



## **Current Partnerships of the CERF Secretariat with Agencies Evaluation Departments**

CERF secretariat, *October 2012*

### **A. Background**

Project-level evaluations of activities supported by CERF funds remain under the purview of UN agencies and IOM<sup>1</sup> as described in the CERF's Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF). The CERF secretariat has, therefore, reached out to agencies' evaluation departments to forge a closer relationship with a view to ensuring that key lessons-learned at project-level relevant to CERF are captured and made available to the CERF secretariat. To date, the following initiatives are underway.

### **B. CERF-Specific Evaluations**

The five-year evaluation of the CERF noted with approval the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) 2010 evaluation of its use of CERF-funding. The Five-Year Evaluation recommended that agencies "conduct an evaluation of their use of CERF funds within 18 months to determine what internal factors, including partnership policies and practices, influence the effectiveness of CERF projects." The CERF secretariat has discussed the possibility of carrying out such an evaluation with a number of agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) agreed to conduct a CERF evaluation in 2012. IOM launched an evaluation in August which is expected to conclude by end of the year. IOM's own evaluation section is conducting the evaluation supported by an external consultant.

The World Food Programme (WFP) will include CERF as a component of a broader evaluation of WFP's use of pooled funds scheduled for 2013. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is considering this initiative and examining its feasibility. Follow-up discussions between CERF and UNHCR are scheduled for the last quarter of 2012.

Some agencies have confirmed that they currently do not intend to conduct CERF specific evaluations. UNICEF noted that due to limited funding being available for evaluation activities paired with a high demand for such activities, they were not in a position to prioritise a dedicated CERF evaluation. UNFPA does not conduct donor specific evaluations and, therefore, does not see a CERF evaluation as a possibility. However, both UNICEF and UNFPA expressed interest in including CERF elements in their regular evaluations when relevant (see below).

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as "agencies" henceforward.

### **C. Standard CERF-Related Questions in Agency Evaluations**

The CERF secretariat has discussed with a number of agencies the possibility of including a number of standard CERF-related questions in evaluations of projects or programmes that have received significant funding from CERF. Experience has shown that when CERF-specific issues are not included in project or emergency evaluations, such as inter-agency real-time evaluations or agencies own internal programme or country evaluations, only limited information on CERF will emerge. This is the case even where CERF has contributed substantial funding.

Including sample CERF-specific evaluation questions in agencies' regular evaluations might go some way towards alleviating this. At the beginning of 2012, FAO agreed to include a CERF specific review element on a trial basis in an evaluation in Sri Lanka. FAO concluded the evaluation and the evaluation report will be available during the second week of October (after the finalisation of this note). The FAO evaluation in Sri Lanka will serve as a pilot. FAO and the CERF secretariat will review the outcome and make recommendations for future replication. UNICEF and other agencies have also expressed an interest in this approach and discussions with their evaluation focal points are on-going. No other concrete evaluations have however been identified at this stage.

### **D. Tracking of CERF Related Findings in External Evaluations**

The CERF secretariat has conducted a mapping exercise of agency evaluations resources, identifying information contained on agencies' online evaluation portal, mapping agencies' evaluation procedures and identifying evaluation focal points. In addition, the CERF secretariat has established an internal repository and tracking facility for recording and mapping external evaluations and studies that contain findings relevant to CERF. The mapping includes identification and tracking of findings that warrant follow-up by the CERF secretariat. Once fully operational, it is expected that the process will allow for a more systematic mapping of CERF-related external evaluation findings, and that these findings will complement CERF-specific studies in informing the CERF's secretariat's work.

### **E. Next steps**

Over the coming months, the CERF secretariat will support those agencies who have decided to either conduct CERF-specific evaluations or include CERF elements into their regular evaluation activities. It will also continue to liaise with those still considering these possibilities.

The CERF secretariat will also identify lessons-learned from the FAO evaluation in Sri Lanka that piloted the inclusion of CERF-specific questions. Based on the outcomes of this, the CERF secretariat will draft a concept note in consultation with agencies evaluation focal points to inform similar exercises in the future. The CERF secretariat will continue to maintain regular interaction with agencies' evaluation sections on performance and evaluation issues.