

# Humanitarian Action Strategy Paper Spanish Development Cooperation Executive Summary



MINISTERIO  
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES  
Y DE COOPERACIÓN

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO  
DE COOPERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE PLANIFICACIÓN  
Y EVALUACIÓN DE POLÍTICAS PARA EL DESARROLLO

# 1. Strategy presentation

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The Humanitarian Action Strategy Paper for Spanish Development Cooperation is based fundamentally on Act 23/1998, of 7 July, on International Development Cooperation, and on the present 2005-2008 Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation. It incorporates humanitarian considerations from laws, treaties, and agreements –international and regional– and other commitments assumed by the Spanish government.

The aim of this Strategy –which affects all Spanish development cooperation actors, public administrations, NGOs, academia centres and institutions, and a wide variety of organisation from civil society– is to orient the actions of these different actors in order to improve Spain's humanitarian response, and its insertion into an overall humanitarian response, contributing to improving the situation of the most vulnerable populations.

The strategy incorporates Spain's commitment with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. In 2004, the Spanish government joined this international initiative that establishes 23 principles to be followed in humanitarian actions (HA). The Spanish government and its public administration as a whole will promote humanitarian actions that follow these principles and do not compromise the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian actors. The HA strategy aims to bring together, and make more effective, the humanitarian efforts of all of Spanish society and its institutions,

## 2. Justification

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HA has, in recent years, become one of the most visible international cooperation instruments, and the one that has grown the most as a component of Official Development Aid (ODA). The increase of vulnerability on a worldwide scale, and changes on the international scene, explain this increase.

In Spain, this change has also been evident, with many state and non-governmental actors becoming involved in humanitarian efforts. Public funding for humanitarian projects has grown significantly, topping 108 million euros in 2005. For all of these reasons, it was advisable for Spanish Cooperation, for the first time, to draw up a strategy targeting this area.

## 3. Frame of reference

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It is important to underscore that HA is determined by a number of international agreements and regulatory frameworks, and some of these are very specific, having a lesser relationship with other regulatory frameworks for development cooperation. The specificity of HA is one of the basic characteristics of this instrument.

### Institutional Framework

The institutional framework of Spain's HA strategy has as its international protagonist the UN, and the coordinating role is played by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In the European sphere, it emphasises the role of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), as well as recognising the essential part being played by specialised NGOs based in Spain. The strategy seeks to strengthen coordination and active multilateralism.

## Regulatory framework as a reference for the theoretical framework

HA has been provided with its own regulatory framework, based on a set of principles and values, which are specified in a wide variety of guidelines and legal instruments having with different characteristics and scopes.

### INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

International Humanitarian Law  
Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2006  
International Refugee Law  
International Human Rights Law  
Resolution 46/182 of the UN General Assembly  
Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles  
Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief



### NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

International Development Cooperation Law, 1998  
Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008  
The National Defence Law 5/2005  
Regulations of Spain's Autonomous Regions



### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING SPANISH COOPERATION

The HA strategy advocates the concept of humanitarian action, which is more all-encompassing than simple aid or assistance. It includes protection of victims as an essential element, and considers the preventive dimension, as well as disaster response, immediate restoration, and impact and public awareness as components of humanitarian aid.

### THE HA STRATEGY IS COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Humanity, impartiality, non-discrimination, neutrality, independence and universality as essential values of humanitarian action, whilst stressing others, such as gender equity, equality, promoting local capacities, participation, precaution, commitment to quality, and accountability.

### APPROACH

Multisectorial, rights, integral, risk reduction



### MAIN CONCEPTS

Humanitarian action, threats, disaster, mitigation, linking development aid, risk, connectedness, preparation, prevention, vulnerability

## 4. Framework for action

### GENERAL GOAL

Contribute to improving the situation of populations affected by disasters and conflict through strengthening the Spanish system for responding to and preventing these situations, as well as its contributions to and articulation with humanitarian response on a global scale.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1

Improve the capacity and efficiency of Spanish Cooperation's humanitarian response, increasing its quantity and quality.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3

Deepen Spanish Cooperation's commitments to international initiatives in this area.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5

Incorporate HA into Spanish Cooperation as a whole, in an appropriate manner that maintains its specificity, but also promotes synergies with other instruments.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2

Improve the mechanisms for relations and coordination amongst all of the actors involved, promoting the participation of civil society.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4

Contribute to risk reduction and the fight against extreme vulnerability, articulated short-term responses with medium and long-term ones.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 6

Contribute to national and international awareness-raising regarding the need to prevent and respond more efficiently to disasters of all kinds.

### STRATEGIC LINES

These objectives are specified in the full text of the HA strategy, with strategic lines related to aspects of institutional adaptation, a wide-ranging concept of humanitarian aid, linked with other instruments and impact or public awareness efforts.

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### Specific objective 1:

- Determine a specific budget for HA.
- Assign specific lines of financing, in a foreseeable and flexible manner.
- Reform and strengthen the AECl in these areas. A HA unit in charge of all phases of the cycle, from prevention and preparation to immediate restoration.
- Draw up Action Protocols
- Incorporate Sphere Project and COMPAS quality criteria

#### Specific objective 2:

- Putting into action stable coordination mechanisms for all actors.
- Follow-up on Oslo Guidelines for the participation of military contingents in humanitarian efforts.

#### Specific objective 3:

- Support for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and OCHA initiatives on multilateral issues and system strengthening.
- Draw up a Good Humanitarian Donorship fulfilment plan.

#### Specific objective 4:

- Promote risk reduction actions.
- Strengthen local prevention and response systems.

#### Specific objective 5:

- Promote Technical Cooperation Offices' work in this area. Contingency plans.
- Incorporate HA into geographic planning instruments.

#### Specific objective 6:

- Promote and disseminate information on Good Humanitarian Donorship.

## INSTRUMENTAL FRAMEWORK

Spanish HA resources are channelled through different instruments and procedures which balance the multilateral and the bilateral, the direct and the indirect.

### INSTRUMENTS BILATERALS

- Direct AECL actions, through various channels (sending goods and/or humanitarian teams to the affected zone, sending funds to the corresponding Technical Cooperation Office...).
- Subsidies to Spanish NGO projects.
- Subsidy agreements with Spanish NGOs.
- Actions backed by other ministries, decentralised cooperation actors, or other institutions.
- Subsidies for official institutions and organisations, and NGOs from aid recipient countries, through national state subsidies.



### INSTRUMENTS MULTILATERALS

- Compulsory contributions (quotas) to international organisations.
- Voluntary contributions to international organisations, through various channels:
- Contributions to UN organisations.
- Contributions to UN Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAP).
- Contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
- Contributions to the ICRC, the IOM, and other organisations outside of the UN system.

### INTRUMENTS MULTIBILATERALS

Comprises funds assigned by Spain to multilateral organisations, channelling them into a project or specific programme where Spain's contribution may be made visible (earmarking).

## 2005-2008 Master Plan horizontal priorities and HA.

HA should incorporate horizontally other dimensions that complement its actions and make them coherent. Thus gender equity, respect for cultural diversity, or defence of human rights should be taken into consideration.

### HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES AND HA

<b>Fight against poverty</b>	Although the fight against poverty is not the basic objective of HA, Spanish Cooperation will promote, in the humanitarian field, the fight against the underlying causes that generate vulnerability and human suffering.
<b>Defence of human rights</b>	HA should be carried out with an approach based on human rights, not only on the satisfaction of their basic needs. In armed conflicts, care must be taken regarding strict respect for international humanitarian law, especially those rights linked to the protection of civilian populations.
<b>Gender equity</b>	The incorporation of a gender-based analysis and approach should be applied to all of Spanish Cooperation's humanitarian actions, in all their dimensions; i.e., both the phases prior to the disaster (preparation, mitigation, and prevention) and those coming after (restoration in general, with its components of reconstruction, reconciliation, etc.)
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	HA projects will incorporate environmental impact assessments whenever possible. Priority will be given to supporting HA projects that incorporate environmental protection, especially those involved in the fight against poverty and covering basic needs: water, habitability, good security linked to sustainable agriculture, etc.
<b>Respect for cultural diversity</b>	HA should be respectful with cultural habits, customs, and traditions, within a framework of respect for human rights and a universalist conception of them. The universality of HA should be compatible with, and adapted to, different cultural contexts.

## ACTION GUIDELINES

Considering the different components of HA, such as prevention, response, restoration, and impact:

Regarding <b>preventive action</b> in the widest sense (preparation, prediction, mitigation, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen and support local preparation mechanisms.</li> <li>• More active incorporation into international initiatives.</li> </ul>
As to <b>response</b>	<p><b>The basic criteria for deciding to intervene are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Severity of the crisis.</b> With clear data and analysis making needs assessment possible.</li> <li>• <b>Local response capacity.</b> Both on the part of the authorities and organisations from civil society.</li> <li>• <b>Real possibilities for action.</b> Based on previous experience, means, and presence in the zone.</li> <li>• <b>Added value.</b> Regarding other actors, other donors with which actions could be coordinated.</li> </ul> <p>Other criteria are complementary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Geography</b></li> <li>- <b>Role of other donors in the area</b></li> <li>- <b>Forgotten crises</b></li> <li>- <b>Humanitarian space</b></li> </ul> <p>Likewise, exit criteria should be established to avoid perpetuating aid and dependence, and to facilitate the best relationship with other instruments.</p>
<b>Restoration</b>	Supporting local efforts in a coherent manner. Guaranteeing a steady transition from one action to another, not initiating restoration or development actions in a hasty way, or one having negative effects on the humanitarian situation.
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine incorporation of communication and dissemination aspects into all actions.</li> <li>• Carrying out specific actions in certain cases: for example, failure to respect international law, protection or access problems, and international "neglect".</li> </ul>

## 2005-2008 Master Plan sectoral priorities and HA

Humanitarian action affect to sectorial priorities.

### SECTORAL PRIORITIES AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

<b>Democratic governance, citizen participation, and institutional development</b>	<p>Spanish HA should contribute to strengthening the global humanitarian response through strengthening multilateral system structures, and Spain's capacities and institutions.</p> <p>Especially relevant is the UN reform in this area and EU structures, as well as strengthening local capacity. Support for regional initiatives, for example in Central America, should continue.</p>
<b>Food security and the fight against hunger</b>	Emergency food aid should be inserted within wider policies of food security, and be analysed on a case-by-case basis, minimising possible adverse effects.
<b>Education</b>	Conception of education as a basic right which should also be considered in emergency and crisis situations.
<b>Health</b>	<p>Since health is a basic component of HA, the strategy should promote support for public health systems, and the dedication of specialised resources to humanitarian issues. In emergencies, the use of Sphere Project criteria and guidelines will be promoted.</p> <p>Special attention will be given to mental health, which is highly important in post-disaster, conflict, and post-conflict situations.</p>
<b>Protection of collectives in situations of greater vulnerability</b>	The most vulnerable collectives are the priority recipients of HA. Put into effect specific initiatives for those persons in situations of greater vulnerability.
<b>Basic habitability</b>	Establish common habitability criteria for emergency programmes using Sphere Project rules and guidelines, and, for post-disaster restoration programmes, guarantee the participation of women as well as men in the negotiations, decision-making, and execution of policies and interventions involving basic habitability.

<b>Water and sanitation</b>	The specialisation of humanitarian actors in this area will be promoted, as well as the use of international quality standards in the field (Sphere, COMPAS, Qualité, cluster proposals, ECHO guidelines)
<b>Sustainable economic development</b>	Support recovery of sustenance systems and the “connectivity” of aid actions with those involving restoration and development.
<b>Environment</b>	Incorporate environmental risk analysis into prevention policies. Follow-up on the impact of global warming on the increase of disasters with a natural component.
<b>Cooperation with indigenous peoples</b>	Adaptation of aid strategies and forms to the cultural realities of indigenous peoples.
<b>Gener</b>	Incorporate a gender-based approach into all actions, and all phases, of Spanish Cooperation HA. Apply gender analysis to all HA interventions, including emergency aid. Guarantee that women be consulted and represented, and act as participants, in all phases of aid provision. Specific attention to the security problems of women in armed conflict or disaster situations..
<b>Conflict prevention ad peacebuilding</b>	In violent situations, or those especially prone to violence, specific criteria should be established. We refer here to approaches such as that of “do no harm”, or the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, which try to establish specific planning and follow-up systems in these situations.

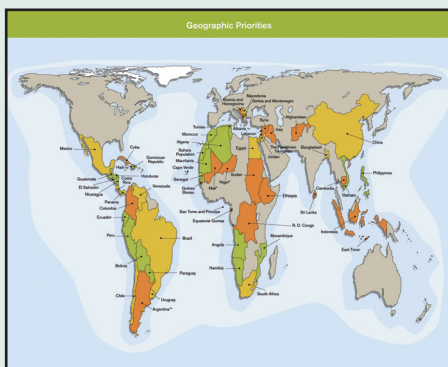
## Geographic framework

Geographic considerations and criteria should not be priorities when deciding on HA resource assignments, in coherence with the principles, objectives, and guidelines of this strategy, and with the orientation of aid based on the needs and severity of a crisis. However, they should be taken into account as complementary criteria orienting decision-making.

Taking these criteria oriented towards the needs and severity of a crisis as the baseline, it is possible, in any case, to propose the following from a geographic perspective:

- The process of planning actions in the priority countries for Spanish Cooperation will take into account whether or not these are especially vulnerable to crises or catastrophes.
- It is noteworthy that, for the first time, the 2005-2008 Master Plan considers as special attention countries or regions those that find themselves in special situations, with implications, in most cases, involving HA or reconstruction. These circumstances include: the need to prevent conflicts or contribute to peacebuilding, weakness regarding respect for human rights or the democratic system, crises derived from natural disasters or financial and social crises that generate an obvious impact on stabilisation or raising levels of poverty in the most disadvantaged sectors of the population.

For these countries, a Special Action Plan will be drawn up, which defines and specifies actions and their instruments.



\* Niger and Mali became a Country for special Attention in PACI 2006.

\*\* Argentina moves for Preferential Country for Special Attention in PACI 2005.

Priority areas and Countries

Countries for especial Attention

Preferential Countries

## 5. Communication and implementation process

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After the approval of the strategy, following discussion with Spanish Cooperation's consultative and coordination bodies, its application will begin within a framework of:

- Strengthening the AECI's capacity regarding humanitarian issues.
- Drawing up and approving a specific document on commitments for fulfilling Good Humanitarian Donorship.
- Drawing up documents for coordination and action protocols.

The Humanitarian Action Strategy should be known and shared by all relevant Spanish HA actors, and their principal partners on an international level. This is especially the case for all centralised cooperation actors, NGOs, the Technical Cooperation Offices, and Spain's embassies in the countries concerned, as well as the relevant academic

Therefore, the SECI will design a Communication and Appropriation Plan for the HA strategy, one having various dimensions:

- Publication of the HA strategy, and dissemination amongst relevant actors.
- Publication of an Executive Summary of the HA strategy, to be sent to a large number of organisations related to this issue to a greater or lesser extent.
- Informative sessions and panel debates with other departments from the Central Administration (Ministries of Defence, Health, the Interior), as well as Spain's regional and local administrations.
- Informative sessions and seminars with NGOs and other actors.

## 6. Follow-up and evaluation

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Like other sectoral strategies, the Humanitarian Action Strategy should be evaluated from its design until its final application. From the first moment, and taking into consideration the drafting process of Sector Strategy Documents, an ex ante evaluation will be carried out, focusing basically on its logical rationale, as its coherence, both internal and external. Given the scope of this strategy, these indicators should centre on the actions and processes proposed, more than on the objectives.

An interim evaluation should make it possible to adjust the strategy, identify divergences, and propose modifications. **The final evaluation should be oriented, in this case, more towards learning experiences and lessons to be gained rather than accountability, although this should also be taken into account.**

Moreover, the Humanitarian Action Strategy will promote the incorporation of a culture of assessment involving Spanish Cooperation actors. To do so, it will promote the use of ALNAP Directives and Manuals, and carry out evaluations on different levels: project level, multi-donors, etc. These materials will be translated and made available to Spanish actors in these areas.

*The electronic version of this document can be downloaded from*

*<http://www.maec.es>*

*<http://www.aeci.es>*

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