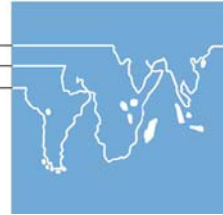




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## *The Evaluation of ECHO's Actions in Sri Lanka and in the Tamil Refugee Camps in Tamil Nadu, India*

### *Final Report*

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## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1. As a response to the signing of the ceasefire agreement on 22 February 2002 and the subsequent re-opening of LTTE-controlled areas, IDPs and refugees started to return to their original homes and livelihoods from where they had fled within the past three decades.
2. In order to ensure that IDPs were returning to a safe environment three funding decisions were adopted between June 2002 and December 2003 enabling ECHO to support mine action activities. Funding decisions adopted in July 2002 and March 2003 provided for an integrated, multi-sectoral support (provision of shelters, NFRI, food security kits, water and sanitation activities) to returnees to mine cleared areas as well as to their socio-economic environment. Tamil refugees living in the camps in Tamil Nadu are receiving assistance since July 2003, when ECHO provided funding for nutritional and basic health support as well as to the maintenance of the database on Tamil refugees' requirements and preparedness for repatriation. ECHO's funding decision of March 2004 primarily focuses on providing assistance to returnees and resident populations in the conflict-affected areas, IDPs in welfare centres, and Tamil refugees in the camps in Tamil Nadu.
3. Altogether €5.5 million have been allocated for the year 2004, €8 million were spent in 2003, and €8.5 million in 2002.

### **1.2 Purpose and Methodology**

4. In compliance with Article 18 of the Regulation (EC) 1257/96 an evaluation was carried out from September 28<sup>th</sup> to October 25<sup>th</sup> 2004 to assess the appropriateness of ECHO's actions, in accordance with ECHO's mandate, in order to establish whether they had achieved their objectives and to produce recommendations for improving the effectiveness of future operations in Sri Lanka.
5. The evaluation team consisted of four independent consultants, Leonie Barnes (Demining Expert), Alice de Jonge (Agronomist), Richard Ellert (Water and Sanitation Engineer), and Dr. Eva-Maria Herms (Socio-Economist, Team Leader).
6. After three days of desk studies and briefings in Brussels by the Desk Officer, the Head of ECHO/DIPECHO Office South Asia and the Evaluation Sector, the team was briefed by the EC Delegation, the ECHO Head of Office from Delhi, various ECHO partners, government authorities and other major donors in Colombo, followed by a 21-day field visit to the offices and field sites of the fifteen ECHO partners in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Trincomale, Batticaloa, Puttalam and Ampara. In addition, Alice de Jonge and Eva-Maria Herms visited for three days the office and field sites of the ECHO partner providing assistance to Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu.
7. Information was gathered through semi-structured interviews of and focus group discussions with target groups, beneficiaries, stakeholders, partners, other donors/NGOs/IOs/GOs in offices and field sites; through observation based on technical experience; visits to ongoing construction activities; participation in and observation of steering committees;

review of reporting systems; revision of external quality assurance and control systems; comparison of costs, establishment of unit costs and basic cost-benefit analyses; studies, review and analysis of literature and documents such as *inter alia* assessments, proposals, log frames, reports, documentation of procedures and results of internal and external M&E.

### **1.3 Review and Testing of ALNAP's Draft Guidance Booklet on Evaluating Humanitarian Action**

8. The team had been requested to assess ALNAPS's draft Guidance Booklet on Evaluating Humanitarian Action. The purpose of this piloting was to test the content, focus and usability of the booklet with the actual user. Mr. Tony Beck, author of the booklet, briefed the team by telephone, and later met Ms de Jonge, Ms Herms and Mr. Ellert in Sri Lanka on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Beck accompanied Mr. Ellert until October 20<sup>th</sup>. The results of the assessment can be found in Annex 13.

### **1.4 Main Conclusions**

#### **1.4.1 Social and Economic Aspects**

9. In general, the overwhelming majority of IDPs and refugees wants to return to its place of origin but decides on rational grounds whether the return can be risked. This includes a precise timing of return (namely at the beginning of an agricultural annual cycle) and the determination to give up the residence of origin and to return to the status of an IDP once again, if the family's physical survival in the difficult period between land-clearing and first harvest turns out to be unfeasible or endangered. Sustainable repatriation/relocation of farming families, apart from a peaceful environment, depends primarily on basic food assistance up to the first harvest, allowing them to focus on the tilling and preparation of their agricultural land (instead of earning their living as labourers elsewhere, neglecting thus their own farm). Once this first harvest has been successful, people are clearly less dependent on external assistance, stop looking back on what they lost and develop plans for the future. Continuous, reliable food assistance like e.g. the dry food rations provided by the GoSL are therefore an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable relocation. (see chapter 5.2).

10. Much more precarious and uncertain is the situation for landless IDPs and those, whose lands lie in the high-security zones, which very likely will remain inaccessible for the foreseeable future. They rather prefer to remain IDPs than venture into an adventure with an uncertain outcome. Unless the Government makes a decisive move by allocating on a large scale government-owned land to de-facto landless people, this part of the population will continue to be displaced and remain vulnerable. (see chapter 5.2.2.1).

11. While the needs of the "classical" EVIs such as female-headed households, pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five, elderly people, returning child-soldiers, etc. are in general appropriately addressed by ECHO partners and the donor community, young male IDPs'/refugees' and returnees' specific socio-economic and psychological needs are barely taken into consideration – with negative effects to the whole society and even more so to their families and children. (see chapter 5.3).

## 1.4.2 Mine Action

12. Sri Lanka has made significant achievements in mine action in partnership with ECHO funded agencies, other mine action agencies and UN and Government structures established to manage the mine action sector. (see chapter 4.1.6).

13. Areas of concern are a lack of coordination between ECHO partners where they share local partners in the areas of skills transfer and capacity building and the lack of coordination at district level between mine action partners and government structures in information sharing. (see chapters 4.1.1, 4.1.2.1). Whilst the refugee and IDP situation as it stands now does not indicate an emergency situation in terms of mine action, the impact of peace and a corresponding increase in return and opening up of high security zones will exacerbate some of the difficulties outlined above and will clearly impact on agreed timings for clearance of the major mine and UXO threat in Sri Lanka. (see chapter 4.1.6).

## 1.4.3 Water / Sanitation / Shelter

### Operational Strategy

14. Since February 2002 €21,350,000 have been allocated to Sri Lanka, approximately €4,600,000 have been invested in the sectors resulting in a physical output of 2,000 wells, 4,100 latrines and 10,200 shelter targeting 35 % of returnees (according to figures of UNHCR).(see chapter 4.2.2).

15. The interventions in the sectors water, sanitation and shelter have targeted the districts most affected by the conflict, being in line with objectives of the funding decision. ECHO's activities have been relevant in this respect. (see chapters 4.2.1, 4.2.2).

16. ECHO provided important assistance in additionally targeting EVIs, and filled an important gap of humanitarian assistance in-between the large bilateral programmes in the northeast.<sup>1</sup> However, the opinion of interviewed persons was, that Sri Lanka is approaching a phase where increasingly development-oriented projects are needed. (see chapter 4.2.8).

17. There has been a clear lack of coordination between the bilateral programmes financed by ADB and the World Bank and the humanitarian assistance of ECHO.(see chapters 4.2.3, 4.2.5.1, 4.2.8). There seems to be little, ECHO can do about it, if other programmes and other organisations do not respond to ECHO's offers and requests of cooperation.

18. Despite considerable efforts made by ECHO to improve the quality of partners' logframes in their proposals most of the logframes submitted did not allow monitoring of activities, results and specific objectives achieved as quality of intervention logic and qualitative indicators were insufficient. In general, impact measurement was not carried out by the partners. (see chapters 4.2.1, 4.2.8).

### Sector Strategy

19. The interventions of ECHO's partners in the sectors water, sanitation and shelter have been relevant in the sense of the definition<sup>2</sup>, even if targeting left room for improve-

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<sup>1</sup> For example the World Bank housing scheme only supports previous house owner, NECORD only rehabilitates large scale irrigation projects.

<sup>2</sup> ECHO evaluation manual



ment. ECHO's partners have generally fulfilled the expectations in terms of physical outputs. (see chapter 4.1.2).

20. Water Supply. Funded operations succeeded in the provision of safer drinking water, and the technology used in order to address the problems was simple but appropriate. The structural quality of wells has been good. Some design deficiencies were found and accompanying measures should have been implemented more stringently. Expertise and existing standards available in SLA were not used up to the extent possible (hydro-geology). (see chapter 4.2.5.1).

21. Sanitation. Latrines gave an impression of being "over-designed" however, besides contributing to environmental health, they gave returnees a sense of "renewed living standard"<sup>3</sup>. Lack of data did not allow assessment of effectiveness with respect to environmental health (see chapter 4.2.6).

22. Shelter. Design has been on average sufficient but no uniform amongst the partners. Effectiveness of shelter assistance had depended much on the vulnerability of the target group and timeliness of the intervention. (see chapter 4.2.4).

### General

23. A more holistic and comprehensive approach, especially with respect to environmental health, would have increased the effectiveness of interventions in water and sanitation. Partners are also encouraged to use a more scientific approach. (see chapter 4.2.4).

24. Sector coordination was not sufficient and did not allow for much exchange of ideas as to the type of technology used, material procured or produced, implementation methods, etc.

25. A key aspect in efficiency of implementation has been experienced technical personnel (especially personnel with a construction background). There have been considerable differences in the quality of project management and efficiency among the partners. Overall efficiency of the interventions can be rated as good, however quite high ratios of support costs / total costs existed. Investment costs per beneficiary and structure have been economical: unit-costs have been fairly equal. In the general absence of required data even short term impact cannot be evaluated. Overall sustainability can be expected as a number of INGOs have development-oriented projects proceeding in parallel and the durability of structures built is good. (see chapter 4.2.5)

### **1.4.4 Food Security, Nutrition and Income Generation**

26. ECHO supported project components in food security and income generation have made a difference for IDP- as well as returnee-beneficiaries. Participation of beneficiaries in the selection of agriculture, animal husbandry and other income generation packages is in general high. Funded by other donors, some of the partners implement more rehabilitation and development-orientated projects, which can serve as follow up projects for the ECHO funded ones. However, gaps between relief and rehabilitation / development projects are occurring. (see chapter 4.3.7).

27. The agricultural packages provided through the ECHO funded projects cover the crop cultivation for one season. Dry rations from the government are given up to 6 months after

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<sup>3</sup> The returnees had been driven away from their properties, where some of them had enjoyed a remarkably high living standard. „Renewed living standard” is therefore used in the sense of getting something back what they had had before.

resettlement. Most of the time a full crop cycle has not yet been completed when this assistance stops<sup>4</sup>. This makes it difficult for returning farm families to fill the gap between the end of the assistance and the benefits of their first harvest. The same problem occurs when the monsoon fails and crops are lost (see chapter 4.3.5).

28. Fishing gear and boats distributed through the ECHO funded programmes very quickly have had a positive impact on the livelihoods of IDP and returnee fisher families - and also in some cases on the strengthening of the local Fishermen Societies, through which the gear was given on a revolving fund basis. The inland fisheries are presently up against low water levels in tanks and sea fishing is still hampered by no-go areas.(see chapter 4.3.6).

29. The Food Security Coordination Meetings facilitated by the FAO in the districts have improved the sharing of information between ECHO partners. There is room for improvement in the coordination and exchange of experiences between ECHO partners and other organisations active in relief.(see chapters 4.3.2., 4.3.3).

30. Insufficient agricultural technical knowledge among (I)NGO field staff and a sometimes un-critical reliance on recommendations of Agriculture Departments, e.g. on the use of fertilisers and pesticides, could lead in an exceptional case to a situation, which could affect the human and natural environment. (see chapter 4.3.3).

31. Animal husbandry packages, especially chickens for vulnerable groups, are implemented following different approaches with varying success and repeated without taking the lessons learned into much consideration. Economic calculations on income generating activities, to determine in what way they are – or are not! – economically viable are seldom made. Marketing problems are rarely addressed. (see chapters 4.3.1, 4.3.6).

32. Three years of ECHO funding have made a difference to the nutritional and health situation in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and also on the quality of the local partner, which could improve itself through the training and advice of the INGO. (see chapter 4.3.6).

#### **1.4.5 NFRI**

33. NFRIs provided by ECHO partners meet beneficiaries' most basic household needs and are absolutely essential for providing the material basics for some sort of dignity.

34. Distributions of tools for artisans and nets and/or boats for fishermen societies enable beneficiaries to become independent from further assistance. Fishermen who had received their nets in late 2003 have not only been able to provide for their and their families' physical survival, but could also buy items like bicycles from their earnings of the past 12 months. They no longer need assistance. Beneficiaries of artisan tools required for construction most probably will become rich in the next few years (provided peace will allow intensive rehabilitation and reconstruction). It is obvious: "Give a man a fish and he will have enough to eat for a day. Provide him with a net and he will have something to eat for the rest of his life." (see chapter 4.4).

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<sup>4</sup> Source: GA Kilinochchi; beneficiaries in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya.

## **1.5 Recommendations**

### **1.5.1 Social and Economic Aspects**

35. With increasing numbers of returnees able to live from their land and to restart again a self-determined life ECHO assistance increasingly needs to be strictly focussed only on the most vulnerable and the most needy, i.e. needy IDPs in WFCs, IDPs in dilapidated WFCs, the most vulnerable refugees in Tamil Nadu<sup>5</sup>, returnees who have not yet been able to harvest their first yields, female-headed households, pregnant and lactating mothers, children under five, elderly people without family support, handicapped individuals, communities in remote and difficult areas. Even though it is the exception, it is totally unacceptable that a whole village is indiscriminately supported, simply because the village committee is not ready to cooperate in the identification of the village's most vulnerable households and individuals. (see chapter 5.2.2.1).

36. However, impacts of any reduction or termination of food assistance needs to be closely monitored by the partners, especially in Tamil Nadu, to allow immediate corrective actions if the nutritional status of those affected by the cut in assistance falls below acceptable levels according to WHO standards. (see chapter 5.2.2.2).

37. For the sake of a gender balanced programme aiming to provide a perspective for all parts of the target population, it is necessary that the gender-related socio-economic imbalances caused by the conflict are appropriately addressed by providing young men with the opportunity to overcome their gender-specific, conflict-related disadvantages, enabling them to re-/integrate into their environment and prevent them from becoming a source of social instability and family problems<sup>6</sup>. (see chapter 5.3.5).

38. In the past ECHO has recognised the provision of psycho-social support to victims of war-/conflict-related traumatisation as being within its mandate: ECHO successfully assisted more than 75,000 war-traumatised Bosnian female IDPs and refugees by providing psycho-social support to overcome their traumata, thus facilitating their social and economic reintegration. Activities in Mannar and Tamil Nadu indicate that this can be achieved here as well. ECHO is therefore advised to assist victims of trauma in order to facilitate their social and economic reintegration. (see chapter 5.3.4).

### **1.5.2 Mine Action**

39. ECHO partners should be required via funding decisions to work to ensure coordination; planing and prioritisation requirements through national and regional/district frameworks are established and maintained. This should be carefully formalised through a more rigorous preparation and analysis of log frame and objectively verifiable indicators. ECHO partners should be required to report on their achievements in this context. This is particularly relevant in countries where a national institution exists or is being developed.

40. Funding should continue for at least two more years, focused on identification of dangerous areas, fencing, marking and ongoing clearance in accordance with the national and regional plans in particular in Jaffna and the Vanni.

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<sup>5</sup> i.e. elderly without family support, pregnant and lactating mothers, children under five

<sup>6</sup> Some promising experience has been made in Batticaloa, where the integration and rehabilitation of such young men is addressed through vocational training and activities in playgroups and fine arts. By far the majority of those who would require such assistance have, however, no access to these activities.

41. ECHO should ensure in future interventions either in Sri Lanka or elsewhere that funding decisions are designed to ensure partners tie into the national framework during the emergency response so that national capacity development and support are encouraged concurrent to the emergency intervention.
42. ECHO should work with other donors and at government level to insist development and reconstruction activities include the costs of mine action in the initial planning.
43. Although the absence of accession to the Landmine Treaty should not hinder the ECHO humanitarian response, as a guarantee of 'return on investment' with regard to the funding of humanitarian mine actions ECHO should include an advocacy clause either in funding decisions or in project contracts to actively encourage the GoSL and LTTE to adhere to the Landmine Ban. (see chapter 4.1.10).

### **1.5.3 Water / Sanitation / Shelter**

#### Operational Strategy

44. *Geographical areas and sectors:* Future intervention should be funded in selected districts concentrating on pockets of vulnerability and EVIs using stringent targeting. Activities in water and sanitation should be kept. Reduced support in shelter (communities' own capacity, FHH, EVIs) simple roads and increased support for income generation (towards development) is recommended. WFC should not be supported indiscriminately. (see chapter 4.2.8.1) The coordination with the multi-lateral infrastructure projects (NECORD, NEIAP, CAARP, etc.) must be ensured (also technology exchange). The partners should be supported in this respect.
45. Coverage in terms of how many districts per partners are covered should be guided by cost-effectiveness. A maximum of 2 districts (exceptionally 3) should be covered by one partner.
46. ECHO is advised to assign technical support to the TA for appraisal of feasibility of the proposals and technical quality (this expert might cover more countries). (see chapter 4.2.8.1).
47. *Partners:* If numbers of partners would have to be reduced, the ones using integrated approaches and ensuring longer term presence should be retained. ECHO should insist to receive "SMART Indicators" and those which cannot be made operational should be rejected and revised by partners.
48. A simple impact monitoring report submitted to ECHO shortly before the end of an intervention (e.g. functioning of wells, shelter, latrines) should be mandatory before any subsequent funding of a partner (funds for impact study have to be allocated).
49. ECHO should make a clear stand towards the LTTE / GoSL on requirements of humanitarian work in the Vanni to support the partners. Regular meetings on this issue should be held between ECHO, authorities and INGOs. (see chapter 4.2.8.1).

#### Sector Strategy

Recommendations for ECHO:

50. *Quality Control.* ECHO should ensure that lead agencies are active in core sectors (funds must be allocated for specialised activities e.g. coordination, dissemination of material, etc.). ECHO must insist that standards are agreed for all sectors (for latrines it has already been done) and adhered to.

51. Inclusion of specialised agencies in future programmes should ensure that a more scientific approach and local expertise (hydro-geologist, maybe local contractor) is used.
52. Standard design parameters must be mandatory when constructing wells (length of drainage, cover, fencing, etc.). ECHO must insist that all organisations collect data on water quality and yields in order to make sure enough and safe water is provided. Special attention has to be given to the high nitrate content in Jaffna and Puttalam and fluoride in Trincomalee and the disturbed ecosystem of Jaffna.
53. *Exit Strategy.* The elaboration of a data base of wells constructed should be financed (including information on geological strata, water level, coordinates, etc.) in order to facilitate hand-over to a future authority which will be responsible for rural water supply in Sri Lanka (see chapter 4.2.8.1).

#### Recommendations for ECHO-Partners:

##### Water and Sanitation

54. *General.* The level of sanitation technique applied should address more the environmental health issue as a whole (preferably based on health data).
55. *Design.* Considering the number of wells built (2000) a general standard for well construction must be developed (as done for latrines). Location of wells should be based on proper well siting technologies (employment of hydro-geologist) or at least using hydro-geological studies / maps of an area (exist for almost all parts of Sri Lanka). Water quality tests (at least, beginning, middle, end), health and hygiene awareness campaigns should be obligatory. Yields of wells (through measuring recharge time) should be checked at least for each area.
56. Partners should be aware of negative environmental impacts caused by latrines especially under unfavourable soil conditions (e.g. sandy soil); here trial pits around latrines and soil sample will provide necessary information (as soon as water tests give indications).
57. Intervention to rehabilitate minor tanks and irrigation channels should be generally based on a conceptual planning including preliminary engineering design and cost-benefit-analysis to justify the investment.
58. *Implementation, site supervision.* Management of the construction sites, work progress, material flows, etc. should follow standard practices in the construction business to ensure timely detection of problems and necessary adjustments. A practical and transparent Gantt chart should be used, showing detailed split-up of activities, work progress, flow of materials and resources used.
59. *Quality Control.* Partners should use more existing expertise and national standards; consult with national organisations to a greater extent (existing hydro-geological surveys, long term experience with respect to rural water supply, geological maps, water resource management, ITDG, drilling contractors).
60. ECHO partners should increase the exchange of their expertise and ensure “mutual capacity building and lessons learning” in sector meetings at district level, which should result in written guidelines and specifications. (see chapter 4.2.8.1).

## Shelter

61. *General.* Interventions (also in WFC) should be decided based on an analysis of the priority needs of the vulnerable population and not include shelter “automatically” in the support package for returnees, balancing limited funds vs. need. In communities where people already have developed a basic form of shelter, other sectors should preferably be supported (except EVIs).

62. *Design:* The “shelter-package” should concentrate on the essential requirements of the beneficiaries in this respect (cement, tin-sheets). The type of shelters for resettlement / relocation should be uniform within a district and agreed upon between the ECHO partners. (see chapter 4.2.8.1).

### **1.5.4 Food Security, Nutrition and Income Generation**

63. Apart from more technical issues, the Food Security Coordination Group takes up, a reflection on: 1) contingency plans in case the situation deteriorates, a peace agreement is reached or in prolonged drought conditions; 2) the possible contribution of ECHO programmes to more sustainable farming and management of farm resources; 3) food and nutrition security strategies for landless returnees; and 4) experiences with and new ideas as to how to attract alternative donors for follow-up projects of ECHO relief actions, as steps in a process of rehabilitation and development, etc.

64. Training, at present organised by FAO, has to become a joint effort in which those partners who have quality agriculture and animal husbandry / fisheries technical staff, provide resource persons for future training. Also successful returnee farmers (women and men) can be used as resource persons (in training for staff as well as farmers).

65. ECHO partners closely follow up on the agricultural packages and their impact. ECHO could provide for a mechanism that allows (vulnerable) beneficiaries that experienced crop loss through e.g. drought to be re-eligible for a renewed agricultural package.

66. The carrying out of simple economic calculations (cost-benefit) with beneficiaries, on income generation activities, before these are started, is highly recommended. It would be advisable to look also into marketing possibilities in remote areas. Especially animal husbandry packages and activities have to be carefully scrutinised to make them sustainable. Lessons learned from past experiences have to be taken into consideration and locally proven approaches adopted.

67. Tools for agriculture and other income generation activities have to be sturdy and adapted to the local situation.

68. Home garden seed packages should be given to all beneficiaries, who have even only a small space near their houses/huts to cultivate vegetables – to cover at least a part of their nutritional security. For the same reason fruit tree saplings should become a more regular part of the agricultural packages. Spirulina production might be an activity to be considered for income generation combined with nutritional security.

69. Existing local systems for savings, credit, revolving funds, need to be respected and, where possible, incorporated by the ECHO funded projects, not bypassed, since they constitute a link to further development of the communities.

70. ECHO contributions to food security and income generation are to be continued with focus on remote and difficult areas, smaller numbers of returnees that continue to come back, especially vulnerable groups like women-headed households and the landless; and on

a more diversified package with emphasis on nutritional security and food use. (see chapter 4.3.9.1).

### **1.5.5 NFRIs**

71. The distribution of NFRIs is absolutely essential and needs to be continued as long as there are IDPs. Partners should regularly monitor the quality of what they are distributing. Tools which break two days after they have been distributed are no real assistance to the beneficiaries: the cheapest is not always the best. (see chapter 4.4.10).

## **1.6 Lessons learned**

### **1.6.1 Mine Action**

- a) One of the most significant lessons learned in clearance has been the adaptation of the Sri Lankan RAKE methodology, incorporated with international standards to ensure the safety of minefield marking and implementation to develop a cheaper alternative to the metal detector. Although the RAKE methodology becomes yet another tool in the mine action toolbox it has been used very effectively in certain terrains in Sri Lanka, particularly the Vanni region's sandy beach like conditions. (see chapter 4.1.8).
- b) The establishment of Technical Field Working Groups at District level attended by all mine action partners in conjunction with the National Mine Action Steering Committee has resulted in significant and rapid developments in quality assurance, standardisation of operational procedures and the use of reporting and planning tools based on lessons learned from other mine action interventions. (see chapters 4.1.5, 4.1.6, 4.1.9).

### **1.6.2 Water / Sanitation / Shelter**

- a) Standardization of typical structures should be made and be required of partners immediately after programme start for all sectors. ECHO partners should be asked to meet, discuss and agree standard designs, materials used, procurement methods that respect their contractual requirements and implementation techniques. This would also facilitate comparison of performance and subsequent lessons learning. Before the start of a humanitarian intervention in a country the existence of a lead agency should be ensured in core sectors. (see chapter 4.2.3, 4.2.4)
- b) Professional water resource management (1,560 wells, 300 agro wells and 150 water pumps is a significant amount of water points) requires that a data-base on structures is set up after programme start (logically by the lead organisation). This would also facilitate sustainability, the exit strategy and the future hand-over to a responsible authority. (see chapter 4.2.4)
- c) The provision of specialised technical expertise to ECHO's technical assistants should be standard within ECHO. It cannot be expected that a single person covers all fields in question (hydrogeology, water-resources, civil engineering, hydraulics, sanitation, etc.). (see chapter 4.2.8.1)

- d) Basic impact monitoring should be mandatory before subsequent funding. What is the physical status of wells and latrines after one year? How did ground water level develop, etc? What was the rate of occupancy for shelter? Has the design for shelter been accepted? (see chapter 4.2.6)

### **1.6.3 Food Security, Nutrition and Income Generation**

- a) Recovery of sustainable livelihoods in the northeast will take time.(see chapter 4.3.2, 4.3.7)
- b) The main challenge for the returnees is to find out what are the realistic options for a sustainable livelihood in the future.(see chapter 4.3.7)
- c) Sustainable farming and market-oriented income generation are therefore two of the main issues. (see chapter 4.3.7)
- d) Community-based approaches are crucial for the effective targeting of EVIs and incorporating them into the community and thus giving them a chance to a sustainable livelihood. (see chapter 4.3.6)
- e) Community-based approaches are crucial for the linking of relief projects to more rehabilitation and development-oriented programmes. (see chapters 4.3.6, 4.3.8, 4.3.9)
- f) Relief, Rehabilitation and Development cannot be compartmentalised / put in different 'boxes'. They are a continuum of processes that occur simultaneously in the same area, the same village, even in the same family. (see chapter 4.3.8)
- g) Future ECHO projects to target the target groups mentioned in the 2004 funding decision, with emphasis on landless (see chapters 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.9):
  - (1) just recently returned IDPs and refugees;
  - (2) landless returnees (who can not yet start economically);
  - (3) pockets of yet uncovered EVIs (FHHs, the elderly, the handicapped, etc.); and
  - (4) IDPs in welfare centres who do not have the option to return to their place of origin in the foreseeable future (village or lands in the high risk security zone, infested with mines, etc.)
- h) Issues needed to be focussed on in future ECHO projects: (see chapter 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.9)
  - (1) food and nutrition security for returnees and host communities;
  - (2) sustainable farming and animal husbandry practices; including the repair of minor irrigation tanks;
  - (3) diversified income generation packages for sustainable remunerative jobs demanded by the local market; and
  - (4) (sector) coordination among ECHO partners and with other organisations in the humanitarian aid.



#### **1.6.4 NFRI**

- a) NFRI need to be tailored to the beneficiaries' specific needs.
- b) The quality of NFRI needs to be regularly checked and monitored: the cheapest is not always the best
- c) The distribution of plastic items should be avoided whenever possible and replaced by more durable material.
- d) The distribution of NFRI needs to be continued as long as IDPs (especially those from welfare centres) and refugees continue to return: up to now most of the returnees were fit, able-bodied people who could face the challenge to rebuild their lives from scratch. Those IDPs, who still remain in the welfare centres, are people who are less fit and EVIs. If any IDPs need this assistance upon settlement, it is these ones. (see chapters 4.4, 4.3.9.1)

## **2 GLOBAL STRATEGY**

### **2.1 Analysis of the Crisis**

72. The armed conflict in Sri Lanka caused the displacement of approximately 800,000 people<sup>7</sup> between 1983 and 2002. A massive wave of return started after the ceasefire<sup>8</sup> resulting in approximately 380,000 returnees by the end of 2004. Upon return villagers found wells destroyed or damaged or simply not sufficient as the number of families had increased. Approximately 60 % of the houses had been damaged and destroyed; sanitation facilities did not exist anymore.

73. In the north and east the conflict has affected agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries and reduced their production severely. From a surplus producing region before the war, the north-eastern province has changed into a food-deficit area. Around 55% of the population is engaged in agriculture and/or animal husbandry and depends on it for its livelihood. Food and nutritional insecurity is high. Throughout the conflict period, but mainly since 1990, farm families have fled their lands and were displaced several times to 'safer' areas, losing all their assets, including their animals and agricultural tools. Abandoned lands were overgrown by grasses and bushes and/or rendered inaccessible by landmines. The area under cultivation diminished by 40-60%. Traditional minor irrigation structures, the 'tanks', of which there are around 2,400 recorded in the north and east, deteriorated and were sometimes destroyed (for military reasons).

74. The cattle and poultry population decreased considerably. In the fisheries sector, some districts lost up to 90% of the productive assets (boats, gear and engines), and generally the catch almost halved during the 20 years of war. Production, income and employment were lost. In some districts very particular problems occurred, as in Jaffna, where a system of dams that regulated seawater intrusion, harmful for agriculture, was destroyed, causing progressive salinisation of soil, resulting in loss of cultivable area and the perishing of fruit trees.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: UNHCR Colombo

<sup>8</sup> February 2002

75. Landless IDPs, mainly Tamil population who had been working on the estates, were displaced many times and lost even the little belongings they had. More than 20% of the households in the northeast are women-headed households, who lost their male breadwinners. Many of the internally displaced persons ended up in welfare centres.

76. Between 70,000 and 80,000 people fled to India, where 60,000 of them are temporarily placed in 103 camps scattered over Tamil Nadu, under the sole responsibility of the Indian Government. Another 20,000 stay with relatives or fend for themselves.

77. However, many of the refugees were farmers in their villages of origin, and cannot carry out any farming activity in the camps or welfare centres where they have found refuge. Food and nutrition security is low and high levels of malnutrition prevail among the more vulnerable groups: pregnant women, lactating mothers, children up to 5 yrs and potential mothers (adolescent girls of 12–18 yrs old).

78. When on 22 February 2002 the ceasefire agreement was signed, many IDPs started to return and this flow continues, reducing however every year. More than 50% of the IDPs had returned by July 2004. Also from India refugees returned, but so far only 17%.

79. All these returnees want to restart their lives: many land-owning or land-leasing farm families in their original villages, many landless IDPs often in new places of resettlement. Most of the returnees have, however, lost everything and are in need of all the basic items for survival and an economic re-start.

## **2.2 ECHO's Response**

80. In order to ensure that IDPs were returning to a safe environment three funding decisions were adopted between June 2002 and December 2003 enabling ECHO to support mine action activities.

81. In addition, funding decisions adopted in July 2002 and March 2003 provided for an integrated, multi-sectoral support (provision of shelters, NFRI, food security kits, water and sanitation activities) to returnees to mine cleared areas as well as to their socio-economic environment.

82. Tamil refugees living in the camps in Tamil Nadu are receiving assistance since July 2003, when ECHO provided funding for nutritional and basic health support as well as to the maintenance of the database on Tamil refugees' requirements and preparedness for repatriation.

83. ECHO's funding decision of March 2004 primarily focuses on providing assistance to returnees and resident populations in the conflict-affected areas, IDPs in welfare centres, and Tamil refugees in the camps in Tamil Nadu.

84. €5.5 million have been allocated for the year 2004, €8 million were spent in 2003, and €8.5 million in 2002. This amounts to a total of €21,350,000; from this €5,500,000 have been allocated exclusively to mine actions, and €15,300,000 to actions dealing with water, sanitation and shelter.

Decision Number	Amount (€)	Area
LKA/210/2002/02000	1,500,000	Mine action; health
IND/210/2002/01000	550,000	Health and nutrition in the Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, India
LKA/210/2002/03000	3,800,000	NFRI, shelter, water and sanitation, food security
LKA/210/2002/04000	2,000,000	Mine action
TPS/210/2003/06000	6,000,000	Mine awareness, NFRI, shelter, water and sanitation, food security, health and nutrition in the Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, India
LKA/210/2003/02000	2,000,000	Mine action
SA/BUD/2004/01000	5,500,000	NFRI, shelter, water and sanitation, food security, health and nutrition in the Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, India
Total funds	21,350,000	

### 2.3 Complementarity

85. There is a well-thought-out inter-sector complementarity in ECHO's interventions in Sri Lanka. De-mining is a first priority; other activities cannot start before an area is declared cleared of mines.

86. Furthermore, ECHO works through partner INGOs who can implement integrated packages of services and activities to meet the immediate needs of IDPs and returnees. Building temporary shelters and distributing NFRI have been complemented with the provision or repair of basic water and sanitation structures. Connected to this assistance for a provisional living environment, is the livelihood assistance, comprising food security and income generation packages accompanied by training.

87. In the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu the intervention consists of nutrition and health improvement as related activities, in a situation with few opportunities for a more long-term sustainable action.

88. ECHO's complementarity with other EC services is reflected in the 'Aid to Uprooted People' programme that will implement rehabilitation and development-oriented projects as a follow up to ECHO's relief intervention.

89. Several other organisations and donors offer livelihood assistance to IDPs and returnees: The World Food Programme implements, on the basis of a Vulnerability Analysis Mapping, different food and nutrition programmes. The Food-for-Work Programmes, in collaboration with local governments and NECORD for IDPs and host communities, rehabilitate rural infrastructure. The Food for Education Programme and the Mother and Child Nutrition Programme give more attention to the nutritional status of school children and mothers. The WFP programmes are funded by different donors in cash and in kind (EU, USA, Japan, Australia).

90. The Transition Programme for Conflict Affected Areas of the UNDP caters to similar basic needs as the ECHO projects, but also provides more rehabilitation and development-oriented programmes, including micro-finance and infrastructural rehabilitation. It collaborates with UNICEF, UNHCR, government administrations and LNGOs / CBOs.

91. There is very little coordination or consultation between the ECHO Partners and the UNDP Transition Programme or the WFP.

## **2.4 Coordination**

92. ECHO coordination meetings facilitated by the TA (based in New Delhi) take place during his visit of the partners in Sri Lanka every three months. The sector coordination meetings of the ECHO partners, which take place monthly at district level, have no regular “umbrella” meeting of programme managers at national level. The team would support such a quarterly meeting in the form of a workshop, for example, to pool information from the districts and to sort out issues that cannot only be dealt within the districts – e.g. different approaches in needs assessments and beneficiary selection; discussions on vulnerability criteria; food and nutrition security strategies for landless returnee families, etc. – and to take decisions regarding these issues.

93. CHA, the Consortium for Humanitarian Action, brings together 70 NGOs in Sri Lanka, in which ECHO partners are represented. This is a useful forum, but has to be better activated, according to some of the partners. At present, the main concern of the CHA seems to be which status should be given to the TRO.

94. Unfortunately, however, the UN is not invited to the CHA, which is at the root of one of the district level coordination problems. On national level as well as in some districts heads of international agency country offices and sub-offices informally meet on a regular basis outside the CHA meetings to discuss topics that are sensitive in nature. Compared to many other countries coordination in Sri Lanka is therefore good.

## **3 OPERATIONAL STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Overall objectives and intervention logic**

95. The objectives of the funding decisions of ECHO: *“assist IDPs returning to their places of origin in the conflict-affected areas of Sri Lanka, to assist people living in “welfare centres”...and the specific objectives ...”support returnees in order to meet their immediate needs”* was reflected in the project proposals of ECHO’s partners. However in the majority of cases the intervention logic presented in the log-frame matrices<sup>9</sup> did not follow a coherent stringent concept from the overall objectives down to the individual activities. E.g.:

96. General objectives read:

- *“The normal life in the resettled communities in the project area has been restored”*
- *To improve the access to water infrastructure.....*

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<sup>9</sup> Objectives, results and activities are taken out of log-frames of proposals submitted between 2002 and 2004.

97. Specific objectives read:

- *“Support the displaced persons to get back to their original places”*
- *To sustainable improve the health and nutritional status of resettling families....*

98. Results read:

- *Access to drinking water is increased in quantity and quality*
- *Provide a good living conditions for IDP's who are returning.*

99. Activities read:

- *x-number of drinking water wells are constructed*
- *Agro well construction*

100. Predominantly the general objectives have been too detailed or too vague (they should reflect the general objectives of the donor organisation and are not exclusively measured through indicators). Specific objectives are not “solid and tangible” goods / services delivered to the beneficiaries and results are vague (e.g. access to drinking water is increased). Often activities are merely re-mentioning results (Results: x-numbers of wells constructed....and the related description of activities are also x-numbers of well constructed. Indicators are seldom practical and often results or activities (e.g. “x numbers of wells constructed” is no indicator for the result of constructing x numbers of wells; the effects of building wells / latrines / shelter should be measured by an indicator rather than the mere number). In general there is a lack of qualitative indicators. The partners would need training in developing SMART indicators, if ECHO wants to ensure that indicators will be used and not only function as a compulsory part of a log-frame without deeper significance<sup>10</sup>. However this would have to be carried out in the head offices of partners, considering the staff turn-over in the country. It should also be the responsibility of ECHO to reject feeble log-frames and their concepts and ask for revision until they are developed to a satisfactory level.

### **3.2 Relevance**

101. The projects have been relevant in the sense of the definition<sup>11</sup>.

102. Landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IED) constitute a significant impediment to resettlement and reconstruction and hinder activities that cement the peace process. Most of the 1-1,5 million anti-personnel mines (AP) were laid in previously highly populated areas and fertile land. Two and a half years into a ceasefire, mines and UXO continue to prevent fertile lands being cultivated and block access to water. Mines still affect over 600 communities in the north and north east of Sri Lanka.

103. The provision of safe drinking water is generally relevant as water is essential to life and all of the communities interviewed named water as one of their most important needs. The construction of latrines was definitely relevant through giving the returnees some form of dignity.

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<sup>10</sup> This is especially valid considering the new FPA which is supposedly results orientated.

<sup>11</sup> ECHO's evaluation manual and ALNAP handbook.

104. Shelter projects are relevant when they target beneficiaries which have just returned. The geographical areas chosen have been the most seriously affected by returnees (e.g. Jaffna received the most support and received most of the returnees).

105. The distribution of basic household kits, i.e. NFRIs, enables returnees to focus their engagement on the reconstruction of their lives, especially their income generating basis, instead of spending the little resources they have on the purchase of basic equipment. The provision of basic household items is therefore highly relevant for returning households trying to begin a settled life again.

106. The food security and income generation components of the ECHO projects are highly relevant for returning IDPs, who have lost all their means of production, and are given an opportunity to restart their livelihoods. They receive agricultural packages for the cultivation of different crops including home garden vegetables, animal husbandry packages, fishing nets and sets of tools for artisans and non-farm employment (also for IDPs in welfare centres). The repair of minor irrigation tanks is crucial for entire communities in re-starting agriculture production.

107. The nutrition component of the ECHO project in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu is relevant for the vulnerable groups that are targeted, and tailored to their specific needs. The programme follows ECHO's strategy to address 'forgotten' crises.

### **3.3 Special Operating Conditions in LTTE Controlled Areas**

108. Operating in LTTE controlled area requires flexibility and professional experience in order to find fast and practical solutions. In principle, INGOs have to work through local NGOs, import of material into the Vanni is cumbersome and specialised craftsmen (such as masons, well diggers) are difficult to contract. LTTE through TRO exerts a varied degree of influence on INGOs concerning certain areas to be covered and certain type of activities carried out. Especially in Mannar INGOs reported difficulties with respect to the absurd procedures on the LTTE / GOSL checkpoints resulting in 3 times loading and off-loading of goods (factory, LTTE, GOSL, final destination). This resulted in increased costs and delay in delivery. Here INGOs need the full back up of ECHO and other donors in order to withstand pressure coming from the LTTE (especially in the Vanni).

109. Each ECHO partner working in the LTTE controlled areas, has its own strategy of dealing with the day-to-day problems that occur. One partner has a very principled approach and a firm attitude towards the exigencies of the TRO, another partner tackles the problems in a more relaxed way, complying partly with the TRO requests to work through local NGOs and at the same time being very present with its own field staff. Both ways have their advantages and disadvantages. Some of the partners would like ECHO to 'enforce' a more uncompromising stand from all the partners. It is questionable whether this is useful at present, since the different LTTE controlled areas represent different problems and need a different approach. The magnitude of the problems also changes from time to time, when high-placed LTTE authorities are transferred to other parts of the LTTE area. This means that working / implementation conditions depend strongly on the LTTE cadres in charge at a particular moment and on the 'diplomatic' ability of the concerned INGO staff. To leave the delicate balance intact that in some cases exists between LTTE and INGOs and that makes it possible for the INGO to support the population in an area, it may even not be advisable to 'enforce' a unique, uncompromising policy.

110. Food security and income generation interventions do not pose serious problems in the LTTE areas at present. Beneficiary selection through local, TRO-affiliated NGOs can be questioned, but the option of 'blanket' coverage of communities with agricultural packages can assure that vulnerable groups are also reached.

111. It can happen that a partner has to compromise on the quality of tools (for agricultural and income generation packages), when these have to be bought or produced locally on request of the TRO. There seems, however, to be ways out of the problems in most cases, e.g. good local craftsmen are identified and experience a boost for their production unit.

### **3.4 Management and Monitoring Carried out by ECHO**

112. The technical assistant (TA) of ECHO is responsible for informing, supporting and monitoring the INGOs and IOs. He is in charge of covering all the sectors in question, i.e. water, sanitation, food security, de-mining, etc. but avails of no special technical background. Above all he is based in New Dehli and visits the projects every three months.

113. The partners are in general satisfied with the assistance and support given to them by ECHO. However it is highly recommended that a technical expert is seconded to the TA in order to appraise the project proposals upon submission and also provide technical support and expertise to both the TA and ECHO's partners if and when required. This expert might cover more countries in the region (a similar set-up exists for example in Zimbabwe where the TA is supported by technical experts from Nairobi).

## **4 SECTOR STRATEGY - FUNDED ACTIONS**

### **4.1 Mines**

#### **4.1.1 Observations**

114. To date although not a signatory to the Convention to Ban Anti Personnel landmines, Sri Lanka has made significant achievements in mine action. Areas of concern however are set out below.

115. Prioritisation criteria used for the selection of tasks and coordination of the national and district (and agency) work plans are too loosely defined and lack full commitment at national, regional and individual partner levels.

116. Information management and dissemination in relation to the Sri Lanka mine/UXO problem has been poor. Lack of coordinated access to mine action information then causes problems in planning for other stakeholders, i.e., NGO, donors, government institutions. In these cases ECHO partners in many areas have been able to support the stakeholders effectively with the necessary information. Whilst this is an essential part of integration in a humanitarian response, partners need to be wary not to undermine the capacity and authority of the national institutions established to do this.

117. The refugee and IDP situation as it stands now does not indicate an emergency situation in terms of mine action. However, time lines set for completion of high priority tasks in Sri Lanka (currently stated as Dec 2006) fail to take into account the impact that the

transition to peace will have on the country. A corresponding increase in return will create enormous pressure on the existing mine action capacity to cope. In this case the situation may well turn into an emergency response.

118. Reconstruction activities continue to occur without the required planning and coordination to ensure the necessary mine action has occurred. This places reconstruction itself at risk and adds extra pressure to ECHO partners and others to cope with new demands not identified in existing plans. Advocacy to formalise this requirement within donor contracts or funding agreements would support coordination efforts and reduce the risk to beneficiaries.

#### **4.1.2 Relevance and Appropriateness**

119. Landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IED) constitute a significant impediment to resettlement and reconstruction and hinder activities that cement the peace process. Surveys have shown that landmine, UXO and IED contamination have affected the districts of Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mannar, Mullativu, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Ampara and adjacent areas. Between 1 and 1.5 million anti-personnel mines (AP) were laid by both parties to the conflict in the latter part of the 1990s, most in previously highly populated areas and fertile land. Many of these areas are either past, or current militarily strategic areas in the north and east of the country. Two and a half years into a ceasefire, mines and UXO continue to interdict fertile lands for cultivation and block access to water. The national database mine/UXO statistics show that mines affect over 600 communities in the north and north east of Sri Lanka.

120. ECHO funded mine action almost immediately on the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement, in February 2002. This sector deals with an evaluation of mine action funding by ECHO. The main purpose is to provide accountability conclusions and recommendations at both strategic and operational levels.

##### **4.1.2.1 The Operation Framework**

121. It should be noted that the agencies funded by ECHO to conduct mine action in Sri Lanka do not work in isolation. There are a number of mine action agencies; including the GoSL Armed forces operating in a humanitarian mine clearance role, the Humanitarian Demining Unit, the HDU, which is the local demining capacity in the LTTE controlled areas, and various other international mine action agencies<sup>12</sup>. In LTTE controlled areas ECHO partners work with the same local partner, the HDU. This same local partner is also working with other non-ECHO funded mine action agencies. This requires a delicate balance from all agencies to ensure they are working coherently with the same local partner. In addition, immediately following the CFA 2002, and as mine action agencies entered into funding arrangements with ECHO, the Government of Sri Lanka began to develop a national and district based structure<sup>13</sup> to plan, coordinate and monitor mine action in the conflict affected areas. This district-based structure is now replicated in the LTTE controlled areas (in particular the area known as the Vanni) where the Tamil Relief Organisation (TRO)<sup>14</sup> as the head of the Regional Mine Action Office (RMAO) parallels this structure.

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<sup>12</sup> UNDP Mine Action Information Bulletin No 2: Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), Danish Demining Group (DDG), Sarvatra, and Horizon. Two of these organisations FSD and DDG also work with the TRO/HDU in cooperation with ECHO funded partners (NPA, UNICEF and MAG).

<sup>13</sup> UNDP sponsored project "Support to GoSL Mine Action Programme"

<sup>14</sup> UNDP sponsored project "Support to TRO Regional Mine Action Office"



122. This operating framework is not completely functional however. The weaknesses of both GoSL and TRO capacity to plan and manage such a support and delivery service are apparent and will only be overcome with time, ongoing capacity building, training and support.

123. It is important however that agencies enter such emergency humanitarian interventions with a view to supporting the longer-term development of the country.

124. The efforts of all agencies to work within this framework, recognising at the same time the sensitivities and particular problems inherent in working within two parallel structures are to be commended. The GoSL and the LTTE<sup>15</sup> have shown foresight in recognising the need to centralise landmine and UXO information and to formalise and integrate mine action planning to support relief, reconstruction and redevelopment activities and maximise the mine action funding through prioritisation and impact analysis.

*It is impossible to conduct an evaluation of ECHO funded mine action activities without reviewing mine action in its context at the national level and in cooperation with all other mine action stakeholders. The reader is advised to take the information contained here in that context rather than purely as an evaluation of only ECHO funded agencies.*

125. Mine action internationally has developed to the point that there are generally accepted strategies, guidelines and best practices that apply. An important function of this evaluation is to identify the extent to which ECHO funding recognised such best practice through the activities funded, the extent to which agencies coordinated between themselves and within the national framework and the extent to which programme objectives were achieved.

#### **4.1.2.2 Appropriateness**

126. ECHO funded mine action has been appropriate with regard to what is essential for an intervention following a ceasefire, particularly where there is little accessible information and a lot of pressure on agencies to undertake humanitarian funding of other sectors, i.e., roads, schools, hospitals, utilities and of course the movement of IDPs and refugees. The ECHO funded activities included a dangerous area survey, a mine clearance capacity survey including technical aspects, minefield fencing and marking and explosives ordnance disposal (EOD), mine risk education and survivor support activities. Although there were some instances where the information arising from the results of surveys were slow in being shared with the national mine action database, in the main, the process has allowed information to be gathered and disseminated to stakeholders, (i.e. IDPs, refugees, other humanitarian actors, government partners, UN agencies); dangerous areas to be identified and fenced; emergency clearance to be conducted; and community and public education of the risks of mines/UXO in a rapid manner. Apart from ECHO's support to White Pigeon, there was limited funding for existing prosthetic support services in the Vanni and Jaffna regions. Only recently an internationally recognised prosthetic support agency requested and received funding to conduct service support interventions. Although national prosthetic support services have done an admirable job with ECHO funding previously, a broader international support early on after the ceasefire might have supported the development of a national standard and coordination efforts for survivor support activities. It is apparent that whereas the other aspects of mine action are well developed in standardisation and coordination, survivor support lacks in these areas.

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<sup>15</sup> LTTE have identified the TRO as the appropriate source within the LTTE controlled region to coordinate, plan and prioritise mine action activities.

127. The mine and UXO contamination of Sri Lanka covers the majority of the conflict affected areas of the north and northeast. The most highly contaminated areas are Jaffna and the area known as the Vanni region although there are of course other areas such as Trincomalee, Mannar and Batticaloa Districts, which are also contaminated.

128. The ECHO strategy of funding of mine risk education (MRE) throughout the north and north east and funding in mine clearance in Vanni and Jaffna is appropriate, given the high degree of contamination in those two areas and that these areas received the most returns immediately after the signing of the CFA 2002.

129. It should be recognised that the Vanni Region with its LTTE control and separate quasi governmental systems imposed by the LTTE, i.e., separate taxes, police, legal and government structures, creates extra pressures on those agencies attempting to implement in the region. The LTTE imposes certain requirements on the agencies, such as, having to work with the TRO/HDU rather than directly implementing. The fact that the GoSL also maintains its own governmental structure in the Vanni region with Government Agents, Divisional Secretaries, etc., also creates a secondary layer of administration and coordination requirements on top of that of the LTTE.

130. It should also be recognised that whilst mine action agencies do work in both GoSL and LTTE controlled areas, they are currently restricted to operating outside of high-risk security zones only. Should the peace process continue and lead to a Peace Agreement, this will impact quite heavily on the amount of area accessible to the agencies to work in and therefore increase the amount of presumably mine and UXO contaminated areas. While this will not necessarily change the high priority areas of work, i.e. Jaffna and the Vanni region, it is presumed that the corresponding increase in refugee return and IDP movement will increase the pressure on agencies to conduct mine action in support of the peace process.

#### **4.1.3 Efficiency**

131. Although efficiency has generally been good throughout the funded period, all of the ECHO partners (and others) have suffered to some degree for a number of reasons. These can be divided into two main areas. Firstly, there are problems experienced in dealing with general administration and bureaucracy. These include issues such as: difficulties with customs clearances, delays in establishing MOU with local partners, problems in accessing explosives and permissions to transfer said explosives across the borders from GoSL controlled territory to LTTE controlled areas, difficulties getting visa clearances for expatriate staff and in accessing radio (VHF/HF) frequencies and clearances.

132. The National Steering Committee on Mine Action was able to support agencies to some extent through the establishment of a "one stop shop"<sup>16</sup> to help solve these problems. A lot of the problems stemmed from the GoSL reluctance to release previously strictly controlled items into LTTE controlled areas, in particular radios and explosives. The presence of a UNDP Technical Adviser in Killinochchi collocated with the RMAO may help alleviate these problems in the future.

133. The second major area deals with general operational inefficiencies, which reduce operational capacity and impact on operational planning. Although again, all ECHO funded agencies have achieved their stated objectives with regard to project implementation, there are general difficulties faced by all agencies that impinge on operational efficiency. These include issues such as:

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<sup>16</sup> Using the Secretariat services of the UNDP Support to Mine Action In Sri Lanka project.

- *The high level of general absenteeism of national staff*

This is apparent both in the LTTE controlled region and in GoSL areas, too. Absenteeism can occur for various reasons, being cultural or religious (Sri Lanka has a large number of public holidays), social and family based or just with people changing from job to job without notice. It impacts on agencies in that it seems rare to have a full strength work force on any given day. This means agencies lose time in training replacement teams or need to have standby teams to compensate.

- *Difficulties due to the types of terrain*

The category of area where work is conducted can reduce operational efficiency. This can be due to the type of terrain, i.e. heavy vegetation rather than sandy areas, the presence of heavy building rubble on site, heavy metal contamination due to shrapnel, fragmentation etc, weather, the location rural or urban, etc. This affects the choice of clearance methodology, i.e. metal detector, RAKE method, and use of mechanical support systems, excavation and sapping.

- *Accidents / Incidents*

Accidents reduce efficiencies due to the need to temporarily suspend operations, investigate and retrain if necessary. They may also have an effect on absenteeism.

It is quite possible that although injuries have reduced overall in the general community, the general level of injuries would have been much higher had the Pakistani P4 AP mine been more effective<sup>17</sup> in its operation. Similarly, the LTTE Jony 99 is electrically initiated and at this time, the battery system has run down in most mines and therefore will not initiate the mines.

- *Prioritisation and planning*

Limitations in planning and prioritisation of tasks can also affect efficiencies as it takes time to establish sites. Incorrect or inappropriate tasking can eat away at operational efficiencies. This is linked to the lack of a coherent national work plan<sup>18</sup>, which at this stage does not exist in terms of the identification of all dangerous areas both in and out of high security zones (HSZ), long-term infrastructure reconstruction and development and the prioritisation of work within the districts. Again, this is being addressed both at district and national level and will improve although one must always recognise that plans can and should be changed as new information comes to light regarding the mine/UXO threat in localised areas.

134. It is the NSCMA stated intention to clear all high and medium priority minefields by December 2006. All of the agencies operating in Sri Lanka currently adhere to this goal although most agencies recognise the inherent difficulties in reaching that set target with current resources and productivity achievements, particularly if new minefields are released from high security zones.

135. The majority of agencies have stated a productivity of between 10-15 square metres per deminer per day. In reality when clearance statistics are analysed against the number of

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<sup>17</sup> Comments in discussion with most mine action Technical Advisers, that of the P4 mines found between 60 - 80 % have been stepped on and have failed to function.

<sup>18</sup> Currently planning is under way with support of DSCM/RMAO to the NSCMA.

deminers employed in an agency, most agencies achieve less than 50% of that figure, because of a combination of some or all of the factors discussed above<sup>19</sup>.

136. This has implications for the overall efficiency of the Sri Lanka Mine Action Programme and for the achievement of the goal of clearance of all high and medium priority minefields by December 2006. Once a National Work Plan is produced it would be important to revise the clearance productivity figures and do a simple resources/assets to tasks exercise to fix a more appropriate end target. This would allow the identification of extra needs that would in fact allow for the realisation of the target of December 2006.

#### 4.1.4 Effectiveness

137. The strategic priority for mine action in Sri Lanka is to support resettlement. The National Steering Committee for Mine Action (NSCMA), the Mine Action Offices (MAO) in Jaffna, Killinochchi and Vavuniya, and the District Steering Committees for Mine Action have all endorsed this approach. The second strategic priority is mine action in support of reconstruction and development. Roads, bridges and other infrastructure require repair throughout areas where conflict occurred. The rehabilitation of these structures will require clearance of mines and UXO. Clearance also supports small-scale development projects.<sup>20</sup>

138. Given the above strategic outline and the limited assets and resources available to implement the mine action projects currently funded, it is vital that agencies both at the individual level and as part of the district or regional approach have got it right when planning and prioritising mine action.

139. The situation for clearance agencies both in Jaffna and in the Vanni is such that basically any minefield cleared, surveyed or fenced and any community reached and supported with MRE is going to have some kind of impact due to the high degree of contamination. The criteria for effectiveness however are not just conducting mine action efficiently and in accordance with the programmed goals and objectives, but to ensure those efficiencies are focused in accordance with the essential requirements of the set strategy.

140. The key to achieving this is good coordination and planning and therefore appropriate tasking and targeting. This would be a relatively simple task were it not for the fact that mine action being such a cross cutting issue, influences or impacts on so many other sectors or activities, such as clearance for resettlement, infrastructure repair, development, agricultural action, etc. This means there are many more actors involved than just the community and the agency. This brings into the planning picture such disparate stakeholders as the national and district governmental bodies, other humanitarian aid or development agencies, other donors, private industry, competing utilities (power, water, roads) and other UN agencies and branches.

141. There were several opportunities during the course of the evaluation to see why the need for coordination and planning is so important to ensure the effective use of resources.

142. *To quote a few:*

- a) At a District Steering Committee Meeting for Mine Action it was noted that communities and individual families are still taking up residence inside operational minefields, because of the issue of payment of UAS. In this instance the government pays an allowance to returnees providing they have established a residence on their own property. If that property is located in a dangerous area,

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<sup>19</sup> Figures are available from monthly reports made to the National Database.

<sup>20</sup> From: UNDP Support to Mine Action in Sri Lanka Project, Report on the Millennium Goals.

and the allowance is paid without confirmation of clearance from the DMAO, there may be significant pressure on families to return just to get the 25,000 Rps.

- b) The central theme of one of the local theatre groups conducting a mine risk education programme is that a poor farmer is forced back on to his land, in a known dangerous area, in order to claim the UAS.
- c) In one part of Jaffna, the evaluator observed a family has established its residence in the middle of a minefield from where over 200 AP mines have been removed. When questioned, the head of family advised he had returned in order to access the UAS payment.
- d) At a DSCM the Project Director of Foreign Funded Projects asked for information from the DSCM about locations of cleared areas so that projects could go ahead free from the effect of mines and UXO.
- e) At the same meeting, a mine action agency complained that other agencies had allowed construction activities to go ahead in mine/UXO contaminated areas. The agency also explained that priorities were constantly changing for their mine action efforts because of the effect of unplanned clearance or survey requirements to support infrastructure reconstruction or development. *It would appear the above two points were linked.*

143. Those agencies funded by ECHO (and others) carrying out mine action in Sri Lanka have all subscribed to the need for coordination, prioritisation and planning through the nationally established institutions. This is an important feature of individual agency policies and one that must continue to be encouraged where the national framework exists. Of course there are always instances where the international agency capacity will exceed that of the national capacity and there can be a very frustrating period of catching up. It was apparent throughout this evaluation that most agencies, and particularly those funded by ECHO, do have that long term development thinking in place even when conducting humanitarian emergency interventions.

#### **4.1.5 Impact**

144. On a national level and carrying on the view of mine action in Sri Lanka as a complete programme concerning all mine action players rather than individually funded agencies, the following achievements have been made:

- a) A national database has been established to record the locations of hazardous or contaminated areas, the details of cleared areas and the details of victims and survivors.
- b) The impact of this work at the national level, through the efforts of individual agencies has seen the level of deaths and injury reduced from 15 to 25 per month initially to less than seven per month over the last year. All of this has been achieved during the supported return of over 360,000 IDP and refugees to the north and north east of Sri Lanka.
- c) Over 600 mine/uxo-affected communities have been identified and registered in the national database, allowing the preparation of a national work plan based on district and regional requirements<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Not including those communities affected in HSZ.

- d) Sri Lanka National Standards for Mine Action have been developed and approved and are the basis for Standard Operating Procedures of all accredited agencies.
- e) Mine action agencies are accredited to operate in the country via a National Steering Committee where all stakeholders are represented.
- f) Quality Assurance teams are trained and operational in all demining sites in Sri Lanka providing a high degree of external quality assurance to support the internal quality assurance inherent to agencies.

145. ECHO funded programmes support survey, minefield marking, clearance, explosives ordinance disposal, prosthetic services and community mine risk education. ECHO funded agencies provide the vast majority of services in the Vanni region. In Jaffna, ECHO funded agencies provide integrated mechanical and manual clearance, survey, marking and EOD services and community-based mine risk education. A limited survey capacity is underway through ECHO funded agencies in Trincomalee, survivor support services are underway throughout the eastern region on an outreach basis, and mine risk education reached out to the mine and UXO contaminated border areas (which due to priorities for resettlement and reconstruction are less likely to see mine action in the near future).

146. Another point with regard to impact is the possibility of the peace process moving forward. The north east is divided into two parts: those held by GoSL forces and those held by LTTE. The areas held by GoSL are further divided between freely accessible land and areas known as High Security Zones (HSZ), which are controlled, patrolled and defended by GoSL forces. The majority of the HSZ are collocated along former defence lines and impinge to a great extent on villages and community's available land and infrastructure.

147. If and when peace is negotiated and HSZ are released for communities<sup>22</sup> to begin life again, there will be a corresponding increase in the number of minefields and dangerous areas to be addressed within the national clearance plan. This will impact on agencies' future plans and will stretch existing resources in achieving the end date of December 2006.

148. Alternatively there is always the possibility of the peace process failing and a situation of war in the north and northeast. In this case, although both sides have made public statements in support of the Ottawa Treaty, there has been no formal commitment from either side. The possibility of re-mining or new mining during such a conflict would have a very large impact on the success of the existing programme and the future of any ongoing programme.

#### **4.1.6 Sustainability**

149. Sri Lanka is in the situation now where the basis for sustainable mine action programmes is in place both in the Vanni region and in GoSL controlled areas. ECHO funded partners in the Vanni have been working in close collaboration with the local partner identified to them by the LTTE, and in GoSL controlled areas the Sri Lankan Army Humanitarian Mine Action teams have been strengthened and supported by external donors to build their capacity, through equipment and training.

150. The inclusions of mine risk education into the national school curriculum and in the future into the national teacher training curriculum have ensured its sustainability throughout the school system.

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<sup>22</sup> In Jaffna alone, there are an estimated 84,645 persons displaced from and 17,260 houses located in current HSZ.

151. Inclusion and integration of survivor support programmes into the formal health system in Sri Lanka will help with sustainability in the future.

152. One of the benefits of mine action in Sri Lanka over the last three years has been the focus on community and district level participation in all facets of mine action. Whether through mine risk education projects based on community networks and local partners or through information and data gathering by clearance and survey activities, there is a general trend in methodology to focus on local networks to aid prioritisation and planning. This links to commonly accepted best practice worldwide and in the main, agencies have attempted to implement this as best practice in Sri Lanka.

#### 4.1.7 Accountability

153. The willingness of ECHO partners to embrace previous lessons learnt and implement best practice have shown how just as it is important not to *reinvent the wheel*, it is equally important to *refine the design*. ECHO partners in Sri Lanka have done this to a high standard showing how best practice is indeed the best place to start and can in fact be constantly improved, whether it be in mine risk education, survey and marking and clearance or survivor support.

154. There have been a number of lessons learned in Sri Lanka and a number of examples of how previous lessons have been implemented in Sri Lanka, supporting a more efficient and effective mine action programme.

155. Of the lessons learned, perhaps one of the most significant in clearance has been the adaptation of the Sri Lankan RAKE<sup>23</sup> methodology, incorporated with international standards to ensure safety of minefield marking and implementation to develop a cheaper alternative to the metal detector. Of course, the RAKE methodology becomes another tool in the mine action toolbox but it has been used very effectively in certain terrains in Sri Lanka, particularly the Vanni region under sandy beach like conditions.

156. The stand off distance afforded by the RAKE between deminer and landmine means that generally (AP P4 in particular) if a mine functions during the use of the tool, injuries are limited to sand and dirt debris, and some slight hearing damage.

157. In mine risk education, three years after ECHO funding began and building on commonly accepted best practice, communities are mobilised, children's clubs are operational and mine risk education has been introduced in to the national school curriculum. Community mine risk education liaison teams work closely with demining agencies formalising effective communication needs of both deminers and the community.

158. Agencies willingly submit to the guidance and direction of the national mine action framework, reporting to it and consulting it when formulating policy changes.

159. Overall, one can see the impact of professional mine action agencies working together as a team with national goals in mind and using current best practice guidelines in the implementation of individual projects.

160. It was also apparent during the field research for the evaluation that in spite of lessons learned from the mine action perspective, when it comes to donor coordination and accountability in other sectors, there are still instances where projects are funded with little thought of the impact of mine/UXO contamination on the project and project costs. This is an area that could be improved overall and one where ECHO and ECHO partners may have some influence in encouraging the requirement and need for coordination.

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<sup>23</sup> Light garden rake and heavy rake used in conjunction with appropriate minefield marking and PPE.

#### 4.1.8 Conclusions

161. In conclusion, it is apparent that ECHO funded partners have added considerable value to mine action in Sri Lanka. To date Sri Lanka in respect of its national mine action programme has made significant achievements in mine action.

162. Through the combined efforts of mine clearance and mine risk education the level of death and injury has reduced from 15 to 25 per month to less than seven per month throughout the northeast.

- a) A national database has been established to record the locations of hazardous or contaminated areas, the details of cleared areas and the details of victims and survivors.
- b) Mine action agencies are accredited to operate in the country via a National Steering Committee where all stakeholders are represented.
- c) National Standards for Mine Action (Clearance and Mine Risk Education) have been developed and approved and are the basis for Standard Operating Procedures of all accredited agencies.
- d) Quality Assurance teams are trained and operational in all demining sites in Sri Lanka.

163. That Sri Lanka has progressed so quickly to this point shows the benefit of sound technical advice and agency selection right from the outset of funding. A successful national programme of this nature is indicative of the concept of "*the whole being greater than the sum of its parts*". ECHO funded partners have played a considerable role in these national achievements. It also shows the level of accountability achieved throughout the humanitarian mine action sector internationally where agencies constantly strive to apply the benefits of lessons learned in other regions.

164. It is apparent that although using development strategy tools, most mine action agencies are still conducting humanitarian interventions on an emergency basis. Although the level of deaths and injuries from mines and unexploded ordnance in the conflict affected areas have reduced substantially and the number of dangerous or contaminated areas is to a large extent plotted and marked or at least known, this does not mean that the emergency situation posed by the threat of mines and UXO has been completely contained. This is particularly relevant if the peace process continues and the HSZ are released and refugees and IDPs return in greater numbers.

#### 4.1.9 Recommendations

165. ECHO partners have a requirement via their FPA and project contracts to work to ensure coordination; planning and prioritisation requirements through national and regional/district frameworks are established and maintained. ECHO partners should be required to report on their achievements in this context.

166. National and regional/district institutions are not yet at the stage where development funding can take over the role of emergency humanitarian responses. Funding should continue for at least two more years, focused on identification of dangerous areas, fencing, marking and ongoing clearance in accordance with the national and regional plans.

167. ECHO should ensure in future interventions that funding decisions are designed to ensure developmental goals are identified throughout the emergency response, so that national capacity development and support are encouraged concurrent to the emergency intervention.



168. ECHO should work with other donors and through the EC at governmental level to insist that development and reconstruction activities factor in the costs of mine action in the initial planning.

169. Although the absence of accession to the Landmine Treaty should not hinder the ECHO humanitarian response, as a guarantee of return on investment with regard to the funding of humanitarian mine action, ECHO at all levels should actively encourage the GoSL and LTTE to accede to the Landmine Ban.

## **4.2 Water, Sanitation and Shelter**

### **4.2.1 Relevance and Appropriateness**

170. The projects funded in the sectors water, sanitation and shelter have been relevant in the sense of the definition<sup>24</sup>. The districts covered had taken the brunt of the conflict over the last 20 years.

171. The strategy chosen is plain and straightforward and as one person interviewed explained “...*People have returned to their former homes after 20 years of displacement and, even without elaborate need assessment it was clear, that one of the essential needs they had was safe drinking water and basic shelter assistance...*”.

172. The need assessments by partners have been on the whole appropriate and were well done. Interventions mostly started with lists of returnees received from the DS's / GA's office of the relevant districts. With few exceptions partners verified these lists and carried out preliminary assessments in order to get a clearer picture. The needs have been prioritised through PRA-workshops held in the individual communities. Targeting and compilation of the final list of beneficiaries was mostly done through a household survey (the quality of the household surveys however varied quite considerably, see example in the technical annex). Overall, results of targeting were appropriate, yet sometimes members of supported communities have appeared not to be part of the most vulnerable group.

173. The interventions of INGOs concentrated on the rehabilitation and new construction of dug wells. Technology applied has been fairly simple but appropriate. INGOs have decided against tube wells because of the O&M-aspect and the fact, that traditionally people prefer open dug wells. Yet, tube wells with hand pumps would have been more hygienic (ICRC constructs only tube wells). Tube wells would certainly have been an economic option<sup>25</sup> in specific areas; the evaluator however is of the opinion that dug wells have represented the better option in the majority of cases and under the circumstances.

174. Whether latrines have been relevant is difficult to assess. Latrines had turned into a sort of “status symbol” and in numerous places people's latrines were superior to their houses. Also no health surveys provided supporting data to assess relevance, in quite some cases people had no latrine before displacement. However, people stressed the importance of latrines in the interviews.

175. Shelter assistance was a straightforward support through temporary basic shelter. Timeliness was a critical aspect in this respect as families naturally had “helped themselves” before the intervention even started, through construction of basic cadjan house. In

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<sup>24</sup> ECHO evaluation hand book and ALNAP guidance booklet.

<sup>25</sup> 2 quotations received from private companies in Colombo quoted €900 for a drilled well and €120 for a hand drilled well.

this case the evaluator had the impression that shelter assistance has been accepted through a “better-than-nothing-sort of attitude and it might have been better to support other sectors.

#### 4.2.2 Coverage

176. ECHO's partners in the water, sanitation and shelter sectors covered the 8 north-eastern districts and 3 central districts (Anuradhapura, Pollunaruwa and Puttalam (IOM, UNHCR). Based on theoretical figures of beneficiaries stated in the proposals of these 8 partners (14 in total) a theoretical number of 339,130 persons have been supported through ECHO financing (see annex: Tables). This would be almost 90% of all returnees according to UNHCR (380,000 people) since February 2002. An unrealistically high figure.

177. Utilizing the numbers of structures provided in order to establish “practical figures” on coverage would result in the following numbers (*15 families covered by a well was the average figure found during site visits<sup>26</sup>, 4 families per latrine was mostly named in proposals, shelter is per family*).

Structures	Total No.	Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries covered
Wells	1,560 <sup>27</sup>	75	<b>117,000</b>
Latrines	4,200	20	84,000
Shelter	10,150	5	50,750

178. Assuming that not always the same beneficiaries have been covered by provision of wells, latrines and shelter and also host communities, EVI, FHH, than it might be assumed that roughly 140,000 beneficiaries have been supported over 3 years. This would be app. 35 % of returnees and presents a somewhat more realistic percentage.

#### 4.2.3 Coordination

179. There was a clear lack of coordination between ECHO's activity and the numerous bilateral programmes which are on-going.<sup>28</sup> Within all these programmes there are water, sanitation, irrigation and housing components, however according to information from partner's attempts to coordinate with the representative e.g. NECORD in the different districts have hardly been successful. Here the support of ECHO will be essential and needed.

180. Almost no sector meetings for water, sanitation and shelter are held in the individual districts, although ECHO has been insisting on, and actively supporting and encouraging coordination among its partners. Similarly, no lead agency has emerged, neither overall for the country nor in the individual districts. Furthermore, partners complained that ECHO finances different partners for similar activities in the same districts, which sometimes created confusion and tension with respect to specific communities targeted by different IN-GOs.

<sup>26</sup> See also evaluation report, ZOA 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Agro wells, multipurpose wells and pumps are not included.

<sup>28</sup> NEPAD, NECORD, CAARP, NERF, NEIAP, etc. Interviews were held with WB and ADB in Colombo.

#### 4.2.4 Effectiveness

181. ECHO partners have predominantly achieved the results (number of wells, latrines or shelter constructed) in some incidences the planned results have even been surpassed. Occasionally activities had to be changed as a result of political circumstances or changing project environments. Partners mostly dealt professionally and efficiently with these changes.

##### Water Supply

182. All interviewed communities expressed their gratitude for the provision of wells. It improved their situation significantly (walking distances of 2 km and more was frequent; people used unsafe surface water, rivers, channels or tanks). Unfortunately, baseline data have rarely been available, making it difficult to weigh up the effects and impacts of the individual interventions. All of the wells visited had sufficient water at the end of the dry season.

183. INGOs constructed the well for a certain number of families (15, 20 up to 30 families<sup>29</sup>) but the safe-yield has never been verified or a hydro-geological map consulted, in order to get an idea on the aquifer's condition (number, strength, possible salinity, possible yield). The numbers of wells constructed is not an assurance that water is provided in sufficient quantity and quality. For this the safe-yield (test pumping) has to be established and water quality tested. This was only infrequently carried out. No agency had results of water tests in their files ("...we are in the process of doing it..."). A general lack of scientific engineering approach was experienced in the field visits (with few exceptions). For instance, only a few organisations looked "beyond the physical structure of the well" and checked how the water is actually transported to the houses, stored in the households and used. Would it have been helpful to provide hygienically safe vessels for the water and check storage capacity in the households? (SPHERE: min. 2 vessels between 10-20 litre each).

184. However, problems of water quantity or quality have never been mentioned by any of the communities visited (maybe people did not tie certain health problems to water because of a lack of awareness).

##### Latrines

185. The construction of latrines was not always understood to be part of a system which supports environmental health. The people supported returned to their own land, they came back to stay. This is different to a refugee situation, where quick and real emergency measures are needed. At least medium term strategies should have been applied. Intervention should have embarked upon issues systematically and holistically and as a consequence looked into:

*Water Supply (quantity necessary, quality, storage practices, etc.), drainage, sanitation, final excreta disposal, solid waste disposal, health and hygiene promotion...*

as an interlinked and interdependent system and made sure that all aspects are at least taken into consideration when designing an intervention. This would have increased effectiveness. Nevertheless, the latrines have been appreciated greatly by the communities and have been maintained very well from the visual appearance aspects. Whether latrines have contributed to an increased hygiene environment could not be evaluated. Negative envi-

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<sup>29</sup> SPHERE standard would be 250 persons or 50 families in the context of Sri Lanka.

ronmental aspects through seepage of pits have not been recorded (trial excavation around pits at a reasonable distance should provide data on this).

### Shelter

186. The effectiveness of the shelter programme financed by ECHO is strongly linked with 2 issues: timeliness and type of shelter. In cases where communities have been assisted, which returned only recently the assistance was very effective and inline with the immediate needs of the people. In cases where communities had already developed a basic form of shelter themselves, the assistance was not so effective anymore (the reason being that ECHO endorsed a very basic form of shelter assistance, which was appropriate under the ECHO mandate). The evaluator had the impression, that people took this assistance because it was free and could have solved the problem of shelter by themselves (with the exception of EVI, FHH, etc.). Here focus could have been given to necessities which are beyond the financial or technical capacity of communities (the results of the PRA would be helpful in this respect).

### Welfare Centres

187. With only one exception (Poonthotham in Vavuniya, one of the worst WFC in the country) all WFCs visited by the water and sanitation experts have had a reasonable appearance, even the 2 WFCs visited in Puttalam (one was exceptionally good and a normal village by all means). The clear information from the visits is, that WFC should not be supported indiscriminately but based on necessity. Definitely the one WFC visited in Puttalam would not have needed external assistance.

## **4.2.4 Efficiency**

### **4.2.4.1 Technologies Applied**

#### Water Supply

188. The technologies applied in order to provide safe drinking water have been simple.

- a) Construction of dug wells, mostly between 6 and 8 feet diameter of avg. 20 feet depth.
- b) Rehabilitation of dug wells.
- c) Replacement of hand pumps (only to a very limited extent in 2002 in Jaffna).
- d) Multipurpose wells providing water for drinking and irrigation.

189. The quality of the structures has been good, and the building method was based on local construction technology commonly found in the different areas. Locations of wells have either been selected directly by the community or by using the traditional palm-leaf-method. Consultation of a hydro-geologist or a hydro-geological map has not been done and the safe yield has never been measured. Excavation was mostly carried out by the communities or depending on geological conditions with professional well diggers or even excavators (Ampara, Batticaloa).

190. The wells had diameters between 5 and 8 feet, were constructed with cement bricks (special well bricks) or burnt bricks (only in Batticaloa), apron and drainage channels were included. Water was extracted through pulley, rope and bucket. An average diameter of 6 feet under normal circumstances should be sufficient. Wells have been disinfected before

handing over; unfortunately data on water quality or health statistics have hardly been collected.

191. Technical deficiencies were found during the field visits e.g. quite often insufficient drainage leading to stagnant water, the few multi-purpose wells had no apron, a pre-requisite for “hygienically safe drinking water”, fencing of wells was seldom done. Well Committees have been established only for approximately 50%<sup>30</sup> of the wells constructed. According to one of the few impact surveys<sup>31</sup> only 30% of the well committees still existed after one year. Health and hygiene awareness as an integral part of rural water supply is often not implemented. (In one incident a motorcycle was washed directly at the well, which was hopefully an exception).

192. The quality of building material either procured or produced by the INGOs did not undergo a quality test (the number of stones would have justified it). Locally manufactured hand pumps showed heavy deterioration (India Mark III recommended as it is national policy also).

### Latrines

193. The latrines have been constructed using a more or less common design, 3x4 feet, with a squatting pan and a pit, recently agreed by all partners (Oxfam latrine). The construction quality is good and communities contributed through providing unskilled labour. Mostly family latrines have been built, fewer communal latrines, having a land title being a pre-requisite.

194. Efforts to promote communal toilets against family latrines or a more simplified design were not successful (the efforts should be continued). Yet, if sufficient funds are available, individual toilets certainly should be the preferred choice of technology.

### Shelter

195. Over 10,100 shelters have been provided using a diversity of shelter-concepts e.g. emergency, semi-permanent, WFC-shelter, “temporary sustainable solution”<sup>32</sup>, house repair. Materials used, ranged from cadjan, tin sheets for roofing, jungle wood, GI pipes as support structures, cement for floors, and doors. Depending on vulnerability, beneficiaries were assisted with skilled labour or had to build the shelter themselves.

196. Shelter seemed not to be the first priority of many beneficiaries interviewed and thus even very basic assistance was welcomed (a real need was tin-sheets to make cadjan roofs water tight before the rainy season). A WB housing schemes<sup>33</sup> unintentionally had a negative impact on ECHO partners in the Vanni, as officials (GA, DS) in districts demanded comparable investments (150,000 Rs) and prevented INGOs<sup>34</sup> from building temporary shelter.

#### **4.2.4.2 Results achieved – Outputs – Cost effectiveness**

197. Approximately €4,560,000 have been invested by ECHO partners on activities concerning water, sanitation and shelter (see annex: tables) resulting in the following output:

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<sup>30</sup> Based on field discussion with the individual organisations.

<sup>31</sup> Information from ACF.

<sup>32</sup> Expression of UNHCR in Jaffna

<sup>33</sup> Approximately 46,000 houses over the next 4 years. Only previous house owner are targeted.

<sup>34</sup> Especially the partners in Jaffna, Killinochi, Mullaitivu. General in the Vanni.

Year	Wells	Latrines	Shelter
2002	657	506	1,432
2003	636	2,906	3,650
2004	266	775	5,070
<b>Total</b>	<b>1559</b>	<b>4,187</b>	<b>10,152</b>

198. In addition 240 agro and 60 multi-purpose wells have been built and a total of 150 water pumps mainly for irrigation purpose provided. In the submitted budgets ECHO partner allocated the funds according to the following ratios.<sup>35</sup>

Item	Average %	Min %	Max %
Expatriate Staff	9.8	2.0	26.4
Local Staff	6.2	1.7	19.8
Transport	8.1	0.3	13.6
Admin Cost	6.2	4.0	7.0
Total support costs	33.7 <sup>36</sup>	17.5	71.0
Direct funds to beneficiaries <sup>37</sup>	66.3	82.5	29.0

199. Total support cost of average 34 % are on the high side, but still within acceptable limits of "standard proposals". Support costs over 40 % however should be discussed with the relevant INGOs to locate potentials for more efficient use of funds in the future. The difficult working conditions in SLA, especially the fact that many INGOs worked in government controlled areas as well as in LTTE controlled areas, might be an explanation.

200. 21 projects have been carried out over 3 years which had water, sanitation and shelter components. In these projects, partners spread out their activities over the following number of districts within one intervention: *1 partner working in 1 district – 3 interventions, 1 partner working in 2 districts – 9 interventions, 1 partner working in 3 districts – 6 interventions, 1 partner working in 5 districts – 2 intervention, 1 partner working in 8 districts - 1 intervention (UNHCR).*

201. ECHO should have tried to fund partners to work in a maximum of 2 districts in order to reduce support costs (logistic, running costs, personnel, etc.).

202. Also standardized designs should have been used as much as possible in order to construct structures more cost-effective (only a latrine construction has been standardized in the Vanni by Oxfam, standards for wells are currently prepared).

203. In a country like SLA it should be expected that organisations (at least the ones which have received 3 subsequent fundings) build up enough local capacity to reduce the expatriate / local staff ratio until the project is mainly run by local staff. Only two organisations managed to reduce expenditure on expatriate staff compared to previous years.

204. The following table presents a rough calculation on cost-effectiveness of structures

<sup>35</sup> 21 proposals have been submitted which had water, sanitation and shelter components

<sup>36</sup> No distinction has been made according to the new FPA (goods delivered to beneficiaries & support costs).

<sup>37</sup> Direct funds are 100% - total support costs

Item	Total invest.	Total fund <sup>38</sup>	Unit cost / structure	Invest / beneficiary Wat-san, shelter	Investment <sup>39</sup> / beneficiary all sectors (see technical annex)
	€	%	€	€	€
<b>Wells</b>	1,171,212	5.50	751	7,5	Aver. 50 €
<b>Latrines</b>	1,024,142	4.80	244	12	Min. 18 €
<b>Shelter</b>	2,366,490	11.08	234	47	Max. 137 €
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,561,844</b>	<b>21.38</b>			

205. Unit costs based on bills of quantities provided by the INGOs have been different, on average €1,120 was spent on a new well, €180 on a latrine and €160 on a shelter assistance package. The unit costs are within acceptable limits compared with common figures in other countries. €7.5 per person in order to provide hygienically safe water is a good ratio compared with figures in other countries (between €15 and 25). The same is valid for latrines and shelter.

## 4.2.5 Impact

### Water and Sanitation

206. In the absence of impact measurement (only 3 reports were mentioned, a survey on functioning WC, occupancy of shelter and an evaluation report carried out by a consultant). and respective data the impact has to be evaluated based on the professional experience of the evaluator, technical expertise, site visits and information gained through interviews with the beneficiaries. In total 1,560 wells have either been rehabilitated and / or constructed (including 80 tube wells and installation of 20 hand pumps).

207. The construction of wells has improved significantly; the access to safer drinking water thus reduced the burden on the returning communities. This is a definite longer lasting impact. Dependency on humanitarian aid will not arise from the provision of wells.

208. INGOs have set-up factories to manufacture bricks for constructing wells and latrines. These factories are handed over to certain communities after the INGOs phasing out. In these incidences a minimal local boost to the economy can be expected. It might also encourage duplication. Negative environmental impacts should not arise as the draw off from dug wells is limited (over-use of aquifer is not likely). However care has to be taken in Jaffna in the future where the ecosystem is disturbed and already out of balance (over pumping of the aquifer, salt intrusion, pollution of the aquifer through seepage from pit latrines). If a substantial amount of pit latrines are built in a small area, the existing soil conditions have to be taken into account to assess the risk of ground water pollution.

209. An unintended positive impact of the construction of latrines which the evaluator could observe was that they gave people "some form of dignity" back.

### Shelter

210. The shelter concept promoted by ECHO was basic emergency shelter. No longer term impact can be expected (emergency should bridge a gap).

<sup>38</sup> Percentage in relation to the funds decided for SLA: €21,350,00 .

<sup>39</sup> Calculation is based on theoretical numbers of beneficiaries in the proposal, therefore to be taken with caution as some figures in the proposals might have been more realistic than others.

211. One INGO has introduced a machine in order to make soil-cement bricks and thus reduce costs for the construction of permanent housing. This might encourage repetition in other communities.

212. In the same way women organisations have been set-up to produce the cadjan-roofs of the shelter (in one district). Negative environmental impacts might be expected as jungle wood is part of the shelter assistance. It might lead to excessive use of wood in an area. However INGOs have already reacted to this through provision of GI pipes. Dependency on humanitarian aid should not arise.

#### **4.2.6 Sustainability**

213. A number of INGOs have already been working in a specific area for some time and have an intimate knowledge of the area and people. Additionally they have longer term projects in parallel (CORE, LIFT, etc.). As a result, ECHO funded projects are the “emergency part” of a more development-oriented strategy. Thus aspects like sustainability and LRRD have been ensured.

#### Water and Sanitation

214. Wells have been constructed using local technology. The quality of the structures has been acceptable and it can be assumed that they will last over the planned period of time. Well committees have not always been formed, however operation and maintenance of dug wells is relatively simple and the families will take care of the well because it is essential for their life. Sustainability of the wells should be reasonably well ascertained under normal circumstances.

215. The latrines are structurally sound and will last a sufficient period of time. The evaluator had the impression that having a latrine did not represent the average level of living standard / technology used. Only people who would have been better off before displacement would have had a latrine constructed out of bricks, including squatting pan and pit. Whether similar latrines will be built by beneficiaries once the present latrines have reached the end of their lifespan, must be seen. However all latrines visited have been very well maintained and only one (out of app. 30 visited) had a technical problem (blockage).

#### Shelter

216. Sustainability of shelter is not an issue because ECHO's philosophy was to provide immediate temporary emergency shelter. Sustainability is not an essential criterion here, however ECHO partners have designed the shelter in order to allow families to reuse the material provided in case they have to move on or start building a permanent house. Only the cement cannot be recovered.

#### Irrigation Structures

217. Sustainability of irrigation structures would be defined by parameters like the quality of design and construction and the ability of communities to re-finance occurring repair work and necessary investments. Other aspects are, whether it re-started agricultural production in order to create financial assets which are vital to sustain the structures.



218. Whether the projects have targeted the communities which would have this potential and whether the repair of the structures have been effective enough, will only be seen after the first 2-3 harvests.

#### **4.2.7 Conclusion**

##### **4.2.7.1 Operational Strategy**

219. The sectors water, sanitation and shelter have reflected the immediate needs of the target group and were in line with specific objectives of ECHO. ECHO funded interventions have covered the areas and districts which have borne the brunt of the conflict. Moreover, they belonged to the so-called “dry-zone” which is prone to water scarcity.

220. Besides the government assistance scheme (UAS<sup>40</sup>) for returnees, ECHO provided important assistance through targeting EVIs, FHHs, etc. It thus filled a very important gap in assistance in-between the large multi- and bilateral programmes in the north-east.

221. There has been a clear lack of coordination between the multi- and bilateral programmes financed by ADB and WB and the humanitarian assistance of ECHO. Attempts by ECHO partners to coordinate with the representatives of these programmes in the districts have been unrewarding so far. Framework conditions for implementation have been cumbersome in LTTE controlled areas as a result of problematic procurement, transport and “forced” cooperation with LNGOs hindered operations. For both aspects above, ECHO's full support is required, as is the support of other donors.

222. The quality of log-frames submitted did mostly not allow monitoring of activities, results and specific objectives achieved. In particular stringent intervention logic and qualitative indicators were missing. Almost no impact measurement was carried out by the partners after the interventions. Partners applying an integrated LRRD oriented approach, in their interventions should be preferred.

##### **4.2.7.2 Sector Strategy**

###### Relevance

223. The interventions in the sectors water, sanitation and shelter have been relevant. Need assessments were carried out satisfactorily by ECHO partners but targeting mechanisms have not been elaborated sufficiently. The employed technologies have generally been appropriate; tube wells could have been considered in certain areas, where soil conditions would have allowed straightforward drilling (even with hand augers), however dug wells have been the more sustainable option under the circumstances.

###### Coordination

224. Coordination in terms of sector activities has been limited; similarly not much exchange of ideas on types of technology used and implementation methods have been carried out amongst partners. Geographical distribution of activities has been communicated sufficiently between partners (only minor incidences were reported from Trincomalee).

###### Effectiveness

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<sup>40</sup> 25,000 Rs. after registration of returnees and an additional 75,000 Rs for the construction of permanent housing.

225. Partners have realized the results in terms of physical outputs and numbers of structures provided. Nevertheless a more holistic and comprehensive concept would have increased effectiveness of interventions, taking a broader approach to address environmental health as a whole, not treating wells, latrines as “separate” issues.

226. The provision of wells has been greatly appreciated by beneficiaries and it solved major problems with respect to water supply. Latrines had the positive effect of giving the people an impression of an “improved living standard”.

227. The type of shelter assistance used by partners was not coherent and should have been coordinated better between partners. Existing capacities within the target group were not considered sufficiently. A number of the WFCs visited appeared “better off” than normal villages along the coast of Sri Lanka.

228. Rehabilitation of irrigation structures are an important part in order to link relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). Yet they have to be accompanied by a preliminary design and basic but realistic cost-benefit analysis.

### Efficiency

229. Technology has been appropriate and structures have been generally built in good quality. Yet design and implementation lacked the inclusion of more specialised expertise available in Sri Lanka and standard engineering practice. Certain technical design parameters are mandatory when constructing wells as well as access to the required technical expertise of staff. This was not sufficient within all organisations.

230. Available data on wells left room for improvement (data base of wells constructed, including information on geological strata, water level, coordinates, etc.);

231. Support costs / total costs ratio of individual interventions have been quite high, yet the overall figures are comparable to figures for humanitarian projects in other countries. Costs for expatriate personnel were in most cases higher than costs of local personnel. Unit costs have been average and decreased over the years. Standardized design and construction methods were developed late and only for latrines thus far. In more than 50% of the proposals submitted, partners covered more than 3 districts.

### Impact

232. With few exceptions the provision of baseline data and socio-economic data on project completion in order to evaluate effectiveness, impact, results of the interventions was very poorly carried out by ECHO partners. Nevertheless certain impacts are obvious, and general expectation on impacts concerning the sectors in question will be met.

### Sustainability

233. Structures (wells and latrines) have generally been constructed using material of acceptable quality and will last the planned period of time. Accompanying measures (health, hygiene awareness, water user groups, O&M training, etc.) were carried out in limited circumstances. Most of the organisations implement longer term projects in the same areas and are thus having a longer relationship with the target group, thus providing a basis for improved sustainability.

## **4.2.8 Main Recommendations**

### **4.2.8.1 Operational Strategy**

234. ECHO should continue to be operational in Sri Lanka for a maximum of 2 additional years in these sectors. Phasing out after the next funding decision could be feasible subject to the peace process. Alternative sectors could include basic roads (preferably through contractors), disaster preparedness and conflict prevention (built on existing emergency plans in the districts like Mannar). As far as ECHO mandate allows it, LRRD should be facilitated through appropriate activities, thus providing the necessary link for the transition from emergency relief to development assistance. On the other hand, also donors providing development assistance (including EC services) need to engage in closing the gap between emergency relief on the one side and development assistance on the other side (this was uniformly expressed by all partners).

235. The EC/ECHO should ensure that its partner have the necessary support to withstand "pressure" coming either from the LTTE or GOSL (MoRRR) (some partners would have preferred a more outspoken statement of ECHO).

236. The EC/ECHO should insist (encourage capacity building within partners preferably at head office level – offer trainings) to receive "SMART Indicators" in the project proposals to allow practicable and realistic monitoring of results. Indicators which do not serve this purpose should be rejected for revision by partners. Narrative reports must detail contractual achievements, including details of impact before any subsequent funding of a partner. The necessary budget will have to be allowed for by ECHO in the proposals (a check list for wells is in the technical annex).

237. ECHO is advised to assign technical support to the TA for appraisal of technical quality and feasibility of the proposals (this expert might cover more countries). Reference is made to the set-up in Southern Africa and its technical support from Nairobi.

### **4.2.8.2 Sector Strategy**

#### **For ECHO**

238. Future interventions should be planned in selected districts concentrating on pockets of vulnerability and stringent targeting. Reduce support in shelter (it is within the communities' own capacity) is recommended and increased support for income generation (generally steering towards development). Hand over to development donors should shortly commence. WFC should not be supported indiscriminately and only on the basis of proper need assessments and identification of vulnerability.

239. Coverage in terms of districts per partners should be also guided by aspects of cost-effectiveness. On average a maximum of only 2 districts (exceptionally 3) should be covered by one partner.

240. The multi-lateral infrastructure projects (NECORD, NEIAP, CAARP, etc.) must be taken into account and coordination ensured (also technology transfer?). They will gain momentum over the next year, NECORD II is already planned. The partners should be supported in coordinating with these projects through arranging meetings in the relevant districts.

241. ECHO should consider the inclusion of specialised agencies in future programmes and ensure that a more scientific approach and local expertise (hydro-geologist, maybe local contractor) is used. This should be done through emphasising that people with the

necessary expertise are employed and the concept of a preliminary design (including comprehensive report) is applied.

242. ECHO should ensure that lead agencies are existing and active in core sectors (funds to be provided for specialised activities in this respect, coordination, dissemination of material, etc.) and preferably only one partner (max. two) should work in the same sector in the same district. Partners applying an integrated LRRD orientated approach in their interventions should be preferred.

243. ECHO should make an effectiveness / impact study shortly before completion of an individual intervention compulsory for subsequent funding (budget needed in the proposals).

244. The elaboration of a data base on wells constructed should be promoted, financed if possible (including information on geological strata, water level, coordinates, etc.) in order to facilitate the exit strategy and hand-over to a future authority which will be responsible for rural water supply.

245. Special attention has to be given to the high nitrate content in Jaffna and Puttalam and fluoride in Trincomalee. The disturbed ecosystem of Jaffna requires approaches which are beyond the capacity of INGOs and funding of ECHO.

### **For ECHO Partners**

246. In general it is recommended that partners increase connectedness with existing country frame works and national expertise with respect to water (e.g. existing hydro-geological surveys, water resource management), environmental health (WHO, PHI, etc.) and possible application of appropriate technology (ITDG, etc.) in order to ensure a more scientific (but still practical) approach.

### Water and Sanitation

247. In general the whole village must be targeted (not only the returnees) with respect to the provision of safe drinking water using preferably a maximum of 20 families (parts of the SPHERE standard cannot be used within the SLA context).

248. Location of wells should be based on proper well siting technologies (employment of hydro-geologists) or at least on already existing hydro-geological studies of an area (these exist for almost all parts of Sri Lanka). This should be done in order to ensure that the right aquifer is tapped into. A water quality monitoring system, health and hygiene awareness campaigns should be a mandatory part of all interventions.

249. Certain design parameters are mandatory when constructing wells (length of drainage, cover, fencing, etc.). The collection of data on water quality and water quantity must be an integral part of the construction of wells and the provision of safe drinking water. Considering the number of wells built (1,560) a standard for well construction must be developed (as has been done for latrines). It is recommended that ECHO partners exchange their expertise and ensure "mutual capacity building and lessons learning".

250. When providing machinery, pumps, equipment to a target group, O&M should be ensured and inclusion of a set of spare parts is advised to increase and prolong sustainability.

251. Management of the construction sites, work progress, material flows should be done more according to standard practices as used in the construction business to ensure timely

detection of problems and necessary adjustments. In order to do so practical and transparent Gantt charts should be used for all structures showing activities split up in details and work progress, flow of materials and resources used.

252. The level of sanitation technique applied should be adapted to the needs of the different groups of returnees and the respective environment using a concept which addresses the environmental health issue as a whole (preferably based on health data). Care should be taken to avoid any negative environmental impacts caused by latrines, especially under unfavourable soil conditions (e.g. sandy soil with a high permeability). Here trial pits around latrines and soil samples should provide the necessary information;

#### Shelter / WFC

253. In communities where people already have some basic form of sufficient shelter, other sectors should preferably be supported. The “shelter-package” should concentrate on the essential requirements of the beneficiaries (cement, tin-sheets only) and on EVIs, FHHs, etc. Interventions (also in WFC) should be decided on a case-by-case basis as living conditions and therefore needs vary substantially and thus ensure that a maximum number of people are supported. Care should be taken by partners to really elaborate the priority needs of the vulnerable population and not include shelter “automatically” in the support package for returnees, balancing limited funds vs. necessity.

254. The type of shelters for resettlement / relocation should be uniform within a district and agreed upon between the ECHO partners.

#### Irrigation Structures

255. Interventions to rehabilitate minor tanks and irrigation channels should be based on conceptual planning, including preliminary engineering design and cost-benefit-analysis to justify the investment.

### **4.3 Food Security, Nutrition and Income Generation**

#### **4.3.1 Relevance**

256. The food security and income generation components of the ECHO financed projects are relevant in the context: returning IDPs, having lost all their means of production, are given an opportunity to restart their livelihoods in the form of agricultural packages for the cultivation of different crops including home garden vegetables, animal husbandry packages, fishing nets and sets of tools for artisans and non-farm employment (also for IDPs in welfare centres). The repair of minor irrigation tanks, undertaken by a few of the ECHO partners, is crucial for entire communities in the re-starting of agricultural production in the conflict affected areas. It mitigates the impact of dry spells on crops, assures an appreciable harvest and makes Yala (April–Sept.) cultivation possible.

257. The majority of ECHO partners practice a community-based approach and incorporate vulnerable families of the host communities in the projects – to avoid internal conflict and boost the entire community.

258. Careful needs assessments and beneficiary selections are carried out, involving the potential beneficiary communities through different participatory approaches. Where base-

line surveys were applied, the error margin (of selecting non-eligible beneficiaries) could be reduced from around 10% to 2%. Methodologies and (vulnerability) criteria differ from partner to partner and it may need some concerted effort of the partners to fine-tune these with ECHO's strategy, increasingly focussing on extremely vulnerable individuals and groups, especially the landless.

259. In LTTE controlled areas the beneficiary selection is not always possible in a participatory way and 'blanket' distributions are carried out to ensure coverage of the vulnerable groups.

260. To make the intervention as appropriate as possible, beneficiaries are involved in the composition of the package they have opted for (crop cultivation, animal husbandry, fisheries, and artisan tools). In a few cases this led to complying with the wishes of beneficiaries for e.g. strong agro-chemicals that could be harmful for the environment.

261. Animal husbandry packages, mostly consisting of poultry (broilers or layers), are not always adapted to the management level that the beneficiaries can maintain in their newly restarted homesteads. The failure of such an enterprise could have a discouraging effect on the beneficiaries concerned, mainly vulnerable women.

262. ECHO's rules for the fishery packages do not allow boats to be financed. However, these are crucial production assets for the IDP fishermen. The nutrition component of the ECHO project in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu is equally relevant for the vulnerable groups that are targeted (pregnant women, lactating mothers, children of different age groups, adolescent mothers (12–18 yrs.), the chronically ill) and tailored to their specific needs (different nutritious mixes and/or micro-nutrients or Spirulina). .

### **4.3.2 Coverage**

263. After the signing of the ceasefire agreement in February 2002, the flow of families returning to their original villages in the north and east was high. ECHO partners that had already identified considerable numbers of beneficiaries for agricultural and fishery packages, made project amendments, to accommodate additional returnees.

264. In the course of three years of ECHO financed projects (with a gradually reducing flow of returning IDPs) increasingly remote and difficult areas are identified and covered. Also the more vulnerable groups among the returnees, like female-headed households, landless unskilled labourers and the handicapped, have become more visible and targeted – in line with ECHO's strategy for 2004.

265. Ever since the food security coordination meetings take place on a monthly basis in each district (from end 2003) overlap of food security interventions between ECHO partners has rarely occurred. To forego overlap with other, large international organisations (WB, ADB) some partners identify alternative areas beforehand, to shift their activities to.

266. In the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, ECHO is at present the only international donor involved in the nutritional programme(s). Through regular nutritional surveys the most vulnerable groups and individuals are selected as beneficiaries. Old people, who survive on a very small government dole, are however not sufficiently incorporated in the nutrition programmes.

### **4.3.3 Coordination**

267. At present the food security activities are coordinated in monthly meetings at district level, facilitated by the FAO staff from Vavuniya. Information is exchanged, mostly on the

progress of the respective ECHO financed projects. Some harmonisation work has been done on the different agricultural packages. A database on all the ECHO project activities, of all the partners, is under construction and contains also issues like vulnerability criteria and lessons learned by each partner. Such a database is an excellent starting point for collective consultation and lesson learning on pressing and relevant topics.

268. Coordination with governmental authorities and Agriculture Departments is in general good, but depends often on the persons in office. Some of the active GAs are very much interested in contributing to the planning of ECHO's projects. Agriculture Departments are not always promoting environment friendly agricultural practices and I/LNGO staff has to use its own common sense and agricultural knowledge while developing the agricultural packages.

269. The coordination on food security issues with other international organisations has not (yet) taken off.

#### **4.3.4 Efficiency**

270. All ECHO partner-INGOs involved in food security and income generation have a fairly good to very good operational capacity to implement the components, however agricultural knowledge may not always be their strong point.

271. The partners implement the ECHO projects with either mainly own local staff and/or in collaboration with local partner NGOs, or in collaboration with predominantly governmental services. A low staff per beneficiary ratio is not always the most efficient or cost-effective. A higher staff-beneficiary ratio mostly leads to a more intensive involvement with the beneficiaries, which makes it possible to develop the food security and income generation packages more appropriate, for a more effective result. Equally, vulnerable groups and individuals will be more easily identified and supported.

272. Tender procedures are respected and checks on, especially, germination rates of seed are carried out, with the result that beneficiaries are satisfied with the material they receive. However, finding suitable seeds can be a laborious task. None of the seed farms in the north and east are functioning. FAO is making an effort to restore one of these farms. A growing number of private seed growers are involved in the production of quality seeds, which can be procured from them through the Agriculture Departments.

273. Quality fishing gear is mostly bought in the capital, and some INGOs take the beneficiaries along to ensure the right quality. This may not be cost-effective in the implementation, but it will be in the long run - for the fishermen, to receive durable nets. Obtaining quality tools sometimes confronted with problems. In LTTE controlled areas, partners are compelled to buy or have tools produced locally and to sometimes compromise on the quality (refer also to 3.3).

#### **4.3.5 Effectiveness**

274. The ECHO project components on food security and income generation have achieved their objectives and in many cases the number of beneficiaries served, exceeded the planned number. Through the food security and income generation packages, returnees and IDPs could make a new start and produce a part of their food plus an income (including substitution of expenses, which are considerable for families, with the hiking food prices).

275. Timing is very important in agriculture. In the past (2002) it has happened that seeds could not be procured in time. However the procurement of quality seeds is not without difficulties, in the ongoing projects all seed packages seem to have been – or are going to be – delivered in time.

276. It is difficult to discover how successful the different livelihood packages were. Only a few INGOs monitor the results of the packages they distribute and make the details available in a monitoring report. The effectiveness of the Maha 2003/04 paddy cultivation packages was reduced by the dry spell causing harvest reduction. Nevertheless, one of the ECHO partners found that, in spite of the sub-optimal harvests, 70% of the beneficiaries, who had received the paddy cultivation package, had stored seeds to be sown in the following paddy season.

#### **4.3.6 Impact**

277. The agriculture, fisheries and other income generation packages influenced the food and income situation as well as the morale of the beneficiaries in a positive way. To be able to economically start again is very important for returnees and it helps to stabilise them in their resettlement. The latter is more so the case, when projects are implemented by ECHO partners having an important number of committed staff on the ground or working with a strong local partner. The possibility to implement the ECHO projects through an intensive community-based approach increases their impact, because much more can be done beyond providing the relief assistance. A positive impact is the revival of CBOs, among which, since their introduction through the partners, also the Women's Rural Development Societies play an important role.

278. Paddy cultivation has a limited impact on income, paddy prices at farm gate being rather low (Rs. 10–15/kg). However, production for home consumption reduces household expenses considerably (1 kg of rice costs Rs. 40–45). Packages of other field crops like chilli and onions have had a far more important impact on the income of the beneficiaries. What has been unclear so far is the impact of the animal husbandry packages with cows, goats or chickens, since monitoring details on these packages are hardly available in report form.

279. Fishing gear distributed through the ECHO financed projects, especially in combination with boats, funded from alternative sources through some of the partners, have had a fast positive impact on the livelihoods of IDPs and returnee fisher families. Several local Fishing Development Societies, through which gear was given on a revolving fund basis, were strengthened, as were other CBOs when they were involved in the distribution of income generation packages. Through the revolving funds of the CBOs, the ECHO grants will also boost the village economy over the longer term.

#### **4.3.7 Sustainability**

280. The community-based approach of the majority of ECHO's partners results in an increased ownership of the activities, which is a condition for sustainability. Sustainability of the income generation activities is also enhanced when revolving funds from CBOs can be availed to improve or extend these activities.

281. Sustainable and environmentally friendly farming is promoted by several of the ECHO partners through training, in combination with the distribution of the seed and input packages (e.g. Integrated Pest Management methods) and through distribution of organic fertiliser.



282. Requests for training in agriculture production are high<sup>41</sup>. Returnees, of whom many have not been able to practice their farming profession for several years, want to learn new techniques and practices. This gives the opportunity to incorporate aspects of LEISA (Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture<sup>42</sup>) and other environment-friendly cultivation methods into training. Many lands have been fallow for several years and can be expected to have undergone some regeneration process. They only need a very limited quantity of fertilizer for a good yield. However, research is needed as for how returnee farm families can make a sustainable living out of their land with primarily their own farm resources.

283. ECHO's relief activities are more potentially sustainable when the implementing partners continue their work with the beneficiary communities in follow-up programmes with a rehabilitation and development character. The EC's 'Aid to Uprooted People' is such a programme and will therefore enhance the potential sustainability of the ECHO project activities. Many ECHO partners have handed in proposals for this EC programme. There are, however, often considerable time gaps (up to two years) between the end of the relief and the start of the rehabilitation / development programmes. The main reasons for the delay in implementation of the follow-up programmes are problems with funding and availability of staff.

#### **4.3.8 Results Achieved**

284. Annex 10 gives an overview of the food security and income generation packages distributed and activities implemented per partner and per year of ECHO funded project<sup>43</sup>. A considerable number of families have benefited from packages of paddy and highland crop cultivation (total 46,567). This means an increase of approximately 15,000 ha. under cultivation (1 acre per paddy package and 0.5 acre per highland crop package). The number of families who received income generation packages in the form of artisan tools and fishing nets is also important (total 10,028). The difference between these two numbers indicates a clear focus on landowners. With the perennial crop packages a commendable effort has been made to restore the destroyed tree-cover, especially in home gardens. Around 188,000 trees have been planted – mostly fruit trees to increase the nutritional security of the beneficiaries, but also multi-purpose trees (palms) like Coconut and Palmyra, and for timber trees like teak.

285. Tank and pond repair has been undertaken in 54 cases, which means that on 3000–5000<sup>44</sup> acres, farmers (returnees as well as the host population) can assure a reasonable crop, even when there is a dry spell in a crucial moment of the cultivation cycle. This is an important activity that links the relief action to rehabilitation. A complementary activity is the provision of fingerlings, to motivate returnees and host population to fish culture. This has been done by one INGO so far.

286. Around 6,000 animal husbandry packages were distributed, especially poultry. An impact study needs to be done, to be able to decide as to whether to intensify this activity or not. Home garden packages have been given to 22,000 families (30% of the total beneficiary families).

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<sup>41</sup> Source: FAO Vavuniya.

<sup>42</sup> LEISA: [www.ileia.org](http://www.ileia.org); [www.leisa.info](http://www.leisa.info); [web.idrc.ca/](http://web.idrc.ca/)

<sup>43</sup> The figures are taken from the final reports for ECHO 2002 and 2003 and from the proposals for ECHO 2004

<sup>44</sup> Estimated figure (50–90 acre per tank) since not all partners gave details on the number of acres served by the tanks / ponds.

287. A result that has not been incorporated in the overview, but is however interesting to mention, is that at least five of the ECHO partners have managed to revive CBOs and initiate Self-help Groups, and implement the projects with their intensive involvement. This is again a clear link of the relief activity with the further development of the communities targeted.

#### 4.3.9 Conclusions

##### 288. Operational Level

- a) The Food Security Coordination Meetings, facilitated by the FAO Vavunya in the 8 districts of the north and east
  - (1) have improved the sharing of information between ECHO partners at district level and avoided overlap of working areas;
  - (2) have started a partner database on ECHO financed activities, criteria for beneficiary selection, lessons learned, etc.;
  - (3) need to increase the coordination efforts with other organizations active in relief – at district as well as national level.
- b) Insufficient agriculture technical knowledge among I & LINGO staff and a sometimes un-critical reliance on recommendations of the Agriculture Departments, e.g. on the use of fertilisers and pesticides, can lead in some cases to a situation, which could adversely affect human health and the natural environment.
- c) There is a shortage in quality, certified seeds for different crops,
- d) Several ECHO partners promote environment-friendly agricultural practices through their agricultural packages and the accompanying training, and even through an organic farm (at Mannar)

##### 289. Planning and Implementation.

- a) Animal husbandry packages, especially poultry for vulnerable groups, are implemented following different approaches and management levels, with varying success. Monitoring and evaluation, also of other packages, is seldom done and in many cases the packages are repeated without learning lessons from previous implementations.
- b) The number of different income generation packages varies among the ECHO partners – from 1 to 16. But economic calculations on these activities, to determine in what way they are – or are not! – economically viable, are rarely made. Marketing problems (of eggs, e.g.) are not addressed.
- c) EVIs, mostly the beneficiaries of income generation / animal husbandry packages, cannot venture into enterprises that are not proven to be economically viable.
- d) Local organisations and systems (e.g. “*seethu*”) constitute a link to the rehabilitation and further development of the communities. Several of ECHO's partners revive them and involve them in the distribution of food security and income generation packages, which are (partly) repaid in the organisations' revolving funds, thus strengthening the village economy.

290. ECHO financed projects in general.

- a) So far, focus has been very much on land-owning beneficiaries to re-start their agriculture production (46,567 beneficiaries). Landless labourers and fisher families have been second in row (10,028 beneficiaries).
- b) The suspension of the dry rations for returnees, 6 months after their resettlement, causes in many cases a gap in food security for the families – until their first harvest.
- c) Within the framework of food security not all ECHO financed projects put sufficient emphasis on nutrition security. Especially food use needs attention as an important cause of malnutrition.
- d) Fishing gear, especially in combination with boats, financed through alternative funds of the partners, have had a fast positive impact on the livelihood of the beneficiaries.
- e) Around 30% of ECHO's partners implement projects and programmes (funded by other donors) that are rehabilitation and development orientated. However, gaps of sometimes more than a year between the relief and subsequent rehabilitation and development projects are occurring.
- f) Three years of ECHO funding made a marked difference on the nutrition and health situation in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and also the local partner organisation has improved its operational capacity through the collaboration with the INGO's Technical Programme Coordinator. The focus of the local NGO is very strongly on women's empowerment.

#### 4.3.10 Recommendations

291. For the partners and other INGOs, at operational level.

- a. The Food Security Coordination Group/Meeting, facilitated by the FAO, takes up, apart from more technical issues (like quality seed procurement), a reflection on the matters set out below.
  - (1) Contingency plans for food security in case the ceasefire situation deteriorates, a peace agreement is reached, or in prolonged drought conditions and other disasters.
  - (2) The possible contribution of ECHO financed projects to more sustainable farming and management of farm resources (e.g. LEISA), as a part of LRRD actions by longer-term donors.
  - (3) Food and nutrition security strategies for landless returnees and other vulnerable groups – intensive home gardening and Spirulina<sup>45</sup> production could play a role here.
  - (4) Tank repair/rehabilitation, having proved to be an activity with a wider impact, could possibly be taken up by more ECHO's partners and other donors.
  - (5) How to complete, and make best use of, the recently started data base of the partners, their geographical areas, selection / vulnerability criteria, activities, lessons learned?

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<sup>45</sup> Spirulina; refer to [www.auroville.org/health/food/spirulina.htm](http://www.auroville.org/health/food/spirulina.htm) ; [www.spirulina.com](http://www.spirulina.com)

- (6) The follow-up of actions on ECHO financed relief projects, needed to create a continuum of relief, rehabilitation and development. How to encourage longer-term donors to fulfil their responsibility for this continuum.
  - (7) The Coordination Group should also contact other organisations active in relief and rehabilitation and invite them within its ranks.
  - (8) Apart from the monthly meetings at district level, three or four monthly workshops at national level (not necessarily in Colombo!) should be organised to pool ideas, discussions, findings, and to take decisions (participants should be at least all the district project managers).
  - (9) Institutionalise the coordination structure so that it is not lost when active persons, who are at present the motor behind it, leave.
- b. Training for project staff, at present organised by the FAO Vavuniya, has to become a joint effort of all the partners. Qualified agriculture / animal husbandry / fisheries / crafts technical staff and successful returnees (women and men) act as resource persons. Exchange visits are an effective training tool. How to reduce the cost of production / cultivation and cost-benefit calculations of enterprises are among the most important training subjects.
292. For the partners and other INGOs, to improve planning and implementation.
- a) Closely follow up on agriculture, and especially animal husbandry packages and their impact. Carry out simple cost-benefit calculations with the beneficiaries. Identify EVIs who suffered (crop) loss, analyse the causes, learn lessons together and support them for a second season.
  - b) Identify more jobs and income generating activities with market opportunities through a focus on rural economy during PRAs. Pay special attention to marketing possibilities in remote areas. Cost-benefit calculations are also needed for these activities. Network with, i.e. the Intermediate Technology Development Group<sup>46</sup>.
  - c) Existing local systems and community-based organisations for savings, credit, revolving funds and self-help have to be supported through ECHO-funded projects, not bypassed. They are part of the own coping strategies of the returnees and an important element in the link between relief, rehabilitation and development.
293. Future EC/DG ECHO projects.
- a) In the food security and income generation components, focus should be on landless, female-headed households and youth (male and female).
  - b) Nutrition security needs more attention.
    - (1) Home garden seed packages should be given to all beneficiaries.
    - (2) Initiatives should be encouraged, e.g. the cultivation of local vegetables (agro-biodiversity preservation and cooping strategy – Tamil Refugee Camps) and the incorporation of nutrition issues like food use and diversification of the diet (FAO, Vavuniya).
    - (3) Nutrition-rich traditional red rice varieties and alternative grains like Korokan (*Eleusine corocana*) and other millets should be promoted.

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<sup>46</sup> ITDG, 5, Lionel Edirisinghe Mawatha, Kirulapone, Colombo – 5, Sri Lanka; tel.+94 1 829412; [www.itdg.org](http://www.itdg.org)

- (4) Spirulina production and distribution; an income generating activity combined with a nutrition security activity to be increased in the Refugee Camps in Tamil Nadu and to be introduced in Sri Lanka as well.
  - (5) The setting up of (fruit) tree nurseries with interested beneficiaries to be considered by DG RELEX, DG AIDCO and the EC Delegation as part of LRRD.
- c) Finance indispensable production assets – like fishing boats – as part of EC's assistance to fisher families through reliable Fishing Development Societies.
  - d) Phasing out and transition to development-orientated projects.
    - (1) Reduce activity in terms of numbers but intensify in terms of an integrated approach for the most needy, e.g. still uncovered pockets of EVIs, which give follow-up projects the possibility of dovetailing into.
    - (2) Urge partners to find alternative funds for projects and programmes that represent the link from relief towards rehabilitation and development. Partners with these types of projects are priority partners for ECHO and other EC services.
    - (3) Request partners to closely monitor inflow of new returnees and refugees from India and to include reports in the proposals for 2005/2006. Any such data should be shared with mandated organisations.
  - e) Coordination efforts, impact assessments and/or evaluations to be made an integral part of the ECHO project proposals (including results and indicators).
  - f) Nutrition programmes in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu to be continued on a reduced scale for EVIs: pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5, old people without relatives – on basis of an impact study of the three ECHO projects (2002-2004) and a renewed beneficiary selection.

## **4.4 NFRIs**

### **4.4.1 Relevance**

294. At regular intervals registered IDPs receive NFRI packages, including e.g. basic kitchen utensils, towels, soaps, sanitary towels, saris, sarongs, t-shirts, etc. Beneficiaries participate in the composition of the kits. For people who are having difficulties to earn their living and to make both ends meet, these packages are indispensable as they are replacing either consumables or items with a short life span.

295. The provision of basic household items is highly relevant for returning households trying to begin a settled life again. Most people return with practically nothing in their hands. The items distributed are the most important, yet only the most basic utensils a household needs.

### **4.4.2 Coverage**

296. Recipients of NFRI packages are registered returnees. On the basis of the lists prepared by the GA, the AGA and the GS, returnees are identified. Theoretically all returnees are entitled to receive NFRI packages, de facto EVIs have priority. Especially in the dis-

districts of Mannar, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, but also in all other districts there are, however, many villages not covered by NFRI distribution. Sinhala returnees, who are as poor and vulnerable as Tamil returnees, tend to be totally neglected.

#### **4.4.3 Coordination**

297. It is primarily the GA and the AGA who ensure that all communities of a district are equally covered. Overlapping of NFRI distribution between ECHO partners is the exception, as monthly coordination meetings at district level aim at ensuring coverage and preventing duplication of activities in the same location.

298. Wherever NFRI distribution is part of a package of subsequent interventions, their distribution belongs to the initial activities (along with the provision of shelter and the distribution of agricultural tools).

#### **4.4.4 Efficiency**

299. NFRI kits are comparatively cheap (approximately € 11 per kit), but comprehensively meet the primary household utensil needs of a returning household.

#### **4.4.5 Effectiveness**

300. Although the composition of the kits varies slightly according to the specific needs in certain areas, the procurement and distribution of NFRIs has become a sort of routine. Targets are usually achieved within the timeframe set (they are feasible). Beneficiaries usually receive their kits within one month after their return; in some exceptional cases, however, they had to wait up to three months.

#### **4.4.6 Impact**

301. The distribution of NFRIs is part of a strategic approach to re-/settle returnees. It allows beneficiaries to focus on speedily re-establishing their income generating resources instead of spending scarce resources on indispensable household basics.

#### **4.4.7 Sustainability**

302. NFRI kits have the normal life expectancy of any household utensils, especially when made of durable material. They may not be that sustainable by themselves, yet their availability enables recipients to focus on re-establishing sustainable income generation. The distribution of NFRI packages is therefore reinforcing sustainability of other interventions aimed at returnees' reintegration.

#### **4.4.8 Results Achieved**

303. In the years 2003 and 2004 three INGOs have distributed a minimum total of 8,374 ECHO-funded NFRI packages to returnees<sup>47</sup>, covering a returnee population of some 37,000-38,000 individuals.

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<sup>47</sup> The actual figure is considerably higher, but UNHCR's figures are, unfortunately, not available

#### **4.4.9 Conclusion**

304. Although the distribution of NFRI is fairly inconspicuous, the provision of basic household utensils is highly relevant for the beneficiaries, enabling them to focus their energy on re-establishing their lives instead of spending their meagre savings or income on basic household equipment.

#### **4.4.10 Recommendations**

305. ECHO is advised to ensure assistance until returnees have been able to harvest their first crop. This will enable beneficiaries in the difficult transition phase to fully focus their energy on the rehabilitation of their sustainable sources of income instead of neglecting their speedy and sustainable resettlement by working for others.

### **5 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

#### **5.1 Access and Security for Humanitarian Workers**

306. Needs assessment and beneficiary selection in LTTE controlled areas can be only carried out through the local NGOs with which the ECHO partner is requested to work. The smoothness of working relationship with the TRO/LTTE varies from district to district and changes from time to time when an influential LTTE cadre is transferred. It also depends on the status of the LINGO with the LTTE and how well the INGO handles the issues and problems.

#### **5.2 IDPs and Refugees**

##### **5.2.1 Return and Repatriation since the Signing of Ceasefire**

307. When the ceasefire was signed in February 2002 a big wave of migration of IDPs and refugees set in. By June 2002 some 140,000 registered IDPs had moved back to their original homes or at least close to them; by December of the same year a total of 269,012 individuals (respectively 69,927 IDP-families) and 1,427 refugees (494 families) from India had returned. This may be an indication of how strong the desire or even pressures to return must have been, keeping in mind that people were aware that the homes and villages they often had left more than a decade ago had been destroyed and reclaimed by the jungle, and that basic infrastructure like schools, hospitals and roads were non-existent.

308. Returns of IDPs continued at a lower level in 2003 and 2004, while repatriation of refugees is gradually gaining momentum. Between the signing of the ceasefire and July 2004 a total of 371,485 individual IDPs had moved back. The remaining number of registered IDPs amounted to 360,353 individuals (93,808 families), of which 80,863 were still living in Welfare Centres, and an estimated 279,500 were living outside of Welfare Cen-

tres, in fact the majority. 13,017 refugees have been repatriated (12,439 from India) since 2002, leaving 72,596 refugees in India and 61,066 in other countries<sup>48</sup>.

309. The young, fittest, strongest, the most determined and those who could only win by returning to their homes, have taken up the hard and strenuous task to return and clear the land<sup>49</sup>, rebuild houses and dams, dig wells, and recommence their farms or crafts. Frequently they are leaving old parents, wives and children back with friends or relatives or in the welfare centres, closer to health, educational and other infrastructure perceived to be essential. These more vulnerable family members will join those who went ahead once living conditions will be acceptable, including sufficient yields from the first harvest or the sources of other income generation, a roof over their heads and access to schools and health care.

310. Likewise, IDPs who had found their provisional homes with their relatives or friends are extremely eager to return to their original villages and to restart their lives. Their physical living conditions may have been more acceptable and offered more self-determination than those in the camps. But many relations between IDPs on the one side and their hosts on the other have been severely strained and often extremely humiliating over the years, as the assistance expected to be necessary only for a short period of displacement turned out to be required for many years. Without much, if any, institutional support by government or UNHCR these returnees have learned to fight for their and their families' survival. They are now most determined to start a new, independent life.

311. Understandably, GoSL, donors, I/NGOs and IOs alike responded to this suddenly emerging crisis-like situation by focusing assistance on the returnees, enabling them to restart their self-sustained lives as soon as possible. Their needs and assistance requirements were and still are great and necessary.

## **5.2.2 Living Conditions in Welfare Centres and Refugee Camps for those remaining there**

### **5.2.2.1 IDPs in Welfare Centres**

312. It seems that – at least until ECHO's 2004 funding decision - the focus on the returnees' needs has to a great degree deviated necessary attention from the needs of those who continue to remain IDPs and refugees. Those who remain in the welfare centres or in the refugee camps and are not dependants of returnees are those who for various reasons cannot or do not dare to return to their original place. They include: primarily FHHs; families with a handicapped head of household; landless people; landowners, who in the foreseeable future cannot return to their land as it is either mined or belongs to a high security zone; some 60,000 Muslim IDPs from Mannar, living in welfare centres in Puttalam and unwilling to return unless the LTTE openly guarantees their safety; elderly people living alone. These IDPs remain, although living conditions in welfare centres or in refugee camps are in very many cases extremely difficult and depressing, and provide no realistic long-term perspectives for the individual.

313. It is true that there are welfare centres which at first sight appear to be like "normal" little villages, with small kitchen gardens and some flowers, a small shop selling the most basic items and food, a kindergarten and an elementary school. Some 50,000 people live in

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<sup>48</sup> Source: UNHCR & MRRR, Statistical Summary as at 31 July 2004. Refugees and Internally Displaced – Repatriation and Returns to and within Sri Lanka.

<sup>49</sup> Numerous and very different sources in many locations explained that, if land is not tilled over a certain period, others can occupy it and the previous owner loses his land title.



so called relocation villages, where they were able to buy some land, big enough for erecting their own hut on it.

314. A great number of the welfare centres<sup>50</sup> are, however, like limbo: stagnant sewage surrounding densely populated camps, leaking cadjan roofs and wet, muddy floors during rainy the season, inadequate access to education and health care<sup>51</sup>, and often too remote for people with limited mobility. Furthermore, donors', governments' and host communities' ideology and prescribed phraseology insist that, by definition, the state of displacement is temporary, therefore IDP's housing can and should not be supporting in any way the permanence of displacement by e.g. the provision of certain building materials required for more permanent constructions. While the intention is clear and understandable, IDPs are thus forced to lead a provisional and frequently humiliating life in living conditions they have not sought and cannot change themselves. In the case of the conflict in Sri Lanka for many of them it has been like this for much more than a decade.

315. Welfare centres' inhabitants compete with host communities for scarce jobs, and they often incur their host communities' envy because of the assistance IDPs are receiving while the old-established locals are themselves nearly as poor but do not manage to attract donors' attention. The financial assistance IDPs are receiving from the Government is in reality, however, below the minimum physical requirement, and unlike members of host communities they have much fewer options – if at all - to earn basic and additional income.

316. Many IDPs have “for over a decade ..... been living in conditions that allow for few of their human needs, let alone rights, to be realised. They have been prevented from gaining employment due to limited hours permitted outside the welfare centres, and in some cases been prohibited from organising themselves into proactive groups.” Furthermore, “the common practice of excluding donor beneficiaries from involvement in decisions that affect their lives encourages dis-empowerment.”<sup>52</sup> Under such conditions not everybody is able to maintain control respectively to learn to get control over his or her life. Instead a considerable number of IDPs have learned dependency behaviour and feel (or are) unfit now to activate enterprising courage to successfully face strenuous challenges.

317. ECHO responds to this distressing situation by promoting empowerment through insisting on returnees' involvement in the design, planning and implementation of ECHO-funded operations. ECHO-partners assist communities in establishing CBOs able to represent the interests of the community or specific professional groups and acting as implementing partners at community level. This will enable individual beneficiaries as well as beneficiary communities to gain self-help capacities, a prerequisite for any future sustainable development efforts.

318. Yet, while focussing on developing and strengthening returnees' self-help capacities – necessary for the reconstructing individual households as well as communities - the requirements of even more vulnerable groups, namely those IDPs who feel or are unfit to leave the welfare centres, are neglected. If even the fittest returnees need material and technical support in the resettlement and the reintegration process, it is unrealistic to expect that without any assistance these most vulnerable IDPs will eventually somehow be able to overcome the reasons which up to the present make them stay in the camps. This assistance needs to include at least:

- a) large scale allocation of government-owned land to de facto landless people;

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<sup>50</sup> Such as e.g. the WFC in Vavunya, Poonthotham, or in Puttalam

<sup>51</sup> This is no contradiction to the above: inadequate access is still better than no access.

<sup>52</sup> Sophia Elek, *Choosing Rice over Risk. Rights, Resettlement and Displaced Women*, 2003, pp. 25, 26

- b) capacity building of heads of FHH;
- c) capacity building of handicapped heads of households;
- d) systematic development of self-help capacities.

319. Only after such preconditions have been fulfilled the most vulnerable IDPs will be technically capable to leave the camps.

### **5.2.2.2 Refugees in Refugee Camps**

320. Refugees living in the camps in India are in an even more difficult situation. It is true, once those 125,000 refugees that had arrived in 1990 in Tamil Nadu within a five months' period had managed to reach India, they were no longer exposed to direct war actions: while IDPs in Sri Lanka have been displaced up to eight times, refugees were shifted less frequently – and with less traumata - from one camp to another<sup>53</sup>.

321. Nevertheless, living conditions in the refugee camps are more difficult than in the welfare centres in Sri Lanka: as the Government of India has not signed the Geneva Agreement of 1951 UNHCR cannot directly access and assist refugees<sup>54</sup>. Furthermore, the old discord between UNHCR and the GoI has not been very helpful to the refugees' cause. In addition, the GoI feels it has serious reasons to keep a close eye on the Tamil refugees in the camps and strictly control their movements and contacts. INGOs are therefore not allowed to work in the camps, and visits to the camps and conversations with their inhabitants are closely monitored by the police.

322. The Government of Tamil Nadu provides for some of the basic needs of the refugees accommodated in the Government run refugee camps, such as very basic housing, water<sup>55</sup>, food rations and a dole, which, however, meets only 26% of the costs of the food basket supplying sufficient calories to an average family. For a single-person household – usually an elderly person - the dole amounts to some 13% of the 1 US\$ marking the poverty line. A nutrition survey carried out in the camps in Tamil Nadu documented that the average monthly amount spent on purchase of food is only 58% of the minimum amount needed for adequate nutrition; 40% of the refugee families have inadequate income to meet the requirements for sufficient food. Families with children of school going age have to reduce the intake of food to meet the expenditures for school education. Thus, many of them have fallen into the debt trap. In addition, it is becoming an increasing social problem that many daughters can no longer be married off as their families cannot afford the necessary expenditures for an appropriate minimum dowry.

323. In order to make ends meet the able-bodied go out for work. However, refugees cannot own land and are not formally allowed to work in the surrounding society. They therefore have to accept low paid labour jobs, mostly hazardous and some injurious to health.

324. Under these conditions effective provision of assistance is difficult, which may be one of the reasons why the situation of Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu has become a forgotten crisis, receiving only little attention by few donors. ECHO's engagement in India is

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<sup>53</sup> Usually when the lease for the land expired on which the Government had based the refugee camps.

<sup>54</sup> The UNHCR can assist in repatriation, especially in organising the replacement of missing certificates/documents required for getting travel documents, and organising the travel documents with the Sri Lankan High Commission. At the moment it provides for the airfare and a return grant. The UNHCR's role will increase once repatriation will commence on a large scale.

<sup>55</sup> The mission could, however, observe that provision of water is not always secure. Furthermore, poor housing, poor sanitation and insufficient water and toilet facilities result in frequent and recurrent infectious and chronic diseases.

therefore in line with its policy to also focus on forgotten crises. Its partner in India cooperates with a local NGO of Tamil refugees, which at present is the only organisation with access to all refugee camps. This local organisation is focussing the improvement of Tamil refugees' health and nutritional status by targeting EVIs specifically vulnerable with regard to nutrition and health. In addition, systematic training of health workers has considerably improved the levels of health services. As a result nutrition levels and birth weights in general<sup>56</sup> improved considerably, especially when compared to the conditions in surrounding villages of local residents. There are, however, indications that these levels can only be maintained if assistance is continued, as the refugees' income situation (i.e. the cause of the problem) has not changed.

325. Activities aiming at community and individual empowerment have started only recently and are still in their initial stage, but seem to have already significantly improved coping strategies and mechanisms after only a short period.

326. Furthermore, ECHO's partner has seconded a technical programme coordinator who over the past two years has assisted the local organisation to considerably improve its planning, management, monitoring and administration capacities. In addition, beneficiaries actively participate in planning, implementation and monitoring.

327. All these skills, knowledge and experience acquired by health workers, volunteers and the local organisation's office staff now not only improve beneficiary refugees' health and nutrition status today, but will in due time be taken to Sri Lanka and used there to better integrate and contribute to the development of the country.

328. Although the assistance provided to refugees in Tamil Nadu primarily focuses on urgent health and nutritional needs, they are not just recipients of aid in the health and nutrition sphere but benefit from a comprehensive approach addressing also the improvement of their capacities and coping abilities. It seems that this kind of assistance to refugees is a better preparation for long term residents of camps to return to their original location than giving doles or NFRI assistance to IDPs in welfare centres.

### **5.2.3 Loss of Personal Documents**

329. The loss of documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, identity cards, documentation on land titles, etc. prevent many IDPs and refugees from returning to what they consider to be their homes, and to claim their rights and property. National identity cards are pivotal for children to enrol or complete schooling; their loss requires great efforts from the parent's part to ensure their children's right to education. UNHCR can and in many cases does successfully assist in providing replacement documents, but a considerable number of people in unclear areas have serious (e.g. security<sup>57</sup>) reasons why they cannot or do not want to ask for UNHCR's support.

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<sup>56</sup> With the exception of the age group 1-2 years.

<sup>57</sup> In some unclear areas LTTE reacts extremely harsh when it is observed that individuals contact UNHCR for whatever reasons, as they always seem to suspect that the contents of communication are complaints about the LTTE – although this suspicion is unfounded in most cases. Likewise, people in some villages in unclear areas have been very reluctant to openly discuss any issue concerning their actual living conditions for fear of reprisals in the following night. For the same reasons they try to avoid to be seen speaking alone with a stranger.

### **5.3 Social and Psychological Consequences of War and Displacement**

330. The social and psychological impact the events of the past two decades had on IDPs and refugees are manifold, often disastrous for the individual and considerably impeding society's recovery. The following chapters refer to only a few of them.

#### **5.3.1 Female Headed Households**

331. Especially vulnerable are female headed households, including widows, women, whose fathers, husbands and brothers have disappeared, families separated during unrest and single mothers. Within IDP camps the percentage of FHHs is extremely high<sup>58</sup>. Nevertheless, FHHs' social environment – up to decision making levels within the MRRR - has not been able to accept the changing roles these women had to take over by being solely responsible for their children and/or extended families' welfare, without enjoying the benefits of traditional family support mechanisms. They are exposed to “systematic oppression that include violence, social exclusion, invisibility, neglect, insecurity and a denial of their autonomy and independence”<sup>59</sup>. Vicious gossip, defamatory rumours, threats of and actual abuse and societal discrimination are often systematically undermining female household heads' integrity, and as women traditionally have not been socialised to challenge social ostracisation and discrimination, they withdraw in depressions<sup>60</sup>. In order to comply with traditional norms (which they have internalised themselves) many women therefore do not leave their houses, and are solely reliant upon relief supplies. The team met widows who are leaving their houses exclusively for the collection of NFRIIs distributed by UNHCR, i.e. that is the big social event they are enjoying; for the rest of the time they are staying at home in order to not provoke their environment's indignation.

332. In addition, local government officials usually won't inform women about their rights, including e.g. land ownership, custody of children, and their entitlement for compensation due to the death of their husband. Problems arise when women wish to resettle or seek an alternative place of residence: Widows are for example unable to inherit land unless they are named in their husband's will and remain unmarried<sup>61</sup>.

333. As long as these obstacles are not removed, FHHs are insufficiently prepared and self-reliant for leaving the welfare centres, resettling and restarting a normal, self-determined life.

334. Whenever female heads of households have the option, courage and energy to return to their original place of settlement, they face a multitude of challenges, which primarily require labour input of strong and able-bodied people. Apart from ensuring their families' daily well-being (including food and schooling), they have to till the land (if they have any) and prepare a shelter. This usually exceeds FHHs' capacities. Their future poverty can only be prevented, if the community where they are re-/settling has a strong understanding of responsibility towards the society's disadvantaged (which it may have in theory but considers to be unaffordable in the light of its own efforts to resettle), or if the female heads of households have alternate sources of income.

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<sup>58</sup> 21,400 widows have been reported in Jaffna district in 2001, 9,000 of whom are under the age of 40 (Elek, p. 28)

<sup>59</sup> Elek, p.30;

<sup>60</sup> The situation in the Vanni is, however, different: in LTTE-controlled women, irrespective of their marital status, are entitled to enjoy equal rights, remarriage is officially accepted, sexual abuse severely punished; in Kilinochchi widows' economic needs are protected through LTTE-organised employment.

<sup>61</sup> Land Development Ordinance, 1935

335. ECHO and its partners are aware of FHHs' vulnerability and specific needs, and either through categorisation or specific needs assessments ensure that they are focal beneficiaries of assistance. ECHO funded projects also aim at sensitising CBOs to systematically consider the specific vulnerability and needs of FHHs and to provide for the systematic inclusion of FHHs in their activities. It is, however, an illusion to believe, that a nine-month project will be sufficient to sustainably change attitudes and old behavioural patterns.

336. In some cases ECHO partners (though not with ECHO funding) successfully provided short-term training to resettling heads of FHH, aiming at their empowerment by giving them income generating skills. Apart from this economic independence these women gain self-consciousness, leave their seclusion and subsequently usually lose their depressions. This is therefore the most sensible approach to sustainably enable women to get rid of their economic, psychological and social dependency, and finally assisting them in leaving their IDP status behind.

### **5.3.2 Problems Resulting – also - from Female IDPs' and Female Refugees' Employment abroad**

337. IDPs and refugees wish to escape the poverty and the hopelessness they are living in, yet employment possibilities are limited, or formally even not allowed (as in India). In the early nineties women's option to work abroad as housemaids became increasingly popular. Often husbands encourage and sometimes even force their wives to take advantage of this putative chance, and secure the children's education. While the husbands stay at home, taking care of the children and the family, the wives usually suffer the martyrdom of housemaids from South Asian countries frequently experience in the Gulf States and other Arab countries.

338. Yet, those women who make it to the Gulf States and work there as housemaids are the more lucky ones, as a great number of them end up in the hands of traffickers, who sell them to brothels in Colombo or abroad.

339. Many of these individual employment arrangements between husbands and wives turn out to become a disaster not only for the couple but also for its entire social environment. Many husbands can neither handle their jealousy and being without their wives, nor the responsibility for the everyday care of the family. They resort to drinking, neglect their children, and turn to violence. Women of FHHs in the neighbourhood (especially in welfare centres) – anyway suspected of being loose characters – are usually their victims of rape. If these women are not available or too difficult to reach, it is the own eldest daughter who is raped on an everyday basis.

340. Some ECHO-partners address issues like abuse, sexually based violence, domestic violence, female and children's rights, awareness creation, etc.<sup>62</sup> But the problems are far from being appropriately addressed with regard to the dimension with which they are affecting the society. The problem goes beyond the capacities and mandates of donors specialising in short-term relief. These issues have to be tackled by humanitarian and development donors and national and regional authorities and institutions. Trafficking of women – although obviously of considerably dimension - is not addressed directly by any measure of any ECHO partner.

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<sup>62</sup> Though not through ECHO funding. Training is provided by several organisations, inter alia by UNICEF, Save the Children, Oxfam and a number of Sri Lankan NGOs.

### 5.3.3 The Situation of Elderly

341. The events of the past decades resulted in a break-up of social ties and traditions which previously had secured the society's social security net. This includes an increasing physical, social and emotional neglect of the elderly. The number of old people, who have adult children but not heard from them since many years and who do not know where they are, is alarming. A number of such cases may be the results of war and flight, when family members lost sight of each other, but it seems that in many other such instances adult children have no desire to maintain contacts with and responsibility for their old parents.

342. In times of economic crisis – as for the displaced population under discussion – old people can be perceived, especially by daughters-in-law, as too much of an economic liability for the household: they are economically unproductive, and the doles they are receiving are insufficient even for their own physical needs. In many families physical and mental maltreatment against the elders becomes a daily occurrence, often reinforced through the old people's neuropsychiatric problems resulting either from the maltreatment or caused by old age. These elderly have no choice: they are economically dependant from their children, fear being neglected and see no other perspective than enduring.

343. In the Sri Lankan context the term "EVI" comprises also elderly people, i.e. old people as a category are specifically targeted beneficiaries of material assistance provided through ECHO funding. With the exception of activities in Tamil Nadu, where community based rehabilitation groups have been established by an ECHO partner providing social and therapeutic care for helpless elderly and for depressive community members, old people's psycho-social problems are, however, barely addressed.

### 5.3.4 War Related Traumata

344. Post-traumatic stress disorders have specific development curves and often become manifest only many months, even years after the traumatising events.

345. In every IDP- and returnee-community the mission team visited several individuals were identified as being so severely traumatised that, after conflict-related, traumatic experience they are unable to work and integrate in their social environment and need to be cared for. Others may be able to work but fears originating from the traumatising event/s lead to overreactions which in turn frequently result in the victims' social isolation and the subsequent aggravation of their situation. This "survey" was little more than superficial and did not cover those who severely suffer but manage to be fairly inconspicuous in their social environment. WHO estimates, however, that 2/3 of the population suffer from war-related depression, anxiety and stress<sup>63</sup>.

346. Facilities for psychiatric care are rudimentary. Some fifty psychiatric beds are available in Jaffna, but there are none in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara, Anuradhapura and Puttalam<sup>64</sup>. This is not even covering the needs of average mental morbidity in a country which has not been exposed to war and displacement. If patients are seeking help for mental diseases at all, they address the general health system with conditions that could best be dealt with by a functioning mental health system. Both, WHO and ADB are preparing projects addressing this need, but it is unrealistic to assume that the actual psychiatric needs of the target group of ECHO's programme can effectively be met within the next three years.

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<sup>63</sup> In Mental Health Care in the NE of Sri Lanka. Proposal by WHO for a 3-years project; and communication Denham Pole, WHO, Colombo.

<sup>64</sup> MoH Sri Lanka and WHO: Sri Lanka Health Atlas 2003.

347. With the exception of the region around Mannar, Vavuniya and the refugee camps supported by ECHO in Tamil Nadu war-traumatised people have practically no access to qualified psychological and psychiatric assistance. MSF Holland had trained staff of four local NGOs<sup>65</sup> in “befriending” (closely related to what could be called “social work”) and psycho-social counselling, but has left Sri Lanka in December 2003. Its local staff has founded a new local NGO in order to continue, what MSF has initiated. Also, a psychiatrist and a trained psychologist with a focus on trauma counselling from Mannar<sup>66</sup>, as well as a psychiatrist from Jaffna’s mental hospital are continuing the training which they had provided within the framework of MSF’s activities. Yet, as psycho-social counselling requires high labour input, the number of trained counsellors available is highly inadequate. Responding to the obvious need several NGOs<sup>67</sup> provide “counselling training” to lay-persons in ten-day-courses, allowing their “counsellors” to create considerable damage in their patients.

348. In Mannar, the psychiatrist and the psychologist have established a system of out-reach work, visiting at regular intervals villages and providing professional assistance also to communities covered by ECHO’s assistance. In Vavuniya and Mannar an ECHO partner’s local implementing partner is providing psycho-social assistance to 40 villages<sup>68</sup>. Yet, they can only reach a tiny fraction of those, who actually need their help. In the east of Sri Lanka an ECHO partner assists traumatised returning child soldiers in coping with their traumas and comprehensively supporting them in reintegrating into the society.

349. Refugees in Tamil Nadu benefit from the psychological assistance provided by the ECHO partner since the mid-nineties<sup>69</sup>. They report that conflict-related psychological problems have been widespread and massive before psychological assistance was provided, but have completely disappeared since the late nineties.

### **5.3.5 Returning Young Men – Victims of Child Recruitment**

350. As mentioned above, returning child soldiers are often severely traumatised and face considerable difficulties in reintegrating into society. In addition, they have been recruited while they were still of school-going age. When they return they have missed essential years of schooling and training, and are unable to make up for them. They are therefore – in addition to their war-related trauma - facing similar problems like those young men who have been sent away by their parents to escape recruitment:

351. Whenever parents fear their sons could be recruited by the LTTE they seek to send them away into security, out of LTTE’s reach - the further the better. Who ever has the means sends them abroad, mostly to India. These boys, like those who did not manage to escape, are missing valuable years of schooling and training. When they return in their late teens or early twenties, they have no skills required for civil society, no work, no money – not even for cultivating their fields or buying nets for fishing. As a result they have no self-esteem. Some of them have become acquainted with heroin in India and try to escape their misery by taking it, financing their own addiction through drug dealing. Others try their luck in petty crime.

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<sup>65</sup> Including the implementing partner of one ECHO-partner

<sup>66</sup> The fact that he is a catholic priest and she a nun provides them with a rather unique neutrality. It seems they are having access to and are consulted by all sections of the society.

<sup>67</sup> No ECHO partners!

<sup>68</sup> Not funded by ECHO

<sup>69</sup> But not funded by ECHO

352. When such a young man gets married to a girl that unlike him has been able to finish her schooling and training, and is therefore earning the family income. As “a real man has a job, and is not in charge of the household chores”, his frustration is predictable, as is his resort to alcohol and increasing domestic violence. It does not take long until the couple's children are becoming traumatised by the violence, and by the breaking up of the marriage.

353. While this ‘domestic’ chapter is then finished, the next one is opening: the children, and especially the boys, are afraid of the father and any other male authoritarian, disciplinary figure – including their male teachers, who in their perception replace the authoritarian, disciplinary father. Father, male teachers, school are respectively become sources of existential fear. The children, especially the boys, eventually drop out, and have a good chance to repeat their fathers' biographies.

354. Apart from the police, who is critically observing the young returnees from India as potential heroin dealers, and the psychologist in Mannar, who tries to assist them in their attempts to reintegrate, there is little attention given to these young men. One may cynically argue that their number is too small to deserve special attention as a group, especially vis-à-vis the dimension of the needs of other groups. But the long-term impact of their unsuccessful reintegration and the subsequent behavioural deviation is so serious for themselves and their immediate environment, that comprehensive and systematic assistance for their reintegration needs to be urgently addressed.

355. In contrast, returning child soldiers' problems and needs are easier recognised and understandable: being a child soldier is also being a victim, and naturally deserving assistance. Some ECHO partners specifically mention them in their list of EVIs; but their assistance refers to meeting material needs rather than providing psycho-social assistance. As mentioned above, an ECHO partner assists traumatised returning child soldiers in the east in coping with their traumas and comprehensively supporting them in reintegrating in society. But this is just a drop in the sea.

#### **5.4 Effects on the Environment**

356. Through the war serious destruction of tree-cover has taken place. Tree sapling distribution and nursery training, plus set-up of tree nurseries in the ECHO financed projects have helped to restore this part of the environment at farm and household level. These activities need to be increased.

357. After the ceasefire it turned out that the fishing population of the north and east is now bigger than before the conflict. The provision of a large number of nets through the ECHO projects could contribute to over-fishing, especially of tanks and other shallow waters. The provision of fingerlings for fish culture in tanks – as already undertaken by some of the ECHO partners – is counter-balancing this, possible, adverse effect of net-distribution.

358. The impact of free-roaming goats on the environment is often not beneficial. Goats eat everything – also young trees that try to establish themselves and that are of great importance for the restoration of the war-affected environment. ECHO projects distributing animal husbandry packages with goats have to consider the promotion of alternative ways of goat husbandry that are less damaging for the environment (e.g. stall feeding or penning).



359. In general ECHO projects make an effort to reduce the application of chemicals in their agricultural packages. Especially in areas with a high ground water level this is of utmost importance. Methodologies like Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) are to be increasingly promoted.

360. With regard to the construction of pit latrines especially Jaffna needs to be treated with great care. GTZ considers pit latrines as not safe anymore. Hydro geological considerations are required in order to avoid tapping into a saline aquifer and increasing the yield.

## **5.5 Participation**

361. The success of the ECHO projects from 2002 – 2004/05 is for an important part due to the participation of the beneficiaries. This is made possible through the intensive community-based approaches several of the partners adopt, not only for the ECHO financed projects, but for their entire programme in Sri Lanka. A few partners perceive the ECHO funded projects as a start in the continuum of relief, rehabilitation and development. They link their more rehabilitation and development-oriented projects to the ECHO funded relief projects, which gives the latter an added dimension of sustainability.

## **5.6 Preparedness**

362. Only 25 % of the ECHO partners are actually having a contingency plan for a renewed crisis situation.