

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. One of the Fund's three primary objectives is to 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 additional stakeholders including IFRC and NGOs.

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

Since 2016, the CERF secretariat has relied on the CERF Index for Risk and Vulnerability (CIRV) to analyse the levels of humanitarian needs, risks and vulnerabilities in every country. 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 and emergency operation scale-up (including the IASC's Alert, Early Warning & Readiness Report and humanitarian system-wide scale-up declarations), conflict, and food insecurity.

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)

In parallel, the CERF secretariat uses funding data from OCHA's [Financial Tracking Service \(FTS\)](#)³ and other relevant funding data in order to identify humanitarian operations and emergencies with the lowest levels of funding coverage.

Step 2. Multi-stakeholder consultations

The CERF secretariat consults with an inter-agency working group (UFEWG)⁴ on agencies' priorities and for additional contextual and programmatic inputs. This includes humanitarian information about both HRP and non-HRP contexts, as well as funding information for non-HRP priority countries.

The CERF secretariat also consults with other experts, including representatives from the NGO community via the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Start Fund and IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund.

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 a final list of countries and allocation amounts, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HC) in the selected countries 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 (see also CERF's [Guidance for Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators](#)).

Following the endorsement of the allocation strategies, 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 individual project approval recommendations to the ERC. 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.

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.

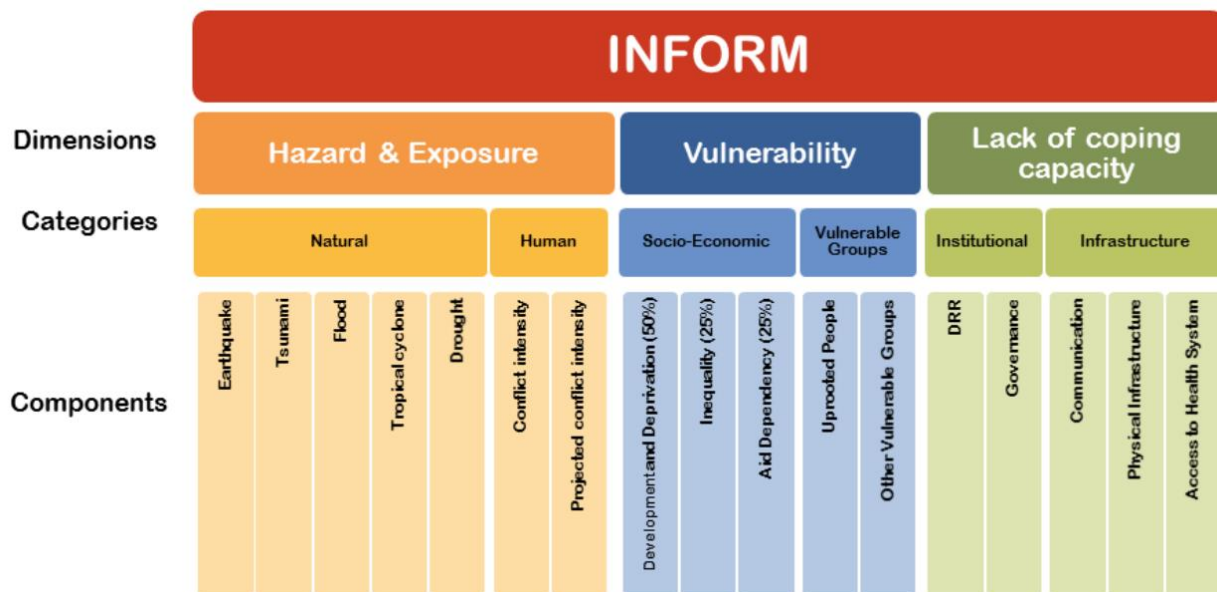
⁴ The working group historically comprises representatives from FAO, IOM, OCHA, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO.

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 dimensions are weighted at 50% each.

		Countries listed in the INFORM Severity Index	Countries not listed in the INFORM Severity Index
1	<p>INFORM Risk Index</p> <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	<p>INFORM Severity Index</p> <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	<p>Composite index</p> <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: • Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Alert, Early Warning & Readiness Report and IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up activations • 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 • Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project: violent events and fatalities data 	33%	50%

Annex 2: Composition of the *INFORM* Risk Index



Annex 3: Composition of the *INFORM* Severity Index

