

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE VALUE ADDED OF THE CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (CERF) IN THE COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY EL NIÑO

## Terms of Reference

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1 June 2017

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### 1. Background to the CERF and Performance and Accountability Framework

It is widely recognized that the key strengths of 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 Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) for 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. 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 developed a PAF, a first draft of which was circulated in 2009. The PAF was formally 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 Advisory Group met on 1 July 2010 and endorsed the PAF. Since then, the CERF secretariat has aimed to conduct between three and five country-level reviews per year.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Scope and Purpose

The main purpose of the present country-level reviews will be to assess the value added by CERF funding towards the humanitarian response to the humanitarian consequences resulting from the El Niño phenomenon. At the time of writing, CERF has provided \$119 million to El Niño-related

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of reviews conducted to date and final reports are available online at <http://unocha.org/cerf/reportsevaluations/evaluations/country-reviews/performance-and-accountability-framework>

activities in 19 countries<sup>2</sup>. The significant funding provided highlights the need to better understand the implications that such slow-onset natural disasters have for CERF as well as the best way for CERF to engage with them. The study includes field visits to review CERF allocations to 3-5 countries. The remaining countries will be studied through a desk review and remote interviews only. The relevant CERF allocations are listed in the annex.

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.

This review differs from past country reviews in that it seeks to answer a set of higher level strategic questions related to CERF's role in responding to humanitarian needs stemming from El Niño by reviewing CERF's response across a range of countries. In doing so, the review will examine an example of a slow-onset crisis whose triggers are difficult to define and CERF's response. Less attention will be given to exploring details of CERF processes in individual countries as done in past reviews.

Recognizing that enhancing response to time-critical requirements is a CERF key objective, as CERF looks to the future<sup>3</sup>, it aims to further define its role in mobilizing life-saving action in response to early warning signs and risk indicators. This could entail further funding of early action in slow onset situations such as drought, improved timing of allocations to season-bound needs like planting season, or immediate preventive measures following a disease outbreak. Within the context of relevant El Niño related findings the review will also seek to make some broader observations with respect to a potentially more clearly defined role for CERF in responding to such slow onset emergencies in the future.

### **3. Key issues**

The three overriding question on which assurance is sought by the ERC are:

- How suited is CERF as a mechanism for responding to an El Niño-type emergency?
- How effectively have funds been prioritized and used?
- How have CERF operations in the countries and at regional and global level added value to the broader humanitarian endeavour?
- How could (a larger) CERF potentially add more value in responding to slow onset crises based on early warning signs and risk indicators?

### **4. Review Methodology**

The formal assessment of agency performance vis-à-vis CERF-funded activities remains the prerogative of recipient agencies via their own internal oversight procedures (internal performance

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<sup>2</sup> Angola, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Swaziland, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.  
[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CERF\\_el-nin%CC%83o\\_20160511.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CERF_el-nin%CC%83o_20160511.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> In 2016 the General Assembly endorsed an increase in CERF's funding target to \$1 billion from the current \$450 million target and a significantly larger CERF may revisit its role and approach in responding to certain types of emergencies.

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 strategic and operational impact.

The review will consist of a desk review of relevant documents, remote interviews of in-country stakeholders in selected countries and visits to 3-5 countries as well as visits to agency headquarters in New York and Rome as required. The exact countries to be studied will be determined during the inception phase of the review. These country visits will allow meetings and interviews with relevant in-country stakeholders and may include travel to CERF-funded humanitarian projects. The analytical approach will be deliberately kept rapid and light. Regional meetings may complement those at country level.

Prior to leaving each country, the Consultant will leave with the RC/HC a short analytical summary of initial observations and potential recommendations in relation to the key assurance issues identified above. The RC/HC, together with the HCT, may subsequently be requested to provide a "management response" to any recommendations in the report once it has been finalized.

In addition to the selected field visit countries, consultants will undertake desk reviews of the remaining countries at the global level.

Desk review: A quantitative analysis will be conducted on the data, reports and files available at the HQ and country level. The desk review includes:

- Remote interviews with key stakeholders,
- If relevant, surveys targeted at key stakeholders,
- Review of relevant studies and evaluations,
- Funding data, including funding from sources other than the CERF (e.g. OCHA's Financial Tracking Service),
- 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,
- Humanitarian appeals and other humanitarian strategy documents.
- Additional El Niño specific documents, such as forecasts, reports, updates, FAO and WFP lists of at-risk countries and FEWSNet information on food insecurity.

Among other things, the desk review will assess the utility of El Niño, drought and related guidance in place at the time of the allocations. The review will inform recommendations as to the necessity of

additional El Niño/La Niña CERF guidance, whether as a stand-alone policy or incorporation into existing guidance packages.

Semi-structured interviews at country level may include: RC/HC, Cluster leads, Heads of Agencies, I/NGO partner implementing CERF projects and those without access to CERF funds, affected people, host government, donors. UN Agencies and IOM will be asked to provide relevant documents and indicate interview partners to facilitate the review.

Interviews at headquarter and/or regional level may include: Stakeholders at OCHA, such as Coordination and Response Division (CRD) geographic desk officers and El Niño team as well as the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), relevant agency focal points, especially WFP and FAO, as well as the El Niño envoys and selected donor representatives as relevant. Interviews will also take place with selected CERF secretariat staff to get further background and perspective.

Select project site visits: The consultant may visit sites of CERF-funded projects in the countries visited 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 people and other key informants in field locations.

In-Country working session at the end of the mission will review provisional results. This will be used as learning opportunities to discuss, validate and fill key gaps in the findings and recommendations.

## **5. Proposed Consultants**

It is anticipated that a small team of consultants will be required to undertake the review. The consultants will be independent.

Collectively the consultants should have the following skills and experience:

- Expertise in UN humanitarian reform & financing and knowledge of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle,
- 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,
- Familiarity with natural disaster settings.
- Expertise in climate variability and change and disaster risk reduction,
- Expertise in drought preparedness, contingency plans and food insecurity,
- Ability to analyze and integrate diverse and complex quantitative and qualitative data from a wide range of sources,
- Proven project and programme evaluation skills.
- Fluency in written and spoken English (other language skills may be required depending on the countries reviewed),

## **6. Management and Support**

The review will be managed by the CERF secretariat, which 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, key informants and expertise necessary to perform the assessment,
- Monitor and assess the quality of the review and its process,
- Ensure sufficient engagement by the HCT during the mission and in response to the draft and final report,
- Disseminate final report,
- Facilitate relevant management response to the final report and subsequent follow up.

## **7. Deliverables**

Under the overall direction of the Team Leader, the reviewers will be expected to produce the following main outputs:

(1) An initial inception report outlining, among other things, a detailed methodology, format of deliverables and timeline.

(3) After the research phase and country visits, the consultants will prepare the draft report, soliciting comments from all stakeholders.

(3) The final output will be one synthesis report in English to the ERC, through the CERF secretariat, in an electronic version, plus an Executive Summary. The report will be structured in the form of short observations and conclusions around the different assurance concerns linked to the review. It will include a global analysis of how El Niño needs emerged, when CERF responded and when appeals were launched in additions to the specific research questions outlined above. Country specific analysis and observations will be included in the report in support of global level analysis. The reports will also 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 analysis performed and a list of persons interviewed.

Annex A - CERF Allocation History

YEAR	RR <sup>4</sup> Funding	UFE <sup>5</sup> Funding	Total
2015	\$43,001,944	\$15,866,133	\$58,868,077
2016	\$60,501,305		\$60,501,305
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$103,503,249</b>	<b>\$15,866,133</b>	<b>\$119,369,382</b>

Country	2015		2016		Total
	RR	UFE	RR	UFE	
Angola			\$4,989,386		\$4,989,386
Djibouti			\$1,971,924		\$1,971,924
El Salvador	\$2,710,000				\$2,710,000
Eritrea		\$2,493,896			\$2,493,896
Ethiopia	\$17,003,929	\$8,516,027			\$25,519,956
Fiji			\$8,022,382		\$8,022,382
Guatemala			\$4,829,690		\$4,829,690
Haiti	\$3,025,767				\$3,025,767
Honduras	\$2,187,908				\$2,187,908
Lesotho			\$4,782,918		\$4,782,918
Madagascar			\$6,000,000		\$6,000,000
Malawi	\$9,963,628				\$9,963,628
Mongolia			\$2,442,974		\$2,442,974
Mozambique			\$4,679,803		\$4,679,803
Papua New Guinea			\$4,736,155		\$4,736,155
Somalia		\$4,856,210	\$11,006,301		\$15,862,511
Swaziland			\$3,141,908		\$3,141,908
Vietnam			\$3,897,864		\$3,897,864
Zimbabwe	\$8,110,712				\$8,110,712
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,001,944</b>	<b>\$15,866,133</b>	<b>\$60,501,305</b>		<b>\$119,369,382</b>

2015 and 2016 CERF Rapid Response Allocations Related to El Niño

Month	Country	Application Title	Agency	Amount	RC/HC Report Due
August 2015	Haiti	Humanitarian assistance to people affected by drought in the South-East and North-West Departments	UNICEF, FAO, WFP	\$3 mill	30 May 2016

<sup>4</sup> CERF Rapid Response window

<sup>5</sup> CERF Underfunded Emergencies window

October 2015	Malawi	Emergency assistance to support food insecure rural households severely affected by drought during the 2014 – 2015 crop season in Malawi	UNICEF,FAO,WFP,	\$10 mill	30 July 2016
November 2015	Ethiopia	Responding to humanitarian crises and enhancing resilience to food insecurity	WFP	\$17 mill	12 August 2016
November 2015	Honduras	Humanitarian response to WASH and food insecurity in communities affected by the drought	UNICEF,WFP,WHO	\$2.2 mill	18 August 2016
November 2015	Zimbabwe	Responding to humanitarian needs of people severely affected by drought	UNICEF,FAO,WFP	\$8.1 mill	3 August 2016
December 2015	El Salvador	Emergency response (food insecurity and WASH) to the population in El Salvador resulting from drought crisis	UNICEF, FAO, UNDP, WFP	\$2.7 mill	20 September 2016
February 2016	Guatemala	Emergency response for people affected by the 2015 drought along the dry corridor in Guatemala	UNICEF, WFP, WHO	\$4.8 mill	2 November 2016
March 2016	Swaziland	Emergency food and WASH assistance to vulnerable households severely affected by the drought	UNICEF, WFP	\$3.1 mill	29 December 2016
March 2016	Mozambique	Emergency response (livelihood, food insecurity, WASH) to drought affected people	UNICEF, WFP, FAO	\$4.7 mill	28 December 2016
March 2016	Angola	Emergency response (maternal and child health, WASH, food insecurity) to the drought caused by El Niño	UNICEF, FAO, WHO	\$5 mill	30 November 2016
March 2016	Fiji	Emergency assistance (GBV, youth, food insecurity, WASH, health, shelter and NFI) to cyclone affected people in Fiji	UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, IOM, UNDP, WFP, WHO, UN Women	\$8 mill	19 December 2016
March 2016	Mongolia	Provide Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) with necessary funds to address urgent survival and livelihood needs of 4,390 vulnerable herder households in dzud conditions in most-affected provinces	UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, UNDP	\$2.4 mill	15 December 2016

April 2016	Papua New Guinea	Emergency Food Assistance to Severely Food Insecure Households Affected by El-Nino-induced drought	UNICEF, WFP	\$4.7 mill	17 January 2017
April 2016	Djibouti	Assistance to displaced populations affected by the effects of El-Nino	UNICEF, FAO, IOM, WFP, WHO	\$2 mill	23 January 2017
April 2016	Somalia	Emergency drought response in Somalia and Somaliland	UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, IOM, WFP, WHO	\$11 mill	6 January 2017
April 2016	Lesotho	Emergency Response (Food insecurity, WASH, health) to the Drought caused by El Niño Weather Phenomenon	UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO	\$4.8 mill	6 January 2017
April 2016	Madagascar	Humanitarian assistance to those affected by the drought in southern Madagascar	UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, WFP, WHO	\$6 mill	26 January 2017
May 2016	Viet Nam	Response to areas affected by El Nino-induced drought and saltwater intrusion	UNWOMEN, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO	\$3.9 mill	23 February 2017
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$103.5 mill</b>	

#### CERF Underfunded Allocations Related to El Niño

Month	Country	Application Title	Agency	Amount	RC/HC Report Due
September 2015	Eritrea	Emergency response (livelihood, health, food insecurity) for drought and desert-locust-affected populations	UNICEF, FAO, FPA, UNDP, WHO	\$2.5 mill	29 September 2016
September 2015	Ethiopia	Emergency response (food insecurity, WASH, health, livelihood) to drought affected communities	UNICEF, FAO, WFP	\$8.5 mill	29 September 2016
October 2015	Somalia	Emergency response (health and food security) to drought and flood affected communities	UNICEF, FAO, WHO	\$4.9 mill	29 September 2016
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$15.9 mill</b>	

## Annex B – Guiding Questions

A number of sub-questions specific to this review and applicable to all study countries and globally may be useful in guiding researchers.

*How appropriate is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?*

- Are slow onset climate-related emergencies, such as El Niño, appropriate for CERF funding (through the Rapid Response and Underfunded Emergencies windows respectively)? If so, what could be CERF's niche in these situations?
- Was CERF funding appropriate in timing, scale and mandate?
- Did CERF funding meet the expectations of country teams?
- Were CERF's life-saving criteria and implementation timeframe appropriate to respond to El Niño related effects?
- Was the process and strategy applied by CERF for allocations to El Niño appropriate? (including the policy of one allocation per country only)
- Was the allocation of CERF appropriate in terms of the selection of countries and size of the allocations for each country?

*How effective is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?*

- Did CERF help enable more timely and effective response to humanitarian needs associated with El Niño effects? That is to say, did CERF funds make a specific difference? What, if any, is CERF's comparative advantage?
- Is the role of CERF in climate related emergencies clear to partners and internally? That is to say, is CERF's humanitarian niche in the context of broader development needs well understood?
- Is specific guidance required for clarifying CERF's role and approach in slow onset emergencies, such as El Niño?
- Did CERF funding make a timely contribution?
- How was CERF complementary to other funding?
- Were CERF allocations actively used as an advocacy tool for raising awareness and mobilizing resources at global and country levels?
- Did CERF work well with local response mechanisms/systems and safety nets?

*What, if any, is CERF's added value in this type of emergency?*

- What was CERF's added value beyond the addition of funding?
- How would larger or additional CERF allocations have affected the response to the crisis?
- Did CERF allocations help bring attention to the crisis at global and/or local levels and leverage additional funding?
- Did CERF funding help bring about a more coherent strategy for responding to El Niño related needs in-country, for example due to the joint nature of CERF allocations?

*What lessons can be drawn from the El Niño response for CERF's role in support of early action more broadly?*

- What could a larger CERF do more and differently in responding early to slow onset emergencies, including to climate-related ones?
- What could be CERF's niche in addressing an apparent gap in the humanitarian financing architecture in responding to such emergencies?

- How could CERF forge a stronger link to early warning systems to inform risk-based allocations?
- How and with what criteria would CERF delineate its early action work in such crises from preparedness?