



# CERF Performance and Accountability Framework Status of Indicators

*Version 1.0*

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## Introduction

The Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) for the CERF was developed to establish a formal framework for defining, managing and monitoring performance and accountability processes related to the operation of the CERF. The CERF PAF was developed during 2009 and 2010 and following endorsement by the CERF Advisory Group at its July 2010 meeting, the CERF Secretariat finalized the PAF in August 2010.

In addition to defining a range of performance and accountability tools and mechanisms for the CERF (most of which were in existence prior to the development of the PAF), the PAF also established a logic model around the three mandated objectives of the CERF. Please refer to Figure 1 for a diagram of the CERF logic model. The PAF logic model outlines a results hierarchy for CERF with associated indicators. The model defines the different levels of CERF, which range from input-related process type indicators up towards outcomes and impact level indicators. All indicators within the PAF are linked to a stakeholder analysis to ensure a proper relationship between performance and accountability structures.

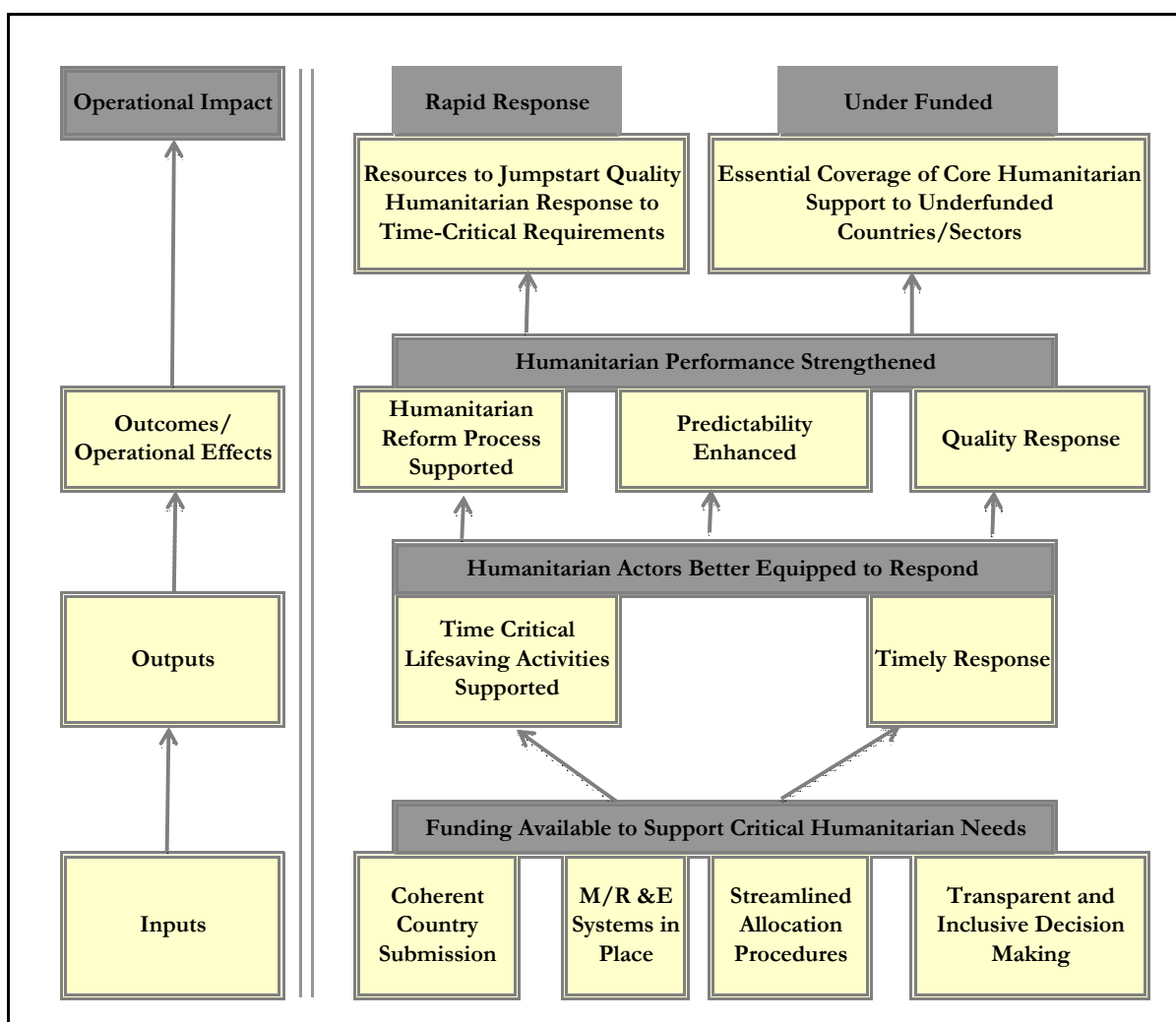


Figure 1: CERF Logic Model Diagram

The PAF has been in use since mid 2010 and subsequently the performance of CERF has been measured against the indicators defined in the CERF logic model. The General Assembly mandated CERF five-year evaluation that was concluded in 2011 was structured according to the indicators of the logic model, and so are the independent CERF country reviews conducted each year under the PAF.

This report is an attempt to take stock and assess CERF performance against the various indicators defined in the logic model of the PAF. The status of each indicator group will be assessed by consolidating findings from different performance assessments activities. The source data will mainly be in the form of information from regular CERF

review and reporting processes, as well as findings from the 2011 CERF five-year evaluation and from the eight<sup>1</sup> independent CERF PAF country reviews conducted since 2010.

The assessment is structured according to the PAF logic model and the report consists of four sections (Input, Output, Outcome and Operational Impact) each containing a number of indicators grouped according to themes. For each indicator group the main sources of verification are indicated and the status is provided in the form of a narrative drawing from these sources. There is some degree of overlap between the different groups of indicators which can lead to some repetition in the different status updates.

## **Status of PAF Indicators**

This section of the report maps out all PAF indicators according to the CERF logic model and presents a consolidated performance assessment against each group of indicators based on information from a number of internal and external sources (verification tools).

### **INPUTS – FUNDING AVAILABLE**

Initial inputs and processes are required both at country and HQ levels for CERF grants to operate as intended. The inputs at country-level include a rigorous and inclusive prioritization leading to a coherent country submission. Internal recipient agency monitoring and evaluation systems are required for CERF funding. They are an essential process within the accountability mechanism. The CERF secretariat also follows a set of processes to ensure that funds are transferred as quickly as possible.

#### **Input I. Transparent and Inclusive Prioritization and Decision-Making**

A transparent and inclusive prioritization at the country level is the foundation on which CERF grants are based. This process happens both at the intra-cluster level (led by the cluster leads) and then at the inter-cluster level (overseen by the RC/HC) as delineated in the indicators below. An inclusive prioritization is meant to ensure that all relevant actors are present to define the most critical needs at the time. The prioritization is expected to take place through the sector/cluster system to ensure allocations are based on cluster objectives, field-based operational knowledge, needs assessments (where available), and reflect a diversity of views.

#### **Indicators**

- a. All members of UN Humanitarian Country Teams (UNHCT) and clusters aware of CERF availability (for RR and UFE).
- b. Intra- and inter-cluster prioritization process includes all relevant stakeholders, including NGOs, for both RR and UFE and adheres to Principles of Partnership.
- c. Analysis of funding undertaken to inform prioritization process and facilitate appropriate direction of funds.
- d. CERF underfunded country selection/apportionment process undertaken in a timely and transparent manner with available resources frontloaded (NOTE: Process occurs only for UFE and at headquarters, not at country level.)

#### **Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs
- Other relevant studies and evaluations

#### **Status**

##### **CERF Awareness**

At headquarters level CERF works closely with dedicated CERF focal points within UN agencies and from NGO consortia to ensure strong organisational understanding of CERF amongst key partners. The engagement with CERF from agency headquarters is found to have been strengthened considerable over the last 2-3 years. At country level the awareness of CERF is also found to be quite strong, especially amongst UN humanitarian partners and in particular in operations where CERF has played an active role. Most OCHA country or regional offices have CERF focal points

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<sup>1</sup> Kenya, Sri Lanka, Chad, Mauritania, Bolivia, Colombia, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

who can advise the HC and HCT on CERF related issues. CERF is also covered in considerable detail in the IASC HC hand book which helps promote CERF awareness amongst HCs.

In addition to this CERF has continuously improved its training efforts, and it targets UN as well NGO partners with CERF training through 7-8 regional trainings each year. The CERF trainings reach approximately 100 humanitarian staff each year, and an estimated 450 people have participated in CERF related trainings since 2008. The CERF secretariat also promotes general awareness and understanding of CERF through development and targeted dissemination of CERF guidance products, as well as through its public information initiatives and the CERF website.

#### Transparency and inclusiveness

A main focus for CERF in recent years has been ensuring that CERF submissions contains well prioritized projects based on inclusive and transparent country level processes. This has been done through increased outreach to country level partners, better guidance products and more rigorous review of CERF submissions. In 2011 a new and more elaborate CERF Rapid Response guidance note for field staff was developed and disseminated. The guidance provides detailed information on the CERF Rapid Response process and lays out a step by step guide for country level prioritisation and consultations processes, with focus on ensuring a transparent and inclusive prioritisation and decision making process.

Likewise, the CERF application template (last revised in 2011) requires that submissions explain the consultation and decision making process behind the CERF application. This should include details on the approach for intra- and inter-cluster prioritization and consultations. Where this is not deemed appropriately explained or where the consultation process does not seem to have been adequate (based on the context), the CERF secretariat will request clarification. This will be taken into consideration when making recommendations to the ERC on approval of proposals.

Based on the quality of submissions and feedback from the field it is CERF's assessment that in general the country level CERF processes have improved considerable over the years.

Nevertheless, while UN agencies generally are closely engaged in country level CERF processes, studies, evaluations and other channels of feedback indicate that NGO involvement in the CERF prioritization process at country-level varies greatly, depending on the specific country context and the coordination structures in place.

The CERF five-year evaluation concluded that the extent to which the CERF process was inclusive varied greatly, both between countries and between clusters. The degree of "inclusiveness" reflected the extent to which the Humanitarian Reform process had evolved in a given country. This also mirrored the strength of experience and initiative of the cluster coordinators and the Humanitarian Coordinator. Lack of inclusiveness of NGOs, especially beyond the needs assessment phase, was said to be a common source of complaint by NGO interviewees. The evaluators found that this reflected an administrative cleavage that had not benefited from full roll out of the UN reform initiatives, especially at the technical level of clusters. Based on this the evaluators concluded that consistent prioritisation and decision-making processes is still a serious challenge for CERF processes in certain countries, and that there are strong links between the effectiveness of a cluster or HCT and how effectively and efficiently CERF funds were prioritised and allocated. The evaluation team had greatest confidence the priority needs were being targeted when the prioritisation decisions were based on an analysis involving a range of humanitarian partners since inclusive processes allow the widest possible information base for setting priorities.

The Ethiopia CERF PAF country review from 2011 found that in terms of inclusiveness and transparency of the allocation process, cluster leads discussed CERF allocations across sectors. In Ethiopia the HRF (local pooled fund) Review Board, which includes different stakeholders, also discussed the allocations which increased the transparency. The review also concluded that there was collaboration between agencies because funding was allocated by sector, not agency. The Zimbabwe PAF review from the same year concluded that the CERF allocation process in Zimbabwe was found to be more inclusive and transparent than in other countries, particularly as the NGO Heads of Agencies monthly meeting received updates from OCHA on CERF funding. However the review also found that although NGOs were vital implementing partners and international NGOs played a fairly active role in Clusters, some interviewees felt that they had an "unequal" partnership with UN agencies and IOM and, sometimes, were no more than sub-contractors.

The consultant that conducted the three CERF PAF country reviews in 2010 in Chad, Sri Lanka and Mauritania recommended that NGOs should be more closely involved in information sharing on the priorities in the field when a CERF application is being prepared as they had a greater field presence and more first-hand information. This would assist with the level of transparency and inclusiveness. But the consultant also stressed that they should not make decisions, as this is clearly the responsibility of the RC/HC and the UN country team.

### The CERF Underfunded process

Since 2006 the CERF UFE process has been adjusted regularly in consultation with agencies with a focus on improving methodology, transparency, communication and information sharing. Nonetheless, the CERF five-year evaluation and the PAF country reviews have found that whilst the understanding of the UFE process is strong amongst partners at the HQ level it varies considerably at the country level. In 2012, CERF will commission an independent review of the UFE process which should result in recommendations on how to further improve the UFE process.

## **Input II. Coherent Country Submission**

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Submission should be prepared under the guidance of the RC/HC, supported by OCHA, and driven through cluster leadership. The submission process should be transparent and inclusive of all humanitarian actors at the country level. In addition, high quality submissions which adhere to the CERF Life-Saving Criteria and other CERF guidelines are expected.

### **Indicators**

- a. Cluster submission to the RC/HC is of high quality and reflects views of cluster members.
- b. UN Agency/IOM performance (capacity to implement within the timeframe of the grant, past performance, speed of distribution and absorptive capacity) is considered when developing proposal.
- c. CERF requests adheres to cluster standards and CERF Life-Saving Criteria.

### **Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Other relevant studies and evaluations.
- Statistics for no-cost extensions of CERF grants.

### **Status**

#### Cluster Inclusiveness and Quality of Submissions

The transparency and inclusiveness of country level prioritisation processes (indicator II.a.) is addressed in detail above under Input indicator group I, and will not be repeated in full here. However, the overall assessment is that while UN agencies generally are closely engaged in country level CERF processes, studies, evaluations and other channels of feedback indicate that NGO involvement in the CERF prioritization processes at country-level varies greatly, depending on the specific country context and the coordination structures in place. The CERF five-year evaluation supports this assessment. The evaluation found that the extent to which the CERF process was inclusive varied greatly, both between countries and between clusters. The report concluded that degree of “inclusiveness” reflected the extent to which the Humanitarian Reform process had evolved in a given country and this also mirrored the strength of experience and initiative of the cluster coordinators and the Humanitarian Coordinator. Lack of inclusiveness of NGOs, especially beyond the needs assessment phase, was said to be a common source of complaint by NGO interviewees for the five-year evaluation.

The quality of CERF proposals submitted by clusters/sectors to HCs is hard to accurately assess from central level. The involvement of the CERF secretariat in this phase of the process is limited, and no formal means of capturing information from this part of the process exists. However, indication is that the quality of initial cluster/sector submissions varies considerably from country to country, often reflecting the CERF experience of the involved partners and the strength of the cluster groups. It is the CERF secretariat’s assessment that the overall quality of CERF proposals, including in the initial country level phases of preparation, have improved over the years. This is supported by the data in Table 1 which shows that the average time needed to prepare submitted CERF proposals for review by the ERC (Official Submission to Final Submission) has decreased over time, with the lowest average recorded in 2011. This may indicate that initial submissions have generally been of better quality and thus have needed less work by country teams in finalising.

#### Implementation Capacity

The CERF application template requests HC’s to confirm that agencies applying for CERF funding have the capacity to implement the proposed activities in a timely manner and immediately upon approval of the grant. It is difficult for CERF to remotely verify the implementation capacity of recipient agencies, and the secretariat will have to primarily

rely on the country level oversight mechanisms in this respect. However, when reviewing submitted proposals the CERF secretariat will refer to the implementation status of past grants when relevant, and will also review any past delays or no-cost extensions for the particular agency in similar contexts. This may lead to CERF requesting additional information for certain project proposals and ultimately result in a revision of the submission. For allocations from the Underfunded window CERF has adopted a more formal analysis of implementation performance against past CERF grants for the respective country. This analysis helps inform envelope and grant decisions.

Agency requests for no-cost extensions of CERF grants will have to be endorsed by the HC. All no-cost extensions are reviewed in detail by CERF and only well justified requests will be accommodated. With the introduction of a six months implementation period for rapid response grants no-cost extensions will be more strictly reviewed and only accepted on an exceptional basis. The statistics for no-cost extensions (Table 4) indicate that CERF has been successful in increasingly fund projects with the capacity to implement activities within the timeline. The data show a steady decline in the number and percentage of no-cost extension requests, with the lowest numbers found in 2011.

#### Adherence to CERF Life-saving Criteria

The CERF application template and all CERF guidance documents make clear reference to the CERF life-saving criteria. The CERF Life-saving criteria are covered in CERF trainings and the guidance is regularly disseminated to partners and is available on the CERF website. All submitted CERF proposals are reviewed against the Life-saving criteria by the CERF secretariat. Only activities that adhere to the criteria within the specific context are accepted in CERF proposals. Evaluations and studies have confirmed that CERF's policy of applying the Life-saving criteria in a flexible and context specific manner is a sound approach. The CERF secretariat is developing additional cluster/sector specific review questions that will help agencies and clusters/sectors assess specific activity types against the CERF life-saving criteria. This supplementary guidance is intended to improve adherence to the life-saving criteria in initial submissions and thereby reduce the duration of the review process.

In its 2011 multilateral aid review (MAR) of CERF DFID raised some question marks over whether all the activities funded from the under-funded emergencies window should be considered priorities for CERF funding. DFID found that CERF funds have sometimes been used to address recovery needs and issues of underdevelopment rather than core emergency humanitarian needs. However, DFID were content that this concern relates to a relatively minor percentage of the overall funds.

### **Input III. Streamlined Review, Allocation and Distribution**

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Transparent systems that allow for timely approval, allocation, disbursement and transfer of funds by UN Controller, ERC, CERF Secretariat, OCHA, UN Agencies/IOM and NGOs must be in place in order for CERF to be a rapid mechanism for fund distribution.

#### Indicators

- a. Average number of working days between final submission of a CERF grant request package from RC/HC and ERC decision (Benchmark: three working days for RR and five working days for UFE).
- b. Average number of working days between receipt of LoU from a grant recipient and request (memo for disbursement to OPPBA (Benchmark: two working days).
- c. Average number of days between request (memo) for fund disbursement by OPPBA to grant recipient.
- d. Average number of working days from disbursement from UN HQ to country office.
- e. Time from UN Agency/IOM country offices signing project agreement with implementing partners to them receiving funding.

#### Main Verification Tools

- Timeliness data from the CERF grants database
- Project sub-granting data from the annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs
- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF

## Status

### Timeliness of Grant Approval and Disbursement

Since its creation in 2006 CERF has constantly worked towards making its review process as effective as possible with minimal delays in grant processing, and approval. This effort has resulted in a constant improvement in timeliness of grant processing and 2011 saw the lowest processing times by the CERF secretariat since inception. Table 1 presents key timeliness metrics for the period 2008 – 2011 for Rapid Response and Underfunded grants combined (RR grants typically have a lower processing time than UFE). The field level component of the CERF grant process (Official Submission to Final Submission) is not under the control of the CERF secretariat. CERF nevertheless tries to influence the effectiveness of the field level processes through improved guidance and ongoing support to CERF focal points, and as a result this part of the CERF process has also been consistently shortened in recent years. Once the introduction of the Umbrella LoU in 2011 takes full effect, a decrease in the time from USG approval of grants to disbursement of funds may be observed.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Official Submission to Final Submission</b>	<b>Final Submission to USG Approval</b>	<b>USG Approval to LOU Signed</b>	<b>LOU Signed to Date Disbursed</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2008</b>	8.8	3.9	5.3	5.3	23.2
<b>2009</b>	11.0	4.2	5.6	5.4	26.2
<b>2010</b>	9.9	3.4	5.0	4.7	23.0
<b>2011</b>	8.5	2.6	4.2	5.1	20.5

### Timeliness of Sub-granting to Implementing Partners

Since 2010 CERF has requested recipient agencies to report on NGO sub-grants in the annual HC country level narrative reports, starting with the reporting on 2009 grants. Data received against the 2009 grants were lacking in quality and it is assumed that only a part of actual sub-grants were reported on. The 2010 sub-granting data submitted as part of the HC reports in early 2011 saw some improvements, although the general quality was still not sufficient for a comprehensive and reliable analysis. Table 2 below presents the statistics for sub-granting timeliness data as reported in the 2009 and 2010 HC CERF country reports. Although the data has to be considered with the caveat that it is incomplete, the timelines of reported sub-grants still indicate delays in contracting NGOs as implementing partners of CERF grants that do not reflect the rapid response mandate of the CERF. This was also highlighted by the five-year evaluation of the CERF and by CERF country reviews under the PAF.

For the reporting on 2011 grants the CERF secretariat has made a concerted effort to have HCs and recipient UN agencies provide improved and complete NGO sub-granting data. Furthermore, the CERF reporting template has been revised to include greater detail on the sub-grants to allow for better analysis, including information on activity start dates for implementing partners in addition to the timing of disbursements of funds. As a result the reports submitted in 2012 provided considerable more information on sub-grants than in previous years, with more than 800<sup>2</sup> pieces of sub-grant data submitted in 2012 compared to just 121 in 2011. The average disbursement times for sub-grants in 2011 are shown in table 2 along with the comparable data from 2009 and 2010.

Realising that the sub-grant disbursement times as reported in the CERF annual country reports may not present the full picture of how CERF sub-grants to NGOs are contracted and implemented, CERF has in early 2012 also worked bilaterally with a number of agencies to explore in more detail how the sub-grating procedures functions for CERF grants. The analysis will be based on a number of selected case-studies from 2011 CERF grants and will also contain general information on agencies sub-grating procedures. The improved reporting introduced for the 2011 HC country reports combined with the outcome of the case studies with individual agencies, should enable CERF to more accurately monitor performance against indicator III.e above.

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<sup>2</sup> A total of 836 sub-grants were reported for 2011 CERF projects. 600 of these had complete information on both timeliness and amounts, whereas the remaining 236 entries did not have usable timeliness data.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average number of working days to forwards funds to NGO partners (All Projects)</b>	<b>Average number of working days to forwards funds to NGO partners (RR)</b>	<b>Average number of working days to forwards funds to NGO partners (UFE)</b>
<b>2009</b>	51	50	63
<b>2010</b>	59	54	70
<b>2011</b>	51	41	62

#### Findings from Evaluations and Studies related to the Effectiveness of Grant Review and Disbursement

In the five-year evaluation of the CERF the CERF secretariat was commended for the development of improved processes, procedures and information management. And it was found that its adoption of a service-oriented culture had significantly increased the level of trust in the CERF. In particular the evaluation concluded that staff in the secretariat had managed to increase the CERF's responsiveness, facilitate decision-making through the development of clearly-defined life-saving criteria as well as reinforce accountability through more transparent information systems and the development of a Performance Accountability Framework. All in all, the evaluation found that this had led to a marked improvement in the capacity and functioning of the CERF secretariat following its expansion in 2008.

The CERF five-year evaluation also concluded that while CERF RR disbursements to UN recipient agencies had become quicker, sub-granting funds to NGOs continued to be dependent on bilateral agreements with the UN recipient agency independent of CERF processes. Consequently, this varied considerably by agency. The impact of delays in the sub-granting of CERF funds by UN agencies, however, tended to be less significant in countries where NGOs had direct access to ERF/CHF funds or alternative sources of quick funding.

The individual CERF PAF country studies undertaken since 2010 have made similar observations on the timeliness of CERF allocation processes. The reviews generally found that the CERF secretariat had been processing grants quickly, but that the timeliness of in-country pre-submission processes and of NGO sub-granting by recipient UN agencies had presented a more varied picture.

The 2011 CERF PAF review for Ethiopia found that in terms of timeliness, the CERF Secretariat was found to be quick in processing applications once they had been finalised and the Controller's Office disbursed money very quickly too. It also concluded that in Ethiopia, where UN agencies worked largely with the government rather than NGOs as implementing partners, UN agencies had transferred funding to partners generally within project timeframes. This did not, however, show whether the partners completed implementation on time.

In line with findings from other countries, NGOs in Bolivia found CERF funding challenging because of the short implementation timeframe, primarily for rapid response grants. Considering UN agency sub-granting requirements, NGOs pointed out that they had little time to develop proposals and complete the contractual requirements before receiving funding from agencies. The Bolivia PAF review in 2011 found that in terms of timeliness, the CERF was deemed to have met performance targets for both windows. However, there remained concerns over the overall timing in arranging sub-granting arrangements for implementing partners.

The 2010 CERF country reviews in Chad, Sri Lanka and Mauritania found that a mixed picture emerged on the timeliness of funding. Processing times for applications within the CERF secretariat were generally found to be short. Significant variability, however, existed in the pre-submission phase, the time it took agencies to revise project proposals in line with comments by the CERF secretariat as well as in the completion of administrative steps at agency headquarter to disburse funds to field offices.

The Kenya CERF PAF review from 2010 found that NGOs face several constraints in delivering humanitarian assistance when they receive CERF funding channelled through UN agencies. These include: delays with funding agreements; funding in instalments; funding limits on programmes; limits on Indirect Support Costs; and limited flexibility. These are due to the standard internal procedures of UN agencies (many of which are not adapted to emergency situations) rather than CERF funding.

#### **Input IV. UN Agency/IOM Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation (M/R & E) Systems in Place**

All CERF recipient agencies are expected to have internal monitoring and reporting mechanisms as endorsed by their executive boards. The existence of these systems is a requirement for CERF funding whose processes underlie CERF project implementation. UN Agencies/IOM must also submit high quality reports to RC/HC, via OCHA, who in turn



reports back to the CERF Secretariat. Evaluation reports from recipient agencies should be made available at request of member states or the CERF Secretariat.

**Indicators**

- a. UN Agencies/IOM receiving grants have internal evaluation and accountability mechanisms.
- b. CERF Secretariat has provided adequate global guidance on the standards for reporting.
- c. OCHA CO/RO, in support of the RC/HC, provides guidance to UN Agencies and IOM, and facilitates input for annual report.
- d. UN Agencies and IOM, both at HQ and in the field provide satisfactory input (as defined by CERF Secretariat Guidelines) to the annual RC/HC Report which adheres to reporting guidelines.

**Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- Other relevant studies, audits and evaluations including agencies own internal evaluations.

**Status**

**CERF Narrative Reporting**

Through its review of the annual CERF country reports from HCs the CERF Secretariat has found the quality of HC narrative reporting to vary considerable. The submission of sub-standard country reports has required the CERF secretariat to invest considerable time in improving the reports to prepare them for publication. Lacking quality of CERF country reports has also resulted in an inability to consistently report accurately on results achieved with CERF funding at project and country level.

The CERF five-year evaluation and the independent CERF country reviews under the PAF have confirmed that while the CERF reporting format is considered appropriate by recipient organisations, the general quality of reporting is often found to be lacking.

As a consequence, the ERC has reached out to recipient agencies to stress the importance of improving CERF reporting and the CERF secretariat has revised the narrative reporting format and guidance in 2012 to be used for the 2011 CERF annual HC reports. Linked to this, the CERF secretariat has followed up more aggressively with countries during the 2011 reporting cycle and indication<sup>3</sup> is that the 2011 HC country reports in general have improved in both timeliness and quality over previous years. Within one week of the submission deadline of 15 March 2012 more than 82 per cent of CERF recipient countries had submitted their narrative reports, compared to just 52 per cent in 2011, and by 6 April 96 per cent (all but two country reports) were submitted in 2012 compared to only 85 per cent at the same time in 2011 (see details in table 3). The HC reports are still under review at the time of writing and a final assessment of the overall quality of the reports cannot be made at this time. However, a significant improvement for 2012 is observed with respect to the completeness of reporting by recipient UN agencies on sub-grants to implementing partners. HC reports submitted in 2011 provided complete information on only 121 sub-grants, whereas reports submitted in 2012 in comparison have provided information on more than 800 individual sub-grants.

<b>Table 3: Timelines of Submission of HC CERF Country Reports</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Submitted in 2011 by Date</b>	<b>Submitted in 2012 by Date</b>
<b>15 March</b>	<b>32.6 %</b>	<b>44.4 %</b>
<b>22 March</b>	<b>52.2 %</b>	<b>82.2 %</b>
<b>6 April</b>	<b>84.8 %</b>	<b>95.5 %</b>
<b>16 April</b>	<b>84.8 %</b>	<b>97.7 %</b>
<b>22 June</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>3</sup> By the time of writing the HC reports covering 2011 allocations are still being reviewed by the CERF secretariat.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Under the CERF Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) the monitoring and evaluation of CERF funded projects is the responsibility of the recipient UN agencies.

In the CERF five-year evaluation the CERF's reliance on agencies' internal assessments, whose processes and methodologies may differ between agencies, countries and clusters was found to be an operational weakness. In addition, the reliance on agencies' internal monitoring systems was considered an additional weakness. The evaluation also concluded that the CERF had become more accountable, although some accountability gaps remained, notably around the multiple lines of accountability and inadequate monitoring since this was entrusted to UN agencies' internal systems. The evaluators further argued that without a mandate for the HC to monitor CERF-funded projects, there was no formal mechanism for calling agencies to account for their use of CERF funds other than through their CERF-mandated programmatic reporting at country level and financial reporting at the global level. Finally, the evaluators stated that accountability was further complicated by a lack of evaluation information for CERF-funded activities.

The CERF PAF country reviews undertaken so far have generally presented a more positive picture of agencies monitoring of CERF funded activities and of reporting quality. The 2010 CERF country reviews in Chad, Sri Lanka and Mauritania found that agency monitoring and evaluation systems at the project-level were deemed sufficient. In the reviews the CERF was commended for featuring reasonable reporting obligations and the system of country-level reporting focal points, within either the OCHA or Resident Coordinator's office, was found to be working well.

In the Bolivia CERF PAF country review, the standard UN agency field monitoring systems were found to be in place. Although project monitoring/reporting was often adapted to the CERF format, the Fund had little impact on accountability mechanisms per se. No examples of impact evaluation or multi-sectoral evaluation which included CERF funded projects were brought up.

The Colombia country review from 2011 found reporting and monitoring to be adequate, although this was independent of the CERF. There was sufficient anecdotal evidence of successful outcomes from CERF projects that UN agencies should view evaluation as an opportunity to demonstrate value.

The 2011 Zimbabwe country review noted that UN agencies and IOM were responsible for implementing and reporting on CERF projects and OCHA was not mandated to monitor CERF projects. This meant that neither the HC nor the CERF Secretariat had an independent source of information on progress with CERF projects.

The CERF PAF review for Kenya concluded that the CERF Secretariat has simplified both narrative and financial reporting formats since the CERF's inception and the UN agencies and IOM in Kenya found CERF proposals and reports very straightforward compared to other sources of funds. Nevertheless, the report noted that the OCHA office in Kenya had to spend some time following up with agencies to obtain their input into the RC/HC's report.

Since project-level evaluations of activities supported by CERF funds remain under the purview of UN agencies and IOM, the CERF secretariat has in early 2012 reached out to agencies' evaluation departments to forge a closer relationship with a view to ensuring that key lessons-learned at project-level relevant to CERF are captured. As part of these consultations the CERF secretariat has discussed with a number of agencies the possibility of including a number of standard CERF-related questions in evaluations of projects or programmes that have received significant funding from CERF. Experience has shown that when CERF-specific issues are not included in project or emergency evaluations, such as inter-agency real-time evaluations or agencies own internal programme or country evaluations, only limited information on CERF will emerge. This is the case even where CERF has contributed substantial funding. Introducing sample CERF-specific evaluation questions in agencies regular evaluations might go some way towards alleviating this.

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### **OUTPUTS - HUMANITARIAN ACTORS ABLE TO RESPOND MORE QUICKLY**

The overall outputs of the availability of CERF funding is that UN agencies and IOM are able to respond more quickly to prioritized needs at the time. At HQ level, support can be initiated with speed and efficiency. At country level, the output will be a timely response to life-saving activities which have been prioritized through an inclusive process with all relevant stakeholders.

#### **Output I. Life-Saving Activities Supported**

With a field driven and effective prioritization process at cluster level, CERF funds should be directed to the most critical humanitarian needs at the time.

### **Indicators**

- a. CERF funds allow UN Agencies/IOM to demonstrate capability to leverage donor confidence for future contributions.
- b. Availability of CERF funding recognized by recipient agencies as being fundamental to ability to respond to life saving needs and gaps.
- c. Extent to which gaps, both geographic and sectoral, have been identified and addressed through use of CERF funds.

### **Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- Annual agency HQ narrative CERF reports.
- Other relevant studies and evaluations.

### **Status**

The annual HC CERF country reports allow country level partners to report back to the ERC and the CERF secretariat on the results achieved with CERF funding. An analysis of the 2011 HC annual country reports show that 96 per cent of recipient country teams reported that CERF funds either helped catalyse a rapid intervention and/or enabled a timely intervention, 93 per cent reported that CERF funds helped humanitarian partners respond to time-critical humanitarian needs and 84 per cent reported that CERF funds helped mobilize additional funding.

The five-year evaluation of the CERF and the CERF PAF country level reviews largely confirm the findings from the HC country reports.

In the five-year evaluation the CERF was found to increase the predictability of funding through its rapid response (RR) window at the global and country level. In doing so, the CERF had now achieved the objectives of its initial designers. The evaluators also found that CERF had increased the predictability of funding through the underfunded window (UFE) at global level but it remained much less predictable at the country and sector levels.

In addition the evaluation report highlighted that CERF promoted early action by enabling agencies to start activities using their own emergency reserves, knowing that they could recover some of these costs through the CERF and that it had increased the coverage of the humanitarian response, in particular by supporting less well-funded common services.

In 2010 the CERF PAF country review for Kenya found that the CERF has added value for UN agencies by providing funding early on in the year; filling funding gaps; enabling agencies to leverage funding from other donors; complementing other donor funds; and being flexible. The country reviews of Chad, Sri Lanka and Mauritania concluded that CERF funding was reliable and predictable thereby contributing to the CERF's aim of making humanitarian financing more equitable and predictable. However, the reports highlighted potential unintended consequences of this in that it might induce agencies to eschew pursuing other donors whose application procedures were perceived as more onerous. In addition, the timeliness of CERF support might relieve pressure on donors to make funding available rapidly in response to an emergency, instead adopting a wait-and-see approach in the knowledge that CERF funding was available.

The reviews in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe in 2011 found that CERF funding had added value for UN agencies and IOM in several ways: by providing timely funding for emergency response, by funding severely under-funded sectors, by providing funding early on in the year (through the first UFE allocation), by enabling agencies to leverage funding from other donors, by complementing other donor funding, by providing flexible funding and by increasing the credibility of the UN system with the government.

The 2011 CERF PAF review for Bolivia found CERF to be a highly important source of funding for UN Agencies and the government. It was perceived to fill a number of gaps and it was used for a range of important interventions for flood-affected populations in 2010. According to the evaluator, the significant challenges in developing stronger national systems in Bolivia made the CERF an attractive resource for the UN. Because there seemed little real prospect of Bolivia receiving significantly more bilateral funds from traditional donors, the UN in Bolivia looked set to continue to call upon the CERF.

The annual CERF global narrative reports submitted by agency headquarters have also regularly highlighted CERF's importance in enabling agencies to respond to life-saving humanitarian needs and to cover critical gaps. Below are a number of references from recent annual reports from agencies.

The UNICEF CERF report for 2011 concluded that the CERF grant facility has continued to make an important contribution both to UNICEF's rapid life-saving activities and increasingly to critical humanitarian interventions in under-funded crises all over the world, particularly as growing political crisis further impacts the global economic situation affecting multi-lateral funding for humanitarian interventions.

In its annual report for 2011 WHO noted that CERF funds have been instrumental for the organisation to provide timely emergency health care and to trigger contributions from other funding sources.

The WFP annual report highlighted that the support received from CERF in 2011 was critical to WFP for the immediate deployment of resources and assistance to affected populations. The support has allowed WFP to both respond quickly to emergencies as well as to provide key funding to projects with significant funding shortfalls.

For 2010 IOM reported that the CERF was a major source of funding for IOM's humanitarian relief activities. This was particularly the case for funding coming from the Rapid Response window, which had enhanced IOM's capacity to provide the required humanitarian assistance in a swift manner. With funding from the CERF, IOM was also able to continue critical activities in countries selected in the Underfunded Emergencies rounds in 2010. IOM noted that CERF had provided a substantial amount of initial and/or additional funding to IOM which translated into immediate responses to life-saving needs identified in countries where no other funding sources were available at the time, or where funding sources were not provided as quickly as the CERF. The report concluded that timely and predictable funding from the CERF has enabled IOM's humanitarian response capacity to be more nimble and implement time critical, life-saving activities in sudden onset emergencies (or rapid deteriorations thereof) and strengthen the core elements of the overall humanitarian response in under-funded emergencies.

UNHCR reported that the CERF rapid response funds in 2011 allowed the organisation to respond timely and effectively to different emergencies and thereby address the most urgent life-saving needs of people of concern to UNHCR in the onset of the emergencies. UNHCR also reported that CERF underfunded grants helped UNHCR to distribute income more equally among its operations by providing much needed support to some chronically under-funded emergencies.

## **Output II. Timely Response**

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This output focuses on the ability of UN Agencies/IOM to use CERF funds quickly. When submissions meet quality standards (as outlined by the CERF secretariat guidelines and the CERF life-saving criteria) the time taken for negotiating elements of proposals is reduced. In addition, when the appropriate systems for rapid disbursement of funds are in place at each level, UN Agencies/IOM can quickly receive funding and begin implementing in a timely manner as agreed within the LOU.

### **Indicators**

- a. Number of No-Cost Extensions requested.
- b. CERF funds fill a critical time gap as measured in relation to time that other contributions are received.
- c. Percentage of total amount of CERF funding to flash appeals provided within the first two weeks (of appeal publication).

### **Main Verification Tools**

- Timeliness and no-cost extension data from the CERF grants database.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- Annual agency HQ narrative CERF reports.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Funding data from the Financial Tracking Service (FTS)

### **Status**

For the status of timeliness of disbursement of funding from CERF to recipient agencies please refer to section III under Inputs.

### No-Cost Extensions of CERF Grants

The statistics for no-cost extensions (Table 4) indicate that CERF has been successful in increasingly fund agency projects with the capacity to implement activities within the CERF implementation timeline. The data shows a steady decline in the number and percentage of no-cost extension requests, with the lowest numbers recorded for 2011. With the introduction in 2011 of a six months implementation period for rapid response grants no-cost extensions will be more strictly reviewed and only accepted on an exceptional basis, and a further decrease in the number of no-cost extension may therefore be observed.

	Number of No-Cost-Extension Requests			Percentage of Approved Projects Requesting Extensions			Percentage of Requests Approved		
	RR	UFE	Total	RR	UFE	Total	RR	UFE	Total
<b>2008</b>	44	9	53	11.6%	6.4%	10.2%	93.2%	66.7%	88.7%
<b>2009</b>	46	21	67	15.8%	12.1%	14.4%	97.8%	95.2%	97.0%
<b>2010</b>	36	14	50	12.8%	7.5%	10.7%	94.4%	92.9%	94.0%
<b>2011</b>	28	3	31	9.7%	1.6%	6.6%	89.3%	66.7%	87.1%

### CERF Supporting Timely Response

An analysis of the 2011 HC annual country reports show that 96 per cent of recipient country teams reported that CERF funds either helped catalyse a rapid intervention and/or enabled a timely intervention and 93 per cent reported that CERF funds helped humanitarian partners respond to time-critical humanitarian needs.

The five-year evaluation of the CERF found that CERF promoted early action by enabling agencies to start activities using their own emergency reserves, knowing that they could recover some of these costs through the CERF.

The CERF PAF country reviews in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe in 2011 found that CERF funding had added value for UN agencies and IOM in several ways including by providing timely funding for emergency response, by funding severely under-funded sectors, by providing funding early on in the year (through the first UFE allocation).

DFID's multilateral aid review (MAR) from 2011 concluded that CERF has been successful in improving the responsiveness and timeliness of the overall humanitarian response, especially where funds have been provided from the rapid response window, and noted that the guarantee of CERF funds has allowed UN agencies to release funds immediately from emergency reserves. However, DFID also highlighted that it found responsiveness of CERF sometimes undermined by delays in passing CERF funds from UN agencies to implementing NGOs, and concluded that CERF has been less successful in delivering timely interventions where NGOs are implementing on behalf of UN agencies.

The annual CERF global narrative reports from the headquarters of CERF recipient agencies have also made references to CERF's support to timely humanitarian response.

The UNICEF annual report covering CERF grants provided in 2011 highlights that CERF has remained a flexible and responsive tool for humanitarian response for UNICEF. The report concludes that CERF continues to work synergistically with UNICEF's internal loan facility, the Emergency Programme Fund (EPF). Quick release of the EPF allows UNICEF to respond at the very onset of the emergency, and the release of CERF allows the response to continue and scale-up prior to receipt of other major donor assistance. The report also makes reference to the complementary role of the CERF in terms of scope, with the CERF providing early support to lifesaving interventions and internal UNICEF reserves providing immediate start-up funding and support to a wide range of interventions for children that might not always fall within the mandate of the CERF (for example, needs assessments and preparedness).

The annual report from WFP notes that the support from CERF has allowed WFP to both respond quickly to emergencies as well as to provide key funding to projects with significant funding shortfalls. The report also highlighted that several WFP Country Offices have maximized the timeliness of CERF funds by utilizing WFP's internal borrowing mechanisms using CERF as collateral. Once CERF funds are in the final stages of negotiation, Country Offices are able to use this as collateral and request an internal loan against the CERF funds. This enhances the timeliness of CERF funds by allowing WFP to use the funds immediately upon the confirmation of the funds, not waiting for them to reach WFP's bank account.

FAO reported that CERF in 2011 represented a key financial instrument for FAO because it provides early and predictable funding. It allows for effective rapid response shortly after a sudden-onset disaster, or early enough during a slow-onset emergency.

WHO highlighted that in 2011 CERF funds have been instrumental for the organisation to provide timely emergency health care and to trigger contributions from other funding sources.

The IOM annual report concluded that the CERF had provided a substantial amount of initial and/or additional funding to IOM which translated into immediate responses to life-saving needs identified in countries where no other funding sources were available at the time, or where funding sources were not provided as quickly as the CERF. Timely and predictable funding from the CERF has enabled IOM's humanitarian response capacity to be more nimble and implement time critical, life-saving activities in sudden onset emergencies.

UNHCR reported that the CERF rapid response funds allowed UNHCR to respond timely and effectively to different emergencies throughout 2011 and thereby being able to address the most urgent life-saving needs of people of concern to UNHCR in the onset of the emergencies. In most emergencies the CERF grants were the first funds available and therefore allowed UNHCR to respond quickly.

#### Timeliness of CERF Support to Flash Appeals

The timing and volume of CERF funding towards Flash Appeals generally reflects the profile and development of the underlying emergency and as such there is no fixed pattern. However, as a rule most CERF rapid response grants will typically come early in the response, i.e. either before the Flash Appeal is launched or shortly after. These initial CERF contributions may in some cases be supplemented with additional allocations later in the response as needs evolve. CERF applies a two week window following Flash Appeal launch as a milestone and indicator for timeliness of CERF response to emergencies with Flash Appeals. 2011 saw close to 88 per cent of all CERF funding to Flash Appeals allocated sooner than two weeks after the launch of the appeals (Table 5), which is well beyond the informal performance target of 50 per cent that is normally used by CERF. For 2009 the percentage was 56 and in 2010 it was 59 per cent, which reflect the fact that a number of large Flash Appeals in 2009 and 2010 received allocations in several tranches from CERF.

<b>Table 5: Volume and Timing of CERF Funding to Flash Appeals in 2011</b>			
<b>2011 Flash Appeals</b>	<b>CERF funding provided within the first two weeks after FA launch</b>	<b>CERF funding provided later than two weeks after the FA launch</b>	<b>Total CERF Funding Provided to 2011 Flash Appeals</b>
El Salvador Flash Appeal (October 2011 - April 2012)	\$ 2,193,402	-	\$ 2,193,402
Namibia Flash Appeal (April - October 2011)	\$ 1,175,941	-	\$ 1,175,941
Nicaragua Flash Appeal (October 2011 - April 2012)	\$ 2,030,597	-	\$ 2,030,597
Pakistan Rapid Response Plan Floods 2011 (September - March 2012)	\$ 17,452,939	\$ 180,575	\$ 17,633,514
Regional Flash Appeal for the Libyan Crisis (March - December 2011)	\$ 4,997,940	\$ 4,692,107	\$ 9,690,047
Sri Lanka Floods Flash Appeal (Revised) (January - June 2011)	\$ 6,141,383	-	\$ 6,141,383
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 33,992,202</b>	<b>\$ 4,872,682</b>	<b>\$ 38,864,884</b>
<b>Timing of CERF Flash Appeal Funding</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

#### **OUTCOMES (Operational Effects) - HUMANITARIAN PERFORMANCE STRENGTHENED**

In line with the objectives of overall humanitarian reform efforts, an outcome of the CERF grant has been the strengthening of humanitarian response. CERF provides an incentive for country-level coordination as well as

supporting the role of the RC/HC. By supporting the humanitarian reform process, CERF also contributes to enhanced coordination and an overall quality response. The built-in monitoring and evaluation processes for each recipient agency promotes quality assurance. The enhanced predictability and reliability of CERF provides UN agencies and IOM with the assurance they need to start operations and maintain or broaden coverage.

## **Outcome I. Predictability and Reliability Enhanced**

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Predictable funding facilitates effective planning, preparation and a more rapid response to humanitarian needs. Predictability is enhanced when UN Agencies/IOM know that CERF will be a reliable source of funding in emergencies.

### **Indicators**

- a. Response capacity is strengthened given knowledge that CERF is a reliable source of funding.
- b. Operations deployed more rapidly due to 'predictability' of quick funding source.

### **Main Verification Tools**

- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Other relevant studies and evaluations.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- Annual agency HQ narrative CERF reports.
- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.

### **Status**

The CERF five-year evaluation found that the CERF increased the predictability of funding through its rapid response window at the global and country level and that it has facilitated UN agencies to respond to new crises by providing reliable funding, even for low-profile crises. In doing so, the CERF had now achieved the objectives of its initial designers. The evaluation noted that CERF had increased the predictability of funding through the underfunded window at global level but it remained much less predictable at the country and sector levels. The evaluation also concluded that the CERF promoted early action by enabling agencies to start activities using their own emergency reserves, knowing that they could recover some of these costs through the CERF. It had increased the coverage of the humanitarian response, in particular by supporting less well-funded common services.

DFID's multilateral aid review (MAR) in 2011 found that CERF has proved that to be a valuable mechanism that has improved the speed and coverage of the international response to humanitarian emergencies.

In 2010 the CERF PAF country review for Kenya found that the CERF had added value for UN agencies by providing funding early on in the year; filling funding gaps; enabling agencies to leverage funding from other donors; complementing other donor funds; and being flexible. The country reviews of Chad, Sri Lanka and Mauritania concluded that CERF funding was reliable and predictable thereby contributing to the CERF's aim of making humanitarian financing more equitable and predictable. However, the reports highlighted potential unintended consequences of this in that it might induce agencies to eschew pursuing other donors whose application procedures were perceived as more onerous. In addition, the consultant noted that the timeliness of CERF support might relieve pressure on donors to make funding available rapidly in response to an emergency, instead adopting a wait-and-see approach in the knowledge that CERF funding was available.

The 2011 CERF PAF review for Bolivia found CERF to be a highly important source of funding for UN Agencies and the government. It was perceived to fill a number of gaps and it was used for a range of important interventions for flood-affected populations in 2010. Because there seemed little real prospect of Bolivia receiving significantly more bilateral funds from traditional donors, the UN in Bolivia looked set to continue to call upon the CERF.

References to the predictability and reliability of CERF are also found in the annual CERF narrative reports submitted by agency headquarters.

The UNICEF annual global CERF report covering 2011 CERF grants noted that CERF has remained a flexible and responsive tool for humanitarian response for UNICEF. The report concluded that CERF continues to work synergistically with UNICEF's internal loan facility, the Emergency Programme Fund (EPF). Quick release of the EPF allows UNICEF to respond at the very onset of the emergency, and the release of CERF allows the response to continue and scale-up prior to receipt of other major donor assistance.

In its annual report for 2011 FAO concluded that CERF represented a key financial instrument for FAO because it provided early and predictable funding. It allows for effective rapid response shortly after a sudden-onset disaster, or early enough during a slow-onset emergency. The report also noted that CERF is dependable, balancing flexibility with rigour, promoting a coherent and prioritized response to needs and, indirectly, supporting the cluster approach

IOM reported that CERF is a key source of funding for IOM's humanitarian relief activities. This is particularly the case for funding coming from the Rapid Response window, which has enhanced IOM's capacity to provide the required humanitarian assistance in a swift manner.

## **Outcome II. Quality Response**

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A unified plan representing the views of the humanitarian community as a whole facilitates better coverage, both geographical and sectoral, eliminates gaps and distributes work based on capacities and resources. In addition, ensuring that internal accountability and monitoring mechanisms for each implementing UN Agency/IOM are in place helps provide confidence that the response is of high quality.

### **Indicators**

- a. Transparent information management of recipient agencies on status of CERF projects.
- b. Accountability to affected populations, as outlined in the Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP), is incorporated into project submissions where recipient has signed up to HAP (NOTE: Internal agency/IOM specific affected population accountability mechanisms will be followed).
- c. Evaluative mechanisms established.
- d. Real-Time and internal UN Agency/IOM evaluations, when conducted, demonstrate CERF's contribution to a more coherent response.

### **Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Other relevant studies and evaluations including agencies own internal evaluations.

### **Status**

Direct attribution of a quality humanitarian response to CERF is not realistic as CERF is only one of many mechanisms at play in a given emergency response. However, as outlined in the performance assessments for other PAF indicator groups in this report, CERF has been found to help strengthen many of the elements that contribute to achieving a more coherent response. As such CERF has helped promote a quality response by fostering improved coordination and prioritisation, by enabling critical humanitarian gaps to be met and by allowing agencies to respond to needs in a more timely manner. At the same time weaknesses still remain in relation to the effectiveness of country level monitoring and reporting mechanisms and in ensuring inclusiveness of all stakeholders in CERF consultations and prioritisation. Studies have also found that CERF processes are likely to mirror the strengths or weaknesses of existing coordination structures in a given context.

The 2010 PAF country review for Sri Lanka concluded that the PAF indicators for the quality of the response are difficult to lay at the door of the CERF even though CERF supports them. The review also noted that many of the actions outlined in the Humanitarian Accountability Project since 2007 are carried out as a matter of course by the majority of organisations involved in humanitarian response whether signed up to this system or not.

The Chad review of the same year highlighted that a quality response is dependent on a whole range of factors and not just on the availability of CERF grants. The CERF does strengthen coordination amongst the UN agencies as it brings them together to discuss priorities for specific situations and to an extent in the clusters when an agency uses an NGO as a partner with a CERF grant. However, the report cautioned that this is by no means was entirely successful in Chad.

In the Mauritania country review the consultant observed that quality assurance is maintained by all of the organisations involved in the delivery of life-saving support, and that many are signatories to Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and to Sphere but even those who are not have their own principles which demand



the same levels in quality. The report also found that there are no separate systems for monitoring and reporting on CERF funding among any of the UN agencies, and that their normal monitoring and reporting mechanisms were sufficient for the need for quality assurance.

The 2010 evaluation of CERF funded FAO interventions (commissioned by FAO) found that CERF was very professionally managed, dependable, balancing flexibility with rigor and promoting a coherent and prioritized response to needs. The evaluation also observed that CERF appears to support the cluster approach indirectly, by giving UN agencies a small and temporary “head-start” as compared to NGOs immediately after a disaster.

DFID’s multilateral aid review (MAR) from 2011 noted that it is the responsibility of the implementing UN agencies to report on results at the beneficiary level, and concluded that although CERF is strong on strategic management, its lack of a results framework makes it difficult to demonstrate results at the country level systematically.

Evidence from External Evaluations (indicator d)

Experience shows that evaluations and studies that do not directly have CERF as a study subject generally provide limited evidence of CERF’s contribution to humanitarian response. In the past only limited information on CERF has emerged from inter-agency real-time evaluations or from agencies own internal programme or country evaluations. This is the case even where CERF has contributed substantial funding. In an attempt to broaden the evidence base for CERF performance and contribution the CERF secretariat has in early 2012 discussed with a number of agencies the possibility of including a number of standard CERF-related questions in evaluations of projects or programmes that have received significant funding from CERF. This approach will be piloted in the first half of 2012.

**Outcome III. Humanitarian Reform Process Supported**

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CERF should actively reinforce the role of the RC/HC and strengthen cluster and inter-cluster/sector coordination. This is a by-product of the effective use of CERF funds.

**Indicators**

- a. Extent to which RC/HC, UNHCT and cluster leads use the CERF process as a tool to strengthen coordination.
- b. Strengthened function of clusters and of inter-cluster forum.
- c. Leadership and involvement of RC/HC in humanitarian operation improved.

**Main Verification Tools**

- CERF submission template and consultations around submissions.
- Annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs.
- CERF commissioned independent country reviews conducted under the PAF.
- Other relevant studies and evaluations.

**Status**

CERF only accepts applications submitted by the RC/HC and not proposals submitted by individual agencies or clusters/sectors. In addition the CERF application template requires that submissions explain the consultation and decision making process behind the CERF application, including details on the approach for intra- and inter cluster prioritization and consultations. Where this is not deemed appropriately explained, or where the consultation process does not seem to have been adequate (based on the context) the CERF secretariat will require clarification and will take this into consideration when making recommendations to the ERC on approval of proposals.

The template for the annual CERF country report by RC/HCs request country teams to elaborate on if and how CERF helped improve coordination amongst the humanitarian community. In the 2011 HC reports 93 per cent of country teams reported that CERF funding helped to improve coordination.

The CERF five-year evaluation found that the CERF acted as a catalyst for enhanced implementation of humanitarian reform processes where there was effective leadership and commitment to humanitarian reform. The evaluators concluded that CERF complemented, and was reinforced by, the large-scale reform of the UN humanitarian system. However, the introduction of CERF funding highlighted structural weaknesses where processes led by UN agencies were less inclusive and transparent, in that increased acrimony could result where the process was poorly managed with weak leadership.

The five-year evaluation also noted that in countries where there was a locally managed Common Humanitarian Fund (pooled fund), CERF funding integrated well into existing prioritisation processes and monitoring of activities with cluster members, including national and international NGOs. This did not extend to Emergency Response Funds (ERF) as CERF and ERF processes tended to be managed separately. It was found that integration of CERF and country-based pooled funds processes could improve prioritisation and monitoring for both types of funds.

The CERF PAF country reviews in 2010 of CERF operations in Chad, Mauritania and Sri Lanka concluded that the CERF was found to increase the authority of the RC/HC. The fact that CERF submissions require the approval of the RC/HC strengthened the overall coordination authority of that individual and this pillar of humanitarian reform. However, strategic planning was deemed in need of further improvement. The CAP in itself was seen as not providing a sufficient basis for planning CERF submissions, in particular for submissions to the rapid response window which are typically outside of the CAP. The reviews also found that other parts of humanitarian reform, such as the cluster system, were also reinforced. However, while clusters prioritized projects internally, there was a need for stronger inter-cluster coordination. In addition, there were on occasion perceived tensions between the dual roles of the cluster lead, on one hand, as guiding the cluster and, on the other, being a representative of a particular agency when deciding on funding allocations. The Kenya country review found that the CERF has supported coordination (when sector groups come together to discuss priorities for CERF funding) and the HC's role in Kenya. It has played less of a role in strengthening partnership.

The 2011 PAF country reviews for Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Bolivia and Colombia also found the CERF to have helped strengthen coordination and humanitarian reform in some instances. The four country reports presented a nuanced picture and highlighted that the context played a significant role in determining CERF's contribution in this regard. For Ethiopia the consultant concluded that in terms of support to wider humanitarian reform, CERF funding had strengthened the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator, enabling him to incentivise behavioural change amongst UN agencies and engage with the wider humanitarian community. However, Ethiopia's complex coordination structure and the fact that CERF funding was not generally discussed in sector Task Forces probably contributed to the view that the CERF does not help to strengthen coordination as a whole. For Zimbabwe it was found that the CERF allocation process had benefited from the level of Cluster coordination in the country, which in turn had been strengthened by the programme-based approach. The CERF had therefore benefited from the strength of Cluster coordination in Zimbabwe rather than contributed to strengthening it. For Colombia and Bolivia the situation was more complex in this respect. For Colombia the review indicated that in a challenging political environment and with questionable levels of support from all stakeholders, clusters were uneven in terms of operational capacity and had little operational influence. Placed in this context, the CERF alone provides too small an incentive to strengthen the role of the clusters. For Bolivia the review concluded that although many respondents were positive about the way the CERF had strengthened intra-UN relations and relations between UN and government, this had not equated to strengthened humanitarian reform as globally understood. This was mainly because it was not possible to implement one of the mainstays of the humanitarian reform, namely the cluster approach, where the government had its own system of emergency relief coordination.

DFID's multilateral aid review (MAR) concluded in 2011 that CERF has leveraged positive changes in the international humanitarian system since its inception in 2006 by for example, encouraging better partnership behaviour between UN agencies.

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#### **OPERATIONAL IMPACT - TIME SENSITIVE COVERAGE OF CRITICAL BENEFICIARY NEEDS**

The impact of CERF is broken down by its two grant components – rapid response and underfunded. Ultimately, success is measured not in the number of dollars disbursed or countries reached, but in the actual impact that the allocations have on affected populations. It is challenging to measure these impacts – especially those at affected population level – but anecdotal evidence has revealed that CERF funding has had a significant impact on the humanitarian system. UN agencies and IOM consistently report that CERF rapid response funds are critical in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, allowing them to respond to time-critical requirements. The CERF's underfunded window is a particularly valuable tool for supporting specific sector/clusters that may not have received sufficient donor funds but which nonetheless need attention.

## **Indicators**

### **Rapid Response**

Quality humanitarian response based on prioritized needs is provided in the earliest stage of an emergency. The CERF grant allows UN Agencies/IOM to jumpstart their activities at a critical time to mitigate further loss of life. CERF support provides funding during the gap when other funds are being secured.

### **Underfunded**

In chronically underfunded emergencies, essential coverage of core humanitarian needs is ensured. Countries selected by the ERC have undergone an analysis of needs and consultation with UN Headquarters. The number of countries selected is limited to maximize impact of the funding.

## **Status**

The CERF five-year evaluation found that overall, the CERF has facilitated the ability of UN agencies to respond to new crises by providing reliable funding, even for low-profile crises. The evaluation concluded that the CERF increased the predictability of funding through its rapid response window at the global and country level and that in doing so the CERF had now achieved the objectives of its initial designers. The evaluation also concluded that the CERF promoted early action by enabling agencies to start activities using their own emergency reserves, knowing that they could recover some of these costs through the CERF. The eight independent CERF PAF country reviews conducted since 2010 have generally confirmed these findings.

The five-year evaluation of the CERF also noted that CERF had increased the predictability of funding through the underfunded window (UFE) at global level but it cautioned that it remained much less predictable at the country and sector levels. This has largely been confirmed by the CERF PAF country reviews in that some reviews have observed that the UFE process is less well understood at the country level. However, the country reviews also concluded that allocations from the UFE window have allowed country teams to address critical gaps in the humanitarian response that may otherwise not have been met.

A review of annual CERF country reports from RC/HCs and narrative CERF reports from agency headquarters find that these consistently report that CERF rapid response funds are critical in enabling response to time-critical life-saving needs, and that the CERF's underfunded window is valuable for addressing gaps and underfunded needs that may not have received sufficient donor funds.

In 2011 DFID's multilateral aid review (MAR) found that CERF has proved to be a valuable mechanism that has improved the speed and coverage of the international response to humanitarian emergencies. The MAR also noted that CERF is designed to smooth out imperfections in the way the international community funds humanitarian disasters and that CERF's role is to target funds effectively to meet critical life saving needs in both quick onset emergencies and underfunded emergencies. DFID concluded that they are content that CERF largely meets this requirement.

## **Conclusion**

Consolidation and analysis of CERF performance information for this exercise has shown that the information gathered from a variety of different sources is by and large coherent and consistent in its conclusions, albeit with nuances and some differences based on context and source. The analysis has also confirmed that the independent CERF PAF country reviews are particularly valuable tools for assessing CERF performance. In addition, the fact that both the PAF country reviews and the CERF five-year evaluation are structured according to the PAF indicators has made consolidation of findings from these fairly straightforward.

The assessment emerging from the review is predominantly positive and CERF is found to perform well against most indicators outlined in the PAF. At the same time the assessment confirms what the ERC, the CERF secretariat and the Advisory Group have already identified as areas for improvement or clarification, namely; the quality of narrative reporting to CERF, uneven monitoring and evaluation of CERF funded activities at the country level (or at least a lack of available information from such M&E activities), CERF's dependency on country level structures resulting in variable involvement of partners in the CERF prioritisation processes, and finally the timeliness of sub-granting arrangements between CERF recipient agencies and their implementing partners. CERF is already giving considerable attention to these areas and will continue to work with partners on the issues, as well as monitor and report on progress.

The mapping exercise in itself has proven a very useful exercise for the CERF secretariat. It has not brought new evidence or findings to light as such, but it has allowed the secretariat to bring together a variety of existing information into a common framework and undertake a consolidated analysis in a structured way. This has helped

build stronger evidence for assessing CERF's performance against each group of PAF indicators, and has also helped to further solidify the PAF as an integral part of CERF's work. Building on this exercise CERF will explore whether it would be advantageous to systematically and continuously collate relevant findings related to CERF performance into a common assessment framework around the PAF. This could potentially allow a more "real-time" assessment of the PAF indicators.