

Background

1. In all its allocations, the CERF works with RC/HCs and implementing agencies to ensure that measures are being taken to be accountable to the people we serve. In line with the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, CERF tracks the fulfillment of Commitments 2 (Participation and Partnership) and 3 (Information, Feedback and Action). In all applications for funding, CERF requires applicant organizations to demonstrate that diverse groups of affected people are directly consulted on project development, their feedback is considered during project design and implementation, and they are involved in project implementation and monitoring. CERF also requires agencies to demonstrate how they implement confidential, accessible, and inclusive feedback mechanisms during the project implementation period. In addition to project-level AAP requirements, RC/HCs are also asked to explain in all CERF submissions how existing collective AAP systems and processes in-country are used to support CERF allocation strategies and priorities, and to detail what collective AAP mechanisms are in place, how CERF-funded projects link up to the mechanisms and how consultations with affected people inform the development of the allocation strategy and the implementation and monitoring.
2. In addition to these actions, and as part of this Underfunded Emergencies allocation (UFE) round, **the ERC has decided to commit an additional dedicated funding envelope to help strengthen collective AAP measures** in select UFE-recipient country-operations. This amount will be in addition to the regular UFE funding envelope. The overarching objective of the dedicated AAP allocation is to empower affected people, including women, girls and young people, to continuously and effectively shape humanitarian decision-making, by supporting and engaging them, and the organizations that represent them, as equal partners. The dedicated funding envelope aims to do this by directly supporting sustainable initiatives that will enhance collective¹ AAP practices and processes in the humanitarian operations supported.

Process

3. As part of the CERF allocation process for the dedicated AAP funding, **the RC/HC should:**
 - a. **Consult the AAP working group or equivalent coordination structure²** (including the AAP focal point in OCHA) in the respective country operation (where such groups exist), to ensure that the CERF-funded activities address AAP needs at the whole-of-response level (rather than just at the level of agency or sector response).
 - b. **Ensure that the HCT is consulted and supports the proposed use of the AAP funds.** The RC/HC should also ensure that AAP is a key dimension of the strategy for the 'regular' CERF UFE allocation, and that the dedicated AAP proposal is considered as part of the overall UFE discussions.

¹ For the intents and purposes of this document, collective AAP mechanisms are understood as response-wide mechanisms that bring together multiple humanitarian actors to strengthen engagement with and accountability to affected people. Collective AAP practice and approaches refers to the use of such mechanisms in the country operation.

² These can take different names in different contexts, such as Communication and Community Engagement Working Group, Community Engagement and Accountability Task Force, Communicating with Communities Task Team, amongst others.

- c. **Prepare a submission consisting of a dedicated chapeau that describes the proposed AAP initiative and its rationale**, including how it meets the criteria outlined in paragraph 4 below, accompanied by a project proposal in the standard CERF project template.
- d. **RC/HCs are expected to oversee the AAP project activities** either through the HCT or by establishing a dedicated project steering group (e.g. the AAP working group or designated steering group) that will also lead on learning.

Project Criteria & Eligible Activities

4. **The additional CERF AAP funds are not guaranteed and will only be available for approved AAP projects that meet the following minimum criteria and principles:**
 - a. **Support collective AAP initiatives** that benefit and improve the humanitarian response at large in the country.
 - b. Be **catalytic** in launching or piloting new or enhanced AAP initiatives that will strengthen collective AAP going forward (funds should not be used to fund existing AAP activities)
 - c. Be **sustainable** beyond the CERF-funded project period.
 - d. Be accompanied by a HCT **commitment to learning** from the initiative and to sharing this learning.
 - e. Be focused on **few impactful activities**, with the expectation of a single project implemented on behalf of the wider humanitarian community.
 - f. Have an **implementation period** of up to 12 months.
 - g. Be focused and strategic with a **high return on investment, and limited budgets** (the ERC has set aside an overall global envelope of around \$5 million to support selected AAP initiatives across the 14 recipient countries in this UFE round)

5. **Considering the objectives and criteria set out for the allocation, the following four areas of AAP-related activities have been pre-identified as suitable for support in principle**, on the condition that CERF funds can serve as a catalyst for advancing sustainable initiatives within these areas. RC/HC/HCTs may also propose other impactful collective AAP activities that meet the criteria set out above. Activities are not guaranteed CERF support as this ultimately depends on approval by the ERC, informed by a technical review and assessment.
 - i. **Establishment/improvement of collective feedback mechanisms that support/are linked to decision-making.** Establish and promote collective response-wide mechanisms for affected people for grievances, redress, complaint, feedback and information provision³. These mechanisms shall ensure that feedback is acted upon in a timely and appropriate manner, referrals are made securely and effectively, complaints are addressed promptly, and information collected from affected people is used to inform decisions and actions in the response, including course correctors, so that programming is adjusted, and the feedback loop is closed. Support is conditioned on feedback mechanisms being at the whole of response level, their design being led by affected people's preferences and in compliance with the IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action⁴, and that the HCT/UNCT commits to continue funding the

³ To help ensure that affected people have safe, inclusive and readily available closed-loop feedback channels to request information or assistance, to assess and comment on the performance of humanitarian action, as well as to make complaints about any issue, including sensitive topics such as security, protection, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption, racism and discrimination, environmental violations, and others.

⁴ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/operational-response/iasc-operational-guidance-data-responsibility-humanitarian-action>

mechanism sustainably after the CERF funding has finished. CERF funds should not be used to fund ongoing activities but might be considered for the implementation of catalytic improvements to existing mechanisms.

- ii. **Activities/systems that support the identification and inclusion of minorities/marginalized groups.** Targeted activities and systems for identification and inclusion of minorities and marginalized people and groups for equal access to humanitarian assistance (e.g., elderly, people with disabilities and others excluded due to physical, cultural, or other reasons and therefore not able to access assistance equally). Potential initiatives shall benefit the wider humanitarian response (not only an individual project/agency).
- iii. **Activities that improve people's access to information.** Targeted activities and systems that enhance information provision, including in local languages, to communities and that promote closing the feedback loop with communities⁵. This cannot be a stand-alone one-off activity but should aim to lead to sustainable collective approaches for systematic provision of life-saving information to affected people in support of a more effective and accountable humanitarian response.
- iv. **Initiatives that systematically gather and evaluate beneficiary perception,** such as systematic independent perception surveys and joint assessments and reviews to assess the extent to which affected people's needs are being responded to through humanitarian action; and to inform discussions and decisions at the HCT and ICCG. The CERF AAP funds should not be used to cover existing initiatives, or fund stand-alone one-off activities. Focus should be on new initiatives to establish sustainable systems for collective use of these tools or data to improve the humanitarian response⁶. This may include secondary support activities such as joint aggregation and analysis of data to inform strategic discussions and follow-up actions.

⁵ E.g., joint projects with local media, civil society, community radio (where communities access information via radio), SMS-based information dissemination systems, or dedicated information kiosks in displacement camps or local community centers etc.

⁶ Ideally, these initiatives will also help gauge affected people's perception of the humanitarian assistance funded through this CERF UFE round.