Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the Philippines

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Executive Summary

This review of CERF funding to the Philippines assesses the added value of the CERF and its performance against the indicators of the CERF’s Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) and addresses key questions in the Terms of Reference. This report is based on interviews with the acting Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), previous RC/HC, CERF-recipient agencies, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government representatives and aid recipients in Manila, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Cotabato. Interviews took place from 2 to 13 July 2012 with follow-up interviews by telephone. The report also draws on visits to project sites, a document review, and funding information from the CERF secretariat and participating agencies. Building on the Philippines case study for the CERF Five-Year Evaluation, this review focuses on four CERF allocations to the Philippines in 2011-2012.

CERF Funding to the Philippines

In 2011, the CERF provided two allocations from the Rapid Response window in response to floods in central Mindanao (July) and to Tropical Storm Sendong (December). The CERF has also made an allocation from the Under-Funded Emergencies (UFE) window each year since 2010 for the protracted conflict-related crisis in central Mindanao. Although the CERF has tended to make relative small allocations of $3-5 million to the Philippines, according to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), it has been one of the three top humanitarian donors to the country each year since 2006.

Role of the Philippine Government

The Philippine government has established a disaster management and response capacity and mobilises its own financial resources when a disaster strikes. The government has set up internal channels for reporting on the assistance that it provides, which is shared widely through the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) website and situation reports. The government has also institutionalised the cluster system and humanitarian actors can request additional information through this. However, international actors appeared to have limited access to detailed information, which made it difficult to avoid duplication of response activities. In 2011 and 2012, though, the government made contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP), which the agency reported to the FTS.

Value-Added of the CERF

The CERF has added value to the humanitarian response of UN agencies and IOM in several ways: by providing timely and flexible funding for emergency response, by enabling agencies to leverage other funding, by complementing other donor funding and setting an example to other donors, by supporting a response to a “forgotten” crisis and filling critical gaps, and by supporting coordination at Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) level. Local government units in Northern Mindanao were also deeply appreciative of the CERF’s contribution to the response to Tropical Storm Sendong.

UN agencies also identified challenges with CERF funding, primarily the difficulty of financing relevant training and capacity building. Agencies go through a lengthy review and comment process on proposals for UFE funding and felt it would be helpful if the CERF secretariat made it clear early in the process if it did not intend to fund a project or line item. In addition, the CERF’s inability to fund disaster preparedness in one of the world’s most disaster-prone countries was proving difficult. Finally, agencies had found the application of the CERF’s Life-Saving Criteria challenging in the protracted crisis context in central Mindanao, where it is difficult to distinguish between emergency and longer-term needs.

PAF reviews examine the complementarity between the CERF and country-level pooled humanitarian funds. There was no country-level pooled fund in the Philippines. However, in light of the numerous small-scale disasters that affect the country, interviewees argued that it would be helpful to have a country-level fund that could support quick disaster response, particularly by NGOs, and also finance preparedness activities, like pre-positioning stocks.
Inclusiveness and Transparency of the Allocation Process

In the Philippines, the HCT allocates CERF funding, with the RC/HC playing a strong role in proposing options (based on analysis by OCHA, Humanitarian Action Plan priorities and requests from the government). NGO members of the HCT have been present at the CERF allocations but, as observers on the HCT, donors have generally not participated in these ad-hoc HCT meetings. Ad-hoc HCT meetings are not always minuted so there was no record of the CERF allocation discussions in 2011 and 2012 though OCHA circulated the prioritisation strategy and funding decisions with selected HCT members. Some interviewees, including NGO HCT members, agreed that the RC/HC should make the final allocation decisions but felt that it would be helpful to have greater clarity on the criteria for funding decisions.

Once the HCT has allocated CERF funds by sector, there should be an inclusive intra-Cluster prioritisation of projects for CERF funding. Government departments and NGOs engage in the development of the HAP and prioritisation of activities for this and the Government’s formal request for international assistance stipulates its priorities for CERF RR allocations. However, discussions of CERF funding are restricted to UN agencies and IOM. Once agencies are implementing CERF projects, the government may play a role in technical advice, selection of beneficiaries and identification of activities. CERF-recipient agencies involve NGOs as implementing partners in CERF projects but varied in the extent to which they informed them of the source of funding and shared information on CERF processes.

Timeliness of CERF Funding

The CERF secretariat has generally been quick to approve final proposals and disburse funds. This was particularly so for the response to Sendong. Agencies started responding to Sendong within 24 hours by diverting staff and resources from operations in central Mindanao in the early stages of the crisis. In some cases, this impacted on their ability to implement 2011 CERF UFE grants or to start work on the 2012 UFE grant. In one case, an agency had to return a CERF grant. The timeliness of onward funding to implementing partners varied according to whether agencies were able to use existing agreements or signed new ones. In general, though, agencies appeared to have completed project implementation by the CERF deadline and made no requests for no-cost extensions. Three agencies had reprogrammed funds to expand their programmes within the agreed CERF budget. Two sought formal permission to redeploy funds while the third did not need permission but sought the secretariat’s approval.

Reporting and Accountability

Although CERF-recipient agencies require detailed reporting from NGO implementing partners, their submissions for the RC/HC’s Annual Report on CERF funding in 2011 were weak, with incomplete or incorrect information and sections copied from proposals. This is not unusual but, since agencies should have adequate reporting systems in place, they could improve the quality of their reporting. Currently, the final RC/HC Annual Report is shared with the HCT but not the government. Though the report is available on the CERF website, the government and NGOs had little or no knowledge of the website. The agencies have a variety of mechanisms in place to monitor project implementation and many government entities also monitor CERF projects. In addition, a number of agencies have undertaken lessons learned exercises that have included CERF-funded projects.

CERF Guidance

The extent to which CERF-recipient agency staff were familiar with CERF formats and guidance varied and there were three cases where agencies had not fully understood them. A number of agencies had sent staff members to the regional CERF training workshop and they had found this extremely helpful. The agencies also appreciated the support that they receive from OCHA Philippines on CERF procedures.

Visibility

The CERF does not require agencies to provide visibility for its contributions. However, some recipient agencies felt that it was important to raise awareness of the CERF’s achievements and contribution in
the Philippines to maintain the government’s commitment to being a CERF donor. Demonstrating how the CERF has responded to government priorities would also build support for the government’s acceptance of international assistance.

**Recommendations**

The recommendations listed at the end of each section of the report are grouped together below on the basis of whether they apply to the Philippines specifically or globally. For ease of reference, the recommendation numbers are the same as those in the main report so they are not in order of priority.

**Philippines-specific:**

1. OCHA should support the Philippine government in reporting its contributions to in-country humanitarian response to the FTS. This would highlight the scale of the government’s response and also make it easier for international actors to avoid duplication.

3. Humanitarian actors in the Philippines should explore the option of establishing a country-level ERF, managed by OCHA, to facilitate quick response to small-scale disasters, particularly by NGOs. This would include exploring the option of using it to finance some preparedness activities.

4. During CERF allocations, particularly from the Rapid Response window, the capacity of OCHA Philippines is under considerable strain in responding to the emergency and it does not minute all ad-hoc HCT meetings. It should find a way to capture CERF allocation discussions and share this with all HCT members. It should also make the details of the prioritisation process and the full range of priority needs and those covered by the CERF available on its website.

5. The CERF UFE prioritisation and allocation process would be strengthened with more systematic input from the MHT. Therefore, the HCT should consider including the MHT in CERF allocation decisions, either virtually or by inviting MHT members to Manila.

6. CERF-recipient agencies should ensure that they have mechanisms in place to provide comprehensive reporting on CERF funding.

7. OCHA should share the RC/HC’s Annual Report on CERF funding with all HCT members, including donors. The HCT could then share the report with members of their networks.

8. CERF-recipient agencies undertake a number of lessons-learned exercises. Where these include CERF-funded projects, they should share the outcomes with the RC/HC and the CERF secretariat (through their submissions to the Annual Report, if relevant).

9. It would be helpful if OCHA Philippines could provide briefings on the CERF, as part of wider briefings, not only to UN and NGO staff but also to relevant national-level government cluster lead agencies (DSWD, DOH, DA, OCD, DFA and DBM).

12. CERF-recipient agencies should highlight the CERF’s contribution to humanitarian response in the Philippines to build support for the fund, particularly amongst government partners.

**Global:**

2. The CERF secretariat should explore ways to streamline the CERF proposal review process for the UFE window so that agencies are clear early on in the process about what activities will not be funded.

10. To facilitate the handling of queries about CERF funding, agency headquarters should send contact details of their CERF focal point to all country offices that have received a CERF allocation.

11. CERF recipient agencies should ensure that all programme managers and cluster leads are familiar with CERF requirements, such as requesting permission to re-programme funds and prioritising CERF funding within clusters. This could be the responsibility of the agency’s CERF focal point.
Section 1: Introduction

The CERF secretariat developed a Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) in 2010\(^1\). The CERF Advisory Group supported the PAF’s proposal of conducting three to five independent country-level reviews per year, as determined by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). This review of CERF funding to the Philippines is one of the country-level reviews in 2012.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this review (see Annex 3) outline the purpose and key issues that the review should cover. The Philippines was part of the CERF Five-Year Evaluation, with a country case study that covered 2006-2010 (the field visit took place in March 2011)\(^2\). This review builds on this previous study so it focuses mainly on 2011, when the Philippines received the following CERF grants:

- A Rapid Response (RR) allocation of $4,917,919 for the floods in central Mindanao in July 2011,
- An allocation of $3,450,334 from the second Under-Funded Emergencies (UFE) window in 2011,
- A RR allocation of $2,980,718 for Tropical Storm Washi/Sendong in December 2011.

In addition, the Philippines received a CERF grant of $3.9 million from the first UFE window in 2012. This review included the allocation process for this grant.

This report is based on a visit to the Philippines from 2 to 13 July 2012 as well as follow-up interviews by telephone. As described in Annex 2, the sources of information for this report are:

- Interviews in Manila, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Cotabato with the RC/HC a.i., UN agency and IOM staff members, government representatives, international and local NGOs and aid recipients. The evaluator also conducted a telephone interview with the previous RC/HC.
- Visits to project sites in Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Cotabato (see Annex 1 for a map of the Philippines).
- A document review, including the 2011 RC/HC Annual CERF report and project documents.
- An analysis of funding data, based on information from the CERF secretariat.

The evaluator is very grateful to all interviewees for their time and to those who helped to organise meetings and visits to project sites, including OCHA, IOM, WFP and FAO as well as the implementing NGOs and local government representatives that travelled to project sites. OCHA staff members also provided tremendous support with logistics and obtaining documents.

At the end of the field mission, on 12 July 2012, there was a presentation of preliminary findings to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Manila. This report focuses on the key questions raised in the ToR and the PAF indicators (listed in Annex 2). Therefore, it does not go into the details of how the CERF operates at a global level. Information on the establishment of the CERF, guidelines, application and reporting formats etc. are all available from the CERF website: cerf.u.org. To keep the main report short, Annex 1 contains supporting evidence (following the same section numbering as the main report).

1.1 Humanitarian context in the Philippines

The Philippines (Mindanao) Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) for 2012 notes that the population of Mindanao faces insecurity due to a four-decade-long conflict between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and Moro armed groups as well as sporadic clan fighting (known as *rido*)\(^3\). This results

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in repeated displacement. Mindanao is also affected by natural disasters and central Mindanao experienced extraordinary rainfall that led to widespread flooding from end-May to mid-June 2011. The impact was particularly severe because, as the RC/HC’s 2011 report on CERF funding pointed out, between one third and half of the population in Mindanao lives below the poverty line. As a result, an increasing number of people live in vulnerable areas at risk from the impact of natural disasters. The report cites the government’s assessment that the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Region XII were the worse affected regions (with severe damage to houses, agriculture and infrastructure and over 900,000 individuals affected).

On 24 June 2011, following flooding in Cotabato City in Region XII, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) requested humanitarian assistance from the international community in country. Following good practice recommended by the CERF secretariat, OCHA Philippines contacted the CERF secretariat on 30 June to discuss the option of a Rapid Response allocation to respond to the floods. The RC/HC was able to announce to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on 1 July 2011 that the Philippines would receive funding from the Rapid Response window.

As part of the global second UFE allocation in 2011, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) allocated $3.5 million to the Philippines. In a letter on 29 June 2011, the ERC informed the RC/HC that the Philippines was eligible for an UFE grant because the HAP was severely under-funded. According to the RC/HC’s 2011 report on CERF funding, there had been an increase in attacks against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) by the New People’s Army (NPA) in Eastern Mindanao, North Cotabato and South Cotabato in 2011. This had resulted in a significant deterioration in the security situation for IDPs and returnees. In addition to this, in the first quarter of 2011, a cumulative total of 10,000 families had been displaced by rioño. IDPs fleeing from a rioño often seek refuge in crowded evacuation sites with minimal access to services and livelihood support. They choose to remain displaced during temporary pauses of armed skirmishes between feuding groups due to security concerns. Despite these humanitarian needs, the Philippines receives very limited humanitarian funding because it is a middle-income country and also because of the nature of the protracted complex emergency. Therefore, the HCT welcomed the ERC’s decision and, on 5 July 2011, the RC/HC informed the ERC that the Philippines would submit project proposals for the UFE allocation.

The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Natural hazards include typhoons, floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, with an annual average of five destructive typhoons. On 16 December 2011, Tropical Storm Washi (known locally as Sendong) struck the North Eastern coast of Mindanao. This is much further South than the most storm-prone region of the country. The heavy rains caused flash floods and landslides across the region. The cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan in Region X (Northern Mindanao) were most severely affected because the flash floods struck in the early hours of the morning, giving residents little warning and killing many people as they slept. As a disaster prone country, the government of the Philippines has a well-developed disaster management capacity. However, since the Tropical Storm struck a part of the country that does not typically experience...
disasters of this magnitude, local resources were overwhelmed. The government made an official request for international assistance on 19 December 2011. In response, the ERC immediately allocated $3 million from the CERF’s Rapid Response window.

During a visit to New York in November 2011, the head of OCHA Philippines had advocated for a CERF allocation from the first UFE round of 2012. This was because CERF funding early in the year would help to leverage funds from other donors. Agencies would also have more time to prepare project proposals whereas the second half of the year is busier due to the typhoon season. In December 2011, the ERC did make an allocation to the Philippines from the first UFE allocation in 2012 because the 2011 Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) had been poorly funded and the requests in the 2012 HAP were well focused. However, with Tropical Storm Sendong hitting in mid-December, agencies were actually occupied with responding to it at the same time as preparing proposals for 2012 UFE funding.

1.2 Role of the Philippine Government

Since the Philippines is so disaster-affected, the government has established a disaster management and response capacity. The structures for coordination, disaster risk reduction and response management are laid out in national legislation. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) leads the coordination of emergency response. It has an Operations Centre that monitors natural hazards 24/7 in order to provide early warnings. It also undertakes preparedness activities and is responsible for the operational coordination of emergency response activities (so agencies, such as the Philippine National Police, Philippine Red Cross, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Internal and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Health (DoH), place a staff member in the Operations Centre to ensure coordination and receive information from regional level counterparts). The Operations Division of the Office of Civil Defence (OCD) manages this Operations Centre. The OCD is responsible for organising logistics for emergency response so it links with the military to transport relief items for government departments involved in response activities.

As a middle-income country, the Philippine government has its own financial resources. This includes a Calamity Fund at national level. The government can use this to finance a quick response to a sudden emergency and it was clear from consultations with those affected by Tropical Storm Sendong that the government had provided substantial assistance from the very first days after the disaster. The General Appropriations Act determines the Fund allocation at the beginning of the fiscal year and the OCD manages the Fund. The Philippine government is decentralised and local government units also have responsibility for disaster response. In order to fulfil their responsibilities, they are expected to set aside 5 per cent of their revenue for a calamity fund at local level. The size of these funds varies according to the capacity of the local government to generate revenue.

The NDRRMC publishes Situation Reports on its website, highlighting the government’s activities and broad financial contributions. It also discusses information on funding provided by the government at its meetings. In addition, government departments, such as the DSWD and DILG, provide reports from field level to Manila. However, international actors appeared to have limited detailed information on the amount of funding that the government makes available for local disaster response. This makes it difficult to avoid potential duplication of response activities. In 2011 and 2012, the government made contributions to WFP, which reported them to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). If the government

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4 A DSWD representative noted that the Department had received international donations to respond to Tropical Storm Sendong. It had advertised the names of the donors, the amounts contributed and where the funds had been spent in major newspapers. The DSWD’s website also shows the status of contributions it has received.

5 The Philippine government contributed $3,547,705 for food to WFP’s HAP project for central Mindanao on 2 September 2011. It made another contribution of $3,474,000 to WFP’s HAP project for central Mindanao on 11 June 2012.
reported all its contributions to humanitarian response within the country to the FTS, this would make it possible to see the size of the government’s own response in relation to international humanitarian assistance. It would also be in line with the President’s emphasis on budget transparency.

The Philippine government is one of the 126 countries that have donated funds to the CERF. Since the CERF began operating in 2006, it has contributed a total of $40,000. This consists of contributions of $5,000 each in 2007 and 2008 followed by contributions of $10,000 each in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Since the government has a disaster management capacity and financial resources, according to a former OCD staff member, its focus tends to be on its own response and internal accountability rather than obtaining an overview of the assistance that was provided, including assistance from international and NGO actors. However, many international agencies do consult the government and keep it informed about the assistance that they are providing. The previous RC/HC and OCHA also invested time and effort in engaging the government at national level (NDRRMC and OCD) and explaining the international humanitarian system to them. This had resulted in a closer working relationship, particularly during the response to Tropical Storm Sendong. An OCHA staff member argued that it is necessary to undertake a similar engagement exercise at local level since Local Government Units (LGUs) also play an important role in disaster response.

1.3 CERF funding to the Philippines

The Philippines has received CERF funding every year since the fund was established in 2006. Given the number of disasters that affect the country, it is not surprising that from 2006-2009, it received CERF funding exclusively from the Rapid Response window. From 2010, it began receiving allocations from the UFE window as well (one allocation each year from 2010 to 2012). With a total of $35.8 million since 2006, the Philippines is the CERF’s 20th largest recipient. Figure 1 above shows funding by CERF window. This shows that, with the exception of 2009, the Philippines has received quite small allocations – between $3-5 million. In 2011, Rapid Response funding totalled almost $8 million but this comprised two separate grants of $5 million and $3 million. One UN interviewee argued that, in the context of the amounts for which agencies are appealing in the HAP, the amounts that they receive are very small and it is, therefore, difficult to achieve much impact with the funding. However, the amounts

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6 During the response to Tropical Storm Sendong, though, DSWD appointed 50 camp managers in the Cagayan de Oro area to manage evacuation centres and transitory shelter camps. These camp managers were responsible for coordinating assistance to the camp or evacuation centre and also for taking up problems identified by the displaced communities.

7 For a full list of recipient countries, see: http://www.unocha.org/cerf/cerf-worldwide/allocations-country/2006-2012-country
requested in the HAP are small compared to appeals for other countries so it could be argued that the CERF allocations are proportional to the total requested in the HAP.

Table 1 in Annex 1 lists CERF funding by recipient agency and sector in 2011 and 2012. This shows that UFE window funding is spread across more sectors (and agencies) while Rapid Response funding has tended to be more concentrated. Given that the Humanitarian Action Plan has been severely under-funded, this suggests that CERF funding has been used to fill gaps across various sectors.

Table 2 in Annex 1 puts CERF funding to the Philippines in the context of the top five humanitarian donors to the Philippines from 2006-2012. This shows that the CERF has been one of the top 3 donors to the Philippines since 2006, even though (with the exception of 2009 and 2011) it has given relatively small amounts.

**Recommendation**

1. OCHA should support the Philippine government in reporting its contributions to in-country humanitarian response to the FTS. This would highlight the scale of the government’s response and also make it easier for international actors to avoid duplication.

**Section 2: Value Added of the CERF**

This section focuses on the extent to which the CERF has added value to humanitarian response in the Philippines. It addresses indicators 17, 18, 19 and 21 of the PAF. It starts by highlighting the ways in which CERF funding has added value to humanitarian response in the Philippines. It goes on to outline the challenges that CERF-recipient agencies have experienced with CERF funding. The section concludes by discussing the option of a country-based pooled fund.

UN agencies and IOM receiving CERF funding emphasised that it has been critical in the Philippines. Specifically, it has added value to international humanitarian response by:

- **Supporting a timely response at times of acute emergency.** AusAID noted that the CERF was the first funding in response to both the July 2011 floods in central Mindanao and Tropical Storm Sendong. It was particularly quick after Sendong, with CERF funding made available within days. Beneficiaries started receiving assistance from CERF-recipient agencies within a week or so after the tropical storm hit. The CERF provided WFP with a logistics grant that supported the humanitarian community broadly. So, an NGO partner of UNHCR, described how its locally purchased NFIs arrived on time in the field through WFP transport (which was carrying food as well). A local NGO gave the example of IOM being able to provide repair kits to displaced people who could return home before the DSWD could make kits available because there was a delay with government funding. WFP had an office in Iligan before Sendong struck, for its work in Lanao del Sur, so it had existing contacts and relationships that enabled it to react quickly and also assist other UN colleagues. This meant that it was looked upon as a leader but, it argued, without timely CERF funding, it would not have been able to respond in the way that the government and other actors expected. FAO believed that the UN’s ability to launch this quick response increased its credibility with the government and affected populations.

- **Enabling agencies to establish a presence on the ground** quickly and jump-start activities (in the case of Sendong), **which then enables them to leverage other funding.** Agencies pointed out that it was easier to raise funds from donors if they had on-going activities. For example, after using CERF funds to start work on warehousing and transport in response to Tropical Storm Sendong, WFP received additional funding for its logistics work from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). OCHA used the fact that the CERF enables agencies to attract additional funding to argue that the secretariat should allocate funding to the Philippines from the first UFE round in 2012.
Complementing other donor funding. FAO received funding from New Zealand for activities in Maguindanao. CERF funding complemented this and enabled FAO to extend these activities to other areas. In the case of UNHCR’s protection programme, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) financed birth registration activities in areas affected by Tropical Storm Sendong while CERF funding covered similar activities in areas not affected by Sendong. CERF funding for UNFPA’s project to address gender-based violence (GBV) in 2012 is complementing funds from AusAID so that it can cover the 10 geographical areas that it has identified as a priority.

Supporting a response to a ‘forgotten’ crisis in conflict-affected parts of Mindanao. A UN interviewee pointed out that it has been difficult to draw attention to the situation, let alone raise funds, because it is not seen as a humanitarian crisis. The former RC/HC agreed that, despite advocacy, donors have been uninterested in the on-going humanitarian situation. CERF funding has shed light on the need for a humanitarian response that would have remained invisible otherwise. It has also enabled UN agencies to maintain their operations in central Mindanao and thereby support a response by NGOs and the government as well. UNHCR highlighted the fact that its budget for the Mindanao programme is conditional on raising funds at country level. Thus CERF funding has helped ensure the continued allocation of funds by its headquarters. Two interviewees argued that the CERF has been a reliable donor for the protracted crisis situation since 2010. However, it is not guaranteed so agencies do not rely on CERF funding being available when planning their programmes.

Setting an example for other donors. FAO felt that the launch of the HAP is useful for raising funds but the CERF leads the way by funding critical activities in the HAP. It also demonstrates the UN’s commitment to the HAP process. An OCHA interviewee agreed that bilateral donors have followed the CERF in providing funding for the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

Filling critical gaps (as the UFE window has been a major source of funding to conflict-affected areas). UNHCR noted that, in both 2011 and 2012, the CERF was the first donor to support its IDP activities. This was even though the 2011 grant was from the second UFE round. UNICEF argued that other donors are interested in specific sectors so it received no funding for child protection, nutrition or education activities until the CERF funded all three sectors from the UFE window in 2011. This enabled UNICEF to augment its own funds. UNFPA noted that the CERF was the only donor to respond to reproductive health needs in the emergency context in central Mindanao.

Supporting coordination at HCT level. The acting RC/HC argued that CERF funding strengthens the ability of an RC/HC to bring HCT members around the table for planning. The former RC/HC found that CERF funding strengthened an HC’s authority and supported her coordinating role. A UN agency interviewee suggested that CERF funding also facilitated the establishment and strengthening of clusters in Iligan in the immediate aftermath of Sendong.

Providing flexible funding. WFP has found that CERF funding allows it the flexibility to decide what food to purchase and also to opt for regional or in-country purchase, if that is appropriate. This is more flexible than some donors. It can also enable WFP to provide assistance to beneficiaries more quickly. The requirements of some donors can mean that it takes three to five months for assistance to reach beneficiaries. Also, during the response to Tropical Storm Sendong, assistance was initially focused on the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. However, the government and aid agencies soon realised that remote communities were also severely affected and required help. The flexibility of CERF funding meant that UN agencies and IOM could assist these communities as well.

Apart from UN agencies and IOM, local government representatives in Iligan expressed their appreciation for the CERF’s contribution. In particular, they were grateful for WFP’s food distribution (because it complemented the government’s own food distribution to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in evacuation centres by providing food to IDPs in host communities). In addition, CERF funding...
enabled agencies like WFP and IOM to provide aid in the hinterland barangays that were difficult to access. Local government officials also found IOM’s help with establishing an IDP tracking system very useful. A school principal described how WFP’s food assistance to a school that had been used as an evacuation centre increased attendance and helped children to return to normalcy. Local authorities and school principals also expressed heartfelt gratitude for international assistance generally.

2.1 Challenges with CERF Funding

While agencies readily acknowledged the value of CERF funding for their humanitarian response in the Philippines, some of them also identified challenges. WFP raised the issue of the 7 per cent indirect support costs that the CERF Secretariat allows. In agencies such as UNICEF and WFP, headquarters withhold the indirect support costs. WFP argued that this means that it has to find other funding to cover its support costs. During the pilot PAF review in Kenya (in 2010), staff at UNICEF headquarters explained that they use the retained indirect support costs to finance salaries and other indirect costs at field level so the money is used to cover field level costs. It was outside the remit of this review to examine whether this is also the case for WFP. At the HCT meeting at which the evaluator presented preliminary findings from this review, an NGO pointed out that the challenge of covering indirect support costs trickles down to the implementing partners of CERF-recipient agencies. One NGO gave the example of not being allowed to charge administrative costs for the first CERF-funded project it implemented in Mindanao while another NGO said that it had refused to implement a CERF-funded for this reason. The NGOs were not aware that the reason for this is that the 7 per cent administrative costs that a CERF recipient agency receives is a maximum and its implementing partners are supposed to receive their administrative costs from this amount, not on top of it. Therefore, if the agency’s headquarters withholds the full amount, its implementing partners cannot receive their share.

WFP also argued that the CERF’s ceiling on the percentage of the budget that can be spent on certain elements such as staff or training made it difficult to programme CERF funding. It has had to find other sources of funding to cover the full costs of its programme. CERF funding is not intended to cover the entire cost of a project and agencies are expected to find complementary funding but this may be more of a challenge in the Philippines because the country receives limited humanitarian funding and the CERF is one of the major sources of humanitarian funding.

UNICEF noted that the flexibility of CERF funding globally had facilitated innovation. However, it had not found the CERF sufficiently flexible on funding for the training component of a CERF project, perhaps because the Philippines is a middle income country and the CERF Secretariat did not see the requirement for training for the government. According to UNICEF, the training was needed because it was introducing an approach in its nutrition programme that was new to the Philippines and to its government partners. After considerable back and forth with the CERF Secretariat, UNICEF removed the training component from the project.

FAO had also found it difficult to secure CERF funding for training for farmers on the best use of inputs that it was providing through its project, even though this was a small part of the budget. The CERF secretariat initially refused to finance this component but FAO was able to justify its inclusion. However, FAO did remove the line item for a workshop to consult with stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

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8 A school principal said that her school had received good quality utensils in support of the school feeding programme, back to school kits (funded by ECHO), a water pump from the Red Cross, and help with repairing the school from Save the Children.
9 An OCHA interviewee argued that agencies are also finding it increasingly difficult to secure humanitarian funding to respond to the protracted crisis in Mindanao because, since the financial crisis, traditional donors have reduced budgets for humanitarian aid and there is donor fatigue with low-profile protracted crises.
UNFPA called for greater flexibility on financing capacity building as well after it had to remove a budget line item for meetings. The Life-Saving Criteria do not include capacity building and some agencies can find it a challenge to raise additional funding for this. While the government has a disaster management capacity, this may be overwhelmed at times of emergency. Since Tropical Storm Sendong struck an area of the Philippines that is not prone to disasters, there was less local disaster management capacity than in other parts of the country. As a result, local government entities in both Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities were very grateful for the support that they received from IOM (in Cagayan de Oro) and WFP (in Iligan). This was not simply with equipment but also advice on what to do and how to organise things.

The experience of agencies with trying to secure CERF finance for training or capacity building highlights the challenge of a back and forth on CERF proposals. Agencies and OCHA in the field (both Manila and Cotabato levels) go through two to three rounds of drafting project proposals, with OCHA providing feedback and ensuring that the proposals comply with CERF secretariat requirements. Then, once agencies submit their proposals, the CERF secretariat sends questions and comments so agencies need to respond to these and take them into account in the final version of the proposal. Table 4 in Annex 1 shows the number of working days that agencies take from submitting an initial proposal to the CERF secretariat to finalising the proposal. While this is very quick in the case of Rapid Response grants, UFE proposals took between three and 19 working days in 2011 and between six and 13 days in 2012 to finalise. As the lessons learned section of the RC/HC’s 2011 Annual Report highlights, while this review process is helpful in improving the quality of the proposal and ensuring that it is in line with CERF requirements (which reduces back and forth with the CERF secretariat), it results in a lengthy commenting and review process. In many cases, agencies simply withdraw the project or remove a line item rather than continue the process of questions and answers. UNFPA noted that the process of applying for CERF UFE grants in 2012 involved so many questions and requests for details that it considered withdrawing its application. Clearly, agencies need to provide sufficient detail in their initial proposals to reduce the number of questions and requests for clarification that they receive. However, some interviewees felt that it would be helpful for the secretariat to state earlier in the process when it does not intend to finance a project or line item.

The application of the CERF’s Life-Saving Criteria has been relatively straightforward in acute emergency situations in the Philippines. In fact, one agency had found the criteria useful for arguing that it could not rehabilitate roads and infrastructure damaged by Tropical Storm Sendong, which is a government responsibility.

It has been more challenging to apply the Life-Saving Criteria with the CERF’s UFE window. A UN agency interviewee argued that, although the Philippines is a middle-income country, due to the long-standing conflict, in parts of Mindanao, development indicators are as low as in sub-Saharan Africa. He believed that although the situation was not a traditional emergency context or obviously a situation of life and death, the poorest communities required humanitarian aid to meet minimum living standards. However, it was not easy to fit this with the Life-Saving Criteria. As a result, UNDP had faced the challenge of having an early recovery project approved as a priority at country level but then not receiving CERF funding for it because it did not fit with the CERF’s Life-Saving Criteria. Although CERF funding supports Appeals in countries where one exists, an OCHA staff member pointed to a discrepancy between the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) and CERF funding. While a CAP can include a range of Early Recovery activities, the CERF only funds those that clearly fit within the Life-Saving Criteria. The Philippines HAP

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10 There was considerable back and forth between UNDP and the CERF Secretariat to clarify project activities because the original proposal included medium-term recovery interventions not traditionally funded by the CERF. UNDP eventually withdrew the project and the CERF Secretariat recommended that the HCT reallocate the funding to “an alternative life-saving priority humanitarian intervention where the allocation would have a greater immediate impact”.

has included early recovery activities and OCHA interviewees in Cotabato pointed out that, in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao, it is difficult to distinguish between humanitarian and longer-term needs because repeated displacement has reduced the coping mechanisms of affected populations.

An interviewee from UNICEF pointed out that, because the Philippines is so highly disaster prone, it is embedding disaster risk reduction (DRR) into its country programme. However, the CERF does not finance DRR or preparedness and this was going to be a challenge (although UNICEF was able to use other donor funding to incorporate disaster preparedness into its CERF-funded education project in 2011)\(^\text{11}\). Several local government representatives in Northern Mindanao highlighted the problem with short-term emergency funding – six months after Tropical Storm Sendong, many agencies had run out of funds and closed down their offices in the region. Government funds were also beginning to dwindle even though most IDPs, particularly in Iligan, were in transitory shelters and still needed assistance. In particular, the IDPs were desperate for livelihoods activities and the government was also keen for people to move from receiving “hand outs” to working for the assistance they received\(^\text{12}\). The lack of funds for recovery activities was a challenge for national and international actors alike. Although the CERF does not fund preparedness and recovery activities, the acting HC felt that the CERF Secretariat could play a role in advocating for donors to finance preparedness and resilience.

2.2 **Country Level Pooled Fund**

One aspect of CERF PAF reviews is to examine the complementarity between CERF funding and any country level pooled humanitarian funds that exist (such as a Common Humanitarian Fund or an Emergency Response Fund). In the Philippines, there was no country level pooled fund at the time of the review. However, emergencies are frequent in the Philippines and since the field visit for the CERF review, the island of Luzon has experienced severe flooding and a sudden upsurge in violence in Mindanao resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of people. It is not possible to request CERF funding for relatively small-scale crises so UNHCR argued that it would be helpful to establish a pooled fund at country level that would release funds quickly to facilitate response to relatively small, unforeseen emergencies. These are not covered by the HAP, which focuses on continuing needs in conflict-affected areas. An OCHA interviewee also felt that it would be helpful to have a fund to enable NGOs, particularly local ones, to respond to small-scale disasters. An Emergency Response Fund (ERF) could play such a role.

The CERF’s inability to finance preparedness or recovery activities has been a limitation for agencies because, for example, having pre-positioned stocks is vital for a quick response to a sudden emergency. According to the Life-Saving Criteria, the CERF can finance the replenishment of existing stocks through a Rapid Response grant but not the new establishment of pre-positioned stocks. Although ERFs do not generally finance preparedness or recovery, OCHA could explore the option of setting up a more flexible ERF that was suited to the context of the Philippines and could finance the pre-positioning of stocks.

The feasibility of establishing an ERF will depend on the willingness of donors to finance it. Some of the donors that have been regular contributors to ERFs, such as the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), are not present in the Philippines. AusAID, which could be a potential donor to an ERF in the Philippines, made it

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11 As part of rehabilitating schools in Cotabato after the floods in July, UNICEF’s NGO implementing partner had incorporated disaster preparedness training for teachers as well as students. This included developing an evacuation plan for the school. According to the Division Department of Education, disaster preparedness training is a government priority.

12 As a result, WFP’s CERF-funded Food For Work (FFW) activity was very popular with affected communities. It also helped rehabilitate community assets, which in turn helped people return to normalcy. In addition, the FFW communal vegetable gardens supplemented the food assistance that people were receiving.
clear that it would not consider supporting any mechanism that would dissuade the government from undertaking its own disaster response and preparedness activities and make it more dependent on external aid. AusAID also requires clear branding of its assistance and this could be challenging with a pooled fund.

**Recommendations**

2. The CERF secretariat should explore ways to streamline the CERF proposal review process for the UFE window so that agencies are clear early on in the process about what activities will not be funded.

3. Humanitarian actors in the Philippines should explore the option of establishing a country-level ERF, managed by OCHA, to facilitate quick response to small-scale disasters, particularly by NGOs. This would include exploring the option of using it to finance some preparedness activities.

**Section 3: Inclusiveness and Transparency of Allocation Process**

This section examines the extent to which CERF allocation processes in the Philippines include key stakeholders and are transparent. It addresses indicators 1, 2, 3, 6 and 25 of the PAF. This section starts by describing the process for allocating CERF funding, with sub-sections on Tropical Storm Sendong and the first UFE allocation in 2012. It goes on to discuss the involvement of various stakeholders in the allocation process.

### 3.1 Allocation Process

In the Philippines, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) allocates CERF funding by cluster. The HCT is chaired by the RC/HC and comprises heads of UN agencies and IOM as well as representatives of NGOs and donor agencies\(^\text{13}\). In some countries, such as Zimbabwe, the Inter-Cluster Forum is responsible for allocating funding by sector/cluster. However, in the Philippines, the Inter-Cluster Forum at the national level does not meet frequently\(^\text{14}\). At Mindanao level, the Mindanao Humanitarian Team (MHT) is the Inter-Cluster Forum. A number of UN agency staff members in Cotabato felt that, because the HCT in Manila makes CERF allocation decisions, they do not receive sufficient information on the reasons for these decisions. They also felt that they should be consulted and be able to contribute their views to the HCT’s discussions. This was an issue of information being shared within agencies, from headquarters to field level, as well as a matter of communicating the HCT’s decisions clearly to the MHT.

The four CERF allocations in 2011-2012 were all allocated to sectors at country level at ad-hoc meetings of the HCT. This means that donors have not participated in the meetings, only UN agencies, IOM and NGO members of the HCT. However, donors were present at the HCT meeting on 21\(^\text{st}\) December 2011 at which the acting HC announced CERF allocations from the Rapid Response window for Sendong. This was because donors were interested in hearing the acting HC’s detailed briefing on the situation in Northern Mindanao. The HCT meetings to allocate CERF funding were ad-hoc and not all ad-hoc meetings are minuted, particularly at the height of an emergency response. In 2011 and 2012, there was no detailed record of the discussions that took place before the HCT reached its decision though OCHA circulated the prioritisation strategy and funding decisions to UN agencies, IOM and NGO members of

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\(^{13}\) The 2012 HAP lists members of the HCT. This shows 7 NGOs as HCT members and 5 bilateral donors as observers.

\(^{14}\) The Forum focuses on preparedness needs and is activated as-needed to respond to emergencies, particularly during the tropical cyclone season which runs from June–December.
the HCT. This meant that donors were not fully aware of the CERF allocations though the information is published on the CERF and FTS websites.

UNICEF and UNHCR argued that the HCT should have included funding for protection needs (including child protection) identified by the joint rapid needs assessment in the CERF RR allocation for Tropical Storm Sendong or at least highlighted the needs as a priority. Since donors were present at the HCT meeting at which the HC announced the RR grants, this influenced their subsequent funding decisions and made it harder for the agencies to raise funds from other donors. Therefore, UNICEF suggested that OCHA could play a role in systematically making donors aware of priority sectors that are under-funded but that the CERF is not able to fund. An AusAID representative agreed that it would help if the HCT highlighted the full range of needs and then identified what the CERF was covering.

The former RC/HC played an active role in ensuring that funding is allocated according to priority needs, drawing on analysis by OCHA, priorities outlined in the HAP and government requests for assistance. The former RC/HC explained that the process evolved over various CERF allocations but, for the recent allocations, the RC/HC presented options for funding allocations by sector. She intended these options to guide HCT discussions but WFP, as well as an NGO member of the HCT, noted that it was not always clear how the RC/HC arrived at the allocations from OCHA’s analysis. At the presentation of the findings from the review, HCT members accepted that it was necessary for the RC/HC to make tough decisions when allocating CERF funding but argued that the criteria for the decisions should be made clear to everyone. NGO members of the HCT were in favour of the RC/HC, as a neutral actor, making the allocation decisions. They argued that, otherwise, each cluster is likely to fight its corner.

According to one HCT member, there is a level of camaraderie between the heads of agencies in the HCT so discussions on the allocation of CERF funds are constructive and frank. However, NGO members of the HCT and other participants in CERF allocation discussions felt that agencies did not tend to challenge the HC’s suggestions or voice concerns in the HCT meeting. Instead, they tended to raise concerns privately with the RC/HC or OCHA.

Due to the limited availability of humanitarian funding in the Philippines, there has tended to be a bit of a struggle between agencies to secure CERF funding. This was less intense during the allocation of the RR grant for the central Mindanao floods in 2011 because agencies knew that the country had already been allocated an UFE grant from the second round for the same geographical area. Therefore, agencies that did not secure RR funding would have the chance to receive funds from the UFE allocation. In December 2011, when the ERC allocated the RR grant for the Sendong response, agencies knew that she had allocated an UFE grant from the first round in 2012 as well. However, the RR grant was for Northern Mindanao (not central Mindanao) and the acting RC/HC allocated the RR grant to three agencies only. Therefore, there was more rivalry for the 2012 UFE allocation with WFP left unhappy with the final funding decision even though it received $893,000 out of a total UFE allocation of $3.9 million as well as $1 million from the $3 million RR allocation for Tropical Storm Sendong.

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15 Although the rapid needs assessment did highlight protection needs, a local government representative in Iligan argued that collaboration, cooperation and coordination between stakeholders providing assistance and their visible presence (even in remote barangays) helped to prevent human trafficking. As a result, at the weekly Cluster meetings on protection, there were few problems raised. Where agencies identified protection concerns, DSWD went to the Mayor and arranged for security. A DSWD representative in Manila noted that the government ensured that camp managers were trained on protection issues. The government-issued family access cards also captured information on vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, lactating mothers and people with disabilities. In addition, DSWD worked with UNFPA on gender-based violence concerns, including setting up a grievance redress desk in camp managers’ offices.
The RC/HC also tried to ensure that funding allocated to a sector was not captured entirely by the cluster lead. For example, from the UFE allocation in 2011, the HCT apportioned $1 million for protection, which is a strategic priority in Mindanao. UNHCR, as cluster lead within the UN system, discussed the allocation with other UN protection cluster members. Due to its internal budgeting system, UNHCR is under pressure to raise funds at country-level. At the time of the UFE allocation, UNFPA and UNICEF projects were partially funded by other donors whereas UNHCR had not received any funding. UNHCR’s IDP projects are dependent on donor contributions so, without funding, the central Mindanao project risked cuts the following year. Therefore, UNFPA and UNICEF agreed to receive $100,000 each, with UNHCR receiving $800,000. CERF guidance recommends providing grants that are large enough to have an impact. Grants of $100,000 each would not have been adequate to ensure impact in child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) so the RC/HC informed UNHCR that it would receive $550,000 and UNFPA and UNICEF would receive the remaining $450,000. At the time, the HCT had allocated funding to FAO and UNDP for an early recovery project. As described in section 2.1, UNDP withdrew its application and the $450,000 allocated to it was available for other activities. The RC/HC discussed priority needs with OCHA. Protection was a strategic priority in the HAP and still underfunded so the HC allocated this $450,000 to UNHCR.

The acting RC/HC noted that, despite the One UN approach, there had been no joint proposals for CERF funding (with the exception of FAO and UNDP submitting complementary projects for Early Recovery)\(^{16}\). The previous RC/HC was an advocate of project convergence, which is an underlying principle in the HAP. She encouraged agencies to target CERF funding at the same geographical area or beneficiary group or undertake joint programming to maximise impact. This principle underpinned the allocation of CERF funding from the UFE window in 2011. The HCT had a general discussion of the principle and decided to let technical staff in the agencies work out how to implement the principle. WHO’s NGO partners for the 2011 UFE project noted that WHO, UNFPA and IOM had all worked on health issues in the same barangays to increase impact and that this had been successful. As part of the 2011 UFE grant for health, at the HC’s request, WHO allocated $150,000 for WASH activities in health centres (since WASH had not received any funding from the UFE window) and $100,000 for nutrition\(^{17}\). This was to promote convergence further but UNICEF re-programmed the WASH funds (see section 6.1).

3.1.1 Allocation of Rapid Response (RR) Grant for Tropical Storm Sendong

The process for allocating the CERF RR grant for Tropical Storm Sendong was very quick. Figure 2 in Annex 1 outlines the process from the time that the storm hit to the disbursement of CERF funds. After the joint rapid needs assessment, the acting RC/HC received a letter on 19 December from the government accepting international assistance with the response\(^{18}\). Specifically, the government noted that the immediate, life-saving needs were for emergency shelter, food and bottled water, Non-Food Items (NFIs) like blankets and mats, WASH kits and logistics support. Donors attended the HCT meeting on 21\(^{st}\) December to hear the acting HC’s report on his visit to the affected areas. The donors urged agencies to launch an appeal before Christmas so that they could respond to it before offices closed for

\(^{16}\) The CERF does fund joint programmes and there were a number of examples from the Zimbabwe PAF review in 2011.

\(^{17}\) Since UNICEF had received substantial funding for WASH and nutrition from the Rapid Response grant for the central Mindanao floods shortly before the UFE allocation, the HC did not allocate funding directly for these sectors from the UFE grant. Instead, they received a share of the funds allocated to the health Cluster.

\(^{18}\) As noted in section 1.2, the HC and head of OCHA had invested time in explaining the international humanitarian system to government departments. They had also explained that a request for assistance from the government makes it easier to launch Appeals and request CERF funding.
the Christmas holidays. On the same day, the UN system prepared an emergency revision to the 2012 HAP, which was launched on 22 December.\(^\text{19}\)

The joint government-HCT rapid needs assessment, the priorities stated in the government’s letter requesting international assistance, missions by the RC/HC a.i. and OCHA to CDO and Iligan, and the briefings that the RC/HC a.i. and head of OCHA received in Northern Mindanao determined the allocation of CERF funding. The CERF secretariat had already indicated that there would be $3 million available for the response. Therefore, at the HCT meeting on 21 December, the acting RC/HC announced the allocation of $1 million each for the shelter, WASH, and food and logistics Clusters.

### 3.1.2 Allocation of Under-Funded Emergency Grant in 2012

The ERC informed the RC/HC that the Philippines had been allocated up to $4 million from the first UFE round in 2012 on 21 December 2011. She asked the RC/HC to confirm her willingness to lead the prioritisation and submission process by 2 January 2012. The RC/HC provided this confirmation on 1 January and received final confirmation of the Philippines’ inclusion in the UFE round on 4 January.

To guide the RC/HC and the HCT in allocating the $4 million available from the CERF UFE window, the RC/HC requested the OCHA office in Mindanao to conduct analyses of:

- Projects that were deemed to be an “immediate” or “high” priority in the HAP and the funding that these had received. At the time, the five immediate priority projects in the HAP had received no funding while high category projects had received 2.4% of the requested amount\(^\text{20}\).
- The geographical allocation of funding received for the HAP
- Funding according to the Gender Marker
- CERF funding to the Philippines in 2010 and 2011 (total amount and by agency)
- CERF UFE window funding in 2010 and 2011 by sector and agency.

As part of its advocacy for funding from the first UFE round in 2012, OCHA had also asked agencies to report on their utilisation of funds received from the UFE window in 2011 and the RR grant in response to floods in central Mindanao (as of 9 December 2011). This showed that agencies had spent 95-100 per cent of their RR funding, even though the projects were due to be completed by end January or early February (since the agencies had six months from the date of disbursement to complete implementation). On the UFE grants, the utilisation rate varied from UNHCR at 90 per cent to UNFPA and UNICEF at 0 per cent. The reasons for the different utilisation rates also varied (see Annex 1 for details). This reporting on utilisation rates fed into the allocation process.

Other factors that informed the allocation process included:

- Consideration of projects in Lanao Del Sur province, which was considered the most underfunded and vulnerable area in Mindanao.
- Partnership with local and international NGOs in the implementation of projects.

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\(^{19}\) According to an OCHA interviewee, the emergency revision did not include NGO projects because it had to be completed in one day. There was a trade-off between speed and inclusivity. However, there was to be another emergency revision at the end of January 2012 so NGOs would have the opportunity to include their projects at this time.

\(^{20}\) Although agencies undertake needs assessments to develop their projects, OCHA interviewees in Cotabato argued that, due to a lack of funding, aid agencies focus on areas where they are already working. Therefore, the HAP does not reflect the true extent of needs in conflict-affected parts of Mindanao. Another UN agency added that the lack of accurate information and analysis on levels of displacement is a major problem for the HAP. It also noted that the IDP situation in Mindanao is so low profile that organisations want to include projects in the HAP for visibility, even if they are unlikely to attract funding.
• Ensuring that funding was not divided into amounts so small that the projects would have little impact.

As part of this process of analysis, the head of OCHA’s Mindanao office spoke to cluster leads individually. Since many of them were involved in the Sendong response, there was no discussion of the CERF with the MHT as a whole. The analysis undertaken by OCHA and the factors listed above informed the HC’s initial selection of sectors and agencies and proposal of the amounts of funding that they should receive. The head of OCHA’s Mindanao office presented the results of the analyses, together with the proposed sectors and agencies, to the HCT on 2 February 2012. Following a discussion, the HCT agreed on amounts per cluster and agency, which the HC communicated to the CERF secretariat on 3 February 2012.

An allocation process based on analysis is more likely to result in funding to priority needs than a process based on negotiation between agencies or clusters. However, WFP argued that the process is not fully transparent and that agencies do not necessarily share the RC/HC’s priorities. In particular, it did not feel that the RC/HC had adequately justified the 2012 UFE grants because it had not received sufficient answers to the questions that it raised about the allocation process. WFP had argued for a much larger share of funding because food is very expensive but its HAP project was not an “immediate” priority (but a “high” priority). It could also be argued that by supporting sectors with smaller budgets, the RC/HC was maximising the impact of the limited amount of CERF funding available.

3.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

PAF indicator 2 aims to measure whether the “Intra- and inter-cluster prioritization process is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders (including INGOs and NGOs ... and adheres to Principles of Partnership”.

The Second Emergency Revision to the 2012 Philippines (Mindanao) Humanitarian Action Plan describes the coordination architecture in the Philippines. This notes that the cluster system has been in place since 2007. In accordance with national law, government departments lead the Clusters and are supported by cluster co-leads, which are often cluster lead agencies in the international humanitarian architecture. Coordination mechanisms are in place at national, regional and municipal level with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in overall charge of coordinating emergency response. As Figure 3 in Annex 1 shows, the HCT at Manila level and the MHT in Cotabato complement the government-led coordination architecture but the government does not participate in these two bodies. Since CERF funding is allocated at Manila level within the HCT, the government is not involved in these allocation decisions.

Once the HCT has apportioned funds by cluster, there is an intra-cluster discussion to prioritise the HAP project(s) to be put forward for CERF funding. Government cluster leads are involved HAP prioritisation process. For example, according to UNICEF, several government departments, such as the Department of Education (DepEd), DSWD, the Commission on Human Rights and the Department of Science and Technology, participated in HAP discussions within the education cluster. So, by funding HAP priorities, the CERF UFE allocation in 2012 supported the government’s priorities. Also, the government’s formal requests for international assistance clearly stipulate priorities for CERF RR grants. Thus, government

21 UNICEF had an internal discussion about the sectors for which it would seek funding. It decided to focus on one sector because there was a limited amount of CERF funding available and it felt that it would be less likely to receive funding if it tried to seek small amounts across four sectors. This meant that it sought funding for WASH only and did not receive CERF funding for nutrition, child protection or education.

cluster leads are indirectly involved in the prioritisation of CERF allocations though they are not directly involved in CERF discussions within clusters. The education cluster co-lead noted that only UN cluster members are involved in discussions of CERF funding. A DoH representative in Cotabato explained that discussions in the health cluster focus on project implementation, not the allocation of funding. For the UFE grant to WHO in 2011, WHO discussed project sites and implementation methods with the four NGO partners that it had selected and not the government. This was because, as cluster lead, the DoH believes that its role is to provide technical advice and overall guidance.

For the CERF RR grant for floods in central Mindanao, UNICEF identified WASH implementing partners through the HAP development process. When it received CERF funding, it explained to the implementing partners how it was going to allocate money to them. It argued that there is a trade-off between a participatory process and responding quickly. For the UFE grant in 2012 for WASH, UNICEF selected three of the NGOs with which it had partnered for CERF funding in 2011 and asked them to submit concept notes for project implementation. It discussed approaches and how to use the available funds in line with HAP priorities with these key partners at Manila level. After this, UNICEF informed the Cluster in Cotabato that CERF funding was available. UNICEF’s international NGO partners are working with local NGOs so UNICEF felt that a range of NGOs could benefit from CERF funding without increasing its administrative burden.

One UN agency argued that the reason for not involving NGOs in the allocation of CERF funding in cluster meetings is that local NGOs, in particular, are sensitive about public discussions of funding to avoid animosity from NGOs that fail to receive funding (since a large number of NGOs participate in cluster meetings but only a few become implementing partners of UN agencies). The interviewee maintained that, to avoid disputes, cluster lead agencies do not reveal publicly the actual amounts that they are giving to implementing partners.

WFP knew that, as cluster members, the government and NGOs should be involved in prioritising CERF funding but admitted that this does not happen and WFP simply uses the money allocated for its food and logistics activities. In the case of government partners, this may be because DSWD, although it is the cluster lead, relies heavily on WFP to run the cluster and chair meetings. WFP had not involved NGOs in the allocation of CERF funding (though they are involved in discussions of assessments and priority activities in the cluster) because it was not clear whether including NGOs in its CERF budget would mean that they would receive CERF funding in their own right or whether the funding would still come to WFP.

It was not clear whether cluster members broadly were not involved in prioritising activities for CERF funding because of concerns that this would affect the robustness of the prioritisation process or because cluster lead agencies were not aware that clusters are expected to play a role in prioritising CERF funding. A UN agency staff member in Cotabato was not very familiar with the CERF and argued that the agency did not have to discuss CERF funding with cluster members because the funding is for the agency, not the cluster.

The HAP development process is participatory and clusters prioritise activities during their regular meetings. For example, an NGO member of the WASH Cluster in Cotabato argued that the WASH cluster’s needs assessment is the “bible” on needs. When a disaster occurs, the cluster can add real-time information to the existing assessment. This makes it easy to prioritise activities. For this reason, perhaps, CERF-recipient agencies have focused discussions about the allocation of CERF funding on identifying implementing partners. However, UNICEF felt that there should be broader discussion of CERF funding both within clusters as well as within the MHT, which is the Inter-Cluster Forum at

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23 Although FAO stated that it discusses CERF funding with the Department of Agriculture.
Mindanao level. It also believed that it was important to bring donors and the government together for a strategic level discussion of CERF funding so that the UN system could highlight the contribution of the CERF and then discuss the complementary role of other donors and the government.

Once CERF funding has been disbursed, government agencies may play a role in technical advice, the selection of beneficiaries and identification of appropriate activities. For example, FAO sought help from LGUs to prioritise those most in need because, even after combining CERF UFE money with a contribution from the New Zealand government, it did not have sufficient funds to deal with the whole caseload in central Mindanao. Also, when FAO made savings on the agricultural inputs that it was providing with CERF funding, it consulted government technicians about using the additional funds (see section 4.3 in Annex 1 for details). The technicians advised FAO to increase the number of beneficiaries in the same barangays where it was providing assistance because there were still people in need. For WFP’s CERF-financed Food for Work project in Northern Mindanao, if communities could not identify suitable activities, WFP relied on the government to identify the most urgent and appropriate activities.

Government entities have also benefitted directly from CERF funding because CERF-funded agencies have worked alongside them to support them and strengthen their capacity during the response to Tropical Storm Sendong. A representative from the Regional DSWD in Cagayan de Oro spoke with deep appreciation of the support from IOM, particularly the knowledge and skills transfer. Although the Regional DSWD was the lead for the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, it had no experience of running a cluster. IOM coached the Regional DSWD in running the cluster and also provided funding to reinforce the capacity of its camp managers.

3.2.1 NGOs as Implementing Partners

One way of involving NGOs in CERF projects is as implementing partners. UN agencies had different processes for selecting their partners in the Philippines. For example, FAO obtained information about potential NGO partners from the government and other UN agencies. There is an NGO network in central Mindanao as well. FAO chose its partner(s) after obtaining information through several channels. It highlighted the importance of having complete information on potential partners, including their political affiliation, particularly in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. Otherwise, there is a risk of working through an NGO partner affiliated to one political faction in an area controlled by another faction. For the CERF UFE project in 2011, FAO organised a workshop on 18 November 2011, attended by farmers, government representatives and NGOs, to discuss the kinds of agricultural inputs that were required and identify the number of beneficiaries per municipality. FAO informed participants about CERF funding and four local NGOs that attended the workshop submitted letters of intent to FAO. From these, FAO chose one NGO and signed an agreement on 5 January 2012 (see timeline in Annex 1).

IOM chose NGOs that it had worked with before or that were known to its local staff members, who are familiar with the track record of local NGOs. It also checked that the NGOs were government accredited. UNICEF chose NGO implementing partners for its 2011 CERF-funded education project during a workshop to develop an implementation strategy for the HAP. It focused on partners that had implementation capacity as well as experience of doing education activities in emergency settings. It shared the CERF template for project proposals as well as the Life-Saving Criteria with the NGOs. For its WASH projects, though, UNICEF had not shared CERF guidance or the Life-Saving Criteria. This may be because it has had existing PCAs with its implementing partners rather than signing new agreements (see section 4.2). WFP had a regular NGO implementing partner in central Mindanao. In Northern Mindanao, in addition to this partner, it worked with an established international NGO on the Cash For Work component of its project. WFP asked the implementing partner to submit a proposal outlining its coverage and the time period for activities. Once it had agreed the activities and budget with the NGO, it signed a tripartite Field Level Agreement with the NGO and DSWD. Since WFP has an excellent working relationship with DSWD, having the government as a signatory did not delay the process.
For its CERF UFE project in 2011, WHO informed the health cluster of the allocation and selected four local NGOs that had put forward projects for the HAP under WHO’s aegis. It sent the CERF guidelines and Life-Saving Criteria to the four NGO partners with information on how to submit proposals for funding. The health cluster was allocated a CERF UFE grant in 2012 and the CERF Secretariat disbursed the funds to WHO on 16 April 2012. According to WHO’s NGO partners for the 2011 project, as of 9 July 2012, the health cluster had not discussed this CERF funding because it had been busy with the HAP mid-year review and a lessons-learned workshop on the 2011 CERF-funded project.

In Cagayan de Oro, OCHA conducted training from 16-18 April on the cluster approach, needs assessment and information management training. The workshop was conducted at the request of the Office of Civil Defence - Region X, based on its analysis of post-Sendong needs. It targeted regional and local governmental staff members involved in the Sendong response. However, a government representative argued that local NGOs also need a better understanding of the process of appealing for international humanitarian aid if they are to participate more actively. OCHA has provided briefings on the international humanitarian system to local NGOs in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

**Recommendations**

4. During CERF allocations, particularly from the Rapid Response window, the capacity of OCHA Philippines is under considerable strain in responding to the emergency and it does not minute all ad-hoc HCT meetings. It should find a way to capture CERF allocation discussions and share this with all HCT members. It should also make the details of the prioritisation process and the full range of priority needs and those covered by the CERF available on its website.

5. The CERF UFE prioritisation and allocation process would be strengthened with more systematic input from the MHT. Therefore, the HCT should consider including the MHT in CERF allocation decisions, either virtually or by inviting MHT members to Manila.

**Section 4: Timeliness of CERF Funding**

This section examines the timeliness of the CERF Secretariat in disbursing funds as well as the timeliness of onward funding to implementing partners. It addresses indicators 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 20 of the PAF. None of the CERF-recipient agencies had requested no-cost extensions (NCEs) for the four allocations covered in this review though one agency had to return an unspent grant, as described in section 6.1. Three agencies had re-programmed funds, as described at the end of the section.

As noted in section 2, CERF RR funding has facilitated a quick response to sudden onset disasters. Section 3.1.1 described how CERF funding was available within days of Tropical Storm Sendong striking the Philippines. As a result, affected populations started receiving assistance from international agencies, including those funded by the CERF, within a week. In Calaanan, near Cagayan de Oro, a group of displaced people stated that they had received hygiene kits from a UNICEF NGO partner by 22 December and high-energy biscuits from WFP by 28 December. This was sufficiently rapid because local communities had helped each other as soon as the disaster occurred and the government had begun to provide food and other assistance within 24 hours.

Although agencies responded very promptly to Tropical Storm Sendong, some of them did this by diverting staff and resources temporarily from on-going programmes in central Mindanao (UNHCR described “mothballing” its Cotabato office for a couple of months as staff moved to Northern

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24 A staff member pointed out that WHO had started the administrative groundwork for the 2012 project and held discussions with the regional and provincial department of health and local government about the supplies and equipment required.
Mindanao). In some cases, this had a knock-on effect on their ability to implement 2011 CERF UFE grants (see the case of UNFPA in section 6.1) or to start implementing the 2012 CERF UFE grants. For example, WHO had not started discussions about the 2012 CERF-funded project with NGO implementing partners three months after it had received CERF funding. This was partly because of its focus on the Sendong response and partly because it was focused on the completion of the 2011 project by 30 June.

4.1 Timeliness of the CERF Secretariat

The CERF’s focus on life-saving and time-critical emergency response has led the Secretariat to emphasise the timeliness of CERF funding. Therefore, PAF indicators 8-10 seek to measure the following:

- Average number of working days between the final submission of a grant request package from RC/HC and ERC decision. (Benchmark: Three working days for RR and five working days for UFE)
- Average number of working days between receipt of countersigned approval letter from a grant recipient and request (memo for disbursement to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA)) (Benchmark: Two working days)
- Average number of days between request (memo) for fund disbursement by OPPBA to grant recipient.

Table 4 in Annex 1 shows the number of working days for each of these indicators for CERF allocations to the Philippines in 2011-2012. This shows that:

- Once agencies submitted final proposals, the ERC was very quick to approve RR grants, doing this either on the same day or the next day.
- The average number of working days to approve UFE grants was 6.2 days in 2011. While most grants were approved within four to six days, the ERC took 14 days to approve two UNICEF grants and 11 days to approve a third UNICEF grant. At UNICEF’s request, its grants for different sectors are treated as one project (which is why the four UNICEF UFE grants in 2011 have the same project number with A, B, C and D to distinguish the different sectors). This means that all the proposals are approved at the same time. UNICEF’s WASH and nutrition proposals did not require revision so the date of the final submission is the same as the date of the initial submission. However, it took 10 days to finalise the education proposal. This meant that the ERC had to wait for this final proposal to approve all four grants. This increased the number of days from final submission to ERC approval on the WASH and nutrition proposals (as well as the child protection proposal, which was finalised three days after the initial submission).
- In 2011, the CERF Secretariat was well within its benchmark of two working days from receiving the countersigned approval letter to requesting disbursement for both RR and UFE grants. For the 2012 UFE allocation, though, the CERF Secretariat took 16 working days to request payment for the UNICEF grant and 17 days to request payment for the WHO grant. This increased the average to 4.75 days.
- In 2011 and 2012, the average number of days from the CERF Secretariat submitting a request to disburse funds and actual fund disbursement was less than five working days.

This shows that, with the exception of requesting payment for a couple of grants for the UFE allocation in 2012, the CERF secretariat has been very quick to approve grants and disburse payments.

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25 The CERF secretariat and UNICEF have now resolved this problem and UNICEF projects no longer need to wait for joint approval.
WFP raised the issue of a delay with the disbursement for its Rapid Response grant for food in response to Tropical Storm Sendong. The ERC approved the four grants from this allocation on 23 December 2011, the day that the agencies submitted their final proposals. WFP’s Rome headquarters countersigned the approval letter for the logistics grant on 5 January 2012 but it did not countersign the approval letter for the food grant till 18 January 2012. This was due to internal issues. This meant that the CERF secretariat could disburse the logistics grant on 10 January but the food grant was only disbursed on 24 January. The delay meant that the CERF secretariat re-numbered the food grant with a 2012 project number (as shown in table 4 in Annex 1).

4.2 Timeliness of Onward Funding

Annex 1 contains timelines for a few of the projects funded in 2011. The aim of undertaking these timelines is to illustrate how CERF funding and its timing influenced project implementation. They are also intended to complement the CERF secretariat’s research and bilateral discussions with agencies regarding the linkages between CERF funds and NGO sub-granting. Finally, they should help improve understanding of the full CERF project cycle.

The timelines in Annex 1 show that the timeliness of onward funding to implementing partners varies and agencies have different systems and procedures. For example, UNICEF amended existing annual Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with WASH NGO partners to be able to respond quickly to the floods in central Mindanao in 2011 (see timeline for project 11-CEF-037B). One of UNICEF’s NGO partners explained that it took 3 months to sign the PCA but, because it was in place, the NGO could simply write a 2-page activation sheet and start responding to the emergency.

In UNHCR’s case, CERF funding contributes to an existing project that would have been financed through the budget allocated by headquarters at the beginning of the year. So, it uses existing annual agreements with implementing partners to channel CERF funds. This makes the process of onward funding quicker. One UNHCR partner explained that, when Tropical Storm Sendong struck, it was coming to the end of its project agreement (the agreement ended on 31 December 2011). The NGO still had a little bit of money left in the budget so it prepared a new proposal to justify a different utilisation of funds and used the money to start responding to Sendong. The partners of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP commended the agencies for their flexibility in reallocating resources from central Mindanao to help start activities in response to Sendong while the partners were drafting new project proposals26.

Other agencies signed new agreements with partners when they received CERF funding, which could take time. For its CERF-funded education project in 2011, UNICEF signed new PCAs with its NGO partners on 24 January 2012 (see timeline for project 11-CEF-046-D in Annex 1). This delay of three months after UNICEF received CERF funding was due to UNICEF’s system change at the end of 2011. The delay in signing the PCA meant that the NGO had to revise its proposal to reduce the implementation period to six months to be able to complete the project by the CERF deadline of 30 June 2012. This had implications for the capacity building component of the project, which the NGO addressed by conducting simultaneous trainings in different geographical areas. Delays with transferring to the new system also led to delays in transferring funds to implementing partners and UNICEF was only able to start disbursing CERF funds to them in April 2012. The NGOs were able to start with community engagement and other preparatory activities before they received their funding but, like UNICEF, they redirected resources to Northern Mindanao to respond to Sendong and this delayed project implementation.

26 WFP explained that CERF funding made it possible for the agency to reallocate pre-positioned food because it could use CERF funds to replenish the “borrowed” food.
IOM is a projectised agency so it has used CERF funding for new projects rather than as a contribution to an existing project (though the project activities may be on-going). Although it implemented the project in response to Tropical Storm Sendong directly, in central Mindanao, due to security restrictions, it works through implementing partners. Therefore, it has had to sign new agreements with its NGO partners for the CERF UFE grants in 2011 and 2012. Although this takes time, its implementing partners can start with activities such as courtesy visits to local authorities while they are waiting to sign an agreement (see timeline for project 11-IOM-032 in Annex 1).

FAO signed an agreement with the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Manila for its 2011 CERF UFE-funded activities in Region XII. It also signed a Letter of Agreement with its NGO partner on 5 January 2012 (see timeline for project 11-FAO-030 in Annex 1). One challenge for FAO is that the DA requires it to establish a Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) for each project. The purpose of the PCC is to provide operational guidance and help coordinate project implementation. It can take several weeks to establish the PCC and, for the 2011 project, the PCC first met on 13 December 2011. FAO required the PCC’s approval for the proposed agricultural inputs at this meeting to start procurement.

WHO had not worked with NGO implementing partners in Mindanao before so it signed agreements with its four NGO partners in October 2011. However, as the timeline for project 11-WHO-050 in Annex 1 shows, it was not able to disburse funds until mid-late November. This was because staff members were unfamiliar with the most effective internal mechanism for financing NGOs to use. The NGOs started assessments and preliminary activities in July because they had their own resources or borrowed funds and were prepared to start work even before they had a signed contract. The most recently established of the four NGO partners did not have its own funding to pre-finance activities so it asked its staff to volunteer their time. The NGOs shared transport with each other or WHO and other aid agencies travelling to the same areas to minimise transport costs (using credit cards to pay for fuel). They started concrete project implementation once they had signed contracts with WHO. Despite the delay in signing contracts and receiving payment, the NGOs were able to complete their activities by the CERF deadline of 30 June 2012 because they had planned a six-month implementation period.

UNFPA experienced difficulties with finding suitable implementing partners for its CERF-funded project to address gender-based violence in 2011 (see section 6.1). By the time that it was able to sign agreements with two NGO partners in June 2012, it was too late to implement the project. However, since UNFPA received CERF UFE funding for similar activities in 2012, it can work with the same NGO partners and be able to implement the project in a timelier manner.

Both UNFPA and WHO pointed out that their internal systems are not designed for emergency response. A UNFPA interviewee argued that the scale of its response to Tropical Storm Sendong overwhelmed the agency’s financial system and this has caused the agency as a whole to consider how to adapt its systems for humanitarian response. Therefore, the agency is developing a global strategy to improve its systems, for example, by introducing fast-track procedures and standard operating procedures for humanitarian settings. WHO also noted that its Philippines operation is contributing to changing the Standard Operating Procedures for WHO’s financial system at a global level. The agency is developing an Emergency Response Framework to improve its ability to respond.

Even an agency like UNICEF, that does have mechanisms to speed up onward funding, such as signing annual PCAs and then amending them for emergency response, can face challenges. An NGO was about to sign a PCA with UNICEF for an education project when Sendong hit. UNICEF can only have one PCA

27 WHO headquarters have informed the Philippines office that it will receive faster approval for payments if it states that these are from CERF funds.
per partner so it took time to incorporate the Sendong response into the agreement. UNICEF also has rules about the liquidation of funds, regardless of the project or source of funding, before it can transfer additional funds. This can pose problems for NGOs that are implementing several projects for UNICEF – a lack of progress on a non-CERF funded project can affect funding for a CERF-funded project.

The timeliness of the implementation of projects does not depend only on the timeliness of onward funding. A range of other factors can affect timeliness, some of which is out of the control of aid agencies. In the case of FAO’s CERF-funded project in 2011, FAO’s NGO partner distributed seeds in March so that farmers could plant in April, before the rainy season. Some farmers were able to do this but, in some areas, the rains came unexpectedly early and fields were flooded from March-May. So farmers were only able to plant seeds in May-June, once the water had subsided, and planned to harvest in August-September.

### 4.3 Re-programming of Funds

For the four CERF allocations to the Philippines covered by this review, none of the agencies had requested no-cost extensions (NCEs) though UNFPA considered submitting a request for its 2011 UFE grant for gender-based violence (see section 6.1). However, three agencies had re-programmed funds. Of these two had made formal requests to redeploy funds to the CERF secretariat while the third, WHO, did not need to make a formal request but sought the secretariat’s approval. Section 4.3 of Annex 1 contains the details of the re-programming of the funds. It is positive that, in all three cases, the agencies were seeking to expand their projects with the agreed CERF budget. Staff members from FAO and IOM had undergone CERF training so they knew what procedures to follow. WHO drew upon the experience of its CERF focal point at headquarters.

## Section 5: Reporting and Accountability

This section focuses on reporting on, and accountability for, CERF grants. It addresses indicators 13, 14, 15, 16, 27 and 28 of the PAF. It starts by discussing agency reporting on CERF funding to the RC/HC. It goes on to describe the monitoring procedures that the agencies have in place. It concludes by outlining ways in which some agencies have involved beneficiaries.

### 5.1 Reporting on CERF Funding

The CERF secretariat has developed a template for UN agencies and IOM to complete as input into the annual report that the RC/HC submits to the CERF Secretariat at the end of March. For the report on 2011 funding to the Philippines, OCHA first briefed the HCT on the reporting process and the fact that it would be contacting the agencies for their inputs. It also emphasised the need for good quality inputs in light of concerns raised by the CERF Advisory Group. It then sent the template to the CERF focal points within agencies that had received funding. These focal points were responsible for collecting information, particularly if the organisation had received funding for different clusters, and submitting
the reports to OCHA. In the initial submissions, there were sections (such as those on gender equity and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms) that were not filled in, sections (such as the outcomes) that had been simply copied and pasted from the project proposals, and some information that was unclear. In some cases, the agencies reported incorrect outcomes or beneficiary numbers because they had confused HAP project proposals with the proposals that they had submitted for CERF funding (which were based on the HAP project)\(^{28}\). OCHA had to request clarifications or further information from the CERF recipient agencies, resulting in a lengthy process.

Other PAF reviews have demonstrated that this weakness of agency reporting on CERF funding is not unusual. However, since the CERF secretariat requires much shorter reporting than most other donors and agencies should have adequate systems in place, they should improve the quality of their reporting. UN agencies require detailed reporting from their implementing partners so they could also examine ways of ensuring that the detailed information they receive from their partners is fed into their reporting to the RC/HC\(^{29}\).

Once OCHA had completed the draft Annual Report, it presented this to the HCT in March 2012, together with an outline of the lessons learned. This was the first time that the secretariat had requested input from the HCT on the lessons learned section. There was a limited discussion of the lessons learned and IOM felt that there was insufficient time for clusters and the HCT to reflect on and analyse lessons learned and ensure that this did not become a box-ticking exercise.

The RC/HC’s Annual Report is not shared with government partners though, in the early stages of the Sendong response, OCHA distributed its Situation Reports widely. These highlighted information on cluster activities, including activities that were in support of the City and District DSWD and other government departments leading the clusters. However, the Mayor of Iligan noted that there was no mechanism to synthesise the information and make it useful for him as the person in overall charge of the disaster response.

NGOs implementing CERF projects also did not know about the RC/HC’s Annual Report. Therefore, they had no idea of the extent to which the reports that they submitted to UN agencies and IOM were reflected in this report.

Since the CERF secretariat receives annual reports from all countries that have received funding at the same time, it takes some time to go through the reports and check them (in 2011, 45 countries received CERF funding). According to OCHA, it took the CERF Secretariat three months to comment on the 2011 report on funding to the Philippines. The secretariat then allowed the agencies a week to respond to its questions. Agencies resented this because it had been a long time since they had completed the reporting process and they felt that it was too short notice. The CERF secretariat is aware that it needs to process the Annual Reports more quickly and allow agencies adequate time to respond to comments so it is working on this. The process would also be speeded up if CERF-recipient agencies improved the quality and accuracy of their reporting.

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\(^{28}\) UNICEF noted that it found it difficult to gather disaggregated data, both for the CERF and HAP proposals. This was because it was often dealing with fluid populations.

\(^{29}\) One implementing partner highlighted the challenge when it had funding from donors such as ECHO and AECID as well as a CERF-funded UN agency. The donors and UN agency all had different reporting requirements even though the NGO was undertaking the same activity of building latrines. It had to put in place careful monitoring procedures so that it was reporting on the right latrines to the different donors. One of UNICEF’s WASH implementing partners described providing monthly progress reports that included photos so agencies should consider including examples and photos in their reports on CERF funding.
5.2 Monitoring and Feedback on CERF Projects

None of the CERF-recipient agencies in the Philippines had evaluated CERF-funded projects but they had monitoring systems in place. According to UNICEF, during the Sendong response, it adopted integrated humanitarian performance monitoring, which was a weekly analysis of performance and assessment of progress that included CERF-funded activities. WFP monitored its general food distributions at the time of distribution and also undertook post-distribution monitoring (PDM) two weeks afterwards. PDM involves checking the quantity and quality of food distributed, the process (including women’s participation), safety and security, etc. For its CERF-funded Food for Work (FFW) project, WFP regularly monitored progress, which then informed its pre-positioning of food stocks. FAO monitored whether its NGO implementing partner had distributed inputs and its national consultants visited project sites to follow up. The NGO partner also undertook monitoring visits two weeks after distributing agricultural inputs to ensure that beneficiaries were using them and that they had not been sold.

In addition, the local government checked on the progress of the FAO project since it took over responsibility for the project after FAO had completed its activities. A representative from the municipal government pointed out that staff members live in the same areas as the farmers benefitting from FAO’s project so they are in constant contact with them and monitor the project closely. UNHCR, too, works with the government to undertake monitoring though the government has limited human resource capacity. A DoH representative in Cotabato explained that government representatives monitor the implementation of health projects when they undertake medical missions. As a result, the government representative was able to testify to the beneficial effects of the psycho-social activities implemented by one of WHO’s NGO partners. At the end of its 2011 CERF-funded project, WHO formally handed over the project to the government and the DoH verified the repair and rehabilitation of health stations included in the project. One of UNICEF’s implementing partners for the CERF-funded education project in 2011 noted that UNICEF and the DepEd had made joint field visits to monitor the project and a Division DoE representative confirmed this. IOM monitors its implementing partners directly but has accompanied local government representatives to project sites to obtain feedback from beneficiaries.

The implementation of CERF-funded projects is also discussed in cluster meetings, particularly when there is report back to the Cluster on who is doing what where (the 3Ws), though agencies do not always mention whether the project is CERF-funded or not. So, for example, UNICEF and WHO’s NGO partners noted that cluster meetings in Cotabato discuss progress with CERF-funded projects. A Division DoE representative mentioned receiving updates on project implementation in Cluster meetings and through reports from school principals.

OCHA does not monitor CERF-funded projects specifically or verify the information that agencies provide in their submissions to the RC/HC’s annual report. However, it does monitor progress with the HAP. Since CERF-funded projects (at least for the UFE allocations) are in the HAP, OCHA receives some information on achievements and challenges with cluster response plans and projects as a whole (not simply the CERF-funded components). OCHA in Mindanao has more opportunities for discussing CERF-funded activities but agencies usually only contact OCHA in Manila regarding no-cost-extensions or re-deployment of funds.

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30 WFP noted that, if it undertook an evaluation, this was likely to be of a specific activity, for example, on-site feeding. This would be done with implementing agencies with a view to handing the activity over to the government. Part of the aim of the evaluation would be to help the government realise that it had facilitated the implementation of the project and help it take ownership. One of UNICEF’s WASH implementing partners mentioned that it had undertaken an internal evaluation of a CERF-funded project though not an external evaluation.
In its submission for the lessons learned section of the RC/HC’s 2011 annual report, UNFPA suggested, “A stronger CERF project monitoring and technical assistance role should be given to the Mindanao Humanitarian Team in order to improve CERF monitoring, learning systems and provide CERF-related inter-cluster technical guidance at the country level. The MHT should be able to discuss the progress of the CERF projects on a regular basis during its meetings and provide technical assistance to those projects which are experiencing difficulties especially of an inter-cluster nature”. Although other agencies did not object to this suggestion when OCHA presented the draft report and lessons learned to the HCT, there has been no move to implement UNFPA’s recommendation and strengthen the MHT’s role in monitoring CERF projects and/or providing technical assistance.

OCHA facilitated an Action Review of the response to Tropical Storm Washi/Sendong on 22-23 March 2012. The workshop aimed to provide humanitarian actors with an opportunity to review the first three months of their response, objectively and constructively, to facilitate learning and thereby improve the response and inform future government planning at the national and regional level. The workshop brought together over 170 participants from local, regional and national government, civil society, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, international organisations and donors. Participants discussed specific themes to identify what went well and what could be improved and developed various recommendations. The workshop was also an opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses and lessons learned on CERF-related issues. OCHA made the Action Review report available online. In June 2012, the health cluster conducted a lessons learned workshop on the 2011 UFE CERF-funded project. WHO’s implementing partners as well as government representatives participated in this workshop. The OCHA-facilitated action review and the health cluster workshop are a reflection of a culture of lesson learning in the Philippines. The WASH and health clusters as well as individual agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA and OCHA) had undertaken lessons learned exercises on their response to Sendong.

5.3 Involvement of Beneficiaries

Some of the agencies participating in the review provided examples of ways in which they had involved beneficiaries in the projects. As part of the Letter of Agreement with its implementing partner for the 2011 CERF-funded project, FAO required the NGO to engage with beneficiaries and explain the project to them. For the New Zealand-funded activities, the NGO also undertook an outcome assessment, which included gender analysis. The Municipal Agriculture Officer helped FAO and its implementing partner to identify beneficiaries most in need. These included the poorest farmers, those with less than one hectare of land and those affected by rido. The NGO then validated the beneficiary list.

IOM noted that it had not undertaken systematic beneficiary satisfaction surveys during its RR grant funded transitory shelter project in Northern Mindanao (in response to Tropical Storm Sendong). However, it had obtained informal feedback and anecdotes from beneficiaries to get an idea of their views on project implementation. At the Calaan project site near Cagayan de Oro, a group of displaced people said that IOM had consulted them closely about the process of moving out of the transitory shelters that it had built into permanent shelters.

Although the Regional DSWD was responsible for managing evacuation centres and camps for people displaced by Tropical Storm Sendong, IOM provided a lot of support with camp management. This included helping the DSWD to set up IDP committees, such as WASH, food and security committees. The

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32 The NGO noted that it had worked to ensure gender sensitivity during the distribution of agricultural inputs as well. So, women, particularly those who were pregnant, were prioritised and given places at the front of the queue of recipients.
IDPs also appointed a camp President to voice their concerns and raise issues with the camp manager. IOM helped to ensure that there was an information board in every camp with a telephone number that IDPs could call with child protection or gender-based violence concerns.

**Recommendations**

6. CERF-recipient agencies should ensure that they have mechanisms in place to provide comprehensive reporting on CERF funding.
7. OCHA should share the RC/HC’s Annual Report on CERF funding with all HCT members, including donors. The HCT could then share the report with members of their networks.
8. CERF-recipient agencies undertake a number of lessons-learned exercises. Where these include CERF-funded projects, they should share the outcomes with the RC/HC and the CERF secretariat (through their submissions to the Annual Report, if relevant).

**Section 6: CERF Guidance**

To improve the quality of the guidance that it provides, the CERF secretariat has sought views on the utility of CERF training and the CERF website. It has also requested information on whether CERF-recipient agencies understand its guidance and requirements adequately.

The CERF secretariat runs an annual regional training workshop in Bangkok. OCHA’s Regional Office sends information on the workshop to RC/HCs in the region, copying in the OCHA office. The OCHA office in the Philippines ensures that the information is shared with the HCT. It is then up to the heads of agencies that participate in the HCT to decide whether or not to send staff for training as the agency has to bear the travel costs. Staff members from UNHCR and UNFPA suggested that it would be very helpful if there could be some form of training or briefings on the CERF in the Philippines itself because it is not possible to send all staff involved in implementing CERF projects to the training in Bangkok.

The majority of international staff at OCHA Philippines involved in supporting CERF funding processes have undergone CERF training and the agencies really appreciated the help that they received from them on developing proposals and other aspects of CERF funding. Agencies had found OCHA staff very approachable and, therefore, found it easy to discuss issues of concern or contact them with questions. One of UNICEF’s NGO partners had also received guidance from OCHA on the application of the life-saving criteria to an education project.

Apart from a small grant of $100,000 in 2006, FAO had not received CERF funding till 2010. Therefore, its staff members in the Philippines had not been familiar with CERF templates and guidelines. After experience with a couple of rounds of CERF funding, they felt that they had a better understanding of what was required in proposals and reports. One staff member had also undergone CERF training in Bangkok and FAO felt that its confidence and knowledge of CERF guidance and requirements had increased as a result. It had also started using the CERF website after the training (mainly to ensure that it had the latest version of templates). UNICEF also used the CERF website for guidelines and templates. IOM, which is experienced with CERF funding, stated that it found CERF templates and guidance straightforward. It had sent a staff member from the Philippines for CERF training in 2010, after which the staff member had begun to make use of the CERF website (to look at CERF allocations to the Philippines and also to obtain the final version of the RC/HC’s annual report)\(^{33}\). IOM had also found the

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\(^{33}\) The CERF made the first UFE allocation to the Philippines in 2010 and this was also the year when a number of agencies – IOM, UNICEF, OCHA and UNFPA – sent staff members for CERF training.
CERF training useful for getting a better understanding of the UFE process, how the Secretariat interprets the Life-Saving Criteria, and how to write better CERF proposals.

Although UN agencies and IOM had made some use of the CERF website, UNICEF and WHO implementing partners stated that they focused instead on the OCHA and Online Project System (OPS) websites because these were most relevant for the HAP.

In the Philippines, UNICEF’s national CERF focal point provided feedback on project proposals and liaised with OCHA. UNICEF has not contacted the CERF focal point at headquarters except to request them to lobby for education to be accepted as a life-saving activity. FAO had not had direct contact with the CERF focal point at headquarters level but worked with them through the emergency office. IOM had consulted the CERF focal point at headquarters to discuss whether it would be possible to use more than 10 per cent of a project budget for staffing. Thus, although the contact details for CERF focal points at headquarters level are available on the CERF website and, for the UFE allocation in 2012, the CERF secretariat shared these contact details with the countries receiving funding, it appears that agency staff at field level tend not to work with them very much.

As noted in the lessons learned section of the 2011 RC/HC’s Annual Report, agencies have found the level of details required by the new CERF application template challenging. Therefore, they recommended that CAP and CERF project proposals should be streamlined.

6.1 Compliance with CERF Requirements

Although most of the CERF recipient agencies were familiar with CERF requirements, there were three cases where agencies had not fully understood them. These are explained below. In addition, there were some discrepancies around the deadlines for the completion of CERF-funded activities. CERF-recipients agencies are expected to complete activities (not just disburse funds) by the end of the CERF grant’s implementation period. In some cases, their implementing partners requested an NCE and completed activities after the deadline. For example, in the case of UNICEF’s CERF-funded education project in 2011, an implementing NGO made some savings. It submitted a No-Cost Extension to UNICEF and proposed spending the savings on other project related activities. This meant that the NGO completed the project at the end of July, rather than by the deadline of 30 June. The deadline for the completion of UNICEF’s Rapid Response grant for its response to floods in central Mindanao in 2011 was 25 January 2012, since UNICEF received CERF funding on 25 July. Its agreements with three NGO partners were due to end on 15 or 31 December 2011, well within the implementation period for the CERF grant. Two of these NGOs required NCEs till 31 January 2012. The fourth NGO partner for this project had an agreement that ran from 1 September 2011 to 28 February 2012. This NGO did not require a NCE but its agreement exceeded the CERF implementation period. These project over-runs are often not reported to the CERF secretariat although UNICEF’s submission to the RC/HC’s annual report did mention that two NGO partners required NCEs.

FAO was forced to exceed the implementation deadline for its 2011 UFE project very slightly because, at the end of its distribution of agricultural inputs in mid-March, a staff member discovered that one of the two types of fertiliser that it had procured was adulterated. In accordance with its technical protocol, FAO went through a lengthy process of getting samples analysed by various entities, including an independent company in Europe. It was mid-June by the time it received the final results. The Technical

34 For Rapid Response grants the deadline for completion of activities is 6 months from the date of disbursement of funds. For grants from the first UFE round, the deadline is 31 December. For grants from the second UFE round, the deadline is 30 June of the following year.
Support Team in Rome recommended that FAO distribute a replacement for the adulterated fertiliser. Due to the time required to procure the replacement fertiliser, FAO was only able to distribute the replacement on 13 July, two weeks after the 30 June deadline for the completion of activities.

**UNICEF**

UNICEF received a grant of $150,000 from the UFE allocation in 2011 to undertake WASH activities in health centres (this was part of funding allocated for the health sector). At the time that it received the money (20 September 2011), agencies were still dealing with the response to the floods in Cotabato and central Mindanao. The WASH Cluster was running out of hygiene kits due to the flood response and there was a need to replenish the pre-positioned stocks. In the RC/HC’s 2011 annual report on CERF funding, UNICEF noted “Regular emergencies break out in Central Mindanao and at the time of expenditure there were no stocks available”. Therefore, UNICEF proposed to the cluster that the CERF UFE grant be used to replenish the hygiene kit stock instead.

As described in section 4.3, agencies are required to submit a redeployment of funds request to the CERF secretariat to re-programme funds. However, the WASH cluster co-lead was not aware of this requirement, though it is outlined in the Letter of Understanding (LoU), and believed that the cluster’s approval was sufficient. Therefore, the CERF secretariat first became aware of this redeployment of funds when it received the RC/HC’s annual report in which UNICEF reported “Funds are 100 per cent utilised on transportation and purchasing hygiene and water kits... As an average of more than 20,000 hygiene kits are distributed yearly in Central Mindanao, we expect to use them shortly.” The report stated that 6,000 household hygiene kits and water kits were pre-positioned for emergency response with WASH Cluster partners.

According to UNICEF, though, it shifted to a new Program Management System globally at the end of December 2011. To facilitate the migration to this new system, it had a freeze on purchases after 30 September 2011. Its operations and supply division wanted to minimise the number of transactions and focus on funds expiring during migration (such as the CERF Rapid Response grant). Since the CERF UFE grant was not expiring till 30 June 2012, UNICEF did not take action on this grant. In January 2012, UNICEF manually placed the order with its local Long Term Agreement suppliers to replenish the stocks using the UFE grant but due to problems with the new system and the focus on responding to Tropical Storm Sendong, the Purchase Order was not completed in the new system until late June 2012. The kits delivered in June have been pre-positioned in Cotabato City. Despite UNICEF’s report to the RC/HC on the use of CERF funds, it appears that the kits were not procured and pre-positioned till 9 months after they were urgently needed. However, UNICEF did purchase and pre-position some kits before June 2012 and it was not clear whether this was in fact with CERF funds or its own un-earmarked emergency funds.

**UNFPA**

UNFPA had planned to work with three NGO implementing partners on its CERF-funded project to respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in 2011. The three NGOs formed a consortium to undertake complementary activities. One was to conduct surveillance and rescue survivors of GBV, the second to provide medical and psychosocial assistance and the third to provide shelter to survivors. UNFPA named them in its CERF proposal but, once it had secured funding and came to negotiate agreements with the

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35 In the RC/HC’s 2011 annual report, UNICEF reported, “the WASH Cluster determined that a greater need in the humanitarian context was for pre-positioning hygiene and water kits”. However, according to UNICEF, the minutes of the WASH Cluster meeting did not record this discussion. Two Cluster members also did not recall such a discussion in a Cluster meeting. One interviewee suggested that this is probably because it was a very short discussion with UNICEF proposing that the money be re-deployed and Cluster members agreeing to this.
NGOs, one NGO had included staff and office costs in its budget. UNFPA argued that this did not fit with CERF rules but the NGO refused to remove these costs from its proposal. The negotiations with this NGO failed in December 2011 and the other two consortium members also pulled out of implementing the project. This was when Tropical Storm Sendong struck and UNFPA deployed staff from central Mindanao to Northern Mindanao for two months to facilitate the response. Once UNFPA focused on finding another implementing partner for the GBV project, it took a couple of months to identify suitable partners. Therefore, it was May 2012 by the time it identified two NGOs and 15 June by the time it signed agreements with them. This was only two weeks before the deadline for the completion of the CERF project. UNFPA was not clear whether the 30 June was the deadline for the completion of activities or for disbursing funds so it had discussed the option of obtaining a no-cost extension with its CERF focal point at headquarters as well as OCHA in the Philippines. The CERF focal point raised the issue with the CERF Secretariat and was informed that, in the circumstances, the ERC would probably reject a no-cost extension. Therefore, UNFPA decided not to request an NCE and to return the unspent funds.

UNFPA was also grappling with the issue of the 30 June deadline for the reproductive health project. It had paid for training to take place before 30 June but the training was delayed and took place in the first week of July. It had considered whether to continue with the training after the 30 June deadline, since it had already spent the funds, or cancel it. Therefore, it sought advice from OCHA Philippines and went ahead with the training.

WHO

WHO was not clear whether CERF funding is allocated to a Cluster or an agency even though it is channelled through individual agencies. A WHO representative in Manila argued that, when the HCT allocates CERF funding, if it is not made clear that this is for the health Cluster as a whole rather than WHO, the agency’s headquarters treats the money as a grant to the agency and this makes it difficult to finance NGO projects that have been submitted independently to the HAP. During the development of the 2011 HAP, NGOs in the health Cluster had the option of submitting projects under the aegis of WHO or independently. By the mid-year review, since they had not received any funding for their HAP projects, four local NGOs chose to submit their projects for the revised HAP under WHO’s aegis. Therefore, WHO selected them as implementing partners for its 2011 UFE project. In 2012, the NGOs had submitted projects independently in order to raise their profile and attract direct funding. Although the NGOs submitted revised proposals during the HAP Mid-Year Review, with the exception of one NGO, they did not subsume their projects under WHO. Since WHO was under the impression that the CERF grant had been allocated to the agency, rather than the health Cluster, this left WHO uncertain about whether it could fund the same implementing partners that it had in 2011, even though they were proposing to undertake the same activities (at a meeting in June 2012, the cluster had identified the new areas that should be targeted with the services that the CERF financed through the 2011 UFE grant). Therefore, although the CERF secretariat disbursed WHO’s 2012 UFE grant on 16 April 2012, WHO had not started the process of contracting its implementing partners at the time of the field visit for this review (mid-July). The NGOs that implemented the project in 2011 did not know that WHO had already received CERF funding for 2012 and were concerned about needs going unmet.

36 A group of NGOs suggested that some UN agencies work regularly with local and international NGOs so the UN system should develop a way to share information about their experiences of working with different partners. This would make it easier for agencies that do not work with NGOs regularly to identify good partners.

37 UNFPA had initially thought that, because it had three months to provide a report on the project, it could use this time to complete activities as long as it had spent the money before the 30 June deadline.
This uncertainty about whether CERF funding is intended for a Cluster or an agency is not limited to WHO. As noted in section 3.2, WFP was not clear whether including NGO projects from the HAP in its CERF proposal would detract from funding to the agency. Also, during the response to Sendong, there was some confusion about whether the $1 million for the shelter cluster was for IOM as the Cluster lead or the cluster more broadly. UNHCR had been involved in the pre-allocation teleconference in which the acting RC/HC alerted agencies involved in the three sectors that were to receive funding. Perhaps due to this, UNHCR expected to receive direct funding for the temporary shelter items that it flew in and expressed dissatisfaction that it did not receive CERF funding to cover its costs. From the perspective of the acting RC/HC and OCHA, this was a misunderstanding. As a shelter cluster member, UNHCR should have coordinated with IOM to include its requirements in IOM’s proposal for the cluster rather than expecting separate funding as an agency.

**Recommendations**

9. It would be helpful if OCHA Philippines could provide briefings on the CERF, as part of wider briefings, not only to UN and NGO staff but also to relevant national-level government cluster lead agencies (DSWD, DOH, DA, OCD, DFA and DBM).

10. To facilitate the handling of queries about CERF funding, agency headquarters should send contact details of their CERF focal point to all country offices that have received a CERF allocation.

11. CERF recipient agencies should ensure that all programme managers and cluster leads are familiar with CERF requirements, such as requesting permission to re-programme funds and prioritising CERF funding within clusters. This could be the responsibility of the agency’s CERF focal point.

**Section 7: Visibility**

The CERF does not require visibility from recipient agencies. This was an issue that emerged from consultations for this review rather than one raised by the CERF Secretariat.

As noted in section 3.2, government cluster leads are not involved in intra-cluster discussions on the allocation of CERF funding and the extent to which NGOs are involved in such discussions varies. Even though NGOs are involved in implementing CERF projects, they do not always know which donor has funded a particular project. As a result, both government entities and NGOs had limited knowledge about which activities are funded by the CERF and which by other donors. A couple of local government representatives in Cagayan de Oro pointed out that, in the midst of a response, the government is not interested in the source of funds as long as aid agencies are able to provide assistance. Unlike the CERF, other donors have visibility requirements so local government units and NGOs tend to see the logos of the donors on boards and assistance items. However, with the exception of IOM, CERF-recipient agencies do not provide any visibility for the CERF.

In the case of the Sendong response, OCHA gave a briefing on the CERF as a possible source of funding, as part of the preparing the revision of the HAP in Iligan. However, once agencies had received CERF funding, it was not discussed specifically in Clusters. So, NGOs implementing the CERF-funded WASH project did not realise the source of funding for the project until the Action Review (described in section 5.2). At the Action Review, the head of WFP highlighted the importance of the CERF contribution to the response. The level of knowledge of the CERF’s funding was so low that an NGO thought he was talking about the local detergent brand, Surf, and that it had made a contribution.
A WFP staff member in Northern Mindanao argued that it is important to strengthen the visibility of the CERF and demonstrate what it has achieved to the Philippine government. This is because the government contributes to the CERF. If it understands what the CERF has done to help its own country, this is likely to strengthen its commitment as a CERF donor. A representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), which is responsible for allocating CERF contributions, felt that it was important to broaden the CERF’s donor base and even modest contributions play their role. The country’s New York Mission had also made the case that the CERF is a good example of an initiative where member states can be both recipients and contributors and the Philippines can be an example to other countries by being a consistent donor. The DFA representative argued that the obvious way to maintain the government’s commitment to the CERF was to highlight how much the country had benefitted from it.

CERF RR funding in 2011 (in central and Northern Mindanao) responded to the government’s request for assistance. An OCHA interviewee felt that it was important to continue to demonstrate that the UN was responding to government priorities to maintain government support for international assistance. A DFA interviewee pointed out that governments are more likely to be comfortable with international assistance if they are familiar with the systems that provide it. The more information that the government has about aid mechanisms and examples of other countries also using them, the more likely it is to be open to accepting assistance. During the action review of the response to Sendong, the DSWD acknowledged WFP’s role in addressing needs in the hinterlands, which had been overlooked initially. WFP pointed out that CERF funding had made this response possible and the government was very appreciative of the CERF’s role. The fact that CERF funding is provided in support of the HAP should also help to strengthen the government’s participation in the development of the HAP and its willingness to record contributions to UN agencies against HAP requests (section 1.2 provided details of the government’s contributions to WFP recorded in the FTS).

WFP’s staff member suggested that the CERF website should highlight its impact with a section on each current crisis, outlining the CERF’s achievements and using photos that recipient agencies could provide. The CERF website already has a “Top Stories” section that describes how CERF funding to specific countries has made a difference but there is a low level of awareness of the CERF website and even CERF-recipient agencies use it largely for templates and guidance. Although UN cluster leads could raise awareness of the CERF website, local actors are unlikely to have the time or interest to check it. Instead, they need more local and easily visible sources of information about CERF-funded projects, whether at cluster meetings, in OCHA situation reports or simply logos on boards at project sites.

**Recommendation**

12. UN agencies should highlight the contribution of CERF funding to humanitarian response in the Philippines to build support for the fund, particularly amongst government partners.
Annex 1: Supporting Evidence

Section 1.2  CERF funding to the Philippines

Table 1 below shows CERF funding to the Philippines in 2011 and 2012 by recipient agency and by sector. This shows that UNICEF was the largest recipient of CERF funding, followed by WFP. At a global level, WFP is the largest recipient of CERF funding, followed by UNICEF. IOM is the third largest CERF recipient in the Philippines, whereas it is the sixth largest recipient of CERF funding globally. UNHCR is the fourth largest recipient in the Philippines though, globally, it is the third largest recipient of CERF funding.\(^{38}\)

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\(^{38}\) For a list of CERF funding by agency globally, see: http://www.unocha.org/cerf/cerf-worldwide/funding-agency/funding-agency-2012
### Table 1: CERF funding by recipient agency and sector in 2011 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>RR July</th>
<th>UFE</th>
<th>RR Dec</th>
<th>UFE</th>
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<td>297,548</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Shelter</td>
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<td>1,000,025</td>
<td>500,039</td>
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<td>100,232</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,500</td>
<td></td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>Repro health</td>
<td>146,617</td>
<td></td>
<td>192,306</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>IDPs</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>271,439</td>
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</table>

**Total Funding** | 4,917,919 | 3,450,334 | 2,980,718 | 3,955,432

*Source: CERF secretariat database*

### Section 2: Added Value of the CERF

The table below shows the top 5 donors to the Philippines from 2006-2012, with the amount that they contributed. The total in the last row is the total amount of funding that the Philippines received in that year. The CERF contribution in each year is different from the figures in Figure 1 and Table 1 above because FTS data is based on the disbursement date whereas the data for Figure 1 and Table 1, particularly in 2011 when the CERF allocated $3 million from the Rapid Response window for Tropical Storm Sendong at the end of December. While the proposals were approved in December, the CERF Secretariat made disbursements at the beginning of January.
Section 3.1.1 Allocation of Rapid Response (RR) Grant for Tropical Storm Sendong

Figure 2 below shows the key steps and events in allocating the Rapid Response grant in response to Tropical Storm Sendong. The rapid joint needs assessment focused on Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities. NGOs (international and national), UN agencies, IOM, a donor representative (Spain) and government departments participated in the needs assessment. The HC a.i. and the head of OCHA travelled to Cagayan de Oro and Iligan on 20th December and attended a briefing by the Office of Civil Defense for the President, who was visiting the affected areas at the same time. Since the HC a.i. had already received the government’s letter outlining the priority sectors for response, the HC a.i. and head of OCHA held a teleconference with WFP, IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF while travelling from Cagayan de Oro to Iligan. The purpose of the discussion was to alert the agencies to the fact that food, WASH and shelter would be the priority sectors for CERF funding. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) approved proposals the day that the CERF Secretariat received the final version of the proposals though the agencies received the funds on the following dates in January 2012.

- IOM: 5th January
- WFP (logistics grant): 10th January
- UNICEF: 19th January
- WFP (food grant): 24th January

There was a delay with disbursing the WFP grant for emergency food because there was a delay in signing the letter of understanding at WFP HQ in Rome.

Table 2: Top 5 donors to the Philippines from 2006-2012

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
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<td>11,726,931</td>
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<td>CERF</td>
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<td>3,078,231</td>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>19,956,966</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>6,401,769</td>
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<td>10,000,736</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>926,000</td>
<td>CERF</td>
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<td>CERF</td>
<td>6,936,150</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
<td>10,338,840</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>32,553,190</td>
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Source: Financial Tracking Service (FTS)
* According to the CERF database, the ERC approved the proposals on 23 Dec but the RC/HC a.i. received the official approval email on 27 Dec.
3.1.2 Allocation of Under-Funded Emergency allocations in 2012

Based on information compiled by OCHA, table 3 below shows the utilisation rates of the UFE grants in 2011, together with reasons for the different utilisation rates. The table does not include IOM’s UFE grant because OCHA did not receive information on this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>CERF amount</th>
<th>Date Disbursed</th>
<th>Utilisation rate</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Emergency Response to Restoring Rural Livelihoods in Conflict and Flood-Affected Areas of Mindanao (CERF 11-FAO-030)</td>
<td>299,721</td>
<td>30.09.11</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>• Procurement of seeds is time-sensitive. FAO will purchase seeds in January and February that are most appropriate for the targeted cropping season. The procurement of seeds will push the expenditure rate to around 80%. • In the meantime, NGOs have been engaged to help refine the target beneficiaries. • This project builds on another project of a similar nature (but different target location), and therefore, a system is already in place for a smooth implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Promoting Reproductive Health and Saving the Lives of IDP Women, Adolescents and Men in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao (CERF 11-FPA-038)</td>
<td>146,617</td>
<td>06.09.11</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>• This project has received funding from AusAID, and AusAID funds have been used to begin the implementation. • Currently, a local NGO is being accredited as an implementing partner. • Generally, as it is the end of the year, the progress is slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) among the IDPS in Mindanao (CERF 11-FPA-039)</td>
<td>100,232</td>
<td>16.09.11</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>• This project has also received funding from AusAID, and AusAID funds have been used to begin the implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Assistance to the Internally Displaced Persons in Mindanao (CERF 11-HCR-041)</td>
<td>550,002</td>
<td>12.09.11</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>• Protection cluster support provided with 2 staff members on mapping and information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39 UNHCR’s planning cycle is from 1st January to 31st December. The process to carry funds over to the next year is challenging so it had tried to spend the CERF UFE grant received in 2011 by the end of the year. This is one reason why its utilisation rate was so high.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Expended</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Assistance to the Internally Displaced Persons in Mindanao (CERF 11-HCR-050)</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>07.10.11</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>77 local staff hired through DSWD to facilitate the mobile birth registration project. Protection monitoring activities scaled up in east and western Mindanao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Ensuring Access to Nutrition Services by Conflict-Affected Communities in Central Mindanao (CERF 11-CEF-046-B)</td>
<td>101,353</td>
<td>20.09.11</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>UNICEF is currently transitioning from one country programme to the next. The project is therefore waiting for the new programme to begin in order to make the most of the CERF grants. UNICEF is confident that the full amount will be expensed by the deadline of end of June 2012 or earlier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Providing WASH services to Health Facilities in areas affected by conflicts and natural disasters in Mindanao (CERF 11-CEF-046-A)</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>20.09.11</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>UNICEF is currently transitioning from one country programme to the next. The project is therefore waiting for the new programme to begin in order to make the most of the CERF grants. UNICEF is confident that the full amount will be expensed by the deadline of end of June 2012 or earlier. The WASH Cluster has augmented its capacity, and now has a dedicated WASH coordinator and a WASH Information Management Officer, both in Manila and in Mindanao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Protecting Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Mindanao (CERF 11-CEF-046-C)</td>
<td>341,480</td>
<td>20.09.11</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>The funding has been re-phased internally. The expenditure rate is low at this moment, yet UNICEF is confident that the full amount will be (easily) expensed by the end of June 2012. The Child Protection Working Group has been broadening partnership in the past months, and will continue to do so in 2012, especially with respect to the Security Council mandate on Children and Armed Conflicts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| UNICEF | Education | Ensuring continued access of conflict and natural disaster-affected children to quality pre-school and basic education opportunities (CERF 11-CEF-046-D) | 750,000 | 20.09.11 | 0% | This project is also funded by AECID, whose funds have a shorter expiration date (end of April 2012) than the CERF. As such, UNICEF is currently prioritizing the use of AECID funds to }
Currently refining needs validation and identification of beneficiaries, which is a time-consuming process given that the target is children who are not enrolled in official schools.

The project has also identified new, reliable local NGO partners in order to reduce risks of depending on a limited number of local NGOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Ensuring Access to Essential Health Care for IDPs in Mindanao (CERF 11-WHO-050)</th>
<th>373,946</th>
<th>26.09.11</th>
<th>25%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Partner activities (five implementing partners) are proceeding at phase. However, WHO experienced technical difficulties in disbursing the CERF grants to implementing partners. If CERF grants were released earlier, a more swift implementation would have been possible.
Section 3.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

Figure 3: The humanitarian coordination structure for Tropical Storm Washi response at the national and regional level.

Section 4.1  Timeliness of the CERF Secretariat

Table 4 below shows the number of working days that the CEF secretariat took to process CERF grants for the 2 Rapid Response and 2 UFE allocations to the Philippines in 2011-2012. To distinguish between RR and UFE grants, the former are shown in blue and the latter in black.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project number</th>
<th>Initial Submission to Final Submission</th>
<th>Final Submission to USG Approval</th>
<th>LOU Signed to Payment Request</th>
<th>Payment Request to Funds Disbursed</th>
<th>Initial Submission to Final Submission</th>
<th>Final Submission to USG Approval</th>
<th>LOU Signed to Payment Request</th>
<th>Payment Request to Funds Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11-CEF-037-A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-WFP-042</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-CEF-046-A</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-FAO-030</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>11-FPA-038</td>
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<td>12-HCR-009</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-IOM-003</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-WHO-011</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average No. of Days (RR)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average No. of Days (UFE)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CERF Secretariat Database

Section 4.2  Timeliness of Onward Funding

This section shows timelines for a selection of CERF grants. Where necessary, it provides explanatory notes, based on information from the organisation. To make a clear distinction between the UFE and RR grants, the former are coloured in blue and the latter in green.
GRANT 11-CEF-037B (RR) Project title: Providing immediate WASH support to families and communities affected by floods in central Mindanao

Geographical areas targeted with CERF funding: Cotabato City and the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Lanao del Sur

Project budget: US$2,000,000. Amount received from CERF: US$869,762 (initial funding: loan of $320,000 from UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund)

Anticipating typhoon season, a Standby PCA signed with ACF:
16 Jun 11

Note: Existing PCAs with Oxfam and Save the Children can be amended as needed

ACF Standby Agreement activated using UNICEF funds:
23 June 11

Proposal submitted:
13 Jul 11. Final proposal: 14 Jul 11

Partners (ACF, Oxfam, Save the Children + ASDSW) convened and informed of CERF-RR & may expand response activities based on needs:
20 July 2011

Funds received in country:
26 Jul 11

Supplies purchased:
Between 26 July to 12 Oct 11 starting with water and hygiene kits

Partners’ PCA proposals submitted and reviewed:
04 Aug 11

Approval of CERF triggered a note for the record to be signed against the Save the Children PCA to use existing PCA funds for flood response until PCA amended*:
04 Aug 11

Amended ACF Standby Agreement:
19 Aug 11

New PCA signed with ASDSW:
22 Aug 11

Oxfam PCA amended:
22 Aug 11

Save the Children PCA Amended:
24 Aug 11

Funds to partners:
ACF: $101,343: 19 Aug 11
Oxfam:
$102,781: 31 Aug 2011
Save the Children:
$107,976 + $13,912: 25 Aug 11 + 15 Sep 11

Implementation using CERF-RR funds started:
20 Aug 2011

Water tankering:
27 June to 11 July 11

Waste management:
27 June 11

Hygiene promotion:
27 June 11

Distribute hygiene kits:
27 June 11

Water Quality monitoring:
27 June 11

Construct/ rehabilitate water points:
20 Aug 11

Latrines:
minor repairs: 27 June
Construction after 20 Aug 11

* This became the basis for developing a contingency clause in all new UNICEF-WASH Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCA) with partners with emergency response capacity. This clause allows up to 15% of the PCA amount to be used of emergency response
GRANT 11-CEF-046D (UFE)  Project title: Ensuring continued access of conflict and natural disaster-affected children to quality pre-school and basic education opportunities.

Geographical areas targeted with CERF funding: Cotabato City, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte and Sultan Kudarat

Project budget: US$2,828,150. Amount expected from AECID: US$1,000,000. Amount received from CERF: US$750,000

Proposal submitted: 19 Aug 11
Final proposal: 2 Sep 11
LOU signed: 14 Sep 11
Funds disbursed: 20 Sep 11

USG Approval: 8 Sep 11

Funds recd in-country: 21 Sep 11

NGOs submit proposals: Oct 11
UNICEF reviews proposals: Nov 11*

Capacity building:
5-8 Dec 11

Mobile learning spaces:
Dec 11

Education supplies provided to PSWDOs and DepED in Regions 10, 12 and ARMM:
1 Dec 11–30 Jun 12

Repair/construction of centres:
Started Jan 2012

Agreements signed with partners:
Balay Rehabilitation Centre:
24 Jan 12
CFSI:
24 Jan 12

Funds to partners:
Balay Rehabilitation Centre:
$47,413.39: 27 Apr 12
$27,856.10: 14 Jun 2012
CFSI:
$101,465.03: 22 May 12
$66,241.56: 4 Jun 12

* By the time proposals were finalized, UNICEF office was transitioning from PROMS to VISION system, which stopped the transfer of money to partners. UNICEF was able to initiate procurement of supplies though.

Tropical Storm Sendong: 16 Dec 11. Resources re-directed to respond to severely affected areas of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan

Mindanao Education Cluster strategy implementation workshop in Davao to determine locations & focus areas: 5-6 Sep 11
3 NGO Cluster members draft proposals on basis of workshop

Mini field workshops with DepEd Region XII and ARMM to determine number of under-served children, addresses, contact persons in Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, South Cotabato and Maguindanao: 5-6 Dec 11.
Areas prepared for distribution

Implementation completed: 30 Jun 12
GRANT 11-FAO-030 (UFE)

Geographical areas targeted with CERF funding: Conflict and flood affected areas in the provinces of North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.
Project budget: US$790,262. Amount received from CERF: US$299,721

USG Approval: 16 Sep 11
LOU signed: 23 Sep 11
Funds disbursed: 30 Sep 11

Proposal submitted: 19 Aug 11
Final proposal: 15 Sep 11
Funds recd in country: 17 Oct 11
Implementation starts: Oct 11
Agreement signed with partner Bangsamoro Women Foundation for Peace and Development Inc (BMWFPDI): 5 Jan 12
Funds to partner BMWFPDI: $3,623: 31 Jan 12 $2,416: 13 Feb 12 $3,655: 18 Apr 12*
Beneficiary/ govt consultation: Sep-Nov 11
Project workshop: 18 Nov 11
Project Coordination Committee mtg: 13 Dec 11
Procurement: 6 Jan-13 Feb 12
Training: Jan-June 12
Distribution: 26 Feb-12 Mar 12
Request to redeploy savings: 10-14 May 12
Procurement for additional beneficiaries: 16 June 12
Distribution to additional beneficiaries: 27-30 June 12
Distribution of replacement fertilizer: 9-13 July 12
Implementation completed: 13 Jul 12

* BMWFPDI will receive a final payment once FAO has reviewed its financial report. This had not been paid as of 15 August 2012.
GRANT 11-WHO-050 (UFE)  Project title: Ensuring Access to Essential Health Care for IDPs in Mindanao.  
Requested information not provided by WHO

Geographical areas targeted with CERF funding: 8 return areas in the province of Maguindanao (Brgys Nunangen and Tugal in Datu Anggal Midtimbang; Brgy Kalipapa in Datu Piang; Brgy Dapiawan in Datu Saudi Ampatuan; Brgys Linamunan and Damablac in Talayan; Brgys Pamalian and Pikeg in Sharif Saidona) and 2 return areas in North Cotabato (Brgy Upper Dado in Alamada and Brgy Salat in President Roxas).

Project budget: US$1,388,159. Amount received from CERF: US$373,946.

During the lessons learned workshop on this project in June 2012, participants identified poor road conditions and insecurity as two factors that had delayed implementation.
Section 4.3 Re-programming of Funds

The details of the re-programming of funds by three agencies are described below. WHO did not need to make an official request but sought the CERF secretariat’s approval for the use of savings.

11-FAO-030

In its 2011 UFE project proposal, FAO had budgeted to provide farmers with hybrid corn. However, during preparation of the project implementation plan, the Department of Agriculture and agriculturists from provincial and municipal local government units (LGUs) decided to provide farmers with open pollinated variety (OPV) white corn instead. This was because the Philippine government promotes white corn under its food staples sufficiency program to further ensure food security in rural communities. As the price of OPV white corn is much lower than the price of hybrid corn, FAO made some savings. Through the OCHA offices in Cotabato and Manila, it enquired whether the CERF secretariat would allow it to use the saving to assist additional beneficiaries. When the CERF secretariat indicated that it would look favourably on the application, FAO proposed assisting an additional 750 beneficiaries with agricultural inputs, providing technical training to beneficiaries and covering some additional staff costs. FAO obtained the HC’s endorsement before submitting the request to redeploy the funds to the CERF secretariat.

11-IOM-046

IOM was one of three agencies to receive a grant from the RR allocation to respond to Tropical Storm Sendong. During the second emergency revision of the 2012 HAP in January, the HCT and the government agreed that the international community should expand the geographical coverage of the response beyond the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan as many rural and remote areas were also severely affected. The Shelter Cluster, which IOM co-leads, undertook a needs assessment that confirmed the need to expand geographical coverage to the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Bukidnon and Musamis Oriental. Therefore, IOM submitted a formal request to redeploy funds and expand the scope of its project through the HC at the beginning of February 2012.

11-WHO-050

WHO made savings on the training of counterparts and the purchase of supplies in its 2011 CERF UFE project. It decided to use the savings to finance Handicap International (HI) to include disability issues in the project. This is because, during the HCT meeting to allocate CERF funding, the RC/HC requested recipient agencies to promote disability issues. Several agencies verbally indicated they would do this, including WHO. When WHO approached HI to discuss its participation in the project, it became clear that WHO’s CERF grant could not cover HI’s funding needs. WHO and HI assumed that other agencies would finance HI’s activities. However, this additional support did not materialise. Since the cumulative shift between budget categories was less than 15 per cent of total project direct costs, there was no change to either staffing costs or Project Support Costs, and there was no change to the scope of the project, WHO did not have to complete a formal request to redeploy funds. However, WHO obtained the CERF secretariat’s approval through its CERF focal point at headquarters. It funded HI to conduct three trainings to raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, including for programme staff and people who could serve as champions for people with disabilities within their organisations.

40 According to FAO’s implementing partner, the project helped an additional 450 beneficiaries.
41 A Department of Health representative in Cotabato mentioned that his colleagues had attended a workshop organised by WHO on disability. This was to raise awareness rather than lead to policy development but at least one staff member had advocated to make health centres more accessible to people with disabilities as a result.
Annex 2: Methodology

This annex briefly describes the methodology for this review. The review used the following sources of information:

- Face-to-face interviews in Manila, Cagayan de Oro (CDO), Iligan and Cotabato conducted during a 12-day visit from 2-13 July 2012 as well as follow up interviews by telephone. Table 5 below lists the number of interviewees per organisation. To maintain confidentiality, it does not name the individuals interviewed.
- Visits to project sites in Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Cotabato. Table 6 below provides details of the project and specific sites visited.
- A document review (the documents covered are listed below).
- Analysis of funding data provided by the CERF Secretariat.

While most meetings were with individuals or small groups, the evaluator conducted the following group meetings. Since not all those present at the meetings participated actively, they have not been counted as individuals in table 5 below unless the evaluator also met with them individually or in a small group.

- Meeting with the acting Humanitarian Coordinator, the head of OCHA and agency representatives from FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP. The aim of this meeting was to introduce the review and undertake initial consultations.
- Meeting with UNICEF, two of its NGO implementing partners and City health authorities in Cagayan de Oro.
- Group discussion with 15 male and female beneficiaries of IOM and WFP shelter and Food For Work projects in Calaanan (near Cagayan de Oro).
- Meeting with 19 representatives from the City Department of Social Welfare and Development (CSWD), Regional DSWD (Region X), Department of Education (including school principals), ILO and NGOs in Iligan.
- Group discussions with the Barangay Captain, Region X DWSD representative, WFP and IOM staff members and a group of 25 male and female beneficiaries of WFP and IOM projects in Mandulog Barangay.
- Group discussion with group of around 15 (mainly female) IDPs in school in Iligan used as evacuation centre and beneficiaries of IOM transition shelters.
- Group discussion with Barangay Captain, Barangay Agriculture Chairman and two beneficiaries of FAO project in Lambayong municipality, Province of Sultan Kudarat.
- Ad hoc HCT meeting with UN agencies, IOM and NGOs to present preliminary findings from the review (18 participants).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: List of Organisations Consulted</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Humanitarian Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Humanitarian Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
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</table>
Document Review

The document review covered the following:

- 2011 RC/HC annual report on CERF funding to the Philippines (including agency submissions for this)
- 2012 Humanitarian Action Plan, including the two emergency revisions
- CERF 5-Year Evaluation Philippines Country Report
- Tropical Storm Washi/Sendong Action Review Report
- CERF guidance documents, including the Life-Saving Criteria
- Agency proposals for Rapid Response and UFE allocations in 2011 and 2012
- Prioritisation strategies for 2011 and 2012 UFE allocations
- Documents and correspondence on re-programming of funds
- CERF Secretariat data on funding to the Philippines from 2006-2012, including the time taken to process CERF applications

PAF Indicators

Table 7 below numbers and lists the PAF indicators covered by this review. The review has also sought to answer questions identified in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 3) and additional questions identified by the CERF Advisory Group and Secretariat as being of interest (for example, on the adequacy of CERF guidance).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>PAF Indicator</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>PAF Indicator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All members of Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and clusters aware of CERF availability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Intra- and inter - cluster prioritization process is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders (including INGOs and NGOs), (for RR and UFE) and adheres to Principles of Partnership (Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analysis of funding undertaken to inform prioritization process and facilitate appropriate direction of funds’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CERF underfunded country selection/apportionment process undertaken in a timely and transparent manner with available resources frontloaded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cluster submission to the RC/HC is of high quality and reflects views of cluster members</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agency performance (capacity to implement within the timeframe of the grant, past performance, speed of distribution and absorptive capacity) is considered when developing proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CERF request adheres to cluster standards and CERF Life Saving Criteria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Average number of working days between final submission of a CERF grant request package from RC/HC and ERC’ decision. (Benchmark: three working days for RR and 5 working days for UFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Average number of working days between receipt of LoU from a grant recipient and request (memo for disbursement to OPPBA (Benchmark: two working days)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Average number of days between request (memo) for fund disbursement by OPPBA to grant recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Average number of working days from disbursement from UN HQ to country office</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Time from UN agency country offices signing project agreement with implementing partners to them receiving funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Agencies receiving grants have internal evaluation and accountability mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>CERF Secretariat has provided adequate global guidance on the standards for reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>OCHA CO, in support of the HC, provides guidance to agencies, and facilitates input for annual report</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Agencies, both at HQ and in the field provide satisfactory input (as defined by CERF Secretariat Guidelines) to the annual RC/HC Report which adheres to reporting guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>CERF funds allow agencies to demonstrate capability to leverage donor confidence for future contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Availability of CERF funding recognized by recipient agencies as being fundamental to ability to respond to life saving needs and gaps</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Extent to which gaps, both geographic and sectoral, have been identified and addressed through use of CERF funds</td>
<td></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Number of No-Cost Extensions requested</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>CERF funds fill a critical time gap as measured in relation to time that other contributions are received</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Percentage of total amount of CERF funding to flash appeals provided within the first two weeks (of appeal publications)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Response capacity is strengthened given knowledge that CERF is a reliable source of funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Operations deployed more rapidly due to ‘predictability’ of quick funding source</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Transparent information management of recipient agencies on status of CERF projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Accountability to affected populations, as outlined in the Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP), is incorporated into project submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Evaluative mechanisms established (NOTE: CERF evaluative processes to be developed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Real-Time and internal agency evaluations, when conducted, demonstrate CERF’s contribution to a more coherent response</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Extent to which Cluster leads and RC/HC leverage CERF as a tool to incentivize coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Strengthened function of clusters and of inter-cluster forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Leadership and involvement of RC/HC in humanitarian operation improved</td>
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Annex 3: Terms of Reference

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE VALUE ADDED OF THE CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (CERF) IN THE PHILIPPINES

Terms of Reference

1. Background to the CERF and Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF)

It is widely recognized that the key strengths of the CERF lie in its ability to respond quickly and in the relatively high degree of flexibility it affords users compared with other sources of humanitarian funding. Member States and private donors require appropriate assurances that the considerable funds involved are managed appropriately and meaningful results are being achieved. The ERC function is charged with a formal fiduciary responsibility over the proper use of CERF funds, and relies upon the CERF Secretariat to assist with the proper discharge of these responsibilities. In this context, the development of a PAF for the CERF is regarded as an effective tool.

Paragraph 19 of General Assembly Resolution 60/124 calls for “the establishment of an appropriate reporting and accountability mechanism to ensure that the funds allocated through the Fund are used in the most efficient, effective and transparent manner possible.” Consequently, the CERF Advisory Group at its meeting on 12 October 2006 called for the development of a Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF). In addition, the 2008 CERF Two-year Evaluation gave as Key Recommendation 4: “The multiple lines of accountability for CERF need to be clarified, in consultation with the UN Controller and the operational agencies, to specify the roles of each actor.” In response, the CERF Secretariat worked on developing a PAF, a first draft was circulated in 2009 and a PAF adopted in 2010.

The CERF PAF proposes, among other things, the introduction of independent reviews to be conducted annually within a sample of three to five countries as determined by the ERC. The CERF Advisory Group supported the inclusion of such an independent country-level mechanism. Following a pilot review conducted in Kenya in early 2010, the CERF AG met on 1 July and endorsed the PAF. Further studies took place in late 2010 in Chad, Mauritania and Sri Lanka and in 2011 in Colombia, Bolivia, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

2. Scope and Purpose

The main purpose of the present country-level reviews will be to assess the value added of CERF operations in the Philippines during 2011. The review will also look at prioritization exercises in 2012 to the extent possible.

A major aim of the review will be to provide the ERC with an appropriate level of assurance around the achievement of key performance benchmarks and planned results for the CERF mechanism. The review will also include recommendations aimed at improving operational aspects of the CERF and may also identify relevant policy issues which need to be addressed at a global level.

3. Key issues

The critical overriding question on which assurance is sought by the ERC is: Have CERF operations in the country successfully added value to the broader humanitarian endeavor?
Using the PAF indicator sets, assurances will be sought around the following specific broad areas of concern to the ERC:

1. **CERF processes are achieving key management benchmarks in that:**
   - CERF submissions are based on an inclusive planning process and adhere to established quality criteria.
   - Transparent systems are in place for correct allocation, efficient flow and use of CERF by agencies.
   - Adequate monitoring and evaluation systems are in place at the agency level for measuring and reporting on results.

2. **There are reasonable grounds to believe that CERF operations favour the following results:**
   - CERF consolidates humanitarian reform by empowering the RC/HC and enhancing the quality of coordination within the cluster approach and across clusters.
   - CERF facilitates adequate coverage, eliminates gaps and facilitates an effective division of labour among humanitarian (especially smaller) actors.
   - CERF contributes to a more timely response to needs.
   - CERF favors the delivery of relevant life-saving actions at critical moments.

The review will also attempt to assess the possible linkages between CERF and a potential country-based pooled fund as well as review findings of the Philippines country study conducted as part of CERF’s five-year evaluation with a view to identifying key recommendations for follow-up.

4. **Review Methodology**

During the PAF development process, UN agencies emphasized that the formal assessment of agency performance vis-a-vis CERF-funded activities remains the prerogative of recipient agencies via their own internal oversight procedures (internal performance reporting, audit and evaluation etc.). The review approach will therefore be designed in a manner which avoids duplication with such procedures and meets only the immediate assurance needs of the ERC in relation to the PAF.

Recognizing that CERF funds are often co-mingled with other donor funds by agencies and that the in-depth assessment of beneficiary-level impact is formally the charge of recipient agencies, the review will not attempt to link beneficiary-level changes to CERF activity, except where recipient agencies already have this data. The review mechanism will not seek to provide comprehensive coverage linked to detailed narratives and contextual analysis around how and why results are being achieved. Rather it will focus instead on providing an assurance around issues of the Fund’s operational impact.

Key components of the methodology will include a rapid desk review and field visits by the consultant to the Philippines, including interviews with key stakeholders. The analytical approach will be deliberately kept rapid and light.

Prior to leaving each country, the Consultant will leave with the RC/HC a short analytical report consisting of a series of short observations and recommendations in relation to the key assurance issues identified above. The RC/HC, together with the HCT, will subsequently be requested to provide a “management response” to the recommendations contained in the report.

**Desk review:** A quantitative analysis will be conducted on the data, reports and files available at the HQ and Country level. These include:

- Funding data, including funding from sources other than the CERF (e.g. OCHA’s Financial Tracking System);
• Timelines on sums requested, allocated from CERF database;
• CERF country-level reports on context, needs, status of implementation, activities, results and lessons learned;
• CERF meeting minutes at HQ and country-level and notifications of application decisions;
• CERF Project files at HQ and country-level.

Semi-structured interviews at country level will include: RC/HC, Cluster leads, Heads of Agencies, I/NGO partner implementing CERF projects and those without access to CERF funds, host government, donors. Interviews will also take place with selected CERF Secretariat staff to get further background and perspective. UN Agencies and IOM will be asked to provide relevant documents and indicate interview partners to facilitate the review.

Select project site visits: These may be included as appropriate and time permitting to help provide some limited anecdotal information regarding the use of funding at the affected population level and can provide a field-level snapshot and some direct contact with affected populations.

In-Country briefings will be used as learning opportunities to discuss and validate the findings, explore possible recommendations and further refine the analytical approaches.

5. Proposed Consultants

It is anticipated that one consultant will be required to prepare the reviews for the Philippines. The consultant will be independent and he/she has not been previously involved with any aspects of the country-level operations being reviewed. He/she should have the following skills:

• Expertise in UN humanitarian reform & financing and knowledge of the CAP and Flash Appeal process;
• Expertise and extensive experience in humanitarian evaluation;
• Expertise in analyzing financial data in tandem with other types of information;
• Expertise in project management and implementation;
• Knowledge, including field experience with a broad range of humanitarian actors, such as UN agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, local government disaster response structures and systems, and NGOs;
• Fluency in written and spoken English;
• Familiarity with complex emergency and natural disaster settings.

6. Management and Support

The review will be managed by the CERF Secretariat, who will identify country-level focal points to support the review mission. Their responsibilities will include:

• Provide necessary administrative, coordination and logistical support to the consultants;
• Facilitate the consultants’ access to specific information or expertise necessary to perform the assessment;
• Monitor and assess the quality of the review and its process;
• Ensure sufficient engagement by UNCT on initial findings prior to dissemination;
• When appropriate, recommend approval of final report;
• Disseminate final report; and
• Facilitate management response to the final report and subsequent follow up.

7. Deliverables
The main output will be one concise report in English to the ERC, through the CERF Secretariat, of no more than 20 pages each (excluding appendices) in an electronic version plus an Executive Summary (up to two pages). The report will be structured in the form of short observations and conclusions around the different assurance concerns linked to the PAF. The reports will include, as appropriate, a set of specific, well targeted and action-oriented recommendations whose purpose should be to improve the performance of the CERF within the country or raising any policy issues. The annexes will include a brief description of the methods used and the tests performed and a list of persons interviewed.