extensive organisational and technical competencies, capacities and experience, only NGOs and civil organisations that comply with a series of predefined criteria are considered as partner organisations for the implementation of emergency humanitarian measures.¹⁰ Since 2006 these criteria have been reviewed in an accreditation

⁶ This term includes all organisations defined in section 3 (2) of the DCA.

⁷ In particular UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA, WFP, WHO and ICRC; also UNDP, UNODC and FAO where applicable.

⁸ The administration and decision as to the allocation of multilateral funds to the ICRC, UNHCR, OCHA and CERF is the responsibility of the FMEIA department VII.3. For funds to WFP it is section III/3 of the FMAFEWM.

⁹ This applies above all to situations in which because of administrative necessities (visas for staff members, organisational/technical equipment, etc.) other aid organisations do not yet have capacities to carry out humanitarian aid measures promptly.

¹⁰ Organisations that do not meet the criteria have the possibility of building up capacities and competencies through other instruments (e.g. ADC co-financing). Because of the special

procedure based on the ECHO model, and the accredited prequalified actors are stored in an ADA database so that funding guidelines can be communicated more rapidly. To strengthen local capacities, organisations that cooperate with local partners (local NGOs, national institutions and administrative bodies) are preferred as contract partners. The creation of greater prevention and self-help capacities in the target country is enhanced by transferring know-how and strengthening local structures (participative approach).

■ Organisations involved in civil-military cooperation

Humanitarian aid is provided primarily by civil organisations so as to prevent the unacceptable mixing of politico-military goals and humanitarian requirements and the politicisation of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid organisations are committed solely to humanitarian principles whereas armed forces have a political mandate and basically pursue a military logic. Because of these different mandates it is important to clearly define the basis and framework for cooperation between aid organisations and armed forces. The Oslo Guidelines of 1994 by UN-OCHA provide a useful framework for this cooperation. If necessary military resources are used in a supporting role where civilian forces are inadequate or insufficient (subsidiarity) and — in accordance with rules for the use of military and civil defence resources — in disaster relief. The management and responsibility for humanitarian actions always remains with the civilian authorities. The coordination of civil and military activities is vital and should be designed to ensure and safeguard access by aid organisations to the affected population.¹¹

requirements in the humanitarian sector they cannot be considered as ADC contract partners for humanitarian aid.

¹¹ See also: Civil-Military relationship in Complex Emergencies, IASC Reference Paper, 2004.



Annex

Statutory instruments, international conventions and standards

The following statutory instruments form the legal context for ADC international humanitarian aid:

Anderson, Mary B.: Do No Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War. Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., London, 1999

Three Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy as most recently amended
<http://www.entwicklung.at/en/services/publications/programmes.html>

Development Cooperation Act, Federal Gazette I No. 49/2002, 49th Federal Law, as amended in 2003, Federal Gazette 961, 65th Federal Law
http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/development_cooperation_law.pdf

Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocols of 1977
<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/genevaconventions>

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women – Policy Document of Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Vienna, April 2006

Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief, Project DPR 213/3 MCDA, U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva, May 1994

Humanitäre Hilfe auf dem Prüfstand: Prinzipien, Kriterien und Indikatoren zur Sicherstellung und Überprüfung der Qualität in der Humanitären Hilfe. VENRO Arbeitspapier Nr. 14, Verband Entwicklungspolitischer Deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen e.V., Bonn, August 2005
<http://www.venro.org/english.html>

Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), New York, 2006
<http://www.ineesite.org>

Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship, Endorsed in Stockholm, 17 June 2003
<http://www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org>

Reference Manual on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Relief Operations (MCDA); UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva, 1995

The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
<http://www.sphereproject.org>

Yonder, A., Akcar, S., Goplan, P.: Women's Participation in Disaster Relief and Recovery. Population Council, USA, 2005
<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/seeds/Seeds22.pdf>

Summary of EU legislation on humanitarian aid
<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/s05010.htm>