



1. Purpose

This paper provides a general overview of the methodology and key decision-making processes for the selection of humanitarian operations for funding under the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) Window.

2. CERF's Mandate and Objectives

The CERF was established by the General Assembly in 2005¹ to ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian emergencies. The three primary objectives of the Fund are to: 1) promote early action and response to reduce loss of life; 2) enhance response to time-critical humanitarian requirements; and 3) strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises.²

Through the CERF UFE window, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) allocates financial support for life-saving activities in the least funded and forgotten humanitarian emergencies. Countries with significant humanitarian needs and demonstrable underfunding are eligible for UFE support. UFE grants support essential humanitarian activities; partners are expected to simultaneously seek other resources to complement the CERF funding.

3. Country Selection Process

Countries are selected on the basis of a quantitative data analyses of humanitarian needs, risks, vulnerabilities and funding levels, complemented by a review of qualitative, contextual information and consultations including with UN agencies and OCHA headquarters, and NGOs.

Step 1. Analysis of needs, risks, vulnerabilities and funding levels

Since 2016, the CERF secretariat has relied on an index – the CERF Index for Risk and Vulnerability (CIRV) – to rank countries. This index assigns a value between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100 to every country, including countries without a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or other response plans/appeals.

CERF's index is calculated using publicly available quantitative and qualitative datasets (See Annex for details). The CIRV is composed of three composite indices:

- The INFORM Risk Index – a global open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises.
- The INFORM Severity Index – an improved way to objectively measure and compare the severity of humanitarian crises and disasters globally.
- A composite of indices – comprising qualitative and quantitative data on early warnings (including the IASC's Alert, Early Warning & Readiness Report), conflict, and food insecurity.

The CERF secretariat uses funding data from OCHA's *Financial Tracking Service* in order to identify humanitarian operations and emergencies with the lowest levels of funding coverage.³

¹ General Assembly Resolution, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/RES/60/124)

² Secretary General's bulletin, "Establishment and operation of the Central Emergency Response Fund" (ST/SGB/2020/5)

³ FTS is a centralized source of curated, continuously updated, fully downloadable data and information on humanitarian funding flows. Government donors, UN-administered funds, UN agencies, NGOs and other humanitarian actors and partners exchange data and information with FTS. For countries with a HRP or other response plans/appeals, FTS tracks total requirements and funding received (towards the plan, and outside of the plan). For countries without a HRP or other response plans/appeals, FTS only tracks funding received.

The CERF secretariat plots countries with HRPs (or other response plans/appeals) on a scatterplot based on their CIRV scores and the percentage of funding received towards the plan in order to identify a preliminary list of candidate countries with high needs and low levels of funding. The CERF secretariat also calculates CIRV scores for “non-HRP countries” with humanitarian operations to inform a shortlist for consideration.⁴

Step 2. Multi-stakeholder consultations

The CERF secretariat consults with agency experts for additional contextual and programmatic inputs to the analysis, and insight on agency country priorities. This includes humanitarian information on both HRP and non-HRP contexts, as well as funding information for non-HRP priority countries.

The CERF briefs the UFE working group (UFEWG)⁵ at the outset of the process, and consults UFEWG members on their preferences and priorities.

Step 3. Recommendation to the ERC

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis and guided by stakeholder consultations, the CERF secretariat recommends a final list of country candidates and proposed funding envelopes to the ERC for consideration. The CERF secretariat refines this list as needed based on the ERC’s feedback, collecting further information where necessary.

4. Application and Disbursement Process

Once the ERC has endorsed the final list of countries to receive funding, and has determined the funding envelopes for each country, the application process for a UFE grant is similar to that of a CERF Rapid Response (RR) window request.

The RC/HCs confirm their commitment to lead the prioritization process in consultation with in-country humanitarian partners. This includes convening multi-stakeholder discussions to develop final allocation strategies with funding breakdowns by agency and sector.

The RC/HCs submit a full application package, including agency-specific project proposals and budgets. As per standard practice, the CERF secretariat reviews the proposals and ultimately submits project approval recommendations to the ERC on an individual basis. Once all project grants are disbursed, the ERC officially communicates to the RC/HC the details of the finalized allocation and related implementation timeline and reporting requirements.

⁴ CERF does not initially plot non-HRP countries on the scatterplot because funding levels as a percentage of requirements is not available via FTS.

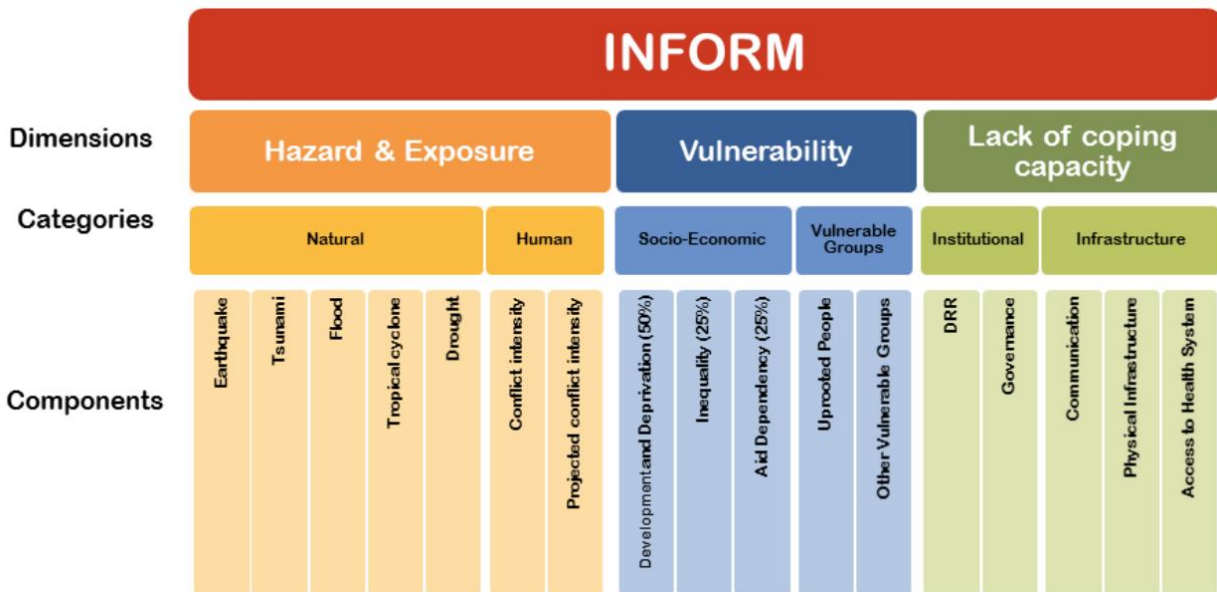
⁵ The working group historically comprises representatives from: FAO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO.

Annex 1: CERF’s Index for Risk and Vulnerability (CIRV)

The CIRV comprises 3 core dimensions, each of which is based on a subset of indices. These dimensions are weighted equally (i.e. 1/3 each), except for countries that are not listed on the INFORM Severity Index, in which case the 1st and 3rd dimension are weighted at 50% each.

		Countries listed in the INFORM Severity Index	Countries not listed in the INFORM Severity Index
1	INFORM Risk Index <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters Comprises 3 dimensions: hazards & exposure, vulnerability, and lack of coping capacity Includes over 50 indicators including dimensions on conflict, natural disaster, displaced and other vulnerable people, coping capacity Forward-looking (3-5 years) 	33%	50%
2	INFORM Severity Index <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved way to analyse the severity of humanitarian crises globally Comprises 3 dimensions: the geographical and human impact of the crisis itself; the conditions of the people affected; and the complexity of the crisis in terms of factors that affects its mitigation or resolution Includes 30 indicators Updated monthly 	33%	n/a
3	Composite index <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprises 3 equally-weighted dimensions: the risk of humanitarian needs, the prevalence of food insecurity, and the risks of conflict. Draws on qualitative reports and assessments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Alert, Early Warning & Readiness Report FEWSNet: <i>Food Assistance Outlook Brief</i> FSIN: <i>Global Report on Food Crises</i> FAO: <i>Quarterly Global Report on Crop Prospects and Food Situation</i> FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO: <i>The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)</i> International Crisis Group: <i>CrisisWatch</i> global conflict tracker 	33%	50%

Annex 2: Composition of the *INFORM* Risk Index



Annex 3: Composition of the *INFORM* Severity Index

