

CERF LIFE-SAVING CRITERIA AND SECTORAL ACTIVITIES (Guidelines)

I. Introduction:

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a stand-by fund established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts by rapidly and effectively channelling resources to humanitarian agencies. The CERF was approved by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 December 2005 to achieve the following objectives:

- promote early action and response to reduce loss of life;
- enhance response to time-critical requirements;
- strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in under-funded crises

These guidelines aim at clarifying definitions and determining criteria for the grant window of the CERF. They cover general and sectoral criteria for the rapid response and under-funded windows¹ of the Fund and seek to improve the quality of submission and speed up the approval process. At the same time, it is recognized that a degree of flexibility, and predictability in regards to funded activities, should guide the application of these criteria. Against this background the following criteria and suggestions are offered, noting that further refinement and review of 'lifesaving criteria' may be required in the future.

II. Definitions:

Natural Disaster: A disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human suffering, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

Complex emergencies: Complex emergencies are characterized by: extensive violence and loss of life, massive displacements of people, widespread damage to social and economic assets, and multi-faceted humanitarian responses.² A humanitarian crisis that requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency. (IASC, December 1994).

¹ Specific details on timeframe and description of procedures for the 2 windows are available in [CERF's website](#).

² Definitions adapted from different sources including CERF Resolution, IASC, Financial Tracking System and Sphere Standards.

Life-saving and/or core emergency humanitarian programmes are those *actions that within a short time span remedy, mitigate or avert direct loss of life, physical harm or threats to a population or major portion thereof. Also permissible are common humanitarian services that are necessary to enable life-saving activities.*

Time-critical response refers to necessary, rapid and time-limited actions required to immediately avert or minimize additional loss of lives and damage to social and economic assets. It relates to the opportunities for rapid injection of resources to save lives either in complex emergencies or after sudden disasters.

III. Criteria:

In the context of the need to respect the above definitions, and recognizing that prioritization and initial analysis of CERF submissions are conducted at the field level by the Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) /Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Team (UNCT), submitting agencies need to consider how far the following specific requirements for CERF funding are met:

- ✓ Immediate emergency response as a result of a rapid onset disaster or emergency, a sudden (unexpected) deterioration of an existing emergency, or an under-funded emergency within a country receiving allocation from the ERC,
- ✓ based on recent needs assessments (for both rapid response and under-funded windows),
- ✓ ensure that minimum safety conditions are in place for delivery of humanitarian assistance, and that
- ✓ CERF should only serve to start-up response after verification of other funding opportunities (i.e. bilateral contributions, ERF, agency reserves, pooled funding, etc.) and to contribute towards existing priorities in under-funded emergencies.

In principle, CERF submissions should also be based on the existing core humanitarian planning and programmes (i.e. CHAP, CAP, Flash Appeals, Country Strategies).

More specifically, CERF contributions do not cover:

- ✓ recurrent costs (government staff salaries, maintenance costs, etc.),
- ✓ generic early warning and prevention activities and regular agency stockpiling,
- ✓ capacity building and training (funded only if related to direct implementation of emergency response).

IV. Principles:

CERF supported interventions are to be consistent with basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. In addition, agencies implementing CERF funded projects, as part of the United Nations and of the larger humanitarian community, would take into consideration:

- Vulnerability of particular groups: Children and women represent the largest group of individuals affected by emergencies. Particular concern should be paid to the situation of girls and women in all emergency situations. The CERF emphasizes the importance of ensuring that principles provided in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁴, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, together with the CRC's Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (adopted in 2000)⁵ and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (adopted in 2000)⁶, and other related Resolutions such as Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000, be pillars to the implementation of CERF funded programmes and projects. In all sectors of response agencies would ensure the application of gender equity principles and will promote the empowerment and protection of women and girls.
- Environment: Given the increasing fragility of the natural environment and the irreversible deterioration of soil and water quality, agencies are requested to ensure a maximum consideration to the use of funds to avert negative impact on the environment.
- Complementarities: The CERF is a complementary financial mechanism and does not replace other efforts to obtain financial resources to respond to emergencies by governments, UN agencies, NGOs or other actors. As such the CERF is not expected to fund basic operational capacity of agencies or replace their regular funding efforts but to contribute to existing appeals and funding efforts.
- Partnerships: UN agencies and humanitarian actors at large are at the heart of planning, prioritization and decision making in regards to the CERF. They are encouraged to maximize the inter-action and collaboration with governments and national and international non-government organizations in order to effectively respond to emergencies and to ensure that the basic principles and priorities of the CERF are followed and effectively applied.
- Empowerment of affected populations: Focusing on the immediate aftermath of emergencies, the CERF expects agencies implementing programmes and projects to make direct efforts to contribute to the durability of solutions and the improvement of livelihoods of the most affected population with special consideration to gender and minority groups.

³ [CEDAW Text](#),

⁴ [CRC Text](#)

⁵ [OP Text](#)

⁶ [OP Text](#)

- Support for the Principles of “Good Humanitarian Donorship” and “Do No Harm”:
Agencies will make all efforts to ensure that assistance funded by the CERF empowers local communities and promotes self-sufficiency; conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of impact; avoid contributing to conflict and inequity; contribute to recovery and sustainable interventions; and ensure effective participation of civil society and local governments.

V. Sectors and activities regularly funded by the CERF grants:

The table below is an integral part of these guidelines and elaborates on the elements described above. The table includes a general description of the overall criteria for interventions in IASC recognized sectors, a list of activities that meet that criteria and conditions agreed for specific activities or sectors. Other humanitarian activities not reflected in this list may be considered for CERF funding based on specific contextual analysis and agreement with the agencies.

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
Agriculture <i>Criteria: Agricultural activities that have a direct and immediate impact on protecting and restoring food availability and the livelihoods of families affected by an emergency.</i>	- Provision of seeds, fertilizers and tools in emergency contexts to restore food security and production capacity.	Time-critical interventions to restore livelihoods and food availability.
	- Survival of productive animals (emergency vaccination, initial re-stocking, de-stocking, water and supplementary feeding for animals)	Only on case by case and when animal husbandry is a primary source of livelihood particularly for pastoralists communities and women and when livestock are essential for nutrition, income, transport, ploughing, and fuel.
	- Initial inputs for trans-boundary crop pest plague control (i.e. locust, etc).	Time-critical interventions to avert disaster and restore livelihoods after damage assessments.
	- Flood and drought related response (i.e. emergency embankments, spot repair of agricultural infrastructure, emergency inputs)	Time-critical interventions to protect or ensure food security.
Coordination and Support Services <i>Criteria:</i>	- Inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessment in new emergencies.	Only for HC/RC/Cluster lead assessments and to complement agency resources for rapid response. CERF will not fund sector

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
<p><i>Activities that support the delivery of emergency/humanitarian response for UN agencies, NGOs and Government.</i></p> <p><i>Activities that provide immediate logistical support for the delivery of priority sectoral interventions in emergency response.</i></p>		specific assessments.
	- Emergency telecommunications equipment	Only for inter-agency use (CERF cannot fund OCHA)
	- Evacuation support	Only complementary to agency resources.
	- Transport (Air, personnel, movements, refugee/IDP returns, evacuations, NFIs)	Only humanitarian personnel and supplies
	- Emergency storage	Only for rapid response
	- Joint Logistics Centers	
	- Provision of security measures for safety delivery of humanitarian efforts.	Support to UNDSS and other agencies at HC/RC request. ERC can allocate under UFE.
- Provision of safety equipment on emergencies (vehicles, safety materials, PPE, etc.)	Case by case basis	
<p>Education</p> <p><i>Criteria: Interventions aiming at restoring educational and recreational activities for children and adolescents during an emergency.</i></p>	- Provision of school tents and other education and recreation materials to establish safe spaces/learning environments for different age groups.	No recurrent costs funded.
	- Emergency repair of primary education facilities.	No recurrent costs funded.
	- Initial teacher training in emergencies	Only to support establishment of initial teaching capacity. No recurrent costs for training.
	- Essential life-saving skills (SGBV information, Mine risk education, HIV/AIDS, health and hygiene)	
<p>Food Aid</p> <p><i>Criteria: Provision of minimum food requirements to people affected by emergencies.</i></p>	- General food distribution and targeted distribution for most vulnerable groups (complement gaps).	For under-funded emergencies the CERF would only contribute to food pipeline breaks in serious deterioration emergencies and based on analysis of funding/financial status.

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
<p>Health</p> <p><i>Criteria:</i> <i>Activities that have an immediate impact on the health of population affected by an emergency.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of health aspects in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies. 	<p>As part of a wider initiative (it may be included in overall inter-sectoral coordination).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disease surveillance and dissemination of critical health information and laboratory reagents for early diagnosis. 	<p>Case detection action and epidemiological surveillance through existing Early Warning Systems.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring equitable and timely access to Emergency Primary Health Care, including: establishment of facilities and support systems, core health staff, complementary pharmaceuticals, basic equipment, waiving user-fees and individual referral to secondary health care. - Provision, distribution and replenishment of quick-turnover emergency stockpiles. 	<p>All if these in the context of specific emergency response.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SGBV medical and psycho-social support to survivors of rape. Including PEP kits. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mass casualty management 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing life-threatening conditions related to communicable diseases (immunizations, outbreak control). 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maternal and neo-natal risk, reproductive health emergency interventions (including provision of emergency reproductive health kits based on the Minimum Service Package MISP); 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary Level Health Care (only as follow up to natural disasters) 	<p>Case by case basis</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psycho-social support for survivors of emergencies 	<p>Case by case basis</p>

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HIV/AIDS emergency awareness and provision of education material/condoms. - HIV counseling, testing and treatment for vulnerable groups. 	Case by case basis and only in the context of natural disasters or complex emergencies.
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infant Feeding in Emergencies 	In refugee/IDP situations ensure secluded areas for breast feeding; supplementary feeding when required; targeted distributions of formula and education on preparation and use of formula.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition 	Requires community involvement and establishment of feeding centers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Micronutrient supplementation - Vitamins supplementation 	
Shelter and Non-Food Items <i>Criteria: Immediate provision of temporary/semi-temporary shelter and basic utensils for victims of disaster.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision and distribution of shelter materials 	Only for temporary emergency shelter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction/repair of temporary emergency shelter 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic provision of Non-Food items for affected populations and hosting families. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash Grants and Cash for Work 	Cash can replace handouts after impact assessments are undertaken.
Protection/Human Rights/Rule of Law: <i>Criteria: Activities aiming at providing physical, legal and social protection to individuals and families affected by natural disasters, complex emergencies or protracted displacement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of IDP/refugee camps. 	This can include deployment of emergency protection teams for IDP/refugee. Maintenance of camps: UFE.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial profiling of displaced populations, refugees and returnees (registration) disaggregated by age, gender and diversity. 	New situations Case by case basis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance for relocation and return of refugees and IDPs and creation of minimum 	Case by case basis

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
<p><i>situations.</i></p>	<p>conditions for return.</p>	
	<p>- Provision of humanitarian assistance in refugee and IDP protracted situations.</p>	<p>As contribution towards durable solutions</p>
	<p>- Protection strategies to respond to threats to physical security and persecution of displaced populations and protection monitoring.</p>	<p>Case by case basis</p>
	<p>- Protection of children (registration, identification, tracing, family re-unification and provision of psychosocial and trauma counseling services).</p>	
	<p>- Documentation campaigns for communities at risk to ensure access to life-saving related rights.</p>	<p>Case by case (No funding of regular State responsibilities in return operations)</p>
	<p>- SGBV response, awareness and education with a focus on women and girls.</p>	<p>In the context of new emergencies and camp related situations.</p>
	<p>- Advocacy and awareness on basic human rights, international humanitarian Law and protection in complex emergencies.</p>	<p>Case by case basis</p>
<p>Mine action</p> <p><i>Criteria: Activities that create immediate conditions of physical safety of populations affected by an emergency.</i></p>	<p>- Emergency de-mining/surveys (start up) to allow/improve humanitarian access.</p>	<p>Case by case basis</p>
	<p>- Mine awareness/education for displaced populations.</p>	<p>Case by case basis</p>
	<p>- First aid training and services available for immediate treatment of injuries.</p>	
	<p>- Coordination mechanisms</p>	<p>Case by case basis</p>
<p>Water and Sanitation</p> <p><i>Criteria: Provision of minimum requirements of water, sanitation and hygiene standards in emergency</i></p>	<p>- Provision of drinking water and emergency repair (wells, boreholes, pumps, small pipeline systems, trucking)</p>	
	<p>- Water purification systems/vector control.</p>	
	<p>- Sanitation systems in</p>	

SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	CONDITIONS
<i>situations.</i>	emergency situations.	
	- Water management.	
	- Hygiene and sanitation supplies (including for women and girls) and awareness raising.	

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-retroviral Therapy
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FTS	Financial Tracking System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
NFIs	Non-Food Items
PMTCT	Prevention of mother to child transmission
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RC	Resident Coordinator
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UFE	Under-funded Emergencies
UNCT	United Nations Country Team