



Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Guidelines

Narrative Reporting on CERF funded Projects by Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators

INTRODUCTION

CERF's overarching legislative framework – *General Assembly Resolution 60/124, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the "Establishment and Operation of the Central Emergency Response Fund" (ST/SGB/2010/05 of 23 April 2010)* and the *Umbrella Letter of Understanding* – requires organizations receiving CERF resources to fully account for the use of funds and reporting on them. Therefore, all Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HC) in countries receiving CERF funds must submit to the CERF secretariat a consolidated RC/HC Report on activities conducted under each CERF grant. In order to enable the RC/HC to report on the use of CERF funds recipient agencies are required¹ to provide quality reporting on implementation of projects to the Office of the RC/HC according to the timeline set by the RC/HC. The reports must cover all recipient projects under the grants.

The RC/HC reports are CERF's key accountability tool to donors and both recipient agencies and CERF risk suffering loss of credibility and funding if the reports are not of a high quality. The CERF secretariat therefore places great emphasis on ensuring that funds are used and reported on in a transparent manner. **The RC/HC bears primary responsibility for ensuring that high quality reporting on the use of CERF funds is prepared based on inputs from recipient agencies.** Where available, OCHA country offices will provide support to the reporting process.

These guidelines provide a step-by-step guidance to the RC/HC offices and recipient agencies on how to prepare the reports. The guidance covers both Rapid Response (RR) and Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) grants.

¹ As set out in the Umbrella Letter of Understanding between CERF and recipient agencies.

MULTIPLE ALLOCATIONS

In the event of multiple CERF grants given in response to the same emergency, the CERF secretariat will allow different options for reporting. The RC/HC will be allowed to submit one full report per allocation but can also choose to only submit one report at the expiration of the final grant that covers all allocations to the given emergency. Situations like these will have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and allow for attention to a variety of issues, including whether the targeting of the various allocations is similar; whether the recipient agencies under each grant are identical; whether it can be expected that additional CERF allocations will be given to the same emergency; etc.

The CERF secretariat will notify all RC/HCs in advance of grant expirations and will at this point in time raise the issue of joint reporting when relevant.

Should an RC/HC decide to submit a report that covers multiple allocations under the same emergency, then specific reporting rules will apply. These are described throughout the guidelines where relevant.

NO-COST EXTENSIONS

In the event that one or more projects in a grant package have received no-cost extensions (NCEs), a few reporting options are available for the RC/HC. In case project(s) granted NCE(s) only constitute a minor part of the overall grant package and thereby only minimally will affect the overall CERF report, RC/HCs would be expected to prepare the RC/HC report in accordance with the dates of the general grant package and update the report with pending project information once the pending project is finalized. If on the other hand the project(s) with NCE(s) form a core part of the overall package, then the CERF secretariat will allow for a later submission of the RC/HC report in accordance with the expiration of the pending projects. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis in discussions between the RC/HC office and the CERF secretariat.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF RC/HC REPORTS

The RC/HC reports should be submitted in ONE language – either English or French. The project sheets (table 1) should also be prepared in the same language as the rest of the report. Reports that fail to adhere to this will be returned to the RC/HC and will not be shared with donors.

Font type and size should be Arial Narrow 10.

In order to simplify the reporting process, the CERF secretariat has provided a tailor-made template in line with each CERF grant. The CERF secretariat has also pre-populated the template with available information. **It is crucial that the suggested template is followed and the structure should not be amended.** A submitted report that do not follow the proposed template will be returned to the RC/HC and will not be shared with donors.

The template contains reminders, as well as helpful tips for completing the report. Text in the template is color-coded:

- Blue text represents helpful tips for completing the report.
- Red text represents instructions/required information to be completed by the RCs/HCs.
- Green text represents pre-loaded text that should be checked by the RC/HC office. In case amendments to pre-loaded text are required, these should be discussed with the CERF secretariat.

Finally, each chapter of the template contain text bubbles that describe the general purpose of the chapter.

Before submitting the report to the CERF secretariat, please delete all text in red and blue and the text bubbles and change green text to black.

The template contains seven sections, respectively titled:

- I. Reporting Process and Consultation Summary;***
- II. Humanitarian Context;***
- III. Focus Areas and Prioritization;***
- IV. CERF Process;***
- V. CERF Results and Added Value;***
- VI. Lessons Learned; and***
- VII. Project Results.***

These guidelines are structured accordingly.

Please note that in order to facilitate easy reporting, Annex 1 in support of the Project Results section is in the form of a separate excel spread sheet that needs to be filled out.

REPORTING PROCESS AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

In this section, the RC/HC should indicate when the After Action Review (AAR) was conducted and outline which CERF stakeholders participated. Secondly, the RC/HC should confirm whether the content of the RC/HC Report was discussed in the Humanitarian and/or UN Country Team and by cluster/sector coordinators. In the event that the report was **not** discussed in the Humanitarian and/or UN Country Team and by cluster/sector coordinators, an explanation should be provided. Finally, the RC/HC should confirm that the final RC/HC Report has been shared with relevant in-country stakeholders. It is recommended that this section is prepared as the last part of the reporting exercise.

I. Humanitarian Context

Section I should present the reader with the overall context and the background for the CERF request. The section shall provide an overview of the humanitarian situation in the country that prompted the first CERF allocation to the emergency along with key funding data for the response.

The section contains three tables and one narrative section.

Table 1: EMERGENCY ALLOCATION OVERVIEW (US\$)

Table 1 should provide a funding overview of the emergency towards which CERF funds were provided with information on total funding needed and received. This is important in understanding CERF's role in the response. It should be prepared by the RC/HC's office. Please indicate in the table the total amount of funding required for responding to the humanitarian emergency. The CERF secretariat has pre-entered data on CERF allocations to the emergency. Please review this data and please insert data on Common Humanitarian Fund/Emergency Response Fund allocations if relevant and provide information on other (bilateral/multilateral) funding provided against the emergency. Please calculate and insert a total.

Table 2: CERF EMERGENCY FUNDING BY ALLOCATION AND PROJECT (US\$)

Table 2 provides an overview of all CERF allocations towards the emergency. The data has been pre-entered by the CERF secretariat. Please review and inform the CERF secretariat in case amendments are required.

Table 3: BREAKDOWN OF CERF FUNDS BY TYPE OF IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY (US\$)

Table 3 provides an overview of the use of CERF funds by type of implementation modality. Please insert:

- total CERF funds allocated to the emergency that have been used for direct implementation by the recipient UN agencies/IOM;
- total CERF funds allocated to the emergency that have been forwarded to NGOs for implementation; and
- CERF funds allocated to the emergency that have been forwarded to government partners.

Please base this on data provided by agencies for annex 1 of the report and the project sheets in chapter seven. In-kind partner arrangements should not be included as funds forwarded. **Please ensure that figures in this table, the related totals of the project sheets and the totals of annex 1 match up.**

Narrative Section 1: HUMANITARIAN NEEDS (max a half page)

Narrative Section 1 should provide an overview of the humanitarian situation in the country that prompted the CERF request. Unless the report covers more than one allocation to the same emergency, then the overview should not exceed a half page. It should be prepared by the office of the RC/HC and include brief descriptions of:

- the humanitarian context;
- the cause of the crisis;
- the affected population (IDPs, refugees, etc., please disaggregate population data by gender and age when possible);
- the main humanitarian consequences; and the need for CERF funding.

In the event of more than one **RR allocation to the same emergency are covered by this report**, each additional allocation should be dedicated an extra paragraph. These additional paragraphs should be structured around the same requirements as the first and describe the humanitarian context upon submission of each of the consecutive CERF funding proposals. The paragraphs should briefly highlight the relevant developments in the humanitarian context from the time of submitting the first RR proposal, and explain the need for additional CERF funding.

II. Focus Areas and Prioritization

Section II should explain the humanitarian needs within the broader humanitarian response that were targeted with CERF funding and describe the basis for the prioritisation of CERF funds. If the actual targeting differs from the original plan, then this should be explained.

The section contains one narrative section.

Narrative Section 2: FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIZATION (max one page)

Narrative Section 2 should describe the geographical areas of implementation of the CERF-sponsored activities and the humanitarian needs that were prioritized for CERF funding. It should be prepared by the office of the RC/HC in collaboration with the recipient agencies/sector-leads. The section should include short descriptions of:

- the relevant needs assessment findings;
- key humanitarian data (e.g. mortality/morbidity rates, nutritional status, needs of certain groups (such as women, children, refugees, IDPs, returnees, and other vulnerable groups) and other relevant data); and
- the geographical coverage of CERF funded activities and reasons for geographical targeting.

- for countries with a country-based pooled fund (ERF/CHF), if and how CERF and the country-based pooled fund were used in a complementary manner to respond to the emergency.

In the event that the targeting has been different than described in the CERF funding proposal, please describe and explain reasons for this.

In the event that **more than one RR allocation to this emergency are covered by this report** and in case the CERF focus areas and prioritization behind subsequent allocation differed from the first, then a paragraph should describe the specific focus areas and prioritization of each allocation.

III. CERF Process

Section III should outline the processes and consultations behind the prioritisation of CERF funds and also describe how CERF allocation decisions were supported by other in-country planning and prioritisation frameworks.

The section contains one narrative section.

Narrative Section 3: CERF PROCESS (max one page)

Narrative Section 3 should describe the CERF process related to the allocation. The section should be prepared by the RC/HC's office in collaboration with the recipient agencies/sector leads. It should include brief descriptions of:

- how the Humanitarian Country Team and clusters/sectors prioritized activities and who that was involved and consulted in the process (including how Implementing Partners were engaged);
- how CAPs/Flash Appeals and/or other planning/resource mobilization tools were used for prioritizing needs for CERF funding, if applicable;
- how gender was taken into account when designing and implementing the activities under the CERF allocation;
- for countries with a country-based pooled fund (ERF/CHF), if and how the structures, systems and processes for the country-based pooled fund were used for supporting prioritisation of CERF funds.

In the event that **more than one RR allocation** to the same emergency are covered by this report and in case the CERF process differed from the first, additional paragraphs should be dedicated to each additional allocation describing the above required specifics of each process. Again, do remember that this is only for multiple allocations within the same emergency.

IV. CERF Results and Added Value

Section IV is meant to be the core of the RC/HC report where the collective results achieved with CERF funds should be analysed and CERF's added value to the humanitarian response be identified. The section should also presents beneficiary estimates for CERF funded activities and compare number of reached beneficiaries with original planning numbers.

The section contains two tables and two narrative sections.

Table 4: AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS AND REACHED DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY SECTOR

Beneficiary numbers provide an indication of key CERF results and impact and are therefore of great importance to member states and donors. However, experience has also shown that agencies report beneficiaries differently. In order to enable RC/HCs to provide a realistic estimate of total reached direct beneficiaries through CERF grants (table 5), table 4 should provide an estimated overview of **direct** beneficiaries by sector supported through the total CERF allocations under the emergency. In the event of **more than one CERF allocation** to the same emergency, then the estimated **cumulative** beneficiary numbers should be provided. Given the challenges related to beneficiary counting at sector level, an estimated number based on best available data will suffice and pro-rating according to total CERF contribution towards projects can be applied.

In the first line of the table, please provide the estimated total number of affected individuals (unless changes have occurred since submitted CERF proposal, this should be identical to the proposal).

In the second part of the table, the CERF secretariat has pre-entered the sectors in accordance with the grant proposal. Please estimate and insert the total estimated number of direct beneficiaries reached by sector, broken down by gender and age group (below and above 18). The beneficiary estimation should be provided by each sector lead agency in close collaboration with all relevant agencies in the sector. **It is vital that each sector-lead seeks to avoid significant double counting.** Therefore, each agency should provide the sector-lead agency with an estimated number of direct beneficiaries supported by the agency through the CERF allocations to the emergency. Then, the sector-lead agency should ensure discussions between all sectors to help identify potential overlaps. Finally, each sector-lead should submit the requested figures to the Office of the RC/HC that should consolidate the data. The reporting on estimated beneficiary numbers by sector is expected to help better estimate total number of beneficiaries reached through CERF funding as required in table 5 while avoiding significant double counting.

Narrative Section 4: BENEFICIARY ESTIMATION (max a half page)

In narrative section 4, the RC/HC and sector lead agencies should provide a brief description of the approach used towards estimating the beneficiary numbers in table 4 and 5, how double-counting has been avoided, as well as challenges met in preparing the estimates.

Table 5: TOTAL DIRECT BENEFICIARIES REACHED THROUGH CERF FUNDING

Table 5 should provide an overview of reached direct beneficiaries through all CERF allocations to the emergency. The figures reported in table 4 should provide a basis for discussions between RC/HC and

sector-leads focused on estimating the total number of direct beneficiaries through CERF funding. A breakdown by reached direct beneficiaries per male, female, children and adults should be provided. This should, as best possible, exclude significant overlaps between the sectors. In situations where the same affected individuals have been assisted through several different CERF allocations within the same year, these individuals should be counted as **separate beneficiaries** when the CERF allocations have been provided **more than two months apart**.

Narrative Sections 5 and 6 (max two pages in total)

Narrative sections 5 and 6 are the key vehicles for the RC/HC, together with the recipient agencies, to describe to the CERF secretariat the activities that CERF funding made possible, results achieved with CERF funding, challenges in meeting planned outcomes, as well as the added value of the CERF grant in terms of timely and/or critical funding. The narratives should be prepared by the Office of the RC/HC together with the recipient agencies, sector/cluster leads and key implementing partners.

Narrative Section 5: CERF RESULTS

This narrative section should describe what was accomplished with CERF funding. This should include a brief description of:

- the key outcomes achieved and number of beneficiaries reached through CERF funding (please ensure consistency with the figures reported in table 4 and 5);
- whether you collectively for the overall submission reached your planned targets as laid out in the CERF application (both beneficiaries and outcomes) and, if not, explanation of any significant deviations between the planned number of beneficiaries and actual reached, as well as planned outcomes and actual reached); and
- the change in the humanitarian situation after the intervention that CERF contributed to.

Narrative Section 6: CERF'S ADDED VALUE

This narrative section should respond to the five questions (a, b, c, d and e) formulated in the template. These questions are central to the core objectives of the CERF. **The questions should be assessed collectively** by in-country CERF stakeholders and answered with elaborations provided, as requested. **NB. It is important that each answer be substantiated with a brief explanation.**

V. Lessons Learned

Section V should present CERF stakeholders' collective reflection on the lessons learned from the CERF process and recommends related follow-up actions for country level actors as well as for the CERF secretariat.

The section contains two tables.

Chapter V should focus on the positive, as well as challenging experiences, throughout the entire process of preparing, submitting and implementing the CERF allocation. It should include

descriptive references of good practices and positive experiences, as well as constructive references to difficulties or constraints encountered during the request for CERF funding (and how the team overcame these challenges or why they did not). It should also provide insights into the decision-making process and suggest improvements.

The chapter has two objectives: to make the CERF secretariat aware of potential areas of improvements in CERF's allocation processes and, secondly, to encourage discussions between all CERF stakeholders in the country on lessons learned and areas of improvement for future CERF submissions. Accordingly, the chapter is divided in two tables.

Table 6: OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CERF SECRETARIAT

In table 6, please list all lessons learned and suggestions to the CERF secretariat for continued improvement of the proposal, allocation, implementation, evaluation and reporting processes.

Table 7: OBSERVATIONS FOR COUNTRY TEAMS

In table 7, please list all lessons learned and suggestions to the actors involved in the response for improvement of the specific response and/or recommendations to the involved humanitarian partners (e.g. UN agencies, NGOs, government partners, community-based organisations).

VI. Project Results

Section VI should contain individual reports on results achieved with each CERF grant prepared by recipient agencies and their implementing partners.

The section contains one table per CERF grant in the overall grant package.

Table 8: PROJECT RESULTS

Each agency receiving CERF funds should prepare one table per CERF grant received. In the template is included a table for each project. Project results should be discussed with implementing partners and with relevant cluster members prior to submission. In case of joint projects between multiple recipient agencies, one table 8 should be jointly prepared. In such cases, the table has been pre-populated by the CERF secretariat accordingly.

The Office of the RC/HC is requested to coordinate the collection of the tables from the recipient agencies and to review the provided data prior to submission to the CERF secretariat.

In each sheet each agency should provide:

1. Agency name.
2. CERF project code as per confirmation letter.
3. Cluster/sector.
4. Agency project title.
5. Approved grant period (including No Cost Extension if applicable).

6. Whether the CERF grant implementation is on-going or concluded.
7.
 - a) The total project budget.
 - b) The total funding received for the project (from all donors).
 - c) The amount received from CERF for the project.
 - d) The total amounts (cash only, not in-kind) forwarded to implementing partners – respectively NGOs and government partners. Please do remember to ensure consistency between the figures reported here and annex 1, as well as in table 3.
8.
 - a) Total number, planned and actual, of individuals directly reached through CERF funding broken down by sex and age group. Please ensure that the planned figures are as indicated in the approved CERF proposal. The actual number should be an estimate and pro-rating according to CERF contribution towards the overall project can be applied if direct CERF attribution is not possible. Please describe potential significant discrepancies between planned and reached beneficiaries.
 - b) Beneficiary profile, based on what specified in the project proposal, reporting the number of beneficiaries belonging to the various categories (refugees, IDPs, host population and others).
9. Original project objective as per CERF Result Framework of the approved CERF proposal.
10. Original expected outcomes as per CERF Result Framework of the approved CERF proposal.
11. Outputs, indicators and activities as per CERF Result Framework of the approved CERF proposal.
12. Please provide here additional information on project's outcomes and in case of any significant discrepancy between planned and actual outcomes, outputs and activities, please describe reasons. Please do note that these should be discrepancies beyond those described in response to question number 8 on discrepancies related to reached beneficiary.
13. Please describe how accountability to affected populations (AAP) has been ensured during project design, implementation and monitoring.
14. Whether the project has been evaluated or not or if evaluation is pending (this does not necessarily have to be a project specific evaluation but rather any evaluation that includes the activities implemented under the project). If evaluation has been carried out, please describe relevant key findings and attach evaluation reports or provide URL. Do note that regular project monitoring not qualifies as evaluation. If evaluation is pending, please inform when evaluation is expected finalized and make sure to submit the report or URL once ready. If no evaluation is carried out or pending, please describe reason for not evaluating project.²

² According to the binding agency/CERF LoU, the eligible organization shall provide OCHA with copies of any evaluations of the project which the eligible organization undertakes.

Annex 1. CERF Funds Disbursed To Implementing Partners

In Annex 1 agencies should provide details on sub-grants undertaken under each CERF grant including information on amounts and timeliness.

The Annex is provided as a separate Excel table to be completed with consolidated information on all sub-grants under all projects of the allocation. The template was forwarded as part of the reporting package but can also be found on the CERF website [here](#).

In annex 1, please provide details about CERF funds disbursed to implementing partners. The table should be prepared by the Office of the RC/HC that consolidates sub-grant information submitted by each recipient agency. Please do not include in-kind partner arrangements in the table (e.g. the value of food for distribution by implementing partners). **Please provide one line per sub-grant** (i.e. several lines per CERF project if with multiple sub-grants).

Please insert the following:

1. CERF project code as per approval letter.
2. Cluster/sector name.
3. Agency name.
4. Implementing partner name.
5. Whether sub-grant required signing of new partnership agreement with implementing partner or if pre-existing partnership agreement was in place.
6. Type of implementing partner (e.g. INGO (International NGO), NNGO (National NGO), Gov. (government partner) or RC (Red Cross/Red Crescent). Please do not include commercial partners in the table and **please do not include in-kind partner arrangements** (e.g. the value of food for distribution by implementing partners).
7. Total CERF funds transferred to partners in US\$ (total amount subcontracted to the partner under this CERF grant).
8. Transfer date of first installment (If the CERF sub-grant is paid to the partner in several instalments, please indicate the date for the first instalment).
9. Estimated start date of CERF-funded activities by partner (If the start date for partner activities predates the transfer of first instalment of CERF sub-grant, please use the 'Comments/Remarks' field to elaborate and explain the modality for this).
10. Please provide relevant remarks.

Annex 2. Acronyms and Abbreviations

To be completed by the Office of the RC/HC based on input from each recipient agency. Please spell out all acronyms when used the first time in the report and provide in alphabetical order a list of acronyms and abbreviations in annex 2 (for help in identifying all acronyms in a word document, see here: <http://www.thewritersforhire.com/writers-resources/find-acronyms-in-ms-word-document/>).