

This note sets out the guidance for a dedicated climate action envelope of up to US\$10 million, complementing the regular US\$100 million allocation under CERF's first Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) allocation for 2025.

1. Background

Climate change is a major driver of rising global humanitarian needs. In addition to extreme weather and climate-related disasters becoming more frequent and more intense, climate-related shocks and stresses exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of individuals and communities in already fragile settings, which are often hit the hardest and which benefit the least from climate action.¹

As the gap between humanitarian needs and available financing continues to grow, it is imperative to address humanitarian needs in fragile contexts whilst supporting communities to cope with, and adapt to, climate change to prevent further destabilization. The [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) and [IASC Climate Crises Roadmap](#) articulate the humanitarian community's commitment to advocate for and support the most vulnerably communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis and to advance climate action as a central part of the humanitarian response.

Since 2006, CERF has been at the forefront of the climate crisis response in fragile contexts, allocating some US\$2.6 billion – over a quarter of its funding – to save lives and support people affected by climate disasters such as droughts, floods and storms. CERF is a leader in anticipatory action for climate-related disasters, minimizing humanitarian impact by supporting actions before a crisis hits leading to timely, cost-effective assistance that support people's self-reliance.² Within its life-saving mandate, CERF also regularly supports humanitarian actions that not only save lives, but also enhance adaptation and resilience.³

As the climate crisis escalates, strengthening CERF's support for impactful humanitarian climate action becomes ever more critical. In response, the ERC under [CERF's second UFE round of 2024](#), piloted a thematic US\$10.5 million funding envelope supporting additional and catalytic life-saving humanitarian initiatives that build communities' resilience and adaptive capacities to climate-related hazards. Many initiatives funded were innovative pilots with significant potential for scale up and replication. The initiatives supported local, national and international climate-related strategies, including National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions. The high demand for this funding, with US\$25 million requested against US\$10.5 million available, underscored the urgent need for such dedicated support and the strong commitment of partners on the ground.

Recognizing the ongoing need for such targeted funding, the ERC decided to commit a second climate action envelope of up to US\$10 million under CERF's first UFE round of 2025. This envelope aims to catalyze additional or improved life-saving humanitarian actions that enhance the adaptive capacities and resilience

¹ Wong, C. (2022). [How can climate finance work better for fragile and conflict-affected regions?](#)

² To mitigate humanitarian impacts of projected climate-related shocks, CERF in 2024 supported 20 [anticipatory action](#) frameworks in 17 countries, committing \$122.8 million, of which \$19.6 million was disbursed in Bangladesh, Chad, Niger and Nepal.

³ For instance, in 2024, through a Rapid Response allocation CERF supported 740,000 people facing food insecurity and malnutrition during the lean season in Nigeria by providing drought-resilient agricultural inputs and micro-gardening kits. CERF partners also established Farmer Field Schools to build farmers' capacities and disseminate knowledge on climate-smart agriculture, helping them cope with the current lean season but also strengthening their capacity to withstand future ones. Other CERF-funded activities strengthening climate adaptation include (non-exhaustive list): light rehabilitation of WASH structures to also better withstand future climate shocks; rehabilitating water pumps and upgrading them to operate on solar power or incorporate water-saving technologies; making learning center structures climate-resilient; rehabilitating natural resource-based infrastructure through Cash for Work activities; recovering agricultural assets and livelihoods destroyed by climate shocks and protecting them against future shocks; provision of climate-smart shelter assistance.

of communities affected by climate-related shocks and stresses in already fragile contexts. It builds on the achievements and insights gained from the first climate action envelope to maximize its impact.

The climate action envelope will be in addition to the regular UFE funding envelope of US\$100 million. As for all CERF allocations, the expectation is that humanitarian activities under the regular UFE envelope consider climate-related risks of affected communities as relevant, in line with good humanitarian programming practice, whereas the climate action envelope will focus specifically on enhancing the climate dimension of the humanitarian response by supporting additional, dedicated actions that are catalytic in reducing climate-driven vulnerabilities in the existing emergency situations.

This dedicated climate action envelope has been made possible thanks to generous donor contributions to the [CERF Climate Action Account](#). The Account offers a quick, efficient and impactful avenue for climate-related finance to assist the world's most vulnerable communities facing the consequences of the climate crisis.

2. Scope and objectives

The objective of the climate action envelope is to build on CERF's UFE allocation, which targets chronically underfunded complex crises, to drive individual responses and the wider humanitarian system towards more climate-smart life-saving humanitarian action that also supports people's adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses.

The aim of the climate action envelope is to bring about change by catalyzing climate-smart initiatives that would otherwise not have happened at this time. Funding through the envelope should advance new or best practices, or strategically enhance existing ones, in life-saving humanitarian action that supports vulnerable communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses. This would lead to positive change beyond the lifespan of the CERF-funded activities.

To be eligible for funding, proposed activities will need to be in line with CERF's life-saving mandate, and fall within CERF's distinct niche in the climate financing landscape.

Activities focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR) or preparedness are not eligible for funding under this envelope; only those addressing immediate humanitarian needs and concurrently building resilience and adaptive capacities to future climate-related shocks and stresses will be considered. CERF's support for coordinated anticipatory action frameworks is managed separately and is not part of this envelope.

CERF recognizes the importance of advancing humanitarian initiatives that mitigate the impacts of climate change and minimize the environmental impact of aid operations, with the expectation that this is a standard consideration in all CERF submissions and reflected in project proposals as relevant to ensure visibility. However, the primary focus of this specific thematic envelope is advancing climate-smart humanitarian activities that directly benefit affected populations by addressing immediate needs and strengthening their adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses.

Applying for funds from the climate action envelope is optional. The Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (RC/HC) of each UFE recipient country should decide whether to apply for it in consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) (or UN Country Team (UNCT), in countries without an HCT) and relevant stakeholders.

- To apply, the RC/HC, with the support of the OCHA/Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) focal point, must submit a single completed application template (Annex found at the end of this document). The proposal should be focused and prioritized on few high impact activities. Additionally, the overarching strategic impact of the climate action envelope proposal must be reflected in the overall UFE allocation strategy.

- Climate action envelope application may include no more than three initiatives per country. Each initiative may be either a single agency project or a joint initiative of multiple agencies. Joint initiatives of more than one agency are encouraged, provided they represent genuine collaborative efforts where implementing agencies co-design and coordinate implementation to achieve meaningful collective impact.
- If a country operation decides not to apply for the climate funding envelope, the CERF secretariat should be notified, and the UFE allocation can proceed under standard procedures without the submission of a climate action envelope application template.

Applying for funding does not imply that funds are guaranteed. The overall amount of the climate action envelope, and therefore the availability for each country, is limited, and funding may have to be prioritized for proposals that best meet the criteria. Even if a country proposal is selected for support, not all agencies included in the proposal may necessarily be funded through the envelope. The final funding envelope will be determined by the eligibility of the proposed activities as detailed in the endorsed proposals and select agencies' project and budget documents to be reviewed by CERF. Proposals that are realistic and cost-effective in their funding ask may stand a better chance of being selected.

When developing a proposal for funding under the climate action envelope, RC/HCs, in consultation with the HCT/UNCT and implementing Agencies, shall consider new high-impact climate-smart humanitarian activities which address immediate life-saving needs and at the same time help build adaptive capacity and resilience against future climate-related hazards.⁴ The following shall be considered when developing proposals:

- Funding from the climate action envelope should be used catalytically to overcome barriers to making humanitarian responses in underfunded crises more climate smart.
- Proposals should demonstrate concretely how additional funds will support additional activities or new approaches which would not have been submitted to CERF in the original project proposal(s). Proposals should clearly justify the need for additional resources to enhance the climate sensitivity of the overall UFE allocation and convincingly demonstrate how they will strengthen vulnerable communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related hazards. Proposals that meaningfully involve local and/or national partners as well as affected communities in the development and implementation of the initiatives, thereby supporting locally led adaptation, will be prioritized. All proposals should ensure that investments under the climate action envelope contribute to informing and shaping future program practices beyond CERF-funded activities.
- Innovative approaches to climate-smart humanitarian action – including new technologies, novel practices, pilots, or unique approaches – are strongly encouraged. Where innovative solutions are proposed, they should demonstrate scalability and replicability, and be supported by learning and documentation to facilitate adaptation and expansion to other contexts.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Only countries selected for funding under the 'regular' 2025 Round 1 UFE allocation are eligible to apply for additional funding under the climate action envelope.⁵ Applying for funding under the climate action

⁴ For examples of activities that may be eligible for funding under this thematic envelope, please refer to the summary note on initiatives funded under the climate action envelope as part of CERF's second UFE round in 2024: <https://cerf.un.org/apply-for-a-grant/underfunded-emergencies>. Please note that the activities outlined in this note are examples only, these are not exhaustive nor prescriptive, and eligibility for funding is not guaranteed for – or restricted to – the same activities in proposals for this thematic envelope. CERF encourages applicants to pursue additional activities that help advance climate-smart humanitarian action. In line with CERF's Life-Saving Criteria, activities such as refresher trainings or orientation sessions may only be included as a small component in proposals if very well justified. The proposal, and the majority of its associated budget, should focus on direct assistance to affected populations.

⁵ The 10 countries selected for funding under CERF's first UFE round in 2025 are: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, Honduras, Mauritania, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, Venezuela and Zambia.

envelope does not preclude an implementing agency from receiving funding under the ‘regular’ UFE allocation, and vice versa.

Only proposals that meet the following minimum criteria will be considered eligible for funding under the climate action envelope. Even when meeting these minimum criteria, funding from the climate envelope is not guaranteed as funds are limited. Proposals must:

- Clearly demonstrate how they are facilitating additional actions supporting crisis-affected communities’ adaptation and resilience to climate shocks and stresses, as described in section 2 (Scope and objectives), while adhering to CERF’s [Life-Saving Criteria](#). Only proposals that can convincingly show how they will help affected people become more climate resilient are eligible for support under this thematic envelope.
- Articulate why the additional funds from the climate envelope are needed to implement the proposed climate initiatives, and clearly explain how the extra funds will be invested.
- Be clearly and strategically situated within the climate dimension of the humanitarian context, and well contextualized and coordinated as relevant with broader climate strategies or initiatives in the country.^{6, 7} Linkages with initiatives funded through climate, development, and/or peace finance streams are strongly encouraged.
- Articulate how target communities and local partners will be involved in decision-making and implementation.
- Articulate how the CERF-funded initiatives are expected to lead to change beyond the allocation’s lifespan.
- Be accompanied by an HCT/UNCT commitment to learning from the CERF-funded climate initiatives and to sharing this learning.
- Be focused, strategic and cost-efficient, maximizing impact with limited budgets.
- Can be fully implemented within a 12-month period.⁸

4. Application process for the thematic envelope

In deciding whether to apply to the climate action envelope, the RC/HC should:

- Consult relevant climate, sustainability and/or resilience experts from Agencies, OCHA and other partners to ensure that the proposed activities align with the criteria and objectives of the thematic envelope and consequently meaningfully strengthen the resilience of affected people against climate-related hazards.
- Consult the HCT/UNCT to obtain buy-in and support for the proposed use of the climate-related funding. Consultations should ensure that the activities proposed under the thematic envelope align with the envisaged overall operational prioritization and address most critical humanitarian needs.

If decided to apply to the climate action envelope, the RC/HC, should:

⁶ E.g. climate-relevant sections of HNRPs, UNDAF or other country-level planning documents, strategies and/or visions; Agency and inter-Agency guidance and strategy documents such as the [IASC Climate Crisis Roadmap](#); Government plans such as [National Adaptation Plans](#) or [Nationally Determined Contributions](#); or other relevant climate commitments such as the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#).

⁷ E.g. relevant to the thematic targets of the [Global Goal on Adaptation](#), as articulated in the [United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience](#), such as: enhancing climate resilient water supply, sanitation and access to safe water; attaining and increasing food production and supply; promoting climate-resilience health services and climate related morbidity and mortality; increasing resilience of infrastructure; and reducing climate related impacts on livelihoods and ecosystems.

⁸ While CERF recognizes the benefit of integrated, multi-year climate adaptation and resilience initiatives, funding under this climate action envelope is intended to address immediate humanitarian needs while simultaneously supporting adaptation and resilience. As such, it cannot be used as seed funding for resilience and/or adaptation initiatives designed to be implemented over more than 12 months, unless co-funding is secured to sustain the programming beyond the CERF grant expiration. Nevertheless, CERF strongly encourages proposals under the climate action envelope to be complementary to ongoing or planned longer-term adaptation and resilience initiatives, ensuring alignment and maximizing impact.

- Oversee the submission of a separate completed application template (see the application template in the Annex). A submission can contain no more than three separate projects, ideally less. Projects can be either a single agency initiative or a joint initiative of multiple agencies.
- Ensure that the strategic impact of the climate action envelope proposal(s) is reflected in the overall UFE allocation strategy.
- The proposals will be reviewed and assessed centrally against alignment with the objectives and criteria of the climate action envelope, and presented to the ERC for an overall portfolio decision.

If the ERC decides to allocate funding through the thematic envelope following the technical review of the submitted strategies, relevant Agencies should:

- Prepare and submit project proposals to CERF, showing how the additional funding will be used to implement the approved strategy, in alignment with the objectives and eligibility criteria of the thematic envelope. This should include a detailed narrative and comprehensive financial breakdown demonstrating the added value of the additional funding in making the response more climate smart. All project proposals under the climate action envelope must be submitted to CERF through OneGMS as separate projects with a unique project code, even if an agency has already submitted a project proposal under the same allocation with 'regular' UFE funding. Projects under the climate action envelope must remain closely aligned with and catalytically support the approved strategy of the overall UFE allocation for the respective country, and proposals should explicitly demonstrate this alignment.
- Coordinate with OCHA at the field-level and the CERF secretariat to address any comments to the proposals from CERF's technical review and finalize the proposals accordingly.
- Implement the activities under the thematic envelope upon disbursement of funds.

During and after the project implementation, the RC/HC and Agencies should:

- Report on results and learning following the conclusion of implementation.

Annex – Climate action envelope application template

Please note:

- Prior to completing the template and developing the proposal, please review the full guidance above.
- Each country operation applying for funding under the climate action envelope may submit only one complete application template, which may include no more than three climate-smart humanitarian initiatives.
- Please keep the submission precise and succinct and adhere to the word limit. For submissions involving multiple initiatives, the word limit may be proportionally increased.
- If the submission proposes more than one initiative/project, please describe each as relevant.
- If this proposal is approved, select Agencies will be invited to submit the full individual project proposals and budgets to be considered under the climate action envelope, in line with the above guidance, as part of the country team's full application for the UFE allocation.

I. Context (*max. 500 words*)

Please provide relevant information on how the climate crisis impacts the context in which this UFE allocation is to be implemented, including:

- The types of climate-related shocks and stresses (e.g., floods, droughts, storms) that are currently most prevalent, including their severity and frequency.
- How and to what extent do climate-related shocks and stresses drive humanitarian needs in the targeted areas?
- Any other relevant information

II. Proposal for funding from special UFE climate action envelope (*max. 1,000 words per initiative*)

Please explain here the overall proposed activities, including by addressing the questions below (by project). If more than one initiative is proposed, please explain how these complement each other.

1. What is the funding request (in US\$) from the climate action envelope *in addition to* the UFE allocation amount communicated by the ERC, and how will this funding be utilized? Please specify the implementing agency and sector(s) involved.
2. What activities will be implemented with the funding from the climate action envelope? How will they differ from – and improve upon – existing approaches?
3. How will the proposed climate action initiative contribute to the overall strategic impact of the UFE allocation?
4. What are the geographic areas of implementation?
5. What vulnerable groups of people will be targeted, and why? How will they be targeted?
6. How will local communities and partners be involved in decision-making and implementation?
7. How will gender equality and gender-based violence protection be considered in the project designs?
8. What are the implementation modalities proposed (e.g., in-kind or cash)?
9. What are the expected humanitarian outcomes of the activities?

III. Justification for eligibility of the proposed activities (*max. 1,000 words per initiative*)

Please explain in detail how the planned activities under the climate envelope will reduce exposure or vulnerability, supporting adaptation and resilience, to future climate-related shocks and stresses for targeted individuals or communities, while also addressing life-saving humanitarian needs?⁹ If more than one initiative is proposed, please explain by initiative.

IV. Strategic positioning and added value of the proposal (*max. 1,000 words per initiative*)

Please explain here the expected strategic benefits and added value of the activities proposed under this thematic envelope, including:

1. How will these activities be leveraged to incentivize and support more climate-smart humanitarian action at the country operation level going forward?
2. How will these activities build on, and link to, existing initiatives and/or broader climate strategies in the country, particularly those focused on building resilience and adaptation (e.g., Government plans such as National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions; climate-relevant sections of Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans, the UN Development Assistance Framework or other country-level planning documents, strategies and/or visions; Agency and inter-Agency guidance and strategy documents; or other relevant climate commitments)?
3. How are these activities linked with other initiatives funded through climate, development, and/or peace finance streams?
4. If new and innovative solutions are pursued, how and to what extent are they replicable and scalable, and how and to what extent can these solutions be adapted and expanded into other contexts?
5. Does the proposed strategy in promoting climate resilience and adaptation through this CERF allocation complement or build on similar efforts supported by the Country-Based Pooled Fund or a Regional Humanitarian Fund? If so, how?
6. Any other relevant information

⁹ To address this question, the adaptation-relevant segments of the [OECD DAC Rio Markers for Climate Handbook](#) may be consulted, along with resources from the UNFCCC, IPCC, such as their [glossary](#), and other relevant UN and non-UN resources, such as the IFRC and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre's [Guide to climate-smart programmes and operations](#).