

INTRODUCTION

CERF's Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF), established in 2009 at the request of Member States, private donors and the CERF Advisory Group, mandates annual studies to ensure accountability and measure results. Carried out by independent evaluators, they assess CERF's value added within the overall humanitarian response, identify best practices, challenges, and lessons to inform future initiatives and contribute to broader humanitarian system learning.

Two reviews, on localization and accountability to affected people, are underway in 2024. This note summarizes key information about the assessments for the information of the CERF Advisory Group. The final reports and corresponding management response plans will be shared in due course.

1. Review of CERF Localization Efforts

CERF is placing greater emphasis on involving local and national actors (L/NAs) in its relief efforts. Aligned with the commitments set forth by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Grand Bargain, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) has actively championed localization.

Since 2022, CERF has encouraged greater engagement of L/NAs in its Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) allocation processes and grant implementation. Starting in 2022, the UFE rounds¹ have incorporated specific guidelines on localization, urging country teams to establish clear criteria for consultations and sub-grant a minimum (ambitious) percentage of funds to L/NAs, fostering new partnerships or strengthening existing ones.

Objective and scope

The review of CERF's localization efforts will assess the entire grant process of the respective allocations, from the initial planning through to the final implementation and results. The review will particularly delve into:

- Partnerships, focusing on the quality of existing collaborations and development of new ones.
- Capacity building, investigating how the capacity of L/NAs was strengthened through CERF allocations.
- Financial resources, determining whether these dedicated localization efforts resulted in an increase in sub-grants to L/NAs.
- Coordination, assessing whether the allocations led to greater participation of L/NAs in humanitarian coordination structures.

¹ In the first UFE round of 2022, CERF allocated US\$150 million to 13 countries. The second 2022 UFE round saw \$100 million distributed to 11 countries. The focus on local partnerships continued in the first UFE round of 2023, with \$146 million allocated to eight countries. The second UFE round of 2023 is currently underway in 14 countries with a \$125 million allocation.

- Results, focusing on the impact of increased involvement of L/NAs on the overall quality of response planning and delivery.

The assessment began in the first quarter of 2024 with an in-depth desk review of all grants under the UFE rounds. Eight countries are chosen for case studies. Two (Burkina Faso and Mozambique) will involve on-site visits, while the remaining six (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Yemen) will be assessed remotely. Selection criteria included the presence of interesting localization initiatives, potential learning opportunities, and diversity based on factors like crisis context, grant performance, and logistical feasibility.

2. Review of Pooled Funds Efforts on Accountability to Affected People

The OCHA-managed Pooled Funds – CERF and the Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) – have been instrumental in supporting Accountability to Affected People (AAP) through mainstreaming and targeted allocations, strengthening collective and project-level accountability. CERF's dedicated envelope of \$4.5 million through the UFE allocation in 2023 (with another \$3-4 million planned for 2024) supported collective AAP mechanisms. Similarly, CBPFs in CAR, Lebanon, and Syria Cross Border dedicated \$2.3 million to AAP mechanisms in 2023 and are pioneering innovative initiatives in support of AAP in 2024.

Objective and scope

This review will seek to capture learning across various allocation stages, encompassing both programmatic and process dimensions, as well as partner engagement. In the spirit of complementarity and maximizing impact, it will assess the dedicated AAP efforts of both CERF and CBPFs.

While the methodology and scope of the review are still under discussion, the primary objectives will be to:

- Analyze the Pooled Funds' contribution to advancing commitments to AAP and strengthening system-wide mechanisms.
- Evaluate the Pooled Funds' catalytic effect in attracting additional funding for AAP initiatives.
- Assess the long-term sustainability of these initiatives beyond CERF and/or CBPF support.

The review is scheduled to commence in the third or fourth quarter of 2024.