

Case Study Report: Spanish Humanitarian Response to the 2008 Hurricane Season in Haiti



Velina Stoianova
Soledad Posada

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Velina Stoianova and Soledad Posada
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Velina Stoianova, holds a BA in Political Science and Public Administration, with specialisation in International Relations, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She has done studies on the analysis and management of armed conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa and has worked as research assistant at the Barcelona-based UNESCO Chair on Peace and Human Rights. Has participated in the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition as a team member for the Review of Spanish State Funding for the Tsunami Emergency and Relief Operation and has supported the Donor State Funding Synthesis report. She was part of the original Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) development team and was the researcher in charge of the content development for the HRI 2007 edition.

Soledad Posada works as an evaluation researcher at DARA, where she has participated in humanitarian aid and development evaluations and assessments in Central Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. Her areas of expertise include donor humanitarian funding, disaster risk reduction, capacity-building, and the development and implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation systems and methodology. Prior to joining DARA, she worked as a consultant at the UNESCO Human Rights and Development Section. She has a BA in Philosophy, an MA in International Relations from the University of Bath, and is finishing an MA in Public Policy and Programme Evaluation at the University Complutense of Madrid.



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Goya, 5-7, Pasaje 2º. 28001 Madrid – SPAIN

Tel.: +34 912 44 47 40 – Fax: +34 912 44 47 41

Email: fride@fride.org

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Acronyms

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
CEPREDENAC	Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CP	Civil Protection
CRE	Spanish Red Cross
CRH	Haitian Red Cross
DANA	Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis
DCP	Directorate of Civil Protection
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team
HLC	Spanish Humanitarian Logistic Centre
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MAST	Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti
MSF	<i>Médecins Sans Frontiers</i>
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
PADRU	Pan-American Disaster Response Unit
RedLAC	Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds
SNGRD	Haiti's National Disaster and Risk Management System
TCO	Technical Cooperation Office
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nation's Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	UN World Food Programme

Preface

This report is part of a series of three case studies on humanitarian assistance operations undertaken by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), between 2007 and 2009, in response to various significant emergency situations in the Middle East, Africa, and Central America and the Caribbean. These case studies were undertaken within the framework of a comparative analysis project regarding the efficacy, efficiency and impact of the many humanitarian aid instruments and modalities of Spanish Development Cooperation.

The aim of the case studies is twofold: on the one hand, to make up for a lack of specific research on AECID's direct intervention, which, albeit an unusual humanitarian assistance mechanism, has been repeatedly resorted to by Spanish Development Cooperation in its responses to natural disaster- and armed conflict-related emergency situations. On the other hand, the study of the implementation of different humanitarian instruments, through these three case studies, will contribute to build a framework of action for AECID's global humanitarian action strategy.

Introduction

Country context

Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, where an estimated half of the population survives on less than one dollar a day, is also a country of great political instability and significant economic and social turmoil. Food insecurity is chronic, and Haiti is highly dependent on international aid and the import of goods for its subsistence. Almost 30 per cent of the state budget and 60 per cent of household income are destined to the purchase of food. Extreme poverty and lack of job opportunities have led to the devastation of forests, increasing the vulnerability of the population and their crops in the face of water-related incidents, such as hurricanes, torrential rain, and rising river levels.¹ Furthermore, considering the weak state of the country's economic infrastructure and its lack of preparedness, small-scale natural disasters have an incalculable impact on its population and economic assets. Also worrying are Haiti's low coverage of access to safe and treated water (46 per cent), and hygiene and sanitation (28 per cent). It is therefore not surprising that Haiti is among the Inter-American Development Bank's (IADB) group 5 of 'extremely vulnerable' countries.² Former governments have paid very little attention to vulnerability reduction and disaster management. At present there is, in theory, a certain willingness to address these concerns, but so far advances have been minimal in practice.

Social and political context

Haiti's social and political life has for decades been marked by institutional instability and violent fighting between supporters and dissenters of the many political

¹ Tree cutting for the production and sale of charcoal is one of the few means of living of Haitians, 60 per cent of which live in rural areas.

² Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), 'Disaster Risk Reduction through environmental management: using economic instruments', available at <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=647209>. See also http://www.disaster-info.net/socios_sp.htm

ideas that have sprung as a result of widespread misery and uncontrolled arms, abundant in Haitian ghettos. The worsening state of security led the United Nations (UN) to establish an international peacekeeping force in the country in 2004. The initial mandate of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) is set to conclude in 2011; however, albeit the apparent stabilisation perceived over the last six months, the mandate is expected to be renewed, although probably with a reduced military component and an increased police one. In any case, it seems hardly feasible to reach economic and social stability without a drastic revision of Haiti's political situation. According to Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index,³ Haiti is for a second year running the fourth most corrupt country in the world, only behind Somalia, Myanmar and Iraq. Its institutional stability is chronic,⁴ a condition which is generally seen as responsible for the country's dire current situation. In the spring of 2008, the unstoppable rise in oil and food prices – especially with regard to rice, the import on which Haiti largely relies on for food security – led to serious disturbances and an attempt to seize the National Palace, which caused many casualties. This new violent episode was the *coup de grâce* that precipitated the fall of the already weakened Jacques Edouard Alexis government.⁵ The nomination in July of economist Michèle Pierre-Louis as prime minister was hoped to break the impasse Haiti had been facing since April, as well as to placate the famished protesters. Only a month later, however, hurricane Gustav would initiate a series of successive hurricanes and tropical storms that would devastate the country.

Context of the emergency situation

The 2008 hurricane season in the Atlantic was particularly devastating, especially in view of the damage caused by hurricanes Gustav, Ike, and Hanna, which hit many countries in the region, including Jamaica, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras. With regard to Haiti, the most affected country, devastation began in mid-August with the formation of tropical storm Fay over Hispaniola, the island comprising Haiti and the Dominican Republic. On 26 August hurricane Gustav reached the southern coast of Haiti, causing thousands of victims in the West, South, and Southeast departments. While humanitarian assistance operations to the victims of hurricane Gustav were in full swing, hurricane Hanna, after an unexpected change of direction, on 1 September caused torrential rain in Haiti's northern coastal areas, with an especially hard impact on the city of Gonaïves, which was isolated from the rest of the country for several days. Only a few days later, hurricane Ike hit the same area, with consequences again for the Artibonite department, and made the humanitarian situation even worse in other parts of the country. This series of four tropical cyclones caused the death of 800 people, and damages to another million, out of a total population of 9.5 million in Haiti. In Gonaïves, 300,000 people – out of a total 350,000 – were directly affected. Water and sanitation were the most affected sectors.

The international call that aimed at collecting US\$ 127 million has to this date received only slightly more than half of that amount (58.9 per cent).⁶ The international community has responded to the Haitian emergency in an uneven fashion, which has meant that the needs of certain sectors have been scarcely met – such as protection, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and education – while other sectors, like food, health, and coordination, have received significant coverage.⁷

³ Haiti was the world's most corrupt country in 2006. See www.transparency.org

⁴ For a review of Haiti's historical landmarks see, for example, Reuters Alertnet, http://www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/HA_UNR.htm?v=at_a_glance.

⁵ Amélie Gauthier, 'Food crisis in Haiti: exposing key problems in the process of stabilisation', available at <http://www.fride.org/publicacion/408/crisis-alimentaria-en-haiti-exponiendo-problemas-clave-en-el-proceso-de-estabilizacion>

⁶ OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS), Haiti Flash Appeal (Revised) 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

Humanitarian Response Processes

An analysis of the Spanish humanitarian response to the 2008 Haiti hurricane emergency requires a comprehensive study of the whole response process. Three main phases can be highlighted: first, a 'consultative process', which, through relevance and coordination criteria in particular, will look at how AECID analysed the situation and identified priorities within the international community's system of coordination and consultation. Second, the 'decision-making process' will describe AECID's intervention decisions, measuring the efficacy of the process and to what extent its objectives and decisions corresponded to the priorities identified in the 'consultative process'. The last phase will deal with the emergency response 'implementation process', understood as the results of the decision-making process, as well as efficiency and impact with regard to coordination.

These processes will be analysed through the prism of the problems and difficulties encountered in the coordination of actors that participated in the response. In this manner, it is possible to understand how the coordination processes have influenced response results, having led to complementarity and/or duplication.

Consultative process

When a natural disaster occurs, an ensuing consultative process among humanitarian actors is necessary in order to provide common knowledge grounds. Such knowledge should include a correct Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA), which must treat the most affected areas and most vulnerable persons as priorities. Consultation among actors must, on the one hand, occur within the official UN humanitarian coordination framework, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and, on the other, rely on the aid recipient country's governmental structure.

From Haiti, the Technical Cooperation Office (TCO) began to assess the damages and needs that resulted from the impact of the first two hurricanes, Fay and Gustav, gathering information from town halls and local civil protection committees (CP). CP is the governmental institution responsible for providing data on damage and the number of affected persons in each one of the country's departments. This source was the main one used by the TCO, together with contacts with its own development programme field agents. However, it seems that, in the first instance, Spanish aid was based solely on the number of sheltered persons, since the local CP did not provide the complete data on affected persons until it had passed through the hands of the Directorate of Civil Protection (DCP), which had to evaluate the data on site and in an official manner. Therefore, considering the generally slow CP structure, in contrast with the actual speed of events, it is not possible to say that there was an adequate selection of aid beneficiaries. It is nevertheless true that most of those interviewed for this case study⁸ agree that, given the magnitude of the disaster, the assessment of needs was partial and gradual in time due to, amongst other things, lack of access to isolated affected areas. The decentralised CP structure spread throughout Haiti provides, however, only broad official information, whereas intervention requires it to be much more detailed, especially with regard to the most affected and isolated areas. This seems to explain to a certain extent the great concentration of response actors in the same areas of Gonaives, and the relative lack of attention to other isolated villages in the same department about which no information was available. It is therefore relevant that Spanish assistance was centred mostly in the southeast region, where there was not such a multiplicity of actors but many needs to tend to.

A good example of good practices in coordinated work is the joint assessment of needs undertaken by a mixed coordination team of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the

⁸ Interviews held in May 2009, in Panama and Haiti, with AECID representatives, members of civil society, UN agency personnel, NGOs, donor-country delegates, local authorities, members of Haiti's government, and aid beneficiaries.

United Nations. On 27 August, the IFRC activated a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) destined to support the Haitian Red Cross (CRH) in the assessment of needs and emergency relief for affected persons in the southern and western departments of the country. Thus the IFRC provided immediate support for the joint efforts of CRH, OCHA, and UNICEF promptly to assess the needs of affected areas⁹ – a concrete example of procedural good practice with regard to timing as well as response efficiency, as it assured needs proportionality through adequate on site assessment.¹⁰ On the days following Gustav, UN agencies undertook numerous urgent needs-assessment missions and provided emergency assistance to victims.¹¹ Other donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), chose to deploy their own needs-assessment teams, with a view to planning a global response to the crises that the Atlantic hurricane season was generating.

Considering the volume of needs-assessments compiled during the month of August, it was expected that Spanish Development Cooperation, and especially the TCO in Haiti, would have based themselves on the information available to a larger extent than they did when planning their emergency response actions (the first airplane with Spanish aid was sent on 3 September). For its part, the Spanish Development Cooperation's Humanitarian Logistic Centre (HLC) in Panama had been, in permanent contact with the TCO, gathering data through OCHA's regional office and its inter-agency information management system, RedLAC,¹² whose Annual Plan for natural disaster preparedness is significantly funded by

Spanish Development Cooperation, and whose logistics subgroup is coordinated jointly with the UN World Food Programme (WFP). Considering that a hurricane is the only natural disaster that allows for 48 hours of prior planning, RedLAC held a meeting, contacted the UN resident coordinator in Haiti in order to exchange information on the situation, and within its subgroups established the guidelines for coordinated work. Concretely, the logistics subgroup is the one through which HLC coordinates with other organisations in Panama: WFP, *Médecins Sans Frontiers* (MSF), and the Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). AECID's HLC also played a role (through a Panama-based 'remote' operation) in the WFP-led logistics clusters in Haiti.

The UN system in Haiti activated its coordination mechanisms: under government request, the UN deployed an eight-member Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) to assist OCHA in reinforcing its national and field coordination mechanisms, with the objective of evaluating disaster damage and preparing the UN Flash Appeal. Additional help was requested from OCHA's regional office and from Reliefweb to support in the management of information and links with DCP. Before launching the appeal, coordination clusters had been activated and were sharing information and inviting all humanitarian actors and the donor community to participate in the effort. Donors are not only expected actively to participate, but also to demand coordination accountability from cluster leaders, according to a key informant and representative of the donor community. This, however, can only begin to happen through a strengthened sectoral-group focus based, as a starting point, on the assurance that cluster leaders are engaged characters, with good communication skills and sufficient experience in humanitarian affairs so as to inform on the response priorities for each sector, as well as creating the conditions and motivation for coordinated action. The donor community must therefore play a more significant role in promoting such coordination, being particularly proactive and forthcoming in the meetings of the various coordination mechanisms, where it is essential that all kinds of actors

⁹ The Deputy Head of Zone for the Americas and the Regional Representative for Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti were deployed to the affected areas. See [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFile/ame/KKAA-7HX3AM-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFFiles2008.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFile/ame/KKAA-7HX3AM-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf).

¹⁰ See also IFRC Emergency Appeal MDR49003 of 2 September 2008 for data on humanitarian needs and response action undertaken up until today.

¹¹ For example, seven joint WFP, UNICEF, and CP missions acting in the South, between 28 and 31 August, to assist urgent food, and water and sanitation needs of communities in the Jacmel area. They also delivered hygiene kits, temporary shelter items and 50 tonnes of food by land and air. See <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KKAA-7J439A?OpenDocument&rc=2&cc=hti>.

¹² Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC), www.redlac.org.

are involved. In this sense, the Spanish Development Cooperation's assessment of needs and direct response planning, which was indeed reportedly coordinated with the Government of Haiti, should have been further shared with other actors. Donor consultation, for instance, according to many opinions heard throughout this research, seems to require taking a step further towards complementarity and adaptation in humanitarian responses, overcoming its current informative character.

An example of good practice with regard to country-level coordination is the complementarity among UN clusters, and DCP's and MAST's (Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) sector-based groups. Concretely, within the temporary shelter cluster there is the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) led cluster and the DCP-MAST-led sector-based group, the 'tactical committee for temporary shelter management', of which Red Cross, IOM, and IFRC are observers and provide it with technical assistance. The coordinated meetings of both groups, which previously took place separately, have since June 2009 taken place jointly, in order to strengthen the complementarity of their objectives: using clusters to coordinate humanitarian activities with government and sector-based groups for the development of national government policies. For example, the temporary shelter cluster prepares rapid evaluation and response forms that the government then distributes amongst sector-based groups for their use, benefiting therefore from the technical experience of clusters.

Spanish Development Cooperation should significantly deepen the quest for increasing political and technical complementarity. To this end, it is necessary to continue to exploit the clear added-value provided by HLC, that is, its potential for integration – an integration which is, in fact, already visible – with inter-agency humanitarian coordination meetings, as well as with information sharing online, undertaken through the Redhum project¹³ with Spanish support, as part of Spain's financial contribution to OCHA's regional office for Latin America and the

Caribbean (OCHA-ROLAC). The HLC is a strategic place where a great number of humanitarian actors are gathered and which counts with an ever more coordinated and consolidated operational level. Moreover, the fact that AECID is actively present as a donor in this inter-agency network reinforces the complementarity of humanitarian mandates. At the end of the day, according to an interviewee, the region is focused primarily on donor policies, and, therefore, it is ultimately indispensable that donors not only have knowledge of but also participate in operational activities. Ultimately, the triangular consultative process among the TCO in Haiti, HLC, and AECID's Humanitarian Action Office, with respect to developing a response to the Atlantic hurricane season, was permanent and agile, using also informal communication channels in order to speed up ensuing action. This study will thus analyse the adaptability of the decision-making process with regard to prior needs-assessments and, in general, to technical consultations amongst actors in the field.

Decision-making process

In order to understand the global context of response and the events that took place, it is necessary to look at the main parallel decisions taken by the different actors in the international community. It is also crucial to look at AECID's concrete decision-making process within the framework of the global humanitarian response process in Haiti.

Once the context was analysed, the needs assessed, priorities identified, and a response plan drawn up by each response actor, and once the Haitian Senate had declared the state of emergency in Gonaives on 4 September, the UN launched its appeal for a global response, on 9 September.¹⁴ The appeal requested US\$ 107 million for the emergency situation and other early recovery activities, for a period of six months and within a global, coherent and coordinated international community framework including the Government of Haiti, the UN system, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the International Federation of Red Cross

¹³ Regional Humanitarian Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (Redhum), www.redhum.org.

¹⁴ OCHA FTS, op. cit.

and Red Crescent Societies. More specifically, the appeal was directed at obtaining financial support for 40 projects of eight different sectors' response plans. By 18 December, donor response had covered 40 per cent of the amount in the appeal, including a significant additional aid sum, outside the appeal, of US\$ 40 million, comprised of cash and bilateral donations made to the Haitian government or to NGOs whose projects were not included in the UN appeal.

The research for this case study found that the response of the international community was excessively motivated by and centralised in the emergency situation of Gonaives. This was not without justification, considering that 85 per cent of the town's population was directly affected by the emergency and that the Artibonite department (where Gonaives is situated) is systematically the most seriously hit, due to its plane terrain and the high frequency of floods caused by medium-intensity rains. With regard to Spain's response to the emergency, the decision to focus the direct aid operation on the South and Southeast departments¹⁵ was correct, especially in view of the high volume of unmet needs in those regions after the Fay, Gustav, and Hanna tropical cyclones. Spanish Development Cooperation did not, however, ignore Gonaives, where most of the international response had been focused – the latter a fact that made the region be seen as privileged by some beneficiaries in other areas. AECID funded many projects in the area, fulfilling various humanitarian needs.

Spanish humanitarian assistance focused mainly on four sectors: 'health', funding the activities of UNICEF and the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; 'water, sanitation and hygiene', supporting the activities of Intermón Oxfam in Gonaives; 'food', a sector in which Spanish Development Cooperation participated both directly – in the distribution of family food rations, amongst other things – as well as through its funding of WFP activities; and 'temporary shelter/non-food assistance', the sector that received the largest portion of direct Spanish aid, as well as funding destined to the

IOM. In terms of coverage, the sectoral selection was very appropriate, since it followed both AECID's technical capacities and experiences – whose logistics stock in Panama is structured mostly around non-food items and linked to emergency relief – as well as the humanitarian community's priority requirements endorsed in the UN Flash Appeal.

In the emergency response phase, it was particularly relevant to meet the urgent needs of the 'food' and 'temporary shelter' sectors. The appeal estimated that approximately 800,000 people would be completely dependent on food assistance over the six months following the emergency. This was due to the country's chronic food insecurity and the loss of crops as a result of the hurricanes. Data suggested that the most appropriate kind of food assistance would be the supply of prepared foods, such as the energy bars that AECID's HLC delivered to the WFP. The major needs assessed in the temporary shelter and non-food assistance sectors were the lack of hygiene and kitchen kits for displaced persons (both those lodged in temporary shelters and those who did not manage to do so due to either being cut off in isolated areas or to the overcrowding of shelters) and the search for housing solutions for those affected by the cyclones. AECID's decision to focus its direct response on the supply of non-food kits – hygiene, kitchen, and items for persons in temporary shelters (tarpaulins, blankets, and mosquito nets) – satisfactorily fulfilled this series of needs.

With regard to the decision of undertaking a direct response to the emergency, it must be remembered that such an instrument is uncommon in the humanitarian responses of DAC-OECD (Development Assistance Committee–Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) donors' development cooperation agencies (with a few notable exceptions, such as the US), and AECID itself recognises that it is a last resort resorted to only in view of a significant gap¹⁶ in emergency relief to the affected population. In the Haitian case, direct Spanish intervention was the result of a

¹⁵ The South and Southeast departments are AECID's priority areas for humanitarian action and development assistance in Haiti.

¹⁶ Different sources from within AECID point to diverse reasons that could justify the choice of direct aid: delays in emergency assistance deliveries, lack of coordination amongst humanitarian actors in Haiti, dysfunctional decision-making mechanisms, etc.

decision-making process involving centralised, regional and local officials of Spanish Development Cooperation. In emergency situations, there is always a first meeting at the coordination level of AECID in Madrid, usually involving Spanish NGOs with a presence in the affected area, the Autonomous Communities, and the Ministries of Interior, Defence, and Health. The main aims of this meeting are: to compare and contrast information received from sources in the field, to announce the possibility of direct intervention, and to offer space in airplane decks. Prior to this meeting, the Humanitarian Action Office must have a general idea of the affected country's needs, as well as the most adequate *modus operandi* in each case since there is not yet a specific emergency protocol for direct AECID intervention. The objective of this kind of intervention is concomitant with those of humanitarian aid, but in this case with a strong emphasis on national capabilities and reliance on national coordination. The very magnitude of the disaster; the Spanish Development Cooperation's characteristic emergency focus on the rapid fulfilment of needs; the predisposition and capacity to respond rapidly through the HLC; knowledge of the southeast area, allied with a working group on development programmes; the fact that they were dealing with the same target population; and, finally, consultation with different actors made by HLC and the TCO were the main points that seem to have led, in a 'natural way', to the will and decision to intervene.

It appears, however, that this decision was not discussed in UN coordination meetings or similar donor reunions, nor was it submitted to the analysis of sector-based groups. The extent to which there may have been an agreement amongst the various decision-making entities of Spanish Development Cooperation on the need to intervene is also unknown, although there is evidence that the Humanitarian Action Office in Madrid and the Port-au-Prince TCO advocated from the beginning that direct intervention was the best way to respond to the emergency. It is doubtful, however, that the decision-making process of Spanish Development Cooperation took into account applicability criteria, and, therefore, it is unlikely that it evaluated its technical and human capacities when it decided for the direct supply of humanitarian aid. While the HLC's geographical

proximity to the disaster area and its successful participation in all regional emergency response mechanisms clearly indicate the benefits of the choice of bilateral aid, the insufficient number and, more importantly, the lack of experience of the TCO's human resources, on the other hand, seem to suggest against the option of direct aid supply. Although aid deliveries were carried out smoothly, especially due to the volunteering support of the Spanish Red Cross (CRE), it would have been advisable for AECID to have followed the model used in other direct response cases, which consists of handing aid over to a humanitarian organisation with human resource capacities, technical competencies and detailed knowledge of the intervention area to carry out the distribution of humanitarian supplies.¹⁷

Implementation process

This section aims to compare the process of global humanitarian response in Haiti with the concrete implementation of the activities of Spanish Development Cooperation. The latter will be comparatively analysed through the evaluation of different elements of its direct and indirect interventions.

Direct and indirect aid	Beneficiary	Amount €
State grants	Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul	12,000
	International Organisation for Migration	499,800
	World Food Programme	1,500,000
Open and Permanent Tenders (OPT)	Intermón Oxfam	303,455
NGO Framework Agreements	Spanish Red Cross	400,000
Disbursement of funds	Direct aid emergency relief	500,000
TOTAL		3,215,255

¹⁷ This is the direction pointed to by the guide 'How to donate: Practical recommendations for humanitarian assistance', a PAHO/WHO initiative. The guide has counted with significant AECID funding within the framework of its response enhancement project in the Latin American region. See www.saberdonar.info (in Spanish).

In global terms, the initial humanitarian response phase, with logistical and security support from MINUSTAH, centred on satisfying the urgent needs with respect to water, food, sanitation, and health. In a second, transition phase, aid was focused on helping 50,000 temporarily sheltered persons to return to their homes or be relocated. The cluster coordination mechanism was activated in Port-au-Prince and Gonaives, also establishing a presence in the Southeast department, more specifically in Jacmel. It is crucial that third-phase activities for an early recovery are carried out, in order to avoid the unnecessary prolongation of the emergency situation and, most importantly, to ensure a sustainable recovery to all affected communities, especially since some departments in Haiti are currently having to face the new hurricane season in the Caribbean in a more vulnerable situation than prior to the devastating 2008 season, due to delays in the reconstruction programmes.

With regard to the Spanish Development Cooperation's direct response, all aid deliveries were expediently registered with the Panama HLC through OCHA's Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), whose objective is to facilitate headquarters and field decision-making by allowing for real-time information sharing on humanitarian responses to sudden emergencies. There is, likewise, evidence that the TCO was very diligent in informing OCHA in Haiti of all the significant operative steps regarding the arrival of supplies, their kind and quantity, as well as delivery points. OCHA, in turn, shared data with the donor community involved in the response. However, in the case of bilaterally managed direct aid, the information OCHA receives from the TCO in Port-au-Prince has merely informative purposes, since it is not integrated within the UN coordination system.

AECID's physical presence in the area, due to its direct intervention in the Southeast department, also facilitated the coordination amongst actors in the area. Aid distribution in Cayes-Jacmel and Marigot was coordinated with the department's CP and, through it, with the various local committees. While aid was being delivered, the department's directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture functioned as a warehouse for supplies

delivered by truck from Port-au-Prince, and also where the three chartered aircraft would land successively. Since these aircraft carried supplies from other humanitarian organisations, especially the second one, with Spanish Red Cross and Intermón Oxfam loads (but also the third aircraft, which carried WFP and IFRC supplies), there necessarily emerged a coordinated response, in terms of pick-up and delivery. On the other hand, AECID's presence in the Southeast department also implied scarce coordination with its subsidised counterparts that implemented humanitarian aid in other areas, as was the case with Intermón Oxfam and IOM in Gonaives. It is not possible, therefore, to argue that AECID promoted coordination amongst the organisations it funded, nor did it take on a coordinating role in its indirect humanitarian response.

The aid distribution activities of the TCO, undertaken jointly with CP, CRE, and MINUSTAH, were quite well organised; however, in reason of their rapid deployment, it was not possible thoroughly to monitor the actual number of affected persons and beneficiaries who indeed received aid supplies. Some interviewees were categorical in expressing their doubts as to the rigour and comprehensiveness of the beneficiary lists supplied to Spanish humanitarian assistance by local CP and prefectures. Moreover, accurate control of needs fulfilment in intervention areas does not seem to have occurred, since beneficiary lists were not checked against other official population data (such as electoral or population censuses), which certainly were in the hands of the local prefectures in affected areas. According to various testimonies, supplies in Cayes-Jacmel, for instance, were delivered to the mayor (who was also local CP coordinator) for distribution without the involvement of the TCO, which, therefore, could not monitor the correct delivery of aid to all beneficiaries.

The TCO's willingness to respond rapidly, fulfil humanitarian objectives and take on many responsibilities in a short space of time, all this with scarce capacities or experience, made it excessively dependent on the CP, whose response capacity was also insufficient, and its impartiality questionable. An opinion widespread amongst those interviewed for this case

study is that the formal decentralised government structure does not occur in practice. Local and departmental CP activities are completely subordinated to central decision-making, which is often based on the priorities of political agendas. Haiti's Civil Protection, as an official institution, must continue to act as the natural counterpart in bilateral action, but within its limitations, adapting its responsibilities to its real capacity. In this sense, TCO aid distribution in Cayes-Jacmel should not have been so dependent upon the lists provided by the local prefecture. In general, its distribution in the Southeast department had sound infrastructure and knowledge of the area and its population thanks mostly to CRE's technical support and previous information gathered by AECID's development projects. Thus the sphere in which humanitarian response was most limited was the technical humanitarian knowledge detained by TCO personnel.

It is hard to measure the impact of AECID's direct or indirect intervention, especially in a case such as Haiti's, where local capacity-building and empowerment of beneficiaries are tasks of enormous complexity due to the lack of institutional support to make them efficient. Hence the difficulty in ascertaining which impact – positive or negative – was the result of AECID's interventions and which was the local government's. Haiti's state is in effect very weak, even 'invisible', and lacking in willingness to collaborate in order for local authorities to move towards ownership of foreign aid projects and capacity-building. The lives of people in Cayes-Jacmel and Marigot do not seem to have improved much, as they themselves related. It is true that AECID supplies were of great assistance, and, at present, approximately eight months since the disaster occurred, many families remain in possession of those supplies (especially mosquito nets). In this sense, it is possible to say that AECID did contribute to a small improvement in the livelihoods of the affected, but there is no clear evidence that its humanitarian response may have saved lives or livelihoods, since its direct intervention has lacked continuity throughout the phases of emergency rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Finally, the exposure to risks and the vulnerability of the affected is at present higher than at the time the disaster took place. This is due to the disquieting delay in rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. There are entire families living on the streets, or with friends and family, because their homes, devastated by the hurricanes, have not yet been reconstructed, nor have the displaced been relocated. The evident delay in reconstruction and rehabilitation tasks in southern Haiti has been admitted by a representative of the humanitarian community who works in that sector. He ascribes this situation to the fact that urban sectors were prioritised due to their lacking in traditional social and family networks, which are more characteristic of rural areas. In this light, the efficacy of a seemingly prevalent area-focused humanitarian approach in Haiti is questionable. A strengthened sector-based and multi-sector-based approach to humanitarian action would, on the one hand, reverse the current trend of area-focusing, which is based on Haiti's administrative division (consisting of 10 departments), and, on the other, would allow for each implementing organisation to focus on sector-based specialisation at the national level. In this sense, one interviewee pointed out another example of good practice in the Spanish Development Cooperation's excellent assessment of the status and needs of the water sector in its area of intervention, the Southeast; a practice that could be extended to the national level to deal with other areas that may be facing similar problems. This notion of a problem- or sector-based specialisation-focused intervention could be part not only of a needs-assessment framework, but also of humanitarian response and development projects, hence constituting an integrated circular process that would not have marked and unconnected phases. This integrated focus, it must be reiterated, will not however be possible without substantial information sharing and coordination to generate synergy and consolidate joint efforts amongst the different humanitarian actors.

Response-time Framework

Response time standards in humanitarian responses are one of the fundamental principles of humanitarian consensus and good practices. Considering that victims' needs are most critical in the first few days following emergencies, it is imperative that aid reaches the affected population timely, that is, while the normal relief infrastructure (be it institutional or informal) is obstructed and the population thus unattended. On the other hand, equally important, or perhaps even more so, is an adequate adaptation of humanitarian response to beneficiaries' needs – this is recognised both by best practices guides¹⁸ and implementing organisations. A dilemma between response time and fulfilment of needs should not exist in a functional humanitarian system. However, field experience suggests that often, and for various reasons, data on affected population is scarce and, not infrequently, contradictory during the first few days or weeks following emergencies. In such cases there arises the doubt as to whether to prioritise needs-assessments and then proceed to design response actions accordingly, or to undertake both processes simultaneously. In the case of Haiti, all the strengthening mechanisms of the humanitarian system and its response capacities – enhanced coordination at informational, operational, needs-assessment, and response planning levels, as well as enhanced decision-making mechanisms – were put to the test by the sheer volume of needs, the fragility of physical and institutional infrastructures, and the idiosyncrasies of the Haitian context.

The series of four hurricanes in Haiti, which within one month affected eight out of its ten administrative departments, happened in immediate succession to episodes of civil violence and political instability that had forced a change of government in July 2008.

Tropical storm Fay hit the southern coast of Haiti on 16 August 2008, with a direct impact on the priority action area of Spanish Development Cooperation.¹⁹ Although the damage caused by Fay was not substantial, and received little attention from the Government of Haiti and the humanitarian community, AECID publicly offered assistance, the very next day, to affected countries – Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Cuba – through its HLC in Panama, wherefrom the emergency was being monitored and an immediate response planned. Although this offer of immediate humanitarian assistance was not taken up by the Haitian government, it does attest the Spanish Development Cooperation's real-time monitoring capacity with respect to the status of priority countries and the rapid mobilisation of humanitarian supplies through its strategically located HLC.

Only 10 days later, hurricane Gustav aggravated the situation in the already hit southern departments of Haiti, reaching also the central and western areas of the country. On the immediate trail of hurricane Gustav, Spanish Development Cooperation, represented by its HLC in Panama, attended the emergency RedLAC meeting called by OCHA's regional office in Panama, with the objective of analysing available data. Once again, and thanks to its participation in regional humanitarian mechanisms, AECID was mobilised within an extremely short period of time, in order to plan its response action to the Gustav emergency situation. However, in similar fashion to events following Fay, such preparation did not translate into concrete aid actions, probably due to the fact that the Government of Haiti did not make an international humanitarian assistance appeal. The month of September followed with the unexpected event of hurricane Hanna, when the overwhelmed Government of Haiti finally launched an international appeal. Hanna, the third cyclone within approximately 15 days, affected eight out of Haiti's ten administrative regions, causing the flood and isolation of the entire coastal town of Gonaives, affecting an

¹⁸ 'How to donate: Practical recommendations for humanitarian assistance', op. cit.

¹⁹ For further information on development projects in Haiti in 2008, see 'Spanish Development Cooperation in Haiti', <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LRON-7HEFHQ?OpenDocument>.

estimated 90 per cent of the population. The Spanish Development Cooperation's priority action area thus suffered the season's floods for a third time, and hence the response capabilities of the area's humanitarian organisations were running dry. UN regional offices and agencies supported the humanitarian community by reinforcing technical and human capacities. Following Hanna's devastating impact on the country's already dire situation, Haiti's Foreign Ministry made an official request for assistance to the Government of Spain (through the Spanish embassy in Haiti). Thus began the Spanish response to the emergency.²⁰

The direct response of Spanish Development Cooperation was notoriously rapid in comparison with other donors that also helped Haiti with direct aid or humanitarian funding. AECID responded to Haiti's appeal before France, the United Kingdom,²¹ Canada,²² Venezuela,²³ the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Colombia,²⁴ and Italy. Only the US (through USAID/OFDA and USAID's office in Haiti), Germany, Japan, and the European Commission (ECHO) acted faster than Spanish Development Cooperation. The pre-positioning of non-food humanitarian aid in the HLC and its strategic location in the free zone of Panama were fundamental elements to AECID's agility in deploying humanitarian operatives to the emergency area. If, on the other hand, a comparison is made with regard to the time frame of Spanish humanitarian funding response, the results are quite different. Only since October 2008 has Spanish Development Cooperation provided funds to the various projects being carried out by Spanish NGOs, international organisations, and UN agencies. The inherent limitations of the majority of AECID's humanitarian funding mechanisms²⁵ make this component of Spain's official

humanitarian action unsatisfactory with regard to response time. In this light, when comparatively evaluating the timelines of Spain's response with regard to other donors, it is important to note that efficient disbursement of humanitarian funds to implementing organisations is considered a good practice.²⁶ These deliberations imply that a comparative analysis of humanitarian responses of the donor community based exclusively on timeliness may lead to spurious conclusions, since the instruments chosen by different donors can vary substantially.

It is striking that in both fronts – direct aid and humanitarian donorship – AECID delayed its emergency response to Haiti until 3 September, considering that the chosen response area had been hit in mid-August by the first of the aforementioned hurricanes. The most likely reason, as mentioned above, is the fact that the Government of Haiti did not immediately launch an official appeal for international humanitarian assistance, which may have obstructed an earlier activation of response operations. This is not to question the prior need for a formal assistance request by the recipient country before a donor can initiate an emergency response; what is put under scrutiny is AECID's decision not to participate earlier in DANA operations and emergency assistance to victims in its priority area, where – according to the Technical Cooperation Office in Haiti –, it had both sufficient personnel to inform on the situation and infrastructure to carry out a response operation. Instead of waiting for the Haitian Senate to launch the appeal to then intervene directly, AECID could have assisted hurricane victims, at the time of the disaster, by supporting the humanitarian organisations that had been in the South and Southeast departments from the beginning. In this sense, it would be appropriate for the TCO to have a small preapproved emergency fund, in order for it to be able to respond to crises without having to wait for the slow workings of traditional official grants. Such a model of humanitarian aid would

²⁰ For more data, see <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/YSAR-7J6NFE?OpenDocument&rc=2&cc=hti>.

²¹ DFID's (UK Department for International Development) humanitarian assistance was destined to the food, water, health, temporary shelter, and agricultural recovery sectors, and was channelled through the UN system, IFCR, and NGOs.

²² On 6 September CIDA approved multilateral funding to IFCR and NGOs.

²³ Venezuela supplied food and bottled water.

²⁴ Colombia sent food, medicine, clothing, and household items.

²⁵ See the section on 'Response Instruments'.

²⁶ See the Principles of Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship, available at www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org. For recommendation on cash donations see 'How to donate: Practical recommendations for humanitarian assistance', op. cit.

be more adequate to timeliness in response requirements as well as to proportionality in terms of needs, ensuring that Spanish Development Cooperation would be able to support DANA and base its response decisions on ensuing data.

Response Instruments

Spanish Development Cooperation, in its humanitarian response to the emergency situation during the hurricane season in Haiti, deployed a vast array of funding mechanisms, logistical support to the humanitarian community, and a series of direct victim assistance operations. These instruments have quite distinctive characteristics and their applicability in humanitarian responses to emergency situations is also quite different from other cases.

Humanitarian funding mechanisms

Responses from the interviews made for the Haiti case study show, in broad terms, significant recognition by the humanitarian community as to AECID's integration in existing mechanisms and its efficacy in responding to the UN 2008 Flash Appeal. Spanish Development Cooperation has also received much praise for the considerable rise in its humanitarian aid donations to Haiti, which have increased from €700,000 in 2006 to more than €6 million in 2008.

State grants

In benefit of the growing relevance of strategic multilateralism for Spanish Development Cooperation, state grants are designed especially for funding multilateral organisations. Likewise, public institutions in aid recipient countries – both at the local and national level – may also receive state grants, as well as local NGOs and other local non-profit institutions that undertake humanitarian aid activities in their countries of origin.

State grants are widely used by Spanish Development Cooperation. In Haiti, it has been the funding mechanism for many projects, including those laid out by the UN Flash Appeal to respond to the devastation caused by the 2008 hurricane season. From mid-2008 to the end of the same year, AECID approved €1 million destined to the World Food Programme's 'Food Assistance to Flood Affected Populations in Haiti' project, which consisted of the purchase and distribution of 1,369 tonnes of rice. Another state grant was used to commit, by 5 December 2008, €500,000 destined to IOM's expansion of emergency assistance activities in Haiti. This was aimed at reaching 25,000 persons through the purchase and distribution of housing repair and rehabilitation kits for displaced persons, damage assessment and analysis of household needs, and providing technical assistance. In this specific case, the grant stipulated an unusual delay for implementation (three months after the beneficiary received the funds), which meant that the activities listed above were only actually started at the end of February, when the funds were effectively disbursed. Although the allocation of funds was exceptionally fast – in terms of state grants – it is still striking that the donor would link the implementation of certain humanitarian assistance activities to the effective delivery of funds. In any case, the beneficiary organisation did not limit itself to the implementation period established by the grant.

Yet another state grant, amounting to €12,000, was used to fund the emergency clinic Saint François D'Assise in Gonaïves, managed by the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. This is one of few cases in which state grants were used to fund an entity other than an international organisation.

At any rate, funding emergency response operations with state grants is a questionable mechanism. This is so for various reasons, most notably the rigidity of project development procedures and the time span of funds disbursements. The former does not allow for any changes in development projects once the grant has been approved, making a completely new proposal necessary should humanitarian needs change in the meantime. As for the latter, the time span for the disbursement of

funds for an approved state grant may vary between six to ten months, which far exceeds the time frame of emergency response operations. Considering that the principles and good practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship require donors to adopt mechanisms that are dynamic, flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of humanitarian action, it seems obvious that state grants are not the best mechanism to fulfil such criteria.

Open and Permanent Tenders (OPT)

OPTs are the most consolidated form of Spanish NGO funding for humanitarian assistance operations. The annual tender, consisting of three resolution terms, establishes participation requirements, which however do not generally obstruct many Spanish NGOs from participating. These tenders offer grants to fund development cooperation projects and activities in Spain and abroad, and are not a specific instrument for humanitarian funding.

With regard to its applicability, it is worth noting that, in similar fashion to state grants, implementation and disbursement time spans are far from the standards expected of humanitarian funding mechanisms, which require faster decision-making than in the case of development projects. Nevertheless, OPTs have one significant advantage over state grants, which is their greater flexibility with regard to project definitions, as well as in terms of fund reallocation amongst different budget lines.

With regard to the Spanish response in Haiti, an OPT funded Intermón Oxfam with €303,455 for its project to 'respond immediately to the humanitarian needs of 10,000 affected and displaced persons, in the Gonaives area, in the WASH (water, sanitation and health) sector, aiming at the supply of safe drinking water for survival, and preventing diseases/epidemics related to water and precarious hygiene conditions'. This was the first time AECID received similar funding; as for Intermón, this was its first humanitarian project implementation, since it is normally Oxfam UK which coordinates and heads the organisation's humanitarian affairs in Haiti. AECID's administration was not considered timely and funds were late in disbursement. In any case, Intermón

Oxfam did not depend exclusively on AECID funding and would have intervened with its own resources if necessary. On a good note, the relationship between both organisations was quite satisfactory, and more funding has been requested from AECID for a risk management project in anticipation of another flood season.

Emergency agreements between AECID and NGOs

Framework Agreements between NGOs and AECID were initially focused on development projects. Currently, however, there are two emergency operation-related agreements – one with Action Against Hunger (amounting to € 4 million), and another with the Spanish Red Cross (€ 8 million) – that cover humanitarian activities. This instrument is certainly the most flexible in AECID's humanitarian funding toolbox. It consists of the availability of preapproved funds up to €20 million in total, for a period of four years, to be made available upon activation of the agreement. Activation of the agreement requires the NGO to present an action proposal and its subsequent approval by AECID. Effective disbursement occurs in approximately seven days, although in practice this may take only 24-48 hours, the usual time frame in which beneficiaries receive AECID's informal agreement to the proposal. In the 2008 Haiti hurricane emergency, Spanish Development Cooperation allocated € 400,000 to a CRE emergency medical response unit in Haiti.

Logistical support to the international community through the HLC

The Panama HLC was a key actor in the international community's humanitarian response to the crisis that followed the catastrophic 2008 hurricane season in Haiti.

It was opened in 2008 in view of the ever-increasing incidence of natural disasters in Central America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and a detailed analysis of logistical capacities in the region. In its first year since opening, the HLC has mobilised 150 tonnes of humanitarian material, with transport costs of

approximately € 500,000. This has resulted in cost reductions, since it would cost € 1-1.5 million to transport the same amount of material from the Spanish air base of Torrejón de Ardoz. More relevant still is the reduction of 20 hours in the time span of humanitarian response; as well as the fact that the HLC in Panama is on the same time zone of TCOs in the area, which enhances communication and decision-making. The HLC has, under all circumstances, meant a significant improvement in the efficacy and efficiency of Spanish humanitarian assistance in Central America and the Caribbean, enhancing AECID's readiness to respond rapidly to emergencies, and cutting response costs by 300 per cent.²⁷ The HLC logistical operation was put out to tender, which was won by CEVA Logistics, a Houston-based multinational. CEVA manages HLC's logistic operations and makes the necessary purchases of supplies. For this it follows instructions from the centre's director and counts both with a guide of quality standards and a consolidated list of suppliers.

Within the framework of the Spanish response to the floods caused by the 2008 hurricane season in Haiti, the HLC organised and managed the deliveries of two in-kind aid aircraft. Likewise, the HLC assisted the coordination and transport of UNHRD (United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) humanitarian supplies in Panama, as well as IFRC's PADRU deliveries – an unprecedented fact in Spanish bilateral humanitarian responses. Furthermore, the HLC covered the transport costs of WFP humanitarian supplies, as it picked up 32 tonnes of energy bars (destined to hurricane victims in Haiti) from WFP's base in El Salvador and delivered them to Port-au-Prince. AECID's logistical support provided through the Panama HLC has been highly valued by the humanitarian community in Panama and Haiti, and has also received much praise for the high level of integration the HLC achieved with regional coordination, information sharing, and logistic response

²⁷ In view of such a significant cost reduction for AECID with the advent of the HLC, it may surprise the external observer that the HLC's Director counts with little resources, not having, for example, his own means of transport, making it difficult for him to go to the Centre, which is located in Panama's Tocumen international airport.

mechanisms to emergencies. This valuable logistical support to humanitarian organisations based in Panama is an example of good humanitarian practice in terms of response coordination and rational use of the international community's resources in emergency operations, since it maximises available resources and, therefore, increases the availability of funds for beneficiary assistance.

Direct response

Between 3 and 10 September 2008, Spanish Development Cooperation chartered three aircraft to deliver humanitarian aid aimed at providing emergency relief to cyclone victims in Haiti. The choice of aid supplies was adequate, inasmuch as it was based on established quality standards (such as the Sphere project, amongst others). The HLC is part of RedLAC, which means that it has access to all operational data relevant to emergency aid management in Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean. There was no previous consultation with the Port-au-Prince TCO with respect to the contents of aid kits and supplies in general – mostly due to HLC's following of international standards and criteria in that regard (the Sphere Project, for instance). Prior consultations did take place, however, after the first delivery, resulting in the inclusion of baby and child hygiene material in family hygiene kits. Moreover, following the distribution of aid kits, the HLC consulted the TCO in Haiti in relation to the satisfactory use of aid supplies by beneficiaries.

The first aircraft (B 727-200) took off from the HLC in Panama, headed to Port-au-Prince, on 3 September 2008, carrying 17 tonnes of humanitarian supplies. This consisted of 1,197 hygiene kits, 1,700 water containers/buckets, 3,000 mosquito nets, 1,200 kitchen kits, and 2,400 blankets. It also carried the following material, donated by WFP: four motorboats with eleven spaces each, and six electrical generators. On 5 September, an Antonov-12 aircraft carrying 12 tonnes of humanitarian supplies was chartered from the Torrejón de Ardoz airbase. It transported 53,550 water-purification tablets, 30,600 hydrating salts, 53 water filters supplied by Farmamundi, 4 electrical generators

donated by the Spanish Ministry of Interior's Directorate General of Civil Protection, 245 family food rations donated by the Autonomous Community of Madrid, 5 tonnes of water and sanitation items supplied by Intermón Oxfam, and two water purification plants. The last aircraft flew out on 10 September 2008 carrying 55 tonnes of humanitarian supplies, including 32 tonnes of energy bars picked up from WFP's base in El Salvador, and 23 tonnes of IFRC and AECID supplies. AECID sent 2,000 hygiene kits, 1,500 kitchen kits, 2,000 mosquito nets, and 1,500 water buckets.

The final component of AECID's direct response operation was provided by TCO personnel in conjunction with CRE volunteers, Haiti Civil Protection, and MINUSTAH operatives in the region, all of whom distributed part of the aid flown in, especially family hygiene and kitchen kits, as well as some food rations. Aid distribution took place in the Southeast department, AECID's priority humanitarian action area in Haiti, without any significant incidents. Research conducted for this case study has evidenced TCO willingness to respond rapidly to the emergency and undertake several activities in a short period of time. However, its scarce technical capacity and the lack of humanitarian experience of its personnel made the direct distribution of emergency aid supplies an inefficient alternative. Further, it is advisable for AECID to assess whether its involvement in aid distribution operations is an appropriate task for an official donor, and whether this mechanism provides for the most efficient and effective use of its human resources. In the light of humanitarian theory, the efficacy and applicability of such direct aid distribution operations, carried out by donor-agency personnel, seems clearly questionable, especially considering criteria of experience, technical expertise and humanitarian conduct.

Spanish Development Cooperation's Capacities

In recent years, Spanish Development Cooperation has made a clear effort to enhance its human and technical capacities in the field of humanitarian action. The development and subsequent adoption of the Humanitarian Action Strategy was concomitant with the reform in 2007 of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (former AECI), which became the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (current AECID). AECID reform, in particular, led to the creation of the Humanitarian Action Office, and the promotion of humanitarian policies to the technical cabinet level. The Humanitarian Action Office is expected to create a stable and coordinated working team to promote a more strategic and long-term outlook for humanitarian affairs. Additionally, the creation of a regional logistic centre in Panama (HLC) is a significant advance in AECID's capacity to deliver emergency assistance in a faster and more cost-efficient way to any country in the Americas. Likewise, it enhances Spain's technical capacity as a donor, insofar as it integrates Spanish Development Cooperation with regional coordination, information, disaster preparedness and emergency response mechanisms.

Spanish Development Cooperation's capacities, deployed in response to the 2008 crisis in Haiti, were a key factor in the success of its direct response operations. These had a widely recognised high performance due to the HLC's excellent work, in coordination with other regional response centres of the humanitarian community – namely, UNHRD and PADRU. Involvement of the TCO in Port-au-Prince in the humanitarian assistance operation was also a determining factor. Nevertheless, AECID's decision to distribute part of the humanitarian supplies (sent by the HLC) using its own human and technical capacities

seems wrong in the light of this case study's findings, as well as in the opinion of representatives of the humanitarian community in Haiti interviewed during this research. TCO personnel, although highly committed and motivated, lacked indispensable technical knowledge to plan, organise and carry out aid distribution in such a complex context as Haiti's. The security challenges and problems posed by the country's negligible infrastructure in face of natural disasters required technical expertise in all phases of humanitarian emergency action – assessment of needs, transport and logistics, organisation of aid distribution, monitoring, etc. –, a demand that far surpassed the capacities of the Technical Cooperation Office in Haiti. Technical and human assistance provided by the Spanish Red Cross was critical for the smooth running of distribution. In this sense, following the model adopted by the UN in emergencies, selectively importing technical capacities (either from its own institutions or through specific contracting) from other Spanish Development Cooperation offices – such as the Humanitarian Action Office in Madrid, or a future strengthened HLC – could supplant some of the deficiencies outlined above. Similarly, a strategy designed to strengthen TCOs' humanitarian action capacities, through the provision of technical training for those in charge of humanitarian affairs, would have significantly positive effects for the efficacy of Spanish humanitarian assistance, and would attest AECID's credibility in the field.

Disaster and Risk Reduction in Haiti

Analysis of current Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies in Haiti indicates the need to revise DRR priorities, as assessed both by the international community and the Government of Haiti, the latter in its National Plan for Priority Investments.²³ Overall disaster prevention, reduction, preparedness and response contextualisation require the concomitant additional observation of existing links between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). This much in order to assess Spanish Development Cooperation's DRR initiatives in terms of their applicability and adequacy both to national priorities and those of the international community. Haiti's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSNCRP) frames DRR within one of its four fundamental axes, which also comprehend 'protection of vulnerable groups' and 'environmental preservation'. These four axes are subdivided into 'pillars of growth', supported by 'transversal policies', wherein 'risks and disasters' are situated. Given that Haiti's Directorate of Civil Protection is the executing agency of the National Disaster and Risk Management System (SNGRD, *Système Nationale de Gestion des Risques et des Désastres*), the priorities assessed in this sphere of transversal policies aim at enhancing SNGRD's intervention capacities by strengthening DCP and its territorial infrastructure. SNGRD is therefore considered to be quite vulnerable due to DCP's infrastructural limitations at all levels, as follows:

- A complete lack of operational facilities for SNGRD's normal functioning;
- Scarcity in DCP facilities, which implies its inability in hosting reunions, especially during emergencies;
- Lack of budget allocation for disaster risk management in relevant institutions;

²³ 'DSNCRP's National Plan for Priority Investments, 2008-2010', National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSNCRP, *Document de Stratégie Nationale pour la Croissance et pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté*).

- A quantitative and qualitative gap in disaster risk management human resources;
- Preparedness and response activities, focused mainly on hydrometeorological threats, are usually delayed; and rehabilitation activities are not coordinated, since there is a lack of disaster emergency norms and procedures in Haiti;
- DCP does not have a disaster database, nor documentation, research or training centres.

Civil Protection has made some progress through a UNDP programme to strengthen its capacities and infrastructure in all of Haiti's 10 departments, but there is still much more to be done. It is paramount that CP is strengthened, a fact which is recognised by all relevant actors, since Haiti, in addition to the many limitations described above, also does not have an evacuation plan, and neither capacity to pre-position aid material, nor a clear temporary shelter strategy. Such basic limitations point to the fact that the government's concern for disaster risk management is merely rhetorical – no real interest or advance is seen in practice.

In contrast, the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation of Haiti²⁹ argues that international actors prioritise humanitarian action, as seen by their clear focus on response activities, but somewhat neglect long-term development projects and, therefore, disaster prevention and reduction. The Ministry does not believe that several small development programmes, which often are not complementary, can bring significant advances in disaster prevention and reduction. Whosever responsibility that actually is, representatives of the international community admit that there is little interconnection between different disaster response phases, and they believe this may be in large part due to misuse of the 'humanitarian' concept, which is somehow detached from later disaster response phases, drastically focusing on initial emergency assistance. Another informant to this research considers, however, that talk

of pre- or post-disaster 'phases', rehabilitation, etc. is in fact irrelevant because they are interrupted by equally frequent smaller-scale disasters. This is yet another reason to seek integration of the different phases, strengthening humanitarian agendas and amplifying the very humanitarian concept and technical capacities.

AECID seems to be taking stock of these issues, whilst applying itself to what it considers most important for Haiti in humanitarian and development terms. That is, on the one hand it seeks increasingly to expand its humanitarian experience and agenda. On the other, it continues to support the country's growth through several development programmes, and some institutional strengthening ones; integrate prevention, training and awareness into all of its projects; as well as constantly working at the community level to ensure that local capabilities are gradually strengthened, thus making its projects more sustainable in the long run. It is therefore very important to continue raising awareness, even directly influencing the Government of Haiti in meetings of humanitarian actors, or indirectly through projects, in order for it to take ownership of responsibilities and have a greater involvement in disaster risk management.

It is also necessary for an integrative model to be adopted at the UN and international community level, for early recovery and rehabilitation in the case of Haiti's humanitarian crisis was found severely wanting. According to the Technical Cooperation Office in Haiti, seemingly there is much talk in the UN of 'prevention and early recovery' as a priority issue that needs to be integrated, but clear proposals are still to emerge. Disagreements and misunderstandings amongst governments certainly block many initiatives. A concrete example occurs in the rehabilitation and reconstruction sphere, in which massive land property issues are at stake and governments cannot agree on where to build.

An International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) representative explained that DRR's leitmotif is to work in parallel to development projects, since planning, proposing and reducing risks are, at least in theory, development-related tasks. In practice, however,

²⁹ The Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation of Haiti is in charge of international development cooperation and, therefore, of donor relations, including knowledge of all international community humanitarian operations taking place in the country.

those tasks are more closely related to the humanitarian field, that is, to the actual disaster, emergency situation and overall preparedness.

In conclusion, it is evident that AECID must take advantage, through the HLC in Panama, of experiences gathered and of incessant new initiatives on DRR strategy, methods and mechanisms that emerge from Central America. Also, AECID's joint work with the Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) can serve to make Spanish Development Cooperation an example of alignment with the five priorities laid out in the Hyogo Framework for Action:³⁰

1. *Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.*
2. *Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.*
3. *Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.*
4. *Reduce the underlying risk factors.*
5. *Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.*

Having analysed the context of DRR policies in Haiti and AECID's generalised effort to integrate DRR within all its projects and operations (participating in the most important humanitarian and development issues for the country's recovery and growth), it is now pertinent to look at the extent to which Spanish Development Cooperation, in its emergency response, put those efforts into practice. This shall be analysed briefly in terms of interconnectedness and strengthening of local capacities, in the understanding that these criteria are of fundamental relevance to measuring AECID's real effort in encompassing the long-term needs of Haiti's people, as well as their capacity to face future crises.

First, with regard to interconnectedness and resources linking response with rehabilitation and development, AECID contributed with a € 500,000 state grant

destined to an IOM project which included the distribution of housing repair and rehabilitation kits to displaced persons. The response, however, did not contemplate resources for the post-rehabilitation phase. Lessons learnt from other direct AECID interventions – especially in terms of human resources and technical know-how – could have been taken advantage of to a larger extent, serving as a basis to enhance response to the crisis in Haiti. There seems to be, nevertheless, at least some *a posteriori* concern in AECID's Humanitarian Action Office in Madrid, as well as in the HLC in Panama and the TCO in Haiti as to the need for systematisation of the direct response process in Haiti (extending to other past interventions) so that it may serve to enhance future humanitarian action. The same instances also recognise the urgent need to establish, at headquarters in Madrid, a direct response protocol for Spanish Development Cooperation.

Second, according to interviews held with CP personnel, emergency brigades and the population of communities in the Southeast department, beneficiary involvement in AECID's direct intervention summed up to the help provided by CP members in the joint distribution of kits with TCO staff, and the evacuation of homes supported by emergency brigades, which directed families to local schools used as temporary shelters. On the other hand, AECID has monitored aid distribution and provided accountability to beneficiaries, for they make up the same target population of AECID's development projects underway in the area. Finally, it must be recognised that the TCO had, and still has, an excellent relationship with local authorities, which allowed for coordination in all phases of the response. The TCO based itself on needs-assessments provided by local authorities, and jointly distributed aid supplies.

It can be concluded that AECID has certainly provided meaningful support to emergency prevention and preparedness through measures taken following the crisis. What is missing is for positive results to spring from these measures in the near future.

³⁰ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters', available at www.unisdr.org.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Spanish Development Cooperation's emergency response in Haiti was significant in light of the applicability and adequacy of its actions with regard to the humanitarian needs that were identified and the global response to the crisis: the choice of intervention areas and sectors were in accordance with the priorities laid out in the UN Flash Appeal, and quality standards were used as references for direct aid, which implied a wise selection of distribution supplies. An aspect that could be improved is the TCO's over-reliance on Haitian Civil Protection; although CP was fast to provide data, it did not offer enough area- or sector-specific information. Also, AECID was expected to have profited more from technical consultation with sector-based groups (or clusters) and the different organisations it funded for the response.

With regard to aid effectiveness, Spanish Development Cooperation prioritised timeliness over a more detailed and comprehensive assessment of needs. Paradoxically, timeliness in the first phase of the emergency intervention was inadequate, due to, in particular, the relative slow pace of official DANA and the lack of flexible funding mechanisms for the TCO's humanitarian response. These limitations led to precipitated TCO action in the implementation phase, which resulted in insufficient monitoring of beneficiary identification and needs-assessments, and of the effective distribution of aid to all beneficiaries. Considering, however, the limited humanitarian experience and technical capacities of the TCO, most objectives were met to a satisfactory level.

The results achieved in comparison with resources used, that is, resource efficiency in humanitarian response, are a clear merit to the Humanitarian Logistic Centre in Panama. The HLC has carried out sound work, utilising regional information sharing networks and integrating with the humanitarian system's inter-agency effort,

which greatly benefited the prestige of Spanish Development Cooperation and its efficacy and efficiency in the emergency response in Haiti. On the other hand, AECID's use of various financial instruments was inefficient, in reason of the inherent limitations of several of the agency's financial mechanisms, which are slow and often lacking in flexibility and predictability.

The impact of AECID's response on the improvement of beneficiary living conditions has been positive, although minimal, since most beneficiaries still depend on the material distributed. As for the long-term impact of the global response, it is difficult to ensure positive results in a fragile state where rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, necessarily coordinated by the Government of Haiti, have been excessively delayed in most parts of the country. During research, beneficiary groups in different communities in the South and Southeast departments manifested that the lack of post-emergency recovery has increased their vulnerability before a new hurricane season.

This analysis of Spanish Development Cooperation humanitarian response to the 2008 hurricane season in Haiti has put forward several issues that must be dealt with in the distinct levels of Spanish Development Cooperation humanitarian action, in order to enhance emergency response efficacy.

At the Haiti TCO level

Strengthen humanitarian action capacities through enhancing the role of humanitarian focal points (or of those in charge of humanitarian affairs), as well as technical training in needs-assessment, humanitarian project development, clusters and other parts of the humanitarian system. In this manner, donors can ensure a field presence capable of fulfilling activities such as monitoring, capacity assessment, technical advice to headquarters and national NGOs, and informed decision-making.

Ensure that the full span of Spanish emergency humanitarian action can be effectively coordinated by the Technical Cooperation Office. Enhance the flow of information between implementing organisations and

AECID, in order to provide AECID with enough data to base its decision-making on.³¹

Promote proactive presence in different coordination fora in Haiti, so as to contribute to the improvement of synergies in the humanitarian community in the country, as well as providing the added-value of Spanish Development Cooperation to decision-making.

Following the highly valued example of AECID's support to the Ministry of Public Administration of Haiti in assessing the state of the water and sanitation system in the Southeast department, it is necessary to believe in and promote the exchange of good practices through the expansion of successful experiences in specific intervention sectors to different regions of the country.

Since, in practice, the TCO resorts to AECID personnel in the priority area (Southeast department) for support in emergency needs-assessments, it is fitting to develop specific training in this context. Better trained personnel would ensure objective, impartial and thorough needs-assessments.

Provide the TCO with a preapproved annual emergency fund, in order to enhance timeliness in the first phase of emergency humanitarian response.

At the Panama HLC level

Strengthen the role of the HLC as a regional (Pan-American) hub in terms of integration with regional coordination, information, and prevention and response mechanisms. This will both bring AECID in closer proximity to regional governments and communities, and amplify its recognition and relevance as a donor in the region.

Increase staff numbers to permit the Centre to perform its dual function: management of direct Spanish assistance in the region, and active involvement in inter-agency mechanisms, which are particularly vibrant in

Panama. The latter will consolidate the current transition of Spanish humanitarian aid from a bilateral focus to an inter-agency one.

Increase the Centre's capacities, in order for it to take on more decision-making and management responsibilities in direct interventions in the region. The Centre's integration with regional mechanisms ensures the best possible use of information for decision-making. Additionally, this would unburden the Humanitarian Action Office in Madrid.

Keep up the Centre's logistical capacities in the belief that it will become a significant platform for Spanish humanitarian response in the region.

A future larger HLC could provide the necessary humanitarian action support to TCOs in the region, assisting them with both technical capabilities and personnel in emergency responses.

Considering the highly relevant character of disaster risk reduction strategies in the region, the HLC must be strengthened to participate actively in such initiatives, thus becoming a DRR knowledge conveyor in the Spanish Development Cooperation system.

At the AECID Humanitarian Action Office level

Develop flexible, predictable and timely humanitarian funding mechanisms that may be adequate to the specific needs of humanitarian action, in accordance with established criteria and good practices.

Turn direct intervention experiences into a humanitarian performance protocol based on lessons learnt in different intervention contexts (natural disasters, complex emergencies, armed conflicts, etc.).

Prioritise humanitarian funding as the main emergency response instrument. In-kind aid must be used only as a last resort and always in relation to its complementarity with global humanitarian responses.

Continue to work towards the effective coordination of all Spanish humanitarian actors. This must occur

³¹ See Spanish Development Cooperation's Sectoral Humanitarian Action Strategy, available at http://www.aecid.es/export/sites/default/web/galerias/programas/Vita/descargas/DES_AHResumen_esp.pdf (in Spanish).

not only in the first response phase, but also in the planning and design of activities, ensuring that the capacities and added-value of each agency are taken into account.

Ensure that direct intervention decision-making and implementation are duly based on and integrated in local coordination systems (clusters, sector-based groups, and donor meetings).

Build on the basis of existing close relations and synergy between the governments of Haiti and Spain at all

levels, in order to integrate this bilateral cooperation into global humanitarian response planning.

Continue to support the strengthening of local institutions. Strong local institutions help to reduce the vulnerability of communities and enhance their capacity to face disasters, as well as being aligned with the current political decentralisation process underway in the country.

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Este documento de trabajo analiza la respuesta humanitaria de la Cooperación Española a la devastadora temporada de huracanes de 2008 en Haití, con el fin de identificar los principales retos para la eficacia e impacto de su ayuda humanitaria.

A pesar de la inusitada magnitud de la crisis que vivió Haití a finales del verano de 2008, y que venía a agravar la ya dramática situación provocada por el alza de los precios de los alimentos, la respuesta humanitaria de la comunidad internacional y, particularmente, de la AECID fue clave para salvar vidas y aliviar el sufrimiento humano en una de las zonas más míseras del país más pobre del hemisferio occidental.

La ayuda humanitaria española no se centró en Gonaïves - la ciudad que atrajo de manera desproporcionada la atención de la comunidad donante -, lo que ayudó a brindar una adecuada cobertura de las necesidades del país caribeño. Aún más determinante para la eficacia de la ayuda fue el papel desempeñado por el Centro Logístico Humanitario en Panamá, que no sólo gestionó de manera eficiente la ayuda bilateral española, sino que se constituyó en una plataforma para la respuesta interagencial a la emergencia. No obstante, este documento de trabajo de Velina G. Stoianova y Soledad Posada, sostiene que existen varios aspectos clave tanto de los operativos de respuesta directa como de la financiación humanitaria de la Cooperación Española, que deben ser revisados con el fin de asegurar un mayor impacto y calidad de su acción humanitaria.

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