

CERF climate action allocation

CERF Advisory Group Meeting, 10-11 December 2024

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This paper serves as a briefing note on a dedicated CERF climate action funding envelope of approximately US\$10 million, which complements the regular US\$100 million for CERF's [2024 second round Underfunded Emergencies \(UFE\) allocations](#).¹ The envelope advances climate-smart life-saving humanitarian action that builds crisis-affected communities' adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses in the future.

The climate action envelope was made possible thanks to the generous donor contributions to the [CERF Climate Action Account](#), launched in late 2023.² The Account serves to scale CERF's climate action, offering a quick, efficient and impactful avenue for climate-related finance to support the world's most vulnerable communities in facing the consequences of the climate crisis.

Collectively, **the activities selected for funding under the climate action envelope remain firmly aligned with CERF's established mandate and Life-Saving Criteria**, addressing urgent humanitarian needs across multiple sectors. At the same time, these activities are critical efforts in **equipping the most vulnerable individuals and communities with the tools and capacities needed to better adapt to and withstand the escalating impacts of climate change**.

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

Background

Climate change is a major driver of rising global humanitarian needs. In addition to extreme weather and climate-related disasters becoming more frequent and more intense, climate shocks and stresses exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of individuals and communities in already fragile settings, which are often hit the hardest and which benefit the least from climate action.

As climate change compounds humanitarian needs within a shrinking funding landscape, it is imperative to address humanitarian needs in fragile contexts whilst supporting communities to cope with, and adapt to, climate change. The [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) and the [IASC Climate Crisis Roadmap](#) articulate the humanitarian community's commitment to advocate for and support the most vulnerable communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis and to advance climate action as a central part of the humanitarian response.

Since 2006, CERF has been at the forefront of the climate crisis response in fragile contexts, allocating some US\$2.5 billion – over a quarter of its funding – to save lives and support people affected by climate disasters such as droughts, floods and storms. CERF is a leader in anticipatory action to climate disasters, minimizing humanitarian impact by supporting actions before a crisis hits. Within its life-saving mandate, CERF also regularly supports humanitarian actions that not only save lives, but also enhance adaptation and resilience.

As the climate crisis worsens, it is important to further strengthen CERF's support for impactful humanitarian climate action – through climate-smart humanitarian action that aims to enhance the adaptive capacities and resilience of communities in fragile settings affected by climate shocks and stresses. As such, it was decided to commit **an additional funding envelope of approximately US\$10 million under CERF's second UFE round in 2024**, dedicated to **catalyzing additional or improved climate-smart life-saving humanitarian action**.

¹ For additional details about CERF's 2024 second round UFE allocations, please refer to: [CERF UFE 2024-II Country selection and fund allocations 0.pdf](#)

² Thus far, the CERF Climate Action Account has received generous contributions from Ireland, Latvia and Luxembourg.

Scope and objectives of the climate action envelope

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

The climate action envelope builds on and complements [CERF’s UFE allocation](#),³ which targets chronically underfunded humanitarian crises, aiming to drive the emergency operations in these countries toward more innovative and climate-smart humanitarian programming, for a more impactful humanitarian response. Specifically, the envelope seeks to **catalyze additional climate-smart initiatives that would otherwise not occur**, advancing new or best practices in life-saving humanitarian action.

All activities funded under this envelope adhere to CERF’s [Life-Saving Criteria](#), and fall within CERF’s distinct niche in the climate financing landscape.

Endorsed activities under the climate action envelope

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

The total funding requested amounted to nearly US\$25 million, far surpassing the US\$10 million available within the envelope. This strong interest reflects the commitment of Humanitarian Country Teams, UN agencies and their partners to strengthen and expand climate-smart humanitarian initiatives to better support and protect vulnerable people facing the compounding impacts of ongoing emergencies and climate change in fragile settings. **The overwhelming demand also underscores the need to increase contributions to the CERF Climate Action Account, to ensure more resources can be directed toward climate action in fragile contexts.**

Upon careful review of the proposals against the criteria and objectives set out in the [guidance for the allocation](#), and against CERF’s Life-Saving Criteria, activities from all nine countries were selected for funding, for a total amount of approximately US\$10 million. These activities strategically complement the core UFE proposals and represent efforts that would not otherwise have happened at this time.

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

Several initiatives are innovative pilots with potential for scaling, replication, or adaptation in other contexts.

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

³ The additional thematic climate action envelope did not dictate country selection for UFE funding which followed [the regular analytical and consultative process](#). The climate action envelope builds on the existing practice of promoting better humanitarian action through CERF’s UFE window by advancing humanitarian thematic priorities with targeted funding. Past thematic funding envelopes include GBV response, disability inclusion and support for collective Accountability to Affected People systems.

Examples of climate-smart humanitarian activities supported ⁴

Several funded activities address urgent life-saving **food security** needs while empowering affected populations to achieve more sustainable and resilient food production amidst recurring climate-related shocks and stresses. Specific measures include the establishment of solar-powered, climate-resilient irrigation systems capable of functioning in both drought and flood conditions, the construction of livestock shelters to protect animals from heavy rains, and the distribution of climate-smart seeds, such as drought-tolerant and adaptive crop varieties, to stabilize agricultural productivity despite shifting climate patterns. Additional activities include rehabilitating water points to ensure continuous water availability and reduce livestock disease outbreak risks during ongoing and future droughts and constructing above-ground gardens that remain functional even in flood conditions, alongside drip irrigation technology to enhance productivity while minimizing water waste in drought-prone areas.

Additional activities with a focus on safeguarding vulnerable populations' food security include community-driven mechanisms for seed multiplication and agricultural cultivation, as well as the provision of trainings on climate-smart agriculture and livestock management, including on soil conservation, post-harvest techniques, rainwater harvesting, and ecosystem restoration. These measures will equip vulnerable populations with the necessary skills to better withstand ongoing and future climate impacts, reducing the risk that they will slide deeper into humanitarian need.

Cash for work approaches will provide financial support to vulnerable populations, including women and those displaced multiple times by climate shocks, allowing them to meet their immediate life-saving humanitarian needs, while also supporting adaptation to help reduce the humanitarian impact of climate shocks through rehabilitating small-scale infrastructure, such as dike construction to reduce flood risks, creating contour lines to prevent soil erosion, and developing terraces in vulnerable watersheds.

Other activities selected for funding focus on providing immediate essential life-saving **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** infrastructure and services, while ensuring they can function and remain accessible reliably amid future climate-related shocks and stresses. These efforts also address climate-related health risks, such as the spread of waterborne diseases during extreme weather events. Key activities include the installation of solar-powered, climate-resilient drinking water systems that guarantee uninterrupted access to safe water, even under severe and recurring extreme events. Additional activities will ensure that sanitation systems remain functional and hygienic during ongoing and future shocks, for instance, by constructing flood-proof ecological latrines. Moreover, water-saving technologies will be introduced to optimize the efficient use of scarce water resources, particularly in drought-prone areas.

Complementary measures focus on empowering local communities to sustain WASH infrastructures and services themselves, also beyond the project lifespan. This includes establishing and training community-level WASH committees, including youth-led groups, to oversee the quality, functionality, and maintenance of infrastructure and services.

Lastly, activities selected also address urgent **protection** and **shelter** needs while reducing future climate-driven risks for vulnerable people. Measures include introducing energy-efficient stoves made from locally sourced materials, which address protection risks associated with firewood collection, especially for women and girls, but also prevent deforestation, with mitigation and adaptation benefits. Shelter-focused activities include rehabilitating and upgrading shelters with improved foundations, effective drainage systems, and flood barriers to protect against heavy rains, storms and flooding. In doing so, these measures will provide immediate access to shelter to displaced populations but also reduce the risk of future climate-related displacement by making structures more resilient against climate shocks.

⁴ The presented examples of activities under the climate action envelope are based on initial allocation strategies and is non-exhaustive. Full project proposals are currently under submission or review and final budgets or details of activities may still change.