Central Emergency Response Fund Guidelines

CERF Funding for UN Humanitarian Air Service

A. PURPOSE

These guidelines clarify definitions and outline United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) activities that fall within the scope of the Rapid Response and Underfunded Emergency windows of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

CERF is a stand-by fund established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to victims of disasters and complex emergencies. The CERF was approved by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 December 2005 to achieve the following objectives:

- Promote early action and response to reduce loss of life;
- Enhance response to time-critical requirements; and
- Strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises.

Humanitarian operations often require air transportation in order to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance. In the fifth session of the United Nation's High Level Committee on Management, effective 1 January 2004, the World Food Programme (WFP) was assigned the mandate for administering air transportation services for all UN agencies in humanitarian operations that are not directly or specifically peacekeeping operations.

UNHAS, the name given to inter-agency air services managed by WFP, provides common air transport in various disaster areas. UNHAS aims to provide efficient, safe and reliable air transport service in response to sudden onset or protracted emergencies in the most difficult locations globally, where local capacity is lacking or when local operators do not meet air safety requirements. UNHAS transports humanitarian personnel and cargo, provides immediate medical evacuations, and supports the delivery of priority life-saving activities provided by UN agencies, NGOs and governments in emergency response.

All UNHAS operations serve the wider humanitarian community and in this spirit are also expected to be funded through a wider funding base. UNHAS operations are funded through WFP's Special Operations (SO) project category, consisting of a project proposal and budget. WFP ensures that UNHAS requirements are consolidated in the humanitarian funding appeals (CAP and Flash Appeals).

Despite growing demand for common air services, UNHAS still encounters funding shortages and requires secure and sustainable funding to provide safe, cost-efficient and continuous air services and to maintain the necessary aircraft capacity for medical and security evacuations to the benefit of the humanitarian community.
These guidelines are intended for use by the RC/HCs and the respective country teams at the field level, as well as OCHA, the UN agencies and IOM at the headquarters level to guide the prioritization, formulation and selection of CERF grant requests.

Adherence to these guidelines will be monitored by the ERC, as Fund Manager, with support from the CERF Secretariat. It is imperative that the guidelines are complied with in order to ensure a timely, effective and transparent process for accessing funding from the CERF. Each grantee is also required to comply with the terms of the grant agreement as established in the Secretary-General’s Bulletin on the Establishment and Operation of the CERF, and the Letter of Understanding (LoU), including project monitoring and reporting requirements.

B. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Disaster\footnote{UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009).} is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human suffering, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Disasters can be caused by a variety of factors including natural hazards or be induced by human processes.

Complex Emergencies are characterized by extensive violence and loss of life, massive displacement of people, widespread damage to social and economic assets, and multi-faceted humanitarian responses. Additionally, complex emergencies are also characterized as an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency. (IASC, December 1994).

Life-saving and/or core emergency humanitarian programmes are those actions that, within a short time span, remedy, mitigate or avert direct loss of life, physical harm or threats to a population or major portion thereof. Also permissible are common humanitarian services that are necessary to enable life-saving activities.

Time-critical response refers to necessary, rapid and time-limited actions required to minimize additional loss of lives and damage to social and economic assets. It relates to the opportunities for the rapid injection of resources to save lives either in complex emergencies or after natural disasters.

C. GUIDELINES

Respecting the mandate of the CERF and the core principle of UNHAS, the proposed air services should serve to support the response of the humanitarian system to life-saving or core humanitarian activities. For example, the need to enable an environment in which humanitarian agencies can reach beneficiaries and effectively deliver assistance in difficult-to-reach locations is crucial, especially in the first days of an emergency. Air operations in these circumstances can include transportation of both passengers and cargo. In addition, security and staff safety is a consideration and can prompt the need for an air service. In cases where road transportation is deemed unsafe and operations are spread over a larger area, the enabling factor of a common air service can be “life-saving”.

Besides an analysis of the caseload and their vulnerability by Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), WFP and the Users Group Committee, if already established, the UNHAS proposal should be based on an assessment of the benefits of UNHAS to the humanitarian community, taking into consideration factors such as availability of safe and reliable commercial air services, security concerns, distances, etc.

Application requirements for both Rapid Response and Underfunded requests

Coordination Requirements: UNHAS submissions will be made by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator following the standard consultation process, and where applicable, endorsed by the local UNHAS Users Group Committee. The submission should clearly
outline the reasons for the service and be in line with WFP’s Air Transport Manual and should include, as much as possible, number of organizations using the service, destinations to be served, estimated passenger figures and cargo tonnage, expected flight hours, a resource plan, including user fees and a sustainability/exit strategy.

**Additiona Fundraising:** The CERF is a complementary financial mechanism and does not replace other efforts to obtain financial resources to respond to emergencies by governments, UN agencies, NGOs or other actors. Although WFP develops a resource strategy which includes cost-recovery proposals, donations or cost-sharing by agencies, it should be noted that the UN Country Team and/or the local User Group Committee who request UNHAS common air services should support the mobilization of sustainable funding for UNHAS.

Furthermore, as per UNHAS mandate, the provision of air services for passengers and cargo should benefit the entire humanitarian community, including national and international UN staff members and NGOs present in the operational areas².

**Sustainability:** WFP and the UN Country Team should ensure that the UNHAS project is sustainable. The overall management and operational/recurrent costs of the deployed infrastructure and personnel should be described in the project. The CERF will not fund recurrent cost to sustain humanitarian air operations.

**Additional application requirements for Rapid Response requests**

Rapid Response grants should address the need to deliver life-saving assistance in a timely manner, and should assist humanitarian organizations to quickly access areas and safely deliver life-saving assistance to beneficiaries. Therefore, CERF Rapid Response funds can be made available for UNHAS operations in the following three situations:

1. The establishment of new air operations for transport of supplies and humanitarian personnel. This will include parts of the start-up costs and service for the initial phase of the operation. It should be a timely intervention and serve as a springboard for other donors to come on board. The CERF does not cover the full cost of project proposals.

2. The expansion of existing services if there is a need for additional locations or higher frequency of flights due to deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The need to expand should be documented and justified along the criteria mentioned above.

3. The need for increased operational capacity due to a change in security phase in an ongoing humanitarian operation. The need for these flights will have to be carefully evaluated by the Designated Official in coordination with UNDSS and the wider humanitarian community.

**Additional requirement for Underfunded requests**

If there are UNHAS operations in a country selected for an underfunded allocation, the RC/HC can propose those operations in the submission to the ERC if the operation fits within the CERF Life-saving Criteria. However, the application should explain the reasons for under-funding and describe the fundraising efforts already undertaken.

**Humanitarian Principles**

CERF supported interventions are to be consistent with basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. In addition, agencies implementing CERF funded projects, as part of the United Nations and of the larger humanitarian community, should take into consideration:

**Vulnerability of particular groups:** Children and women represent the largest group of individuals affected by emergencies. Particular concern should be paid to the situation of girls and women in all

² For further direction on passenger definition see WFP Air Transport Manual.
emergency situations. The CERF emphasizes the importance of ensuring that principles provided in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, together with the CRC’s Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (adopted in 2000), and other related resolutions such as Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000, be pillars to the implementation of CERF funded programmes and projects. In all sectors of response, agencies would ensure the application of gender equity principles and promote the empowerment and protection of women and girls.

Environment: Given the increasing fragility on the natural environment and the irreversible deterioration of soil and water quality, agencies are requested to ensure a maximum consideration for the use of funds to advert negative impact on the environment.

Partnerships: UN agencies and humanitarian actors at large are at the heart of planning, prioritization and decision making in regards to the CERF. They are encouraged to maximize the interaction and collaboration with governments and national and international non-governmental organizations in order to effectively respond to emergencies and to ensure that the basic principles and priorities of the CERF are followed and effectively applied.

Empowerment of affected populations: Focusing on the immediate aftermath of emergencies, the CERF expects agencies implementing programmes and projects to make direct efforts to contribute to the durability of solutions and the improvement of livelihoods of the most affected population, with special consideration to gender and minority groups.

Supports the Principles of "Good Humanitarian Donorship" and "Do No Harm": Agencies will make all efforts to ensure that assistance funded by the CERF empowers local communities and promotes self-sufficiency; conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of impact; avoid contributing to conflict and inequity; contribute to recovery and sustainable interventions; and ensure effective participation of civil society and local governments.

D. REFERENCES

Normative or Superior References
- A/60/124 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

SIGNED:  
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