

# DEVELOPMENT OF BEST PRACTICE AND UNIVERSAL STANDARDS FOR HUMANITARIAN TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

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## Executive Summary

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The DG ECHO has selected Groupe Urgence-Réhabilitation-Développement (Groupe URD), Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI), Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción humanitaria (IECAH) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), to support DG ECHO in developing and implementing policies through research, workshop facilitation and the dissemination of results. The four leading European institutions in the humanitarian sector are part of the INSPIRE consortium for this purpose.

## Executive Summary

Humanitarian transport and logistics are essential to enabling fast, efficient and effective response to a disaster. Many different organisations need to work together including national disaster management authorities and local government staff, the military, UN agencies, NGOs, private companies and individuals. Each of these groups has different ways of responding to a crisis, and this can create significant challenges.

The project "Development of Best Practice and Universal Standards for Humanitarian Transport and Logistics" conducted by the Inspire Consortium aims at facilitating a global consultation process to achieve agreed common principles and guidance to support good practices in logistics. This initial study serves as a basis for the development of the project. It has used a mixed methods approach combining literature review and interviews along with discussions with key logistics actors in meetings and webinars.

The consultation process enabled the identification of several key challenges in transport and logistics as a basis to assess whether Standards could contribute solutions. For this purpose, a broad definition of Standards was agreed as "references to universally accepted ways of doing things that can be used to evaluate the quality of an activity or intervention."

Many existing T&L standards or guidance in the humanitarian sector were identified, yet there is limited knowledge of Universal Standards such as Sphere, particularly among smaller organisations and the private sector. In this context there is no universally endorsed tool that provides clear guidance on priority actions and principles that could help to improve the quality and accountability of T&L operations.

This will be achieved through the development of universal standards for humanitarian transport and logistics following the methodology of "open standards". As such they will be developed, approved and maintained via a collaborative and consensus driven process. A group of about 15 professionals and organisations covering a wide range of T&L fields and cross-cutting topics, will form a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG will have a central role in the development of the standards especially regarding the readiness of the drafts of the standards to go out for consultation.

T&L standards should synthesize several technical areas and diverse cross-cutting themes that link basic humanitarian principles with clear guidance. To gain in efficiency and to avoid building from scratch, the information included in the PARCEL project should be used as the initial reference for developing higher level principles, standards and guidance notes that are more suited to a broad range of stakeholders.

While there is a need to consider what the professional humanitarian T&L community uniquely requires, the target audience for access to universal minimum standards is more non-logistics managers, small local organisations and LNGOs. However, a broader group of stakeholders could also benefit from this common reference. These include donors, international humanitarian organisations and UN agencies, academics, private sector companies and training service providers.

It is important to note that, due to its limited timeframe, the project aims at developing a pilot version of the Standards. As such, its final output will consist of approved Standards ready to be tested at field level by humanitarian actors prior to their finalization in a forthcoming project.