



Summary note on the thematic CERF funding envelope for climate-smart humanitarian action

CERF Underfunded Emergencies Window: 2024-II

Introduction

This paper is a summary note for a dedicated climate action funding envelope of US\$10.5 million, which complemented the regular US\$100 million for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)'s [2024 second round Underfunded Emergencies \(UFE\) allocations](#).¹ The envelope advanced climate-smart life-saving humanitarian actions that are designed to build crisis-affected communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses in the future.

This climate action envelope was made possible thanks to the generous donor contributions to the CERF Climate Action Account, launched in late 2023. The Account serves to scale CERF's climate action, offering a quick, efficient and impactful avenue for climate-related finance to support the world's most vulnerable communities in facing the consequences of the climate crisis.

The activities selected for funding under the climate action envelope are aligned with CERF's established mandate and Life-Saving Criteria. At the same time, these activities were critical efforts in **equipping the most vulnerable individuals and communities at the frontline of the climate crisis with the tools and capacities needed to better adapt to and withstand the escalating impacts of severe climate-induced events that threaten both lives and livelihoods.**

By bridging immediate life-saving relief with climate resilience and adaptation objectives, this dedicated envelope aspired to **catalyze a more impactful humanitarian response** that can break the vicious cycle of crisis and response, meeting the dual demands of saving lives today and safeguarding communities against the crises of tomorrow.

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 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.

As the gap between humanitarian needs and available financing continues to grow, it is imperative to address humanitarian needs whilst supporting communities to cope with, and adapt to, climate change. The [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) and the [IASC Climate Crisis Roadmap](#) articulate the humanitarian community's commitment to advocate for and support the most vulnerable 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 to climate disasters, minimizing humanitarian impact by supporting actions before a crisis hits. Within its life-saving mandate, CERF also regularly supports humanitarian actions that not only save lives but also enhance adaptation and resilience.

As the climate crisis worsens, it is important to further strengthen CERF's support for impactful humanitarian climate action – through climate-smart humanitarian action that aims to enhance the adaptive capacities and resilience of communities in fragile settings affected by climate-related shocks and stresses. As such, it was

¹ For additional details of CERF's 2024 second round UFE allocations, please refer to: [CERF UFE 2024-II_Country selection and fund allocations_0.pdf](#)

decided to commit **an additional funding envelope of US\$10.5 million under CERF's second UFE round in 2024**, dedicated to **catalyzing additional or improved climate-smart humanitarian action**.

Scope and objectives of the climate action envelope

The primary focus of the thematic envelope was advancing **climate-smart humanitarian activities that strengthen affected people's adaptive capacity and resilience to climate shocks and stresses**.

The climate action envelope built on and complemented CERF's UFE allocation,² which targets chronically underfunded humanitarian crises, **aiming to drive the emergency operations in these countries toward more innovative and climate-smart humanitarian programming, for a more impactful humanitarian response**. The climate action envelope did not dictate country selection for UFE funding which followed the **regular analytical and consultative process**. This complementary approach promotes synergies and maximizes impact.

Specifically, the envelope sought to **catalyze additional climate-smart humanitarian initiatives that would otherwise not occur**, advancing the adoption of innovative approaches and best practices. **Supporting vulnerable communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses was a principal objective of the projects funded under this envelope**.

All activities funded under this envelope adhered to CERF's Life-Saving Criteria, and fell within CERF's distinct niche in the climate financing landscape.

Proposals funded under the climate action envelope

Nine out of ten UFE recipient countries submitted proposals for funding under the climate action envelope: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Myanmar. Yemen did not submit a proposal. Of these nine countries, eight are on the **World Bank annual list of Fragile, Conflict, and Violence affected countries**.

The total funding requested amounted to nearly US\$25 million, far surpassing the US\$10.5 million available within the envelope. This strong interest reflected the commitment of Humanitarian Country Teams, UN agencies and their partners to strengthen and expand climate-smart humanitarian initiatives to better support and protect vulnerable people facing the compounding impacts of ongoing emergencies and climate change in fragile settings. **The overwhelming demand also underscored the need to increase contributions to the CERF Climate Action Account, to ensure more resources can be directed toward climate action in fragile contexts**.

Upon careful review of the proposals against the criteria and objectives set out in the guidance for the allocation, and against CERF's Life-Saving Criteria, activities from all nine countries were selected for funding, for a total amount of US\$10.5 million. These activities strategically complemented the core UFE proposals and represented efforts that would not otherwise have happened at this time.

The selected activities addressed urgent humanitarian needs and helped reduce vulnerability and exposure to recurring climate-related shocks and stresses across multiple sectors. **Localization** was actively promoted within this envelope, with local communities and partners – including affected individuals, community leaders, grassroots NGOs, women-led organizations, local businesses as well as national and local government entities – playing a central role in decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the selected activities. **Gender** was a key consideration, with women and girls – including elderly women, female-headed households, women living with disabilities, landless women and pregnant and lactating women – prioritized as main targets of the selected activities, and being actively involved in the various stages of programming.

Several initiatives are **innovative pilots with potential for scaling, replication, or adaptation in other contexts**. A strong focus on learning is central to maximizing this potential, ensuring that insights gained inform future programming and enhance the impact of subsequent thematic allocations.

² The climate action envelope builds on the existing practice of promoting better humanitarian action through CERF's UFE window by advancing humanitarian thematic priorities with targeted funding. Past thematic funding envelopes include GBV response, disability inclusion and support for collective Accountability to Affected People systems.

The activities align with collectively agreed upon humanitarian priorities, such as those established in Humanitarian Response Plans, broadly align with areas identified as important in the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, and support priority areas and activities identified in local, national and international climate-related strategies, including National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Below is an overview of the endorsed proposals for the climate action envelope and budgets. The climate envelope allocations are additional to [the amounts awarded under the regular \\$100 million UFE allocation](#).

Burkina Faso

Funding amount approved: US\$1,000,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security), UNICEF (WASH), UNFPA (Protection)

Proposal summary: This pilot initiative addresses immediate Food Security, WASH, and Protection needs of vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso's Boucle du Mouhoun region, including internally displaced persons and women heads of households, while enhancing their resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses. Key activities under the Food Security component include the establishment of an agroecological perimeter with a solar-powered, climate-resilient irrigation system, the introduction of diverse crop varieties to build farming system resilience, and the application of soil conservation techniques like composting and mulching to sustain soil fertility. WASH interventions include a solar-powered drinking water system to ensure uninterrupted water access, the formation of water point management committees for sustainable local oversight, the construction of flood-resistant ecological latrines, and the adoption of climate-smart practices, such as reusing sludge and urine in agriculture. Collectively, these efforts address immediate Food Security and WASH needs but also foster climate resilience by enabling continuous agricultural production less dependent on erratic rainfall, improving water access, and reducing waterborne diseases. Additionally, by promoting sustainable practices like improved stoves made from local materials, the initiative not only aims to address protection risks associated with firewood collection (especially for women), but also to prevent deforestation and align with local community needs for longer-term livelihood support. This initiative has significant potential to be replicated in other hard-to-reach areas to further reduce future humanitarian needs caused by climate impacts. This initiative aligns with growing requests from local and national actors as well as Government and UN climate strategies, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

Burundi

Funding amount approved: US\$1,000,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security)

Proposal summary: This initiative addresses urgent Food Security needs of vulnerable groups, including displaced persons, returnees, and host families affected by floods earlier in 2024, while building their resilience to future climate shocks in Burundi's Bujumbura (including Mairie) and Cibitoke provinces. By employing a Cash-for-Work approach enabling immediate access to financial resources for people to address urgent humanitarian needs, this initiative supports nature-based solutions that prevent erosion, enhance soil fertility, reduce land degradation, and preserve wetland ecosystems in flood- and landslide-prone areas, including shelter sites. Core activities include distributing forestry tools and seeds to support agroforestry and forestry plant production, setting up community-driven mechanisms for plant cultivation, reforesting deforested areas in erosion-prone watersheds, creating contour lines to protect sensitive areas from erosion, developing terraces in vulnerable watersheds, and providing training on climate-smart land management and integrated resource management. This initiative aligns with [Burundi's National Development Plan 2018-2027](#) and the [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework](#). Additionally, it complements recent allocations from traditional vertical climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund.

Cameroon

Funding amount approved: US\$1,500,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security), UNICEF (WASH), UNHCR (WASH)

Proposal summary: This initiative addresses urgent Food Security and WASH needs of vulnerable populations in Cameroon's Far North region, while also building their resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses. The Food Security component aims to provide timely access to life-saving food security assistance for affected communities, while enhancing their ability to cope with recurring flood emergencies by improving food access, strengthening agricultural production, and protecting agricultural inputs. Key activities include the provision of agricultural inputs for above-ground gardens, poultry and fish farming, and distributing assets to improve food processing, such as solar-powered dryers, which are low-cost and sensitive to climatic risks as they can be used in water-scarce conditions. The WASH component focuses on ensuring the availability of clean drinking water and access to hygiene and sanitation facilities in flood-affected areas, while building community resilience to climate shocks through climate-smart water systems. Key activities include the provision of flood-proof water and sanitation systems, facility-based dual-use (water pumping and electricity supply) solar-power solutions, water-saving technologies and related awareness raising. The initiative is coordinated with ongoing anticipatory action projects and other programs under the Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. It aligns with Cameroon's [NAP](#) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), particularly their emphasis on helping communities manage recurrent flooding.

Ethiopia

Funding amount approved: US\$1,000,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security), IOM (Food Security)

Proposal summary: This initiative, jointly implemented by FAO and IOM, addresses immediate Food Security needs of vulnerable populations in Ethiopia's Somali region (Dollo and Shabelle woredas), while building their resilience to climate-related recurrent drought and flooding. The IOM component pilots the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) in Ethiopia, leveraging data and historical knowledge to map, predict, and monitor likely pastoralist movements in response to climate-related hazards. The insights generated from the TTT will enable FAO to make more precise, risk-informed decisions on the location, target populations and approaches for climate-smart humanitarian interventions that enhance livestock water access and promote sustainable agricultural technologies and practices. Specifically, key activities under the FAO component include rehabilitating and establishing water points to harvest and store rainwater, which will ensure water availability through ongoing and future dry seasons, reduce livestock disease spread, and help mitigate flood impacts by capturing excess rainwater. Additional activities include distributing climate-resilient crop varieties, supporting communities in seed multiplication, and training on climate-smart agricultural practices. Collectively, this initiative provides targeted, life-saving assistance to address existing humanitarian needs in the Somali region, while simultaneously strengthening food security for communities facing increasingly severe and frequent droughts and floods driven by climate change. Aligned with Ethiopia's [NAP](#), and benefiting from the lessons of similar interventions by FAO and IOM in Burkina Faso, this initiative provides valuable insights from piloting the TTT in Ethiopia, potentially informing a broader scale-up across the country to support climate resilience in pastoral and agricultural communities.

Haiti

Funding amount approved: US\$1,500,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security), WFP (Food Security)

Proposal summary: These two initiatives address immediate Food Security needs among crisis-affected populations in both rural and urban areas of Haiti, while strengthening their resilience to future climate-related shocks through two complementary components. The first initiative of FAO targets rural areas in the North Department and around Péligre Lake, providing life-saving support to households facing IPC4 levels of food insecurity through cash transfers and agricultural inputs, while increasing their adaptive capacities to future climate shocks. Key activities include distributing climate-smart seeds, such as lima bean varieties adaptable to shifting rainy season patterns, and scaling FAO's Farmer Field Schools model across new areas in Haiti. Additionally, Seed Production Groups are established to cultivate and distribute climate-resilient seed varieties, while climate-resilient livestock shelters are constructed to safeguard animals from heavy rains. Targeted training helps farmers prevent banana trees from toppling during strong winds, and the distribution of elephant

grass stabilized soil, reducing erosion during extreme weather. Additionally, irrigation canals in the Lake Péligre watershed are rehabilitated, which supports multiple crop production cycles and reduces downstream flooding during tropical storms. The second initiative of WFP targets Cité Soleil in Port-au-Prince, an impoverished urban area, which is –in addition to being subjected to repeated armed clashes – particularly vulnerable to climate change-induced flooding due to its low elevation and marshy terrain. This component introduces activities that are innovative for the Haiti context, such as using a Cash-for-Work model to rehabilitate small-scale infrastructure like dikes to reduce flood risks, and repairing irrigation channels to ensure year-round agricultural water access. Both components of the initiative align with existing climate-related strategies including the [NAP](#), the [National Risk and Disaster Management Plan 2019-2030](#), the [2019 National Policy to Combat Climate Change](#), Haiti's [Early Warning for All pilot program](#), and the [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework](#).

Malawi

Funding amount approved: US\$600,000

Agencies and sectors: FAO (Food Security), UNICEF (WASH)

Proposal summary: This initiative addresses urgent Food Security and WASH needs of vulnerable populations affected by drought and preceding emergencies in Malawi's Nsanje and Neno districts, as well as Dzaleka refugee camp, while building their resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses. The Food Security component aims to revive agricultural activities among refugees and host communities around Dzaleka camp. Key activities include emergency distributions of drought-tolerant crop varieties, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices and post-harvest techniques, and protecting and restoring natural ecosystems through community-led natural resource regeneration in local forests. The Food Security component follows an ecosystem-based adaptation approach which not only addresses emergency livelihood needs and strengthens agricultural productivity but also conserves watershed ecosystems and the essential services they provide in mitigating climate-related shocks. The component also pilots innovative, market-based strategies in the camp, including electronic vouchers to give beneficiaries access to high-quality agricultural inputs. Additionally, the Lead Farmer model is introduced for the first time in the camp, where trained Lead Farmers establish demonstration plots and train Follower Farmers—fostering knowledge transfer and ensuring sustainable practices beyond the project's lifespan. The WASH component addresses critical WASH needs while upgrading existing WASH facilities to better withstand anticipated climate extremes in Nsanje and Neno districts. Core activities include constructing solar-powered climate-resilient water supply systems, incorporating climate risk assessments into WASH planning at the community and district levels, and training local WASH committees on maintaining resilient WASH infrastructure. These efforts also aim to reduce the occurrence and impact of climate-exacerbated diseases, such as cholera. This initiative is aligned with existing climate-related strategies including the [NAP](#) and the [Malawi Vision 2063](#).

Mali

Funding amount approved: US\$1,750,000

Agencies and sectors: UNICEF (WASH), UNHCR (Shelter), WFP (Food Security)

Proposal summary: The Mali country team submitted two initiatives targeting the country's Segou and Gao regions, suffering from combined impact of armed clashes and floods, as well as alarming levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. The first initiative, jointly implemented by UNICEF and UNHCR, targets immediate WASH and Shelter needs for vulnerable populations, including displaced people, with a strategic co-benefit to build flood resilience. The Shelter component provides climate-resilient housing, equipped with runoff drainage systems and constructed from environmentally friendly materials that withstand extreme weather. Toolkits for shelter maintenance are also included to ensure resilience against future climate shocks. The other component enhances the resilience of WASH infrastructure to climate-related hazards by elevating well rims, improving human-powered pump systems, reinforcing latrines to withstand flooding, converting boreholes to solar-powered water supplies, and raising community awareness on flood early warning systems and protective measures before, during, and after floods. This initiative aligns with [UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), [Mali's National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction](#), and [Mali's National Policy on Climate Change](#). The

second initiative of WFP addresses immediate food security needs through cash and voucher assistance, while promoting asset-building and rehabilitation to strengthen longer-term food security amid increasing climate impacts. Core activities included training on climate-smart agriculture, resilient food processing and storage techniques. Additionally, the initiative develops community assets and infrastructure to protect against floods, enhance water access, and increase availability during droughts and erratic rainfall through activities such as introducing micro-irrigation systems and floodwater harvesting. Complementary training on sustainable land management, the introduction of natural resource management practices, and ecosystem restoration helps communities conserve water and boost crop yields in an increasingly variable climate. The initiative emphasizes participatory planning, ensuring that women, indigenous groups, youth, and marginalized communities are actively involved in adaptation decision-making, fostering social cohesion and strengthening resilience outcomes.

Mozambique

Funding amount approved: US\$1,150,000

Agencies and sectors: WFP (Food Security), FAO (Food Security), UNICEF (WASH)

Proposal summary: The Mozambique country team submitted three initiatives to address urgent Food Security and WASH needs resulting from the ongoing El Niño-induced drought, while also promoting resilience to future climate-related shocks and stresses. The WFP initiative responds to immediate Food Security needs of vulnerable populations in Sofala province and beyond, while also fostering their resilience to future droughts. Key activities include procuring and installing solar-powered irrigation systems, cold storage facilities, and food processing equipment. Additionally, greenhouses with drip irrigation technology are established to minimize water waste, reduce nutrient leaching, support healthy plant growth, and enhance overall agricultural productivity amid drought conditions. The initiative is aligned with Mozambique's [NAP](#), [NDC](#) and the [National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change](#). The FAO initiative boosts emergency agriculture assistance to vulnerable communities in Manica province while also empowering them to sustain crop production during future droughts. Key activities include distributing drought-tolerant seeds, introducing climate-smart agricultural practices, implementing climate-resilient irrigation systems to optimize limited water resources during drought and winter months, and promoting conservation agriculture to maintain soil moisture and fertility. These practices enhance yields under drought conditions and support agricultural resilience to climate shocks. The initiative supports Mozambique's [NAP](#). The UNICEF initiative addresses the immediate WASH needs of vulnerable populations in Mozambique's Sofala and Manica provinces, while enhancing the resilience of existing WASH infrastructure to better withstand future climate-related shocks and stresses. Key activities include incorporating carbon-neutral and water-efficient technologies like rainwater harvesting systems and solar-powered water infrastructure to ensure sustainable WASH services in the face of recurrent climate shocks. The initiative is innovative for the context of Mozambique as it pilots the YOMA (Youth Marketplace) approach, engaging and training young people to monitor WASH infrastructure performance and manage minor repairs, enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of climate-smart infrastructure over the longer term. The initiative is aligned with Mozambique's [NDC](#), [NAP](#) and local adaptation plans.

Myanmar

Funding amount approved: US\$1,000,000

Agencies and sectors: IOM (Shelter and Non-Food Items, WASH), UNICEF (WASH)

Proposal summary: This initiative addresses immediate WASH and Shelter needs of vulnerable populations in Myanmar's Mandalay, Magway, and Shan states, who have been subjected to recurrent violence, floods and resulting displacement, while also fostering their ability to better withstand future climate-related shocks and stresses. The WASH component introduces climate-smart water supply systems and flood-resistant sanitation facilities in communities, schools, and healthcare centers. These systems ensure immediate and sustained access to safe water, even during droughts, and protect against contamination and waterborne diseases during floods. Community training on the operation and maintenance of these resilient WASH systems further strengthens sustainable and continuous access to clean water and sanitation, reducing health risks in current and future climate-related hazards. The Shelter component focuses on rehabilitating and reconstructing

emergency community shelters to withstand flooding and cyclones. Enhanced drainage, waterproofing, durable materials, improved foundations, and flood barriers are incorporated to increase shelter resilience. Additionally, community disaster response committees receive training to better manage seasonal and cyclone-related flooding. This initiative is aligned with ongoing climate-related initiatives and policies in Myanmar, such as the [NDC](#), and is aligned with initiatives by networks like the [Myanmar Climate Change Alliance](#) and the [Myanmar Climate Action Network](#).