

Introduction and Background

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) supports UN agencies to bring humanitarian aid to people affected by conflict, displacement or natural disasters around the world. UN agencies¹ often work together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government partners such as the local ministry of health to implement CERF-supported humanitarian action. This sub-granting of CERF funds from UN agencies to implementing partners (IPs) has been a priority issue for the CERF secretariat for several years. The speed at which agencies disburse sub-grants to implementing partners helps determine the timeliness and effectiveness of CERF-funded projects and, to a degree, of the CERF. This concern is not exclusive to the CERF but part of the broader issue of partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs.

Agencies list sub-grants to partners in an annex to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's (RC/HCs) reports on the use of CERF funds. This annex was first introduced in 2010 for reports covering 2009. Starting with the grant reports covering the use of CERF funds in 2011, which were submitted in March 2012, agencies also list sub-grants to governmental partners, as well as the start date of activities by the IPs. Agencies are also requested to outline intended sub-grants to partners in their CERF proposals. This allows for a comparison between planned and actual sub-granting.

This paper presents an interim update on sub-grants in 2013. The update covers about half of the data expected to be included in the final analysis of 2013 sub-grants. [The final figures may therefore differ substantially from the interim figures presented here.](#)

The CERF secretariat in 2013 changed the schedule for CERF grant reports from a fixed annual deadline (15 March of the following year) to a rolling reporting schedule where RC/HCs and recipient agencies report on the use of CERF funds within three months of the expiration of a grant. This will allow the CERF secretariat to compile the final analysis of 2013 sub-grants earlier than in previous years. Due to the annual reporting schedule, the sub-grant analysis for 2012 could only be finalized in April 2014. The final 2013 sub-grant analysis will be available by the end of 2014.

State of the Data, Methodology, and Data Description

The data used for this analysis was extracted from 49 reports of the RC/HCs on the use of CERF funds in 2013 that had been submitted, reviewed, and cleared as of the end of September 2014. This is about 60% of the expected total number of 80 reports. The 49 reports cover 52 grants with a total of 275 projects, out of a total of 83 grants with 528 projects.² The 275 projects included in this analysis received \$253 million in CERF funding, out of a total of \$482 million allocated in 2013. In other words, about half of CERF funding and about half of CERF projects in 2013 are included in this analysis. As a result, the dataset available for this update is incomplete and only permits limited analysis. A comprehensive and final analysis will be undertaken once data from all reporting countries has been finalized and entered into the CERF database.

As in previous years, the CERF secretariat has requested that agencies indicate the type of the implementing partner and when the partner started to implement CERF-funded action. This is in addition to the name of the implementing

¹ The terms "UN agencies", "UN agencies and IOM" and "agencies" are used interchangeably, and is meant to include UN agencies, funds, and programs.

² "Project" refers to individual agency project. These are sometimes developed as part of joint projects to improve coordination, coherence, and the strategic use of CERF funds. A joint project has several budgets, one per agency, and each is counted as an individual project for this analysis. The date on which funds were disbursed from CERF to a UN agency determined whether a project was included in the 2013 analysis.

partner, the amount of the sub-grant, and the date of first instalment. Other information necessary for the analysis, such as the CERF grant amount, the date of CERF disbursement to the recipient UN agency, and the originally proposed funding to implementing partners, was taken from the CERF database.

The CERF reports are due three months after the expiration of a grant.³ Upon receipt, reports are reviewed by the CERF secretariat and, if necessary, returned to the RC/HC with comments and a request for revision. The revised reports are resubmitted to the CERF secretariat. Reports may undergo multiple rounds of commenting and revision before they are finalized and published on the CERF website.⁴ Sub-grant data from the grant reports is only included in the CERF database once the report has been finalized and cleared.

It should also be cautioned that the sub-grant data used in the analysis is as reported from the field and unverified by agency head-quarters or by implementing partners.

Sub-Grant Analysis: Timeliness

This section presents preliminary information on the *timeliness* of sub-granting of CERF funds in 2013 based on a limited number of reports received so far. In some cases, in particular for underfunded grants, the workplan for a project may foresee a specific time when a partner should begin with the implementation of a project component. Thus, a long time until the disbursement and implementation of sub-grants does not necessarily indicate a delay.

Table 1 describes the average number of working days taken by agencies to disburse sub-grants after they have received CERF funding. At 55 days this is 3 days higher than the final figure for 2012 but 3 days faster than the *preliminary* figure for 2012. The increase was higher for the window for underfunded emergencies (12 days) than the rapid response window (3 days). Despite the large increase for the UF window, this is still 11 working days faster than the preliminary 2012 figure. As shown by the difference between preliminary and final figures for 2012, the final figures for 2013 may still change substantially once the complete data are analyzed.

1. Timeliness of CERF sub-grants by Year (disbursement)					
Year	Total number of CERF projects	Total number of sub-grants reported**	Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to first instalment forwarded to implementing partner		
			RR	UFE	All
2009	466	172	49.6	62.8	50.7
2010	469	108	48.4	64.5	53.2
2011	472	663	43.5	68.6	54.5
2012	533	801	43.3	65.1	52.1
2013*	275	509	46.6	76.8	54.8

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

** Only sub-grants with complete timeliness information have been included.

While the average disbursement time of sub-grants has increased, the average time until partners began implementation of CERF-funded humanitarian action has slightly decreased, from 46 days to 44, as shown in Table 2. This time is defined as the number of working days from disbursement of funding from the CERF secretariat until the start of the implementation by a partner. The decrease is due to improvements for underfunded grants, while it took slightly longer for partners to begin implementation of rapid response grants. The time until implementation is in many cases shorter than the time until disbursement because UN agencies have standing agreements with partners, partners can pre-finance activities, or for similar reasons.

³ In a few cases, a grant report may cover more than one grant, for instance if two grants were allocated to the same emergency within a short timeframe. In this case, the reporting date may be adjusted.

⁴ <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/reportsevaluations/residenthumanitarian-coordinators-reports/rchc-reports-2013>

2. Timeliness of CERF sub-grants by Year (implementation)					
Year	Total number of CERF projects	Total number of sub-grants reported**	Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to estimated implementation start by partner		
			RR	UFE	All
2011	472	663	39.4	55.5	46.4
2012	533	801	31.9	66.6	45.9
2013*	275	509	35.8	65.8	43.9

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

** Only sub-grants with complete timeliness information have been included.

About one-third each of sub-grants were given to government partners, international and national NGOs, with a small fraction awarded to Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations (see Table 3). For the first time, the reported number of sub-grants for national NGOs is higher than for international NGOs, although the final figures for 2013 may still change. The average time until disbursement was roughly comparable for government partners and NGOs (55-57 days) but markedly faster for Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations (38 days), which were also the fastest to begin implementation, at less than 20 days. (The low number of sub-grants for Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations means, however, that the categories may not be directly comparable.) International NGOs, at 35 days, in average began with the implementation of CERF-funded activities earlier than both government partners and national NGOs (50 days), possibly due to their higher capacity to pre-finance.

3. Timeliness of 2013 CERF sub-grants by implementing partner type*							
Agency	Total Number of sub-grants reported**	Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to first instalment forwarded to implementing partner			Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to estimated implementation start by partner		
		RR	UFE	All	RR	UFE	All
Government	146	45.1	78.9	56.9	38.5	71.8	50.1
International NGOs	165	46.4	75.0	54.5	23.9	63.8	35.2
National NGOs	175	49.7	79.4	55.3	46.4	66.1	50.1
Red Cross/Crescent	23	28.6	60.9	38.4	12.8	35.0	19.5
TOTAL	509	46.6	76.8	54.8	35.8	65.8	43.9

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

** Only sub-grants with complete timeliness information have been included.

4. Timeliness of 2013 CERF sub-grants by agency*							
Agency	Total Number of sub-grants reported**	Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to first instalment forwarded to implementing partner			Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to estimated implementation start by partner		
		RR	UFE	All	RR	UFE	All
FAO	59	41.6	65.7	48.6	39.9	58.8	45.3
IOM	8	65.0	117.0	71.5	37.9	53.0	39.8
UNFPA	28	21.2	120.4	56.6	33.0	121.3	64.5
UNHCR	62	8.1	17.6	11.8	-5.6	13.0	1.6
UNICEF	210	61.9	98.6	73.4	45.0	87.6	58.4
WFP	77	34.1	72.6	40.1	35.2	32.8	34.8
WHO	54	53.0	50.4	52.7	34.5	46.7	36.1
UNOPS	4	26.5	0.0	26.5	11.3	0.0	11.3
OHCHR	1	115.0	0.0	115.0	47.0	0.0	47.0
UNDP	6	108.8	3.0	91.2	95.0	7.0	80.3
TOTAL	509	46.6	76.8	54.8	35.8	65.8	43.9

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

** Only sub-grants with complete timeliness information have been included.

As shown in Table 4, the timeliness of sub-grant disbursement and implementation varied considerably across UN agencies. UNHCR reported the fastest disbursement and implementation start for sub-grants. According to the reported data UNHCR's partners, on average, began implementation 6 days *before* funding was disbursed from CERF to UNHCR headquarters. This is likely due to early start dates for rapid response projects, where agencies can request a start date earlier than the disbursement date.

The data should be treated with caution. First, as all data reported in this paper, it will change once the complete data for 2013 are available. Second, several agencies report a small number of sub-grants, which means that a few values can have a strong influence on the averages reported here.

5. Timeliness of 2013 CERF sub-grants by country*							
Country	Total Number of sub-grants reported**	Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to first instalment forwarded to implementing partner			Average number of working days from CERF disbursement to estimated implementation start by partner		
		RR	UFE	All	RR	UFE	All
Algeria	3		81.3	81.3		37	37
Burundi	29	29.4	29.4	29.4	14.3	56.7	33.3
Cameroon	7	54.9		54.9	49.9		49.9
CAR	21	54.4		54.4	29.7		29.7
Chad	13	17.5		17.5	1.8		1.8
Republic of Congo	7	29.4		29.4	16.1		16.1
DR Congo	9	25.9		25.9	13.9		13.9
Djibouti	9		117.5	117.5		114.2	114.2
Eritrea	6		71.3	71.3		75.5	75.5
Ethiopia	13	42.0	66.8	63	-0.5	55.4	46.8
Guinea Bissau	8	41.0		41.0	46.5		46.5
Jordan	3	120.3		120.3	34.7		34.7
Kenya	4	40.2		40.2	-7.5		-7.5
DPR Korea	3	10.0	65.5	47.0	-32.0	65.5	33.0
Laos	1	7.0		7.0	1.0		1.0
Lebanon	1	45.0		45.0	197.0		197.0
Liberia	19		126.4	126.4		68.3	68.3
Mali	42	67.2		67.2	62.4		62.4
Mauritania	20	43.7		43.7	43.3		43.3
Mozambique	23	36.9		36.9	8.0		8.0
Myanmar	9	46.9		46.9	49.6		49.6
Niger	38	2.7		2.7	19.9		19.9
Nigeria	4	16.8		16.8	85.3		85.3
Pakistan	22	40.8		40.8	17.5		17.5
oPt	2	10.0		10.0	-8.0		-8.0
Philippines	7	43.0		43.0	29.1		29.1
Rep of the Sudan	103	76.9	71.2	73.7	64.7	68.3	66.7
Rwanda	7	84.1		84.1	50.6		50.6
Senegal	13	24.6		24.6	7.5		7.5
Somalia	6	87.7		87.7	103.8		103.8
Syrian Arab Rep	28	72.6		72.6	54.1		54.1
Uganda	29	23.5	63.3	48.9	-14.7	45.9	22.9
TOTAL	509	46.6	76.8	54.8	35.8	65.8	43.9

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

** Only sub-grants with complete timeliness information have been included.

Similar to the breakdown by agencies, the timeliness data by country shows large variations, and should be treated with similar caution. It is noteworthy that in several cases the reported data indicates that partners began implementing before the funding was disbursed from CERF.

Sub-Grant Analysis: Amount

This section presents preliminary information on the *amount* of sub-granting of CERF funds in 2013.

6. CERF Sub-grant Amounts Reported by Year					
Year	Number of sub-grants reported	Total amount of CERF funds provided	Total amount of CERF sub-grants reported	Sub-granting share of <u>those CERF projects that reported sub-grants</u> (%)	Total reported sub-grants share of <u>all CERF projects of the year</u> (%)
2009	172	\$397.4 million	\$12.8 million	29.4%	3.2%
2010	108	\$415.2 million	\$11.1 million	32.9%	2.7%
2011	1,092	\$426.2 million	\$84.4 million	35.2%	19.8%
2012	938	\$489.5 million	\$91.0 million	28.5%	18.6%
2013*	524	\$253.4 million	\$50.6 million	30.3%	20.5%

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

Table 6 shows the amount of CERF funds allocated by calendar year, the amount of reported sub-grants, the percentage of funds that went to implementing partners only for those projects that reported sub-grants, and the percentage out of all CERF projects.

In 2013, based on the preliminary data, out of \$253 million in CERF funding, UN agencies disbursed \$51 million to partners. The share of overall CERF funding that is sub-granted to partners has remained relatively steady at around one-fifth since 2011. The preliminary figure for 2013, at 21%, is slightly higher than in previous years, making it the highest share on record.

If one looks only at those projects for which sub-grants were reported, the share of the budget that is implemented by a partner has remained relatively steady since 2009, fluctuating between 29% and 35%, with 30% as the preliminary figure for 2013.

This is likely due to a combination of two factors. First, agencies may increasingly rely on partners to implement some of their humanitarian programs. Second, the reporting on CERF sub-grants continues to improve. In 2009 and 2010, UN agencies reported only about one sub-grant for every three to four CERF projects. In 2013, on average they reported two sub-grants for each CERF project.

The figures presented here only include the amount of funding disbursed from a UN agency to a partner. In addition, partners may be responsible for additional activities, which are not captured. For instance, a partner may be responsible for the distribution of food, tools, and seeds, or the use of medical drugs and equipment that have been procured by a UN agency.

Individual sub-grants for international NGOs were, on average, much larger than those for government partners and national NGOs. While all three types of partners received roughly the same number of sub-grants, the total amount of sub-grant funding for international NGOs was much higher than for either of the other categories. This was particularly the case for rapid response grants. Overall, according to the preliminary data, international NGOs accounted for more than half of the amount of sub-granted funding, compared to one quarter for government partners, 16% for national NGOs, and 4% for Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations.

7. CERF 2013 Sub-granting by Type of Implementing Partner*						
Partner Type	RR	% of sub-granted RR	UFE	% of sub-granted UFE	Total	% of sub-granted
Government	\$6,211,353	17.3%	\$6,839,302	46.5%	\$13,050,655	25.8%
International NGO	\$22,555,832	62.9%	\$4,961,683	33.8%	\$27,517,515	54.4%
National NGO	\$6,008,085	16.7%	\$2,134,401	14.5%	\$8,142,486	16.1%
Red Cross/Crescent	\$1,096,795	3.1%	\$763,625	5.2%	\$1,860,420	3.7%
TOTAL	\$35,872,065	100%	\$14,699,011	100%	\$50,571,076	100%

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

UN agencies varied in their use of sub-grants and their preference for types of partners, as shown in Table 8. According to the preliminary data, more than half of CERF funds for UNOPS were implemented by partners, while UN Habitat, UN AIDS, and UNRWA did not work with implementing partners for their 2013 CERF projects, and WFP disbursed only 4% of its CERF funding to partners.

Table 9, on the following page, shows that overall, the amount of sub-grants (as per grant reports) was roughly in line with the planned amount (as per project proposals): Agencies reported \$51 million in sub-grants, compared to a planning figure of \$44 million, an increase of 16%. This varied considerably by agency. Some reported only about two-thirds the amount in sub-grants that they had planned, others double the amount or more.

8. CERF 2013 Sub-granting Amounts Reported by Agency*								
AGENCY	Number of CERF projects in 2013	Total amount of CERF Funding received	Amount of CERF funding reported as sub-granted to implementing partners					Reported sub-grants' share of all CERF funds to the agency
			GOV	INGO	NNGO	RedC	Total	%
FAO	25	\$22,674,641	\$973,490	\$1,692,631	\$260,932	\$0	\$2,927,053	12.9%
IOM	15	\$9,389,848	\$0	\$789,139	\$48,246	\$176,703	\$1,014,089	10.8%
UN Habitat	2	\$499,999	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
UNDP	6	\$2,724,796	\$201,212	\$156,000	\$406,280	\$0	\$763,492	28.0%
UNFPA	24	\$5,678,677	\$815,920	\$238,777	\$470,997	\$9,469	\$1,535,163	27.0%
UNHCR	30	\$39,120,897	\$1,456,541	\$9,881,408	\$1,239,761	\$484,928	\$13,062,638	33.4%
UNICEF	80	\$56,695,750	\$8,317,456	\$12,469,032	\$3,166,216	\$181,660	\$24,134,364	42.6%
UNOPS	2	\$1,361,821	\$0	\$481,897	\$285,409	\$0	\$767,306	56.3%
WFP	41	\$81,817,091	\$71,896	\$1,037,747	\$1,029,918	\$708,660	\$2,848,221	3.5%
WHO	42	\$25,960,521	\$1,178,665	\$770,883	\$1,109,727	\$299,000	\$3,358,275	12.9%
UN Women	2	\$481,607	\$35,475	\$0	\$95,000	\$0	\$130,475	27.1%
UNAIDS	1	\$52,630	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
UNRWA	4	\$6,849,889	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
OHCHR	1	\$85,707	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000	35.0%
TOTAL	275	\$253,393,874	\$13,050,655	\$27,517,515	\$8,142,486	\$1,860,420	\$50,571,076	20.0%

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

9. Planned Versus Reported CERF Sub-granting by Agency for 2013*							
Agency	Number of CERF projects in 2013	Proposed		Reported			Reported vs proposed amount (%)
		Number of projects with sub-grants	Amount of funding for sub-grants	Number of projects with sub-grants	Number of sub-grants	Total sub-granting amount	
FAO	25	20	\$4,264,880	18	59	\$2,927,053	68.6%
IOM	15	5	\$324,830	5	8	\$1,014,089	312.2%
UN Habitat	2	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	N/A
UNDP	6	3	\$383,312	3	6	\$763,492	199.2%
UNFPA	24	13	\$635,902	16	30	\$1,535,163	241.4%
UNHCR	30	23	\$8,613,552	24	64	\$13,062,638	151.7%
UNICEF	80	57	\$20,022,782	64	210	\$24,134,364	120.5%
UNOPS	2	2	\$805,690	2	4	\$767,306	95.2%
WFP	41	23	\$4,469,368	25	85	\$2,848,221	63.7%
WHO	42	29	\$4,051,069	27	54	\$3,358,275	82.9%
UN Women	2	1	\$133,600	1	3	\$130,475	97.7%
UNAIDS	1	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	N/A
UNRWA	4	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	N/A
OHCHR	1	0	\$0	1	1	\$30,000	N/A
TOTAL	275	176	\$43,704,985	186	524	\$50,571,076	115.7%

* Partial data based on reporting from about half of CERF funding and half of CERF projects in 2013.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This interim update on CERF sub-grants to implementing partners in 2013 is based on about half the data that will be available for the final analysis, which will be compiled by the end of the year. While preliminary, it serves as an important tool to gauge the involvement of implementing partners in implementation of CERF projects including the timeliness of their engagement. The CERF secretariat has shared the preliminary data with agencies and once the complete analysis of 2013 sub-grants is available the CERF secretariat will approach agencies to discuss the data in detail and to better understand the findings and their operational impact.

The CERF secretariat is also working together with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Humanitarian Financing Task Team, which the Chief of CERF co-chairs, on best practices to speed up the implementation of CERF grants. The Task Team has written a paper on best practices and lessons learned which will allow agencies to learn from one another. The paper will be presented during the CERF Advisory Group's October 2014 meeting.

The CERF secretariat will over the coming months include additional data on sub-grants in its database from the full set of completed RC/HC reports and will revert to the Advisory Group with a more extensive analysis for its first meeting in 2015.

CERF secretariat, 14 October 2014