Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the Countries Affected by El Niño

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Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AHA	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRCiS	Building Resilient Communities in Somalia
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
COPECO	Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (Permanent Contingency Commission of Honduras)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSIP	District Services Improvement Programme
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
FTS	Financial Tracking System
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	international Organisation for Migration
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MIC	Middle Income Country
NERMAP	National Emergency Response, Mitigation and Adaptation Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
PAF	Performance and Accountability Framework
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PNG	Papua New Guinea
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RIASCO	Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROSA	Regional Office for Southern Africa
RR	Rapid Response
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SANAA	Servicio Autónomo Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (Honduras)
SARCOF	Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum
SHF	Somalia Humanitarian Fund
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TC	Tropical Cyclone

TOR	Terms of Reference
UFE	Under-Funded Emergencies
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UTSAN	Unidad Técnica de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (Technical Unit for Food and Nutrition Security, Honduras)
VNRC	Viet Nam Red Cross
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
ZimVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZRBF	Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund

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The constructive dialogue during this review and the openness to explore lessons learned was critical to understanding the context, especially given the broad scope of the assessment and analysis.

This is an independent review and the authors assume responsibility for all opinions, recommendations and any unintended errors that may appear in this report.

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Executive Summary

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) secretariat commissioned this independent review to assess CERF's response to the El Niño phenomenon in 2015-16. The review's three objectives are to:

- Provide the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) with an appropriate level of assurance around the achievement of key performance benchmarks and planned results for the CERF mechanism.
- Assess the added value of CERF funding for the humanitarian response to the consequences resulting from the El Niño phenomenon.
- Examine the potential for a larger CERF to play a strategic role in providing early funding in slow-onset crises by responding to early warning systems and risk indicators in a more systematic and formalised manner.

The review focused on the appropriateness, effectiveness and added value of CERF for the El Niño response. It also identified lessons for CERF's role in supporting early action, particularly in slow onset emergencies, since the 2015-16 El Niño resulted in droughts in the countries to which CERF responded (except in Fiji). However, this should not preclude CERF from exploring its role in funding early action in rapid onset natural disasters and conflict-related crises.

This review uses the **definition of early action** in the draft inter-agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for early action to El Niño/La Niña episodes, which state that, "Early action consists of activities that can be implemented *before the anticipated hazard* to mitigate or even prevent its impacts" (page 5). The key distinction between early action and longer-term disaster preparedness is that it focuses on early warning for a specific impending hazard event rather than a range of potential risks and hazards using scenarios.

The team adopted a regional approach to ensure that findings were nuanced and reflected both differences and commonalities within and across regions. One team member visited selected countries in Asia and Africa while another visited selected countries in the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions. The report presents findings relating to CERF's appropriateness, effectiveness and added value by region. The sections below summarise findings across the regions.

Appropriateness

In most cases CERF was the first international funding to arrive in the countries reviewed. A number of factors influenced the timing of CERF funding, including whether UN agencies waited for emergency declarations by governments before applying, the quality and use of early warning systems and the extent to which these were used to guide a timely response, and the time taken to conduct and agree needs assessments. In development-oriented contexts in particular, agencies tended to apply for CERF funding when the crisis was already well advanced. Examples included several countries in Southern Africa and Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the Pacific, where early warning systems set up during the previous El Niño in 1997-98 did not translate into a timely response. On the other hand, in Honduras and El Salvador, early warning systems and preparedness for joint action with government and NGO partners facilitated well-timed interventions. In Zimbabwe, the Resident Coordinator (RC) and agencies decided to apply for CERF funds for a drought in 2015 on the basis of assessment data, even though the government did not declare an emergency until February 2016, when the country experienced the impact of El Niño in the form of another severe drought.

Agencies and donors were not aware of the secretariat's criteria for accepting or rejecting funding requests and determining allocation size. However, given CERF's approach of kick starting humanitarian responses and financing a small proportion of the overall humanitarian response, the size of allocations appeared to be appropriate. This was particularly the case for smaller and more development-oriented countries in Africa with limited absorption capacity as they shifted from development to emergency mode. In Honduras and El Salvador, where there are fewer humanitarian funding sources, interviewees argued that the size of CERF allocations limited coverage.

The knowledge of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs), recipient agencies and other partners about CERF's role, remit and procedures was context specific, but OCHA consistently played a crucial role in supporting CERF processes. Where agencies were unfamiliar with CERF processes and requirements, it sometimes took time to agree concept notes and applications for CERF funding.

Effectiveness

Interviews and reports on the use of CERF funds afforded substantial evidence of the ways in which CERF funding contributed to the effectiveness of the humanitarian responses. However, agencies' tendency to apply for CERF funds when the impacts of the El Niño were already clear compromised the effectiveness of some CERF-funded projects. This was the case in PNG, where WFP and UNICEF interventions started after the "short season crop harvest" had already started; the delay in application for funds had several causes but was mainly due to the government's reluctance to request international aid. Similarly, in Viet Nam, rains arrived in some areas soon after CERF-funded activities started. In El Salvador and Honduras, UN agencies and their partners found the six-month timeframe of CERF Rapid Response (RR) funding a challenge in a slow onset crisis where they required more time to achieve meaningful outcomes. Pre-existing relationships with government counterparts often resulted in more effective responses, such as in Fiji, where UNICEF's partnerships with water and education authorities positioned it as a key government partner. Unlike some donors, CERF funded sectors other than food assistance, agriculture and livelihoods in what were deemed to be food security crises. This was very helpful, particularly in Southern Africa.

The review found numerous examples of ways in which agencies used other donor funding to complement CERF-financed activities. In Zimbabwe, WFP, UNICEF and FAO used CERF funding to pilot approaches that were then funded by other donors. CERF also complemented country-based pooled funds in Ethiopia and Somalia. Agencies used CERF funds to complement government assistance programmes in several countries (including Viet Nam, Swaziland and Zimbabwe). In Fiji and Lesotho, agencies used government safety net programmes to distribute cash.

Added value

CERF added value to the El Niño response in a variety of ways such as strengthening coordination, helping to kick start emergency responses (particularly in development-oriented contexts such as Honduras, El Salvador, PNG, Lesotho, Swaziland and Viet Nam), strengthening the credibility of UN agencies vis-à-vis the government because they brought resources to the table (e.g., in Viet Nam, Central America), filling critical funding gaps in contexts with ongoing humanitarian responses (Ethiopia and Somalia), and funding neglected sectors or activities (including protection). In Honduras and El Salvador, CERF was critical because it was the primary source of funding for the response. In some contexts, CERF funding had unexpected additional benefits. In Viet Nam, UNICEF's government implementing partners decided to strengthen accountability to affected populations in future responses. In Swaziland, the CERF-funded water project led the government to sign up to international water safety standards. For agencies, CERF also added value by enabling them to leverage additional donor funds.

Lessons for CERF's Role in Supporting Early Action

Understanding exposure of vulnerable populations to risk, making financial provisions in advance, and putting in place plans to guide response are increasingly accepted as the most effective approaches to ensuring an adequate and timely response to emergencies. Thus, there are three pillars required for effective early action - a pre-disaster plan that identifies appropriate early actions, pre-agreed triggers or decision-making procedures for the release of funds and implementation of the actions, and pre-agreed financing. There is growing evidence that financing early action before the full impact of a hazard is felt can save lives, mitigate suffering and lower the cost of response. Early action also has the potential to mitigate the procrastination that characterises resource allocation processes in slow onset emergencies.

The broader disaster risk financing landscape is evolving rapidly and includes both development and humanitarian financing instruments. There are currently two key humanitarian risk-based financing mechanisms for early action; the Red Cross Forecast-based Financing (FbF) mechanism and the NGO START Fund "Anticipation Window". In addition, agencies such as WFP and FAO have developed internal funding instruments to provide funds to country programmes at critical moments to enable early action. However, the financing landscape currently lacks a mechanism for early action financing at scale, which would enable a coordinated multi-sector response.

Conclusions

CERF's key added value in financing early action is its convening power, bringing agencies around the table to develop coordinated and, where appropriate, joint multi-sectoral responses. The fact that CERF was usually the first significant international funding to arrive also gave UN agencies credibility vis-à-vis the government in development-oriented contexts. This could be a useful tool for engaging governments in discussions around early action.

CERF's comparative advantage is that it is fast, needs-based, and able to release funds without a formal government request for international assistance. This is important for financing early action since it can allow agencies to start working with governments to mitigate the impact of disasters in a less politically-charged environment. While the Zimbabwe example shows that agencies can apply for funds before an official disaster declaration, the review demonstrates that the humanitarian system is not set up to respond early in slow onset emergencies. Some countries that face recurrent droughts, such as Zimbabwe and Somalia, are developing information and early warning systems with thresholds to trigger early responses. FAO Viet Nam is also piloting FbF and ensuring early action in response to early warnings. These could help trigger CERF funding for early action. CERF has the potential to play a unique and influential role in early action, taking its place in a progressive policy space that contributes directly to the Agenda for Action aspiration to 'end needs'.

Recommendations

The key recommendation emerging from this review is that CERF should fund early action systematically when the early warning certainty level is relatively high. This would reduce the likelihood of providing funding in the event that the disaster does not materialise. In the context of an expanded CERF, the funding of early action is one of the areas for change that enjoys broad support. Investing in CERF's capabilities to fund early action is also consistent with its founding objective of supporting 'time critical interventions'. In addition, as the humanitarian system better understands the benefits of responding earlier to mitigate the impacts of risk and as the technical feasibility of responding earlier has advanced, it is appropriate that CERF keeps pace with the demands of this evolving system. CERF is well positioned to take on a role in funding early action since it is an established and respected humanitarian financing instrument with a global remit.

In order to shift to financing early action systematically, CERF needs to decide on its approach to key issues. These are the degree of assurance it will provide about the availability of early action funding; processes and triggers for releasing funding; establishing a separate window similar to the existing RR and UFE windows; establishing the level of funding that it will provide for early action; and adopting a learning approach to early action pilots.

The CERF secretariat will need to work with key actors to address practical challenges related to the shift to early action financing, using resources such as the El Niño Standard Operating Procedures recently developed by an interagency working group. This will allow a consensus to be reached on the conceptual and practical definition of what early action means for CERF; to agree on how CERF will work with country-level actors to ensure CERF early action allocations are based on appropriate analysis and early action planning (in the context of high-level commitments to strengthen risk-informed planning and response); to adapt CERF's technical capabilities and processes to accommodate early action, establish strategic partnerships, measure performance and capture relevant learning; and to build a critical mass of support for financing early action.

1. Introduction

This section describes the background to the review, outlines the objectives and scope of the review and clarifies the terminology used in the report.

1.1. Objectives, scope and users of the review

According to the Terms of Reference (TOR), the review has three main objectives. These are to:

- Provide the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) with an appropriate level of assurance around the achievement of key performance benchmarks and planned results for the CERF mechanism.
- Assess the added value of CERF funding for the humanitarian response to the consequences resulting from the El Niño phenomenon.
- Examine the potential for a larger CERF to play a strategic role in providing early funding in slow-onset crises by responding to early warning systems and risk indicators in a more systematic and formalised manner.

The three objectives highlight that the review has an accountability function in providing the ERC with assurance about the use of CERF funding. This review equally has a learning function since it draws out lessons about the role and added value of CERF in responding to a slow-onset crisis such as the El Niño phenomenon.

This review addresses four overarching questions:

1. How appropriate is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?
2. How effective is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?
3. What, if any, is CERF's added value in this type of emergency?
4. What lessons can be drawn from the El Niño response for CERF's role in support of early action more broadly?

There are 14 sub-questions under these overarching questions (see the review matrix in Annex 2). The review is broader in its scope than previous CERF reviews as it covers CERF allocations totalling $119.3 million for the El Niño response across 19 countries during 2015 and 2016. The review also differs from past CERF 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. It examines how CERF has responded to this slow-onset crisis, whose triggers are difficult to define, with a focus on drawing lessons at national, regional and global levels. Unlike previous reviews, it has focused less on the details of CERF processes in individual countries.

CERF funds are intended to leverage additional funding so recipient agencies often co-mingle them with other donor funds. Also, recipient agencies are formally responsible for the in-depth assessment of beneficiary-level impact. Therefore, the review did not attempt to link CERF funding to beneficiary-level changes. This report also does not provide detailed narratives and contextual analysis around how and why results were achieved. Rather it focuses on providing the ERC with assurance around the CERF's strategic and operational impact.

The ERC and the CERF secretariat will be the primary users of this report. External stakeholders - the CERF Advisory Group, recipient agencies, donors, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and others involved in El Niño responses at national, regional and global level – are likely to have an interest in the review's findings.

1.2. Review Background

The CERF's Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF), formally adopted in 2010, proposed conducting three to five annual reviews of CERF's added value to specific crises, as determined by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). The CERF Advisory Group endorsed this and, since 2010, the CERF

secretariat has commissioned such reviews.

The CERF secretariat commissioned this review in light of its large-scale response to the El Niño global climatic event in 2015 and 2016. According to a July 2016 update, CERF was "*…one of the quickest and largest supporters of early humanitarian action in response to the El Niño phenomenon"* disbursing funds from mid-2015 onwards. A key challenge Identified by CERF in its briefing note for this review was in identifying a 'trigger'[1] for a slow onset drought situation (CERF secretariat 2016). The CERF secretariat addressed this by preparing guidance documents on how to demonstrate eligibility for a slow onset crisis and identifying a 'trigger' through the use of available data (CERF secretariat 2016).

The 2016 General Assembly decision to endorse the increase in CERF's annual funding target to $1 billion, up from $450 million has been accompanied by discussions around what a larger CERF could do differently and better. One aspect of these deliberations is around CERF's (future) role in responding to slow onset emergencies and this review of CERF's El Niño response offered a good opportunity to inform the discussions.

Around the same time that the CERF secretariat commissioned this review in mid-2017, the World Meteorological Organisation's global forecast of 28 April 2017 was indicating a 50-60% probability of an El Niño episode in the second half of 2017 (OCHA 2017a). This provided an impetus for OCHA, WFP and FAO to convene a global analysis group to identify the countries likely to be at highest risk over the period June-September 2017 where analysis and early action planning should be prioritised by referring to the draft inter-agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for El Niño episodes that were being developed.[2] Even though the anticipated El Niño episode did not eventuate during 2017, it is evident that CERF will increasingly be called upon to respond to El Niño type events in future.

The German government has attributed the significant increase in humanitarian needs in recent years at least partly to climate risks (Federal Foreign Office and German Red Cross 2015). OCHA has pointed out that the 2015-16 El Niño occurred "in a world already dramatically affected by climate change. More extreme weather events are expected, and climate change may increase the frequency and severity of future El Niño events" (OCHA 2016: 2). The UN Secretary-General echoed the warnings that human-induced climate change may interact with El Niño, resulting in less predictable, more frequent and more severe events in the future.[3] This makes it pertinent to learn the lessons from CERF's response in 2015 and 2016 and to identify CERF's added value in future responses to such events.

1.3. Background to the El Niño Crisis

The El Niño crisis was one of the major global humanitarian crises during 2015-2016[4] with associated droughts, floods and other extreme weather events affecting an estimated 60 million people.[5] The EU has calculated that its funding for the El Niño response amounted to EUR 539 million[6] and USAID has estimated its total global contributions to exceed US$ 1 billion.[7] The 2015/2016 El Niño crisis was widely seen as an example of the humanitarian and development nexus, involving interactions

[1] The trigger was defined by CERF is an eligibility requirement for rapid onset emergencies and while it is straightforward for rapid onset emergencies such as an earthquakes or floods, it is more difficult to prove imminent loss of life for so for slow onset drought emergencies.

[2] The group comprised representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) Columbia University, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, WMO, Christian Aid, START Network, Save the Children, Mercy Corps.

[3] Secretary-General's remarks to High-Level Political Forum Side Event on El Niño and Climate, 19 July 2016. See: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2016-07-19/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-political-forum-side-event-el

[4] Development Initiatives (2017) Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017.

[5] OCHA (2016a) Global Call for Support and Action: Responding to El Niño

[6] European Commission (2017b) Report from The Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid policies and their implementation in 2016 http://www.parliament.bg/pub/ECD/2800761_EN_ACT_part1_v2.pdf

[7] https://www.usaid.gov/elnino (accessed 22 January 2018)

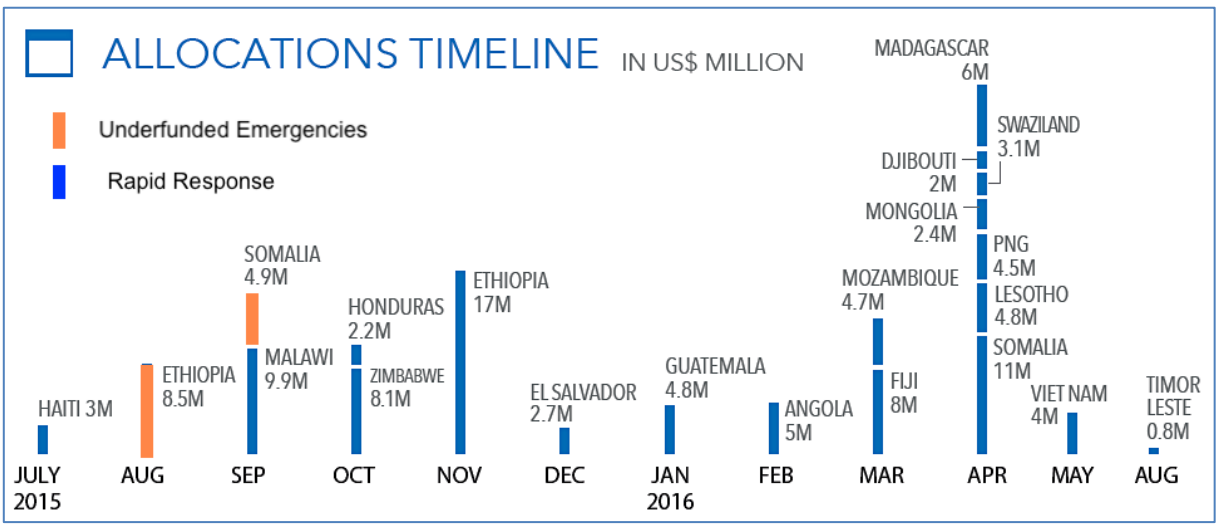
between disaster response and development capacities in international agencies, national and local governments.[8]

1.4. 2015-16 El Niño and CERF response

Early warning indicators of a strong El Niño event started emerging in early 2015. By February 2016, CERF had supported the global response to El Niño-related life-saving efforts in nine countries with over US$ 64 million and was in discussion with more than 13 countries for allocations of US$ 100 million in RR funds for El Niño and other conflict related emergencies. For CERF, allocations to the El Niño crisis represented a significant proportion of available funds. Given the number of countries impacted and returning for additional CERF support through second allocations for the El Niño emergency, the ERC decided to restrict CERF funding to one allocation per country since 8-10 countries were still developing their initial requests. The ERC reiterated that CERF is meant to be a provider of first support, focusing on kick-starting the response in several El Niño affected countries. He strongly advocated with donors and Member States on the need for a larger and more comprehensive direct response to the countries affected by El Niño, especially in East and Southern Africa. By the end of the crisis, CERF had provided US$ 119 million to El Niño-related activities in 19 countries (see Figure 1 below for allocations per country).

Figure 1 shows the month in which the CERF secretariat disbursed funds to each country. However, in some cases, such as Somalia (2016), Fiji and Mongolia, agencies used the option of early start dates for CERF RR grants. CERF guidelines for the RR Window state that, "*In cases where agencies have had to begin expensing funds before this date in order to meet urgent priorities, the agency may specify an earlier start date, not exceeding six weeks prior to the disbursement date and not before the onset of the emergency*" (OCHA, 2011: 2). This can facilitate an earlier response since it allows agencies to start implementing activities even before the ERC has provided final approval for applications and the secretariat has disbursed funds.

Figure 1 CERF Allocations for the El Niño Crisis[9]



[8] European Commission (2017a) Annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid policies and their implementation in 2016.

[9] Source: CERF secretariat

As of June 2016, OCHA estimated that El Niño had affected over 60 million people, with Central America, East Africa (particularly Ethiopia), the Pacific and Southern Africa remaining the most affected regions (OCHA 2016). OCHA estimated that El Niño had affected food security and agricultural production, with cascading effects on livelihoods, health, water, sanitation, education and other sectors. This is due to flooding, disease outbreaks and malnutrition, disruption of health and education services, and overall increased mortality." (OCHA 2016: 1). It also estimated that humanitarian impacts would last well into 2017.

1.5. Terminology

In order to address the questions of CERF's role in financing early action in slow onset emergencies, it is important to define key terms. This section starts with a brief definition of the term early action, which is explored in further detail in section 4.1. It goes on to list definitions of terms related to disaster risk financing before focusing in more detail on the term early action.

Early Actions: are taken to mitigate or prevent the humanitarian impacts of an impending disaster event (as opposed to emergency response when an event has occurred).

Ex ante: Actions taken 'before the event'.

Ex post: Actions taken 'after the event'.

Risk: The combination of the probability of an event and its potential negative consequences.

Risk management: The systematic approach and practice of managing uncertainty in order to minimise potential harm and loss. Risk management comprises risk assessment and analysis, and the implementation of strategies and specific actions to control, reduce and transfer risks.

Risk financing: involves the retention of risks combined with the adoption of an explicit financing strategy to ensure that adequate funds are available to meet financial needs should a disaster occur. Such financing can be established internally through the accumulation of funds set aside for future use or obtained externally through prearranged credit facilities. The banking sector, capital markets and international lending institutions are sources of risk financing.

Risk transfer: involves the shifting of risks to others who, in exchange for a premium, provide compensation when a disaster occurs, ensuring that any financing gap that might emerge is partially or fully bridged. Risk transfer may be obtained through insurance policies or capital market instruments such as catastrophe bonds. The insurance and reinsurance sectors are the main sources of risk transfer, although capital markets provide an alternative source.

Parametric Index Insurance: Parametric indexes enable pre-defined payments that are based on expected losses, correlated against a measurable parameter (e.g. rainfall, temperature or earthquake intensity) or index of parameters. Traditional indemnity insurance relies on costly verification of actual losses whereas parametric insurance allows payments to be triggered automatically when pre-agreed risk thresholds are breached. Dispensing with the need for verification allows substantial savings to the insurer. These savings are reflected in reduced premium costs, making parametric insurance a more affordable product for low-income purchasers. Prior agreement about payments and trigger thresholds, combined with independent measurement of data, also allows for much more rapid disbursement of pay outs and reduces the risk of moral hazard.

Sovereign risk pools: pool resources governments to spread risk and negotiate preferential insurance and reinsurance rates. The pool may retain part of the funds derived from subscriptions, may progressively accumulate reserves, and transfer higher levels of risk to reinsurance and financial markets at more favourable rates than individual states could otherwise achieve.

Residual risk: The risk that remains in unmanaged form, even when disaster risk reduction measures are in place, and for which emergency response and recovery capacities must be maintained.

1.6. Report structure

This report is the main output from the review and is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the methodology for the review, including the review approach, the analytical framework that the team used to answer the review questions, the review process and data collection methods, and the limitations of the review.

Section 3 presents findings against the first three review questions, organised by the four regions covered in this review. Section 4 addresses the global-level fourth review question, "What lessons can be drawn from the El Niño response for CERF's role in support of early action more broadly?" Sections 5 and 6 outline the conclusions and recommendations from the review respectively.

2. Methodology

This section provides a summary of the evaluation approach and methodology, including data collection tools. It provides a summary of participation in the evaluation and notes challenges and limitations.

2.1. Review approach

Discussions with the CERF secretariat through the review have highlighted that, while this review examines CERF's performance during the El Niño response by looking at its appropriateness, effectiveness and value added, it should have a forward-looking component as encapsulated in the fourth review question. This is particularly relevant in light of discussions about the future role of a larger CERF but also to help the ERC and the secretariat to consider how CERF can remain relevant in a rapidly changing financing landscape. The team has therefore given weight to both the accountability and lesson learning aspects of the review during data collection and analysis.

The team also sought to promote a utilisation focus through a participatory approach. At the end of each country mission, team members presented their preliminary findings when debriefing the Resident Coordinator (RC) and other key stakeholders. The team also presented preliminary findings to the CERF Advisory Group and at an inter-agency workshop in order to get feedback on the findings and input into the development of conclusions and recommendations.

A regional approach was taken for this review as El Niño impacts cut across national boundaries and interviews during the inception phase indicated that there were likely to be significant differences between regions. The regional approach helped to ensure that findings were nuanced and reflected differences and commonalities across regions. At the same time, the approach during the review took into account that countries within a region, or even geographical areas within a country, may be affected in different ways.

2.2. Analytical framework

The team developed a review matrix during the inception phase (see Annex 2). This organised the sub-questions listed in the TOR under the four key review questions, merging sub-questions where necessary and deleting duplicative questions. Where appropriate, sub-questions were converted into indicators to help answer larger questions. Through this process, the team reduced the 21 sub-questions listed in the TOR into a more manageable set of 14 questions that guided the team's line of questioning and analysis throughout the review.

For each sub-question, the matrix lists the indicators against which the team gathered evidence during the desk review and field visits. The indicators cover different aspects of each sub-question and ensured that the team collected data in a systematic and consistent way.

Listing the data sources for each sub-question provided a foundation from which to develop data collection tools to address all the relevant sub-questions.

During the data analysis phase, the team used the sub-questions and indicators in the review matrix to organise key findings and to develop conclusions.

2.3. Review process and methods

As illustrated by Figure 2 below, the evaluation comprised three key phases, each of which involved a specific set of activities.

Figure 2 Key phases and activities of the review

2.3.1. Inception phase

During the inception phase, the team held preliminary discussions with staff from the CERF secretariat, OCHA, WFP and the START Network. The aim of these discussions was to gather perspectives on the scope of the review as well as the appropriateness of the review's methodology and approach. These interviews helped to identify key issues that the team should consider during the review.

As described above, the team used the questions listed in the TOR and the issues identified by interviewees to develop the analytical framework for this review. The inception phase concluded with the submission of the inception report.

2.3.2. Data collection phase

The review used a mixed-methods approach to collect data, as described below.

Document review: The team reviewed humanitarian appeals and other humanitarian strategy documents, project applications (including concept notes where relevant), RC/HC CERF reports on the use of CERF funds, CERF secretariat documents (including guidance), relevant study and evaluation reports, and El Niño specific documents, such as forecasts, updates, and FAO and WFP lists of at-risk countries.

Financial data: The team gathered and analysed humanitarian financial data from the CERF secretariat and from relevant databases such as the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) on volumes, sources and the timing of funding. The financial analysis complements data from field-level interviews and helps to contextualise CERF contributions in terms of timing as well as volume and significance to the response.

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD): A total of 263 persons, 161 men and 107 women, were interviewed during key informant interviews and focus group discussions. 60 percent of interviewees were either from UN agencies or participated as part of cluster FGD. A summary is provided in Table 1 and a detailed list is attached as Annex 7.

Table 1 Summary of Key Informant Interviews and FGD

		♂	♀	Total	FGD
Global Level	UN and cluster	11	13	24	0
	Other interviewees	9	8	17	0
	TOTAL (HQ)	**20**	**21**	**41**	**0**
Africa		♂	♀	Total	FGD
	UN and cluster	18	15	33	3
	Other interviewees	15	8	23	0
	TOTAL (Africa)	**33**	**23**	**56**	**3**
Asia		♂	♀	Total	FGD
	UN and cluster	11	12	23	1
	Other interviewees	8	7	15	0
	TOTAL (Asia)	**19**	**19**	**38**	**1**
LAC		♂	♀	Total	FGD
	UN and cluster	19	10	29	3
	Other interviewees	26	20	46	7
	TOTAL (LAC)	**45**	**30**	**75**	**10**
Pacific		♂	♀	Total	FGD
	UN and cluster	18	7	25	1
	Other interviewees	26	7	33	2
	TOTAL (Pacific)	**44**	**14**	**58**	**3**
Total		♂	♀	Total	FGD
	UN and cluster	77	57	134	8
	Other interviewees	84	50	134	9
	GRAND TOTAL	**161**	**107**	**268**	**17**

Field missions: The countries receiving CERF funding for the El Niño response can be divided into four geographical regions; Asia, Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. During the inception phase, the team used the following criteria to select one or two countries in each region for a field visit; the level of CERF funding to the country, the number of sectors and agencies funded by CERF, the timing of CERF funding and the window from which CERF provided funding (Rapid Response vs. Under-Funded Emergencies window), and the extent to which lessons from the country's experience of CERF El Niño funding would contribute to the strategic aspects of this review. The table below lists the countries and regional hubs selected for field visits, together with reasons for the selection and the dates of field missions.

Table 2 Countries and regional hubs selected for visits

Region	Field Mission Dates	Countries and regional hub	Rationale for country selection
Asia	3-10 Aug	Vietnam, Bangkok and Jakarta[10]	Vietnam offered useful lessons for how CERF operates in middle-income, development contexts. It received more funding than Mongolia and CERF funded UN agencies that did not receive funding in many other El Niño contexts. Bangkok is an important perspective hub. Discussions with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and UN agencies in Indonesia provided insights into how ASEAN governments and the Country Team in Indonesia[11] had been dealing with the crisis.
Pacific	26 Sep -6 Oct	Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji and	PNG is the largest island in the Pacific and is at risk of various climate-related hazards, including drought, floods and cyclones. According to the 2018 global INFORM Index for Risk Management, PNG continues to be classified as a 'High Risk' country. PNG was the second largest recipient of CERF funding in the region, behind Fiji and has been identified as "at risk" of additional El Niño type impacts. A visit to Fiji offered the opportunity to both review CERF performance in the country and gain a regional perspective, especially since the mission overlapped with the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership Meeting in Suva that brought together actors from throughout the Pacific.
Latin America and Caribbean	5-15 Nov	El Salvador, Honduras and Panama	El Salvador and Honduras are in the "at risk" category of future El Niño disaster impacts. El Salvador was the only country in the region where FAO received CERF funding during the 2015-2016 crop cycle. There was a permanent OCHA presence in Honduras, though none in El Salvador. The visit to Panama provided perspectives on the overall response in Central America and the Caribbean to El Niño.
Africa	4-15 Sep	Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Nairobi[12]	Interviews and an initial document review highlighted that both Swaziland and Zimbabwe offer useful lessons for CERF. They also offered the opportunity to study different country contexts within the same region (and the regional response by SADC and international actors). Visiting Nairobi as the regional hub for Eastern Africa drew upon relevant lessons from this region.

[10] Interviews in Jakarta took place during October 12-13.

[11] Although Indonesia did not receive CERF funding for the El Niño crisis, the country provided useful insights in how a UN country team approached the crisis. Notable actions by Country Team included commissioning of a scenario analysis for the El Niño crisis (ACAPS 2016) and a joint initiative by WFP, FAO and the Government of Indonesia to develop the "Vulnerability Analysis Monitoring Platform for the Impact of Regional Events" (VAMPIRE) tool, which was one of two winner of the 2017WFP Innovation Challenge award – see Thomalla, F. et al. (2017)

[12] Nairobi is a regional hub for the Horn of Africa but was also used to conduct interviews for the Somalia response.

The purpose of the field missions was to address the first two review objectives. Data from field missions has also helped to inform the assessment of whether a larger CERF could play a strategic role in slow-onset crises. Since assessment of beneficiary-level impact and the establishment of links between CERF funding and beneficiary-level changes were outside the scope of this review, the team did not visit project sites or consult beneficiaries directly. The one exception was in El Salvador, where a team member was able to visit project sites and speak to beneficiaries and partner field staff of WFP, FAO, UNDP and UNICEF projects. The field visit to the Regional Office for the Pacific coincided with the annual Partnership Humanitarian Platform meetings that allowed for discussions with government, UN and NGO staff from throughout the region.

Consultations in Rome and New York: The team travelled to Rome during the week of 16th October 2017 to consult with WFP and FAO at headquarters level since they were both key agencies involved in the El Niño response and WFP received the largest amount of funding from CERF's El Niño allocations. Two members travelled to Rome and spent one day with each agency. While the team undertook consultations with key informants in New York mainly through telephone calls, the visit to New York in October to present preliminary findings to the CERF Advisory Group and conduct a technical workshop provided an opportunity for the team to conduct face-to-face interviews with UNICEF and OCHA.

Semi-structured interviews: The team conducted these with key informants during the field missions and at headquarters/global level. Annex 7 presents a full list of interviewees by region and at global level.

Technical workshop:

Team members facilitated a half-day technical workshop at the CERF secretariat in New York on 29 October 2017 attended by fifteen staff from UNICEF, UNFPA, IFRC, OCHA and the CERF secretariat, together with three from FAO and WFP, one from the START network and a review team member participating via a remote link. The workshop gave participants the opportunity to review provisional findings and emerging conclusions before breaking into small groups. The groups were given three discussion questions: 1) *What are the key differences between preparedness & early action?* 2) *What are the pros and cons of a separate funding window?* 3) *How do Forecast-based Financing mechanisms & risk-based financing mechanisms target assistance/ identify vulnerable HH?* There was an overall endorsement of CERF's role in early action and participant inputs were considered during drafting of this report. The agenda and a summary of working group outputs is attached as an annex.

2.4. Limitations of the review

As indicated by the four overarching questions, this review focuses specifically on the impact of El Niño in 2015-16. With the exception of Fiji, this resulted in slow-onset droughts in the countries where CERF responded. As a result, this report focuses on CERF's potential role in financing early action in slow-onset emergencies. This does not imply that CERF should in any way limit its role in financing early action to these emergencies. There is some experience from the Red Cross's Forecast-based Financing and the START Fund Anticipation Window around early action in rapid onset natural disasters, but CERF will probably need to commission further research to identify its role and added value in financing early action in these types of emergencies as well as conflict-related crises

3. Findings

This section presents findings organised by region against the first three review questions, as described below:

1. **Appropriateness**: This section begins by outlining the timing, scale and mandate of CERF funding (question 1.1). It goes on to assess whether CERF's approach to the response was appropriate (question 1.2) and concludes by examining the level of knowledge of CERF's role, remit, procedures and added value as a humanitarian financing instrument at country level (question 1.3).
2. **Effectiveness**: This section begins by examining the timeliness and effectiveness of the CERF-funded response (question 2.1) before looking at the extent to which CERF funding complemented other donor funds (question 2.2). It concludes by exploring whether CERF-funded projects worked with local response mechanisms and safety nets (question 2.3).
3. **Added Value of CERF**: This section begins by describing the various ways in which CERF added value to the El Niño response (question 3.1) and goes on to identify CERF's comparative advantage in slow onset emergencies (question 3.2). It assesses the extent to which agencies used CERF funding to leverage additional resources (question 3.3) and concludes with a brief consideration of whether larger or additional CERF allocations would have made a difference to the response (question 3.4).

3.1. Asia

In Asia, CERF funded humanitarian programs in Viet Nam and Mongolia in 2016 as part of the El Niño response. This section begins by presenting data on the timing and volume of CERF funding. It goes on to outline findings against the first three review questions, drawing on interviews conducted during visits to Hanoi and Bangkok as well as telephone interviews and on a document review.

3.1.1. Regional context

National and provincial authorities in Viet Nam normally manage responses to the various natural hazards that affect the country (usually rapid onset emergencies) so 2016 was the first time that Viet Nam had requested international assistance since the country experienced large-scale floods in 1999.

Prior to the Dzud in 2015-16, Mongolia had experienced a severe Dzud in 2009-2010 and received CERF funding in 2010 for an emergency response.

Timelines for Viet Nam and Mongolia below shows key dates in the emergency and CERF process.

Figure 3 Timeline of Viet Nam response

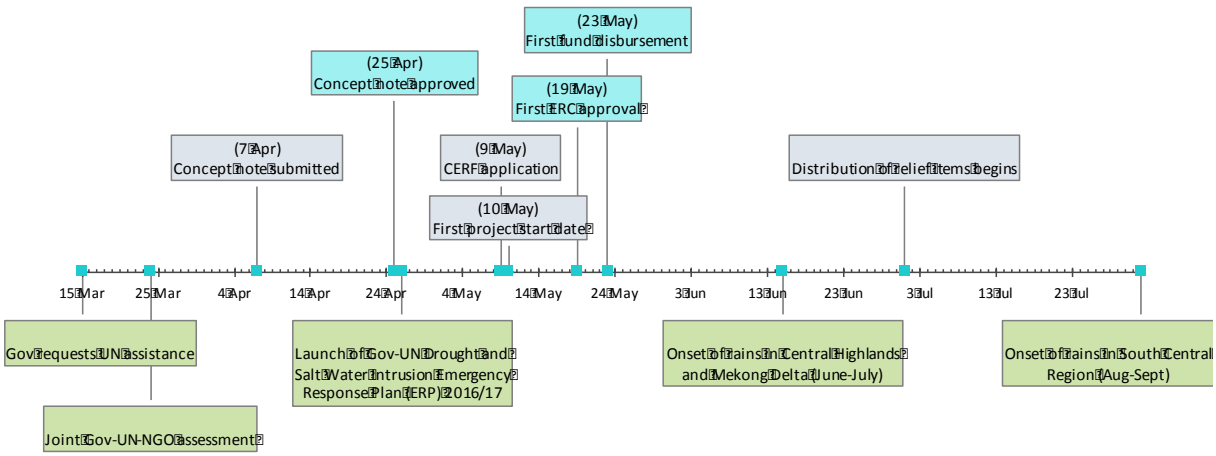
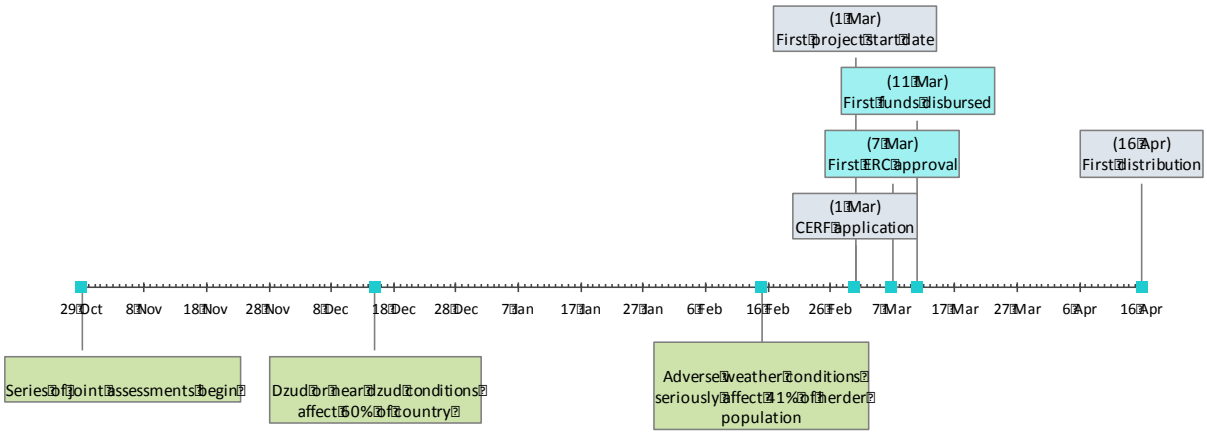


Figure 4 Timeline of Mongolia response



3.1.2. Appropriateness of CERF

Timing, scale and mandate of CERF funding

This section focuses on findings related to the timing of CERF funding to Viet Nam and Mongolia (and the factors that influence this) since this was a more pertinent issue in these two countries than the scale and mandate of CERF funding.

As the timeline in section 3.1.1 demonstrates, CERF funding to Viet Nam arrived just over two months after the government requested international assistance from the UN country team and other humanitarian and development partners. Section 3.1.3 examines how this affected the effectiveness of the CERF-funded response. However, in terms of the timing of the funding, interviewees emphasised that CERF funding was amongst the first international funding that they received.[13]

One issue that affects the timing of funding requests is that governments are often reluctant to declare a state of emergency or make a formal request for international assistance. In Mongolia, in 2015, the government did not want to declare a national emergency and preferred to say that a certain percentage of the country was in Dzud or a Dzud-like situation and that it would welcome international support to complement its response. Mongolia applied for CERF funds for the 2015-16 Dzud on 1st March 2016.[14] According to the application to CERF, by this time adverse weather conditions had affected 62,719 herder households (or 41 per cent of the total herder population) and 187,966 animals had perished. An After Action Review of the CERF-funded response identified that the "Government request for assistance could have been clearer, more official and occurred earlier" in order to facilitate a timely response (Workshop Report pg. 4). When Dzud affected the country again at the end of 2016, both the government and the UN used their 2015-16 experience to improve the timeliness of the response. UN agencies applied for CERF funding earlier in order to avoid the loss of livestock (receiving funding by mid-January 2017 and starting disbursement by 20 February 2017, 6-8 weeks earlier than the 2015-16 response).

When assessing the timing of CERF applications, this review explored the influence of needs assessments and early warning systems. UN agencies in Viet Nam faced a number of challenges with data and assessments and this contributed to delays in the CERF application process. An OCHA ROAP mission report (2017) highlighted the issues. These included the government's limited technological capacity to collect and disseminate data. It was also not possible for agencies to get data below

[13] UNDP received $50,000 from the Australian government prior to CERF. OFDA had draft proposals and funding available by 25th March 2016, when the US Government internally declared a drought and saltwater intrusion disaster in Viet Nam. In some cases, though, it took until mid-May to disburse funds.

[14] According to the UN's application for CERF funding in 2015, "*Dzud* is a cyclical slow onset disaster unique to Mongolia. It consists of a summer drought followed by a deterioration of the weather conditions in winter (10 to 350 cm snow thickness, temperatures -40° C to -50° C) and spring during which shortage of pasture and water leads to large scale death of animals".

province level even though different parts of each province were likely to be affected differently by the El Niño. There was no sex and age disaggregated data (required by CERF) or data on vulnerable groups available. Since the government pre-approves assessment questions, agencies were unable to adapt questionnaires to gather crisis-specific information. Finally, there was a problem of over-assessment, with different organisations visiting the same areas, overwhelming local district officials and communities. As a result, the OCHA ROAP mission argued for a greater use of joint assessments and a standardised approach to produce more comparable assessment data.

In Mongolia, in the absence of early warning systems, agencies rely on assessments to formulate a response. Therefore, different actors conducted multiple assessments – the application to CERF lists six fact-finding missions or sets of assessments by the government, UN agencies, the Asian Development Bank, the Red Cross and individual international NGOs (INGOs) between 29th October 2015 and 6th February 2016, including a joint UN-INGO rapid assessment in February 2016. However, such a lengthy assessment process undoubtedly leads to a later application for CERF funding and a delay in response. The RC/HC CERF report[15] on the use of CERF funds calls for more joint assessments as well as standardised assessment methodologies.

There was general agreement amongst interviewees that although Viet Nam has early warning and information-sharing systems in place for the rapid onset emergencies that the country experiences frequently, these are weak for slow onset emergencies. Responsibility for forecasting and early warning is split across government ministries, slowing down communication. While El Niño forecasts were available in 2016, none of the early warning systems identified the risk of a convergence of the El Niño-induced drought and extensive saltwater intrusion. There were also challenges with disseminating early warning information from national to community level. The government and aid agencies acknowledge the challenges and are working to improve systems. For example, ECHO has funded FAO, UN Women and other partners to pilot forecast-based financing in two provinces. The 18-month project aims to make weather forecast information more accessible to communities and support them to develop early action plans. It will also develop SOPs, thresholds and triggers for financing in the food security and WASH sectors.[16] The project will include a cost-benefit analysis, which should contribute to building empirical evidence about the cost-effectiveness of early action. OCHA ROAP facilitated a multi-stakeholder contingency planning process in Viet Nam (using scenarios for both rapid and slow onset emergencies) in September 2017. UNDP was planning to include the development of risk mapping for 28 coastal provinces in its proposal to the Green Climate Fund. In addition to improving early warning systems, government departments acknowledged that there was a need to revise the legal framework and procedures for receiving international emergency funding in order to avoid delays.

Early warning systems in Mongolia are generally weak so, in late 2015, actors were watching to see whether a Dzud developed. The lack of protocols for responding to early warning signs also delayed the start of the response. UN agencies organised an early warning and early action workshop in early October 2017 in order to move forward the debate and there was a view that sustained investment (both technical and financial) in early warning systems in Mongolia would be extremely helpful. One of the findings from a 'light review' of the CERF response was that the inter-agency contingency plan needed revision to include multiple hazards (including Dzud) and ensure that the processes of different actors are complementary.

Another factor that influences the timing of CERF funding is the level of knowledge of CERF processes

[15] The RC/HC narrative reports are official reporting tool on the use of CERF funds that highlight whether targets have been met and explain how funds have been prioritized and utilized to meet life-saving humanitarian needs. All RC/HC narrative reports are posted on CERF's website.

[16] The aim of having thresholds is to trigger different actions at different levels of certainty of a drought and different times. For example, when there is a 30% chance of drought in six months, there is more likely to be a need for awareness raising activities but there will be a need for mitigation activities when there is a 90% probability of drought in three months.

in country. Unless UN agencies at country level are used to emergency response planning and applying for CERF, they tend to have limited knowledge of CERF requirements and capacity to prepare applications (in particular, knowing how to demonstrate that proposed activities fit with CERF's life-saving criteria). This can lead to delays with project applications and revisions. For example, while the concept note process (see annex 4 for further details) did not cause delays in Mongolia, interviewees in Viet Nam and ROAP highlighted that there were several rounds of communication between the CERF secretariat and agencies in country on the Viet Nam concept note over a period of 18 days (including weekends) from 7-25 April. This led to some frustration amongst agencies at country level. Viet Nam had not applied for CERF funding before 2016 so the level of knowledge amongst UN agencies was limited, as was capacity for emergency response (since the government implements emergency responses to the many small-scale disasters that affect the country regularly). This contributed to the delay in getting approval for the concept note and with submitting project proposals indicated in the timeline above. As the effects of climate change increase, CERF is likely to be providing funding in very different contexts in the future. The secretariat will need to ensure that it works with relevant OCHA offices to support countries that are unfamiliar with its criteria and processes.

A lack of familiarity with CERF can also lead to unrealistic expectations of the level of funding that might be available. UN agencies in Viet Nam were initially planning for an allocation of $7-8 million and OCHA's ROAP, which was supporting the CERF application process, had to manage these expectations by highlighting that three similar applications from the region had only received a maximum of $4 million. The secretariat finally funded projects totalling $3,897,864. Since CERF's aim is to finance a small proportion of total project costs and enable agencies to leverage additional funding, interviews suggest that the scale of funding to Viet Nam was appropriate. A UN interviewee argued that more funding would not have resulted in better outcomes and that his agency received sufficient CERF funding to implement in the limited timeframe available of a RR project.

One interviewee identified that a challenge with CERF funding arriving before other donor funding is that agencies want to secure funding for as many projects/activities as possible in case other donors do not fund them. This makes prioritisation very difficult, particularly when there is a limited amount of CERF funding available. Once agencies know the amount of funding available, the discussion becomes about sharing the funding rather than prioritisation. This underlines the importance of the role of the Resident Coordinator (RC) in leading the UNCT's prioritisation process. While it may be challenging to ensure that CERF applications are focused on life-saving activities (particularly in the case of slow onset emergencies related to El Niño or climate change), the life-saving criteria help with prioritisation.

This section has outlined the factors that influenced the timing of CERF funding to Viet Nam and Mongolia. It has shown that, although CERF funding was amongst the first to arrive in these contexts, the timing of the applications in 2016 meant that it arrived when the El Niño-related emergencies were at an advanced stage in both countries (for further discussion, see section 3.1.3 below).

Processes and strategy application

Interviews with CERF recipient agencies in Viet Nam, the RC in Mongolia and OCHA ROAP showed that they were not aware of the secretariat's decision-making processes for the El Niño response, including the selection of countries, size of allocations per country and the policy of one allocation per country. Therefore, they were not in a position to comment on CERF's appropriateness. However, an OCHA respondent argued that early guidance from the secretariat, for example that it would only make one allocation for the crisis was helpful for managing the UNCT's expectations in Viet Nam and motivating them to fundraise with other donors.

The secretariat's approach of making only one allocation for the response in Viet Nam and Mongolia was appropriate because, in both cases, funding arrived after the peak of the emergency needs and there would not have been added value in a follow-on allocation. Mongolia experienced a Dzud again in 2016-17 and received CERF funding for the response.

Knowledge of CERF's role, remit, procedures and added value as a humanitarian financing tool

As noted above, at the time of the El Niño response in 2016, some UN agencies had limited experience with CERF procedures in Viet Nam and Mongolia but the RCs in both countries clearly understood how CERF could add value to the UN system's response and enable it to support the governments in both countries. OCHA's ROAP provided significant support to both countries with their CERF applications, which was greatly appreciated.[17] Although some UN agencies in Viet Nam received support from their regional offices or headquarters, others did not and some felt that it would have helped if CERF focal points in the agencies had been more engaged. In Mongolia, ROAP helped UN agencies to target their overall humanitarian response as well as CERF-funded components, both geographically and in terms of beneficiaries. It supported the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) with prioritisation and the RC with leading the CERF application process. ROAP also worked with the RC's office (RCO) in Mongolia to prepare the strategy for the CERF application and reviewed project applications to reduce back and forth with the CERF secretariat. ROAP fielded several missions to Viet Nam to support the CERF application process and helped agencies with practical advice on completing the budgets and project proposals correctly.

From ROAP's perspective, CERF guidance and templates are clear and the introduction of the drought guidance at the time of Viet Nam's application was helpful. However, agencies usually struggled with ensuring that activities complied with the life-saving criteria and with demonstrating that they were addressing new, emerging needs rather than a long-standing development issue that had become acute because of the drought. This was particularly challenging in contexts like Viet Nam and Mongolia where agencies are normally focused on development programming. Nevertheless, interviewees argued that CERF should not amend its life-saving criteria because they help agencies to focus on the most urgent needs.

OCHA ROAP staff found the CERF secretariat very open to informal conversations about the data available at country level, what would be acceptable in an application and to providing guidance on the amount of funding likely to be available. This was helpful in expediting the application process in Mongolia particularly.

ROAP has built information about CERF and resource mobilisation into the workshops that it conducts in the region on contingency planning and disaster preparedness. This is part of outlining the response tools available to actors. However, as one interviewee pointed out, it is difficult for people to understand details such as the life-saving criteria until they deal with the practicalities of putting together a proposal. In small countries, such as Viet Nam and Mongolia, agencies are unlikely to have proposal writers in their teams and this increases the need for support.

There was a view that, within the Asia region more broadly, UN agencies found it easier to apply to the CERF than to other donors because it did not require a public declaration of emergency or for the government to request international assistance (simply to welcome it when offered). Agencies also appreciated CERF funding because it enabled them to start programmes that could then be funded by other donors.

In Viet Nam, government departments that implemented CERF projects had found it a useful source of funding. As Viet Nam and other countries in Asia move towards Middle-Income Country (MIC) status and development donors reduce their engagement, CERF is very attractive. However, there was a lack of understanding about CERF's mandate, leading to unrealistic expectations about additional funding for longer-term projects or the possibility of CERF responding to the many small-scale emergencies that Viet Nam experiences. This highlights the need to provide clear information about the role and remit of CERF to implementing partners and government counterparts. This is particularly important to help the government to situate CERF in the broader disaster financing landscape that the World Bank is helping it to develop. As it is receiving less Official Development Assistance (ODA), the

[17] It was helpful that the secretariat had trained ROAP staff during its training session in Asia in 2015 because this meant that a number of staff were able to support countries in the region during 2016. One interviewee suggested that the secretariat could have regional focal points as well as focal points for the RR and UFE windows to support OCHA regional offices with CERF processes as they would have better knowledge of the specificities of each region.

government is exploring mechanisms like public asset insurance (to finance the post-disaster reconstruction of public assets) and social safety nets.

3.1.3. Effectiveness of CERF

Timeliness and effectiveness

The Viet Nam Emergency Response Plan (ERP) 2016/17 identified late 2014 as the onset of the drought. The government distributed rice in 2015 (CERF concept note v.1) but there was no major response to the drought till several provinces declared emergencies in early 2016. The RC/HC CERF report identified the peak of the drought as Feb-May 2016, when an estimated 2 million people did not have access to water for consumption and domestic use, 1.1 million were food insecure, and more than 1.75 million people lost incomes due to damaged or lost livelihoods. By the time CERF funding arrived at the end of May, the peak of the drought had passed. Rains arrived in the Central Highlands and Mekong Delta areas in June-July, leading to flooding in some of the previously drought-affected provinces.

The OCHA ROAP mission report (2017) identifies delays even after agencies received CERF funds. The Disaster Law of 2014 and the 2016 Decree treats emergency funding as ODA. This requires incoming international funds (for projects over $2 million) to be routed either through the Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) or through an NGO with a permit to work in the intervention area. Otherwise, the funds require the submission of a detailed project outline and a lengthy clearance process. Since UNICEF presented its entire response as one $4 million project, it took three months for it to establish a new project (though this was still faster than the usual 6-7 month process).

Some agencies such as FAO and UNDP took steps to ensure a faster response. For example, both agencies divided CERF funds into smaller amounts to go under the cap for new projects and UNDP partnered with both the VNRC and INGOs for delivery. This speeded up disbursement and the start-up of activities (OCHA ROAP mission report).[18] UNDP also received support from its regional office to fast-track procurement so this only took three weeks. UN Women was able to complete its distribution of hygiene kits within two months of receiving CERF funding because it procured them locally. Nevertheless, according to the RC/HC CERF report the distribution of relief items to affected populations began during July; three and a half months after the government officially requested international assistance.

While it would have been helpful if CERF funding arrived before the peak of the drought, recipient agencies in Viet Nam argued that the funding was still useful in providing support to the most vulnerable households. Some interviewees pointed out that the overall response was late because all actors were slow to recognise the severity of the crisis. Government departments that implemented CERF projects also stated that CERF-funded assistance was valuable and appreciated.[19] A few interviewees and the RC/HC CERF report noted that greater flexibility to adapt CERF-funded programmes to the onset of rains and flooding would have been helpful.[20]

In Mongolia as well, the RC/HC CERF report identified that the overall response was late (the government conducted its assessment when a significant proportion of the country was experiencing Dzud or Dzud-like conditions). As mentioned in section 3.1.2, the decision to apply to CERF was also delayed because the government did not declare an emergency, although FAO used the option of an

[18] It is easier for NGOs to set up projects and partnerships in new areas, although they still require clearance and agreement from local government officials. After facing challenges with starting activities in the Central Highlands in 2009, Oxfam has ensured that it has MoUs with local authorities in place as part of its preparedness activities.

[19] The government entity that implemented the FAO project noted that the urea fertilizer arrived later than other items distributed because FAO's international procurement took time. A lesson learned was to use national procurement in future, if possible.

[20] By contrast, OFDA allowed partners to choose a number of provinces. Then, if they received last-minute funds from other donors to target specific provinces, they had the flexibility to use OFDA funds elsewhere. This also avoided concentrating OFDA funds in the provinces that received a lot of donor attention.

early start date for projects to enable it to backdate the start of its response to 1 March 2016, two weeks before the CERF secretariat disbursed funds. As in Viet Nam, CERF was amongst the earliest international funding for the response and the RC/HC's CERF report emphasised that it responded to critical needs. The report from a 'light review' workshop noted that agencies had largely completed project implementation by the end of June, just over three months after the CERF application was approved.

Although CERF funding to Viet Nam increased coordination between UN agencies, a couple of interviewees noted that assistance should have been better coordinated at provincial level. Also, since UN agency procurement procedures took different amounts of time, assistance to the same areas arrived at different times.

Complementing funding from other donors

In Viet Nam, agencies provided examples of using CERF and other donor funding in a complementary way. For example, FAO used ECHO funding for a cash and voucher programme to complement CERF-funded in-kind agricultural input distributions and training for farmers. FAO monitoring visits found that beneficiaries appreciated the mix of cash, in-kind assistance and training. UN Women used funding from the Korean Government to expand its CERF-funded activities to other areas. UNICEF combined CERF and Government of Japan funding for its WASH response, distributing water treatment tablets procured with funding from both donors. UNICEF's government partners for the CERF-funded WASH project also highlighted that they replicated their activities in additional provinces with funding from other donors such as the Asian Development Bank. Thus, other donor funding complemented CERF projects at different levels.

In development-oriented contexts like Viet Nam CERF funds are likely to complement development funding as well as other humanitarian funding. For example, CERF funding to UNDP linked to its existing Green Climate Fund project. Also, based on gaps identified when monitoring the CERF-funded project, UNDP is developing recovery and longer-term projects. Some organisations are likely to have flexibility to re-programme funding from ongoing projects. [21] For example, UN Women was able to reallocate some funding from an ongoing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) project financed by the government of Luxembourg since one of the five provinces covered by the project was affected by drought. INGOs like World Vision, Save the Children and Oxfam have this capability as well as access to internal emergency funding mechanisms. In Mongolia, as well, NGOs were able to re-programme some of their existing programme funding. Also, the World Bank has piloted an insurance scheme for herders (although uptake has been modest because herders are often too poor to prioritise insurance until they face an emergency). The FTS is unlikely to capture this funding so UN agencies applying to CERF need to access information about the broader financing landscape in country through coordination mechanisms (such as the Disaster Management Working Group in Viet Nam).

Working with local response mechanisms

The RC/HC CERF report from Viet Nam highlights that UN agencies used CERF funding to complement the government's emergency response, particularly to ensure that the most vulnerable households could access water and other assistance provided by the government. For example, FAO complemented the government's food distributions by providing seeds, agricultural inputs, training, and extension services to improve food security. WHO's project focused on the Commune Health Stations that are the first providers of health care services in Viet Nam and also used the government's Early Warning Alert and Response Network system.

In Mongolia, too, CERF recipient agencies worked with local authorities on prioritisation and for the delivery of assistance. CERF projects complemented the government's assistance to local authorities by targeting assistance to households.

[21] The World Bank identified projects where it could make adjustments to support the drought response but, unfortunately, government systems did not the required flexibility to enable this.

Although the Red Cross is the main government partner for disaster response in Viet Nam, interviewees from the Movement argued that it had been excluded from discussions around the emergency response plan and it was difficult to get updates on the use of funding for the UN appeal and programme implementation. However, UNDP worked with the VNRC as an implementing partner for its CERF project.

3.1.4. Added value of CERF

CERF's added value

In Viet Nam, CERF funding clearly strengthened coordination between UN agencies and with government counterparts. According to the RC/HC's report, it helped to apply the 'Delivering as One' approach in the humanitarian field by "facilitating joint programming, implementation, development of IEC materials, monitoring and learning building on different agencies' humanitarian expertise and resources, and through an instrumental role of the RC/HC Office" (pp. 10-11). One UN interviewee felt that the CERF application brought a degree of rigour to the response planning that was helpful in a context where UN agencies were not experienced in emergency response.

The RC/HC CERF report on CERF funding to Mongolia outlines how CERF funding strengthened coordination at both national and local levels as well as collaboration between UN agencies, INGOs and government entities. CERF funding also led the food and nutrition clusters to deliver assistance jointly, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the response.

Government entities that implemented CERF-funded projects in Viet Nam highlighted that the experience had strengthened their ways of working in the areas of planning, monitoring and accountability to affected populations. For WASH activities, there was a joint planning workshop between UNICEF, national level Ministries and provincial governments, which helped each province to develop a clear response plan. With UNICEF support, the government entities also established feedback and complaints mechanisms that they found to be a useful lesson for future government responses. Rather than monitoring CERF projects only, UN agencies worked with other actors (including the government) to monitor the whole emergency response in two provinces. UN Women believed that CERF funding enabled it to highlight the need for support to women with the government (including the need for gender-disaggregated data) and to raise awareness of gender amongst local authorities. The government generally does a blanket distribution of aid but, due to the scale of the emergency in 2016, they realised that they needed to target their assistance and CERF criteria were a helpful basis for the discussion around targeting.

A number of interviewees noted that CERF funding gave UN agencies credibility vis-à-vis the government because they brought resources to the table. One argued that CERF funding gave UN agencies a convening role that the government appreciated so it was more willing to attend meetings and to share information.

A UN interviewee pointed out that this was the first time that the UN had been asked to undertake an emergency response in Viet Nam so CERF funding was important in helping agencies to start activities. WHO argued that it would not have been able to secure the same level of funding from another donor and, therefore, without CERF funding, its response would have been ad hoc rather than structured. Similarly, the National Institute for Nutrition noted that CERF funding enabled it to scale up its activities to support six provinces rather than one or two, as it does each year, and that CERF was the only donor to fund emergency nutrition activities.

CERF's comparative advantage

Interviewees noted that one of the advantages of CERF over funding from some other donors is that it does not need a formal government request to trigger an application. This is particularly useful in cases where governments are reluctant to declare an emergency. It also gives CERF the flexibility to respond early in a slow onset emergency and can "break the waiting game of other actors".

MICs like Viet Nam tend not to be on the radar of humanitarian donors so a CERF allocation both

enables a response and can draw attention to an emergency. UN interviewees believed that since CERF funding arrived earlier than other international funding, it supported their advocacy efforts and prompted other donors to provide emergency funding.

Interviewees from the Red Cross Movement argued that it is difficult to mobilise funding for slow onset emergencies from the general public as well as institutional donors, particularly when there are other high-profile emergencies competing for their attention. Therefore, CERF, which is needs based rather than driven by media coverage, is an important funding source for such emergencies.

Leveraging additional funding

The RC/HC's CERF report on CERF funding to Viet Nam argues that the ERP and CERF funding were "instrumental in highlighting the severity and magnitude of the drought" and the humanitarian system was able to mobilise up to 54% of the funding required from a number of institutional donors between June and October 2016. It stated, "CERF funds clearly provided seed resources for improvement of resource mobilization from other sources" (pg. 10). A number of interviewees supported this, noting that CERF funding acted as an impetus for donors to take the ERP more seriously and provide funding. However, a donor interviewee maintained that his agency's decision to provide funding to Viet Nam was based on the analysis of meteorologists and forecasters, as well as an internal assessment, rather than the CERF allocation.

In Mongolia, UN agencies held meetings with donors in country to mobilise additional funding. One interviewee argued that the CERF funding facilitated funding decisions from other development and humanitarian actors because, in the absence of a government emergency declaration, they could use the UN's needs assessment and CERF funding to justify their funding decisions. As a result, the international response supported 45% of the most urgent needs identified by the UN. When a donor questioned the request for support when the government had not formally declared an emergency and not a lot of livestock had died, the agencies could use CERF funding to highlight the severity of the situation.

Value of larger or additional allocations

CERF's RR funding guidelines state that CERF should 'jump-start' rather than fully fund projects (CERF cannot fund 100% of project requirements, except in rare circumstances). Based on this guidance, as noted in section 3.1.2, the level of funding to Viet Nam was appropriate. Also, due to the government's ODA procedures, if individual projects had received $1 million or more in CERF funding, they would have faced the lengthy project approval procedures that UNICEF had to undergo, leading to significant delays in starting activities.

The CERF allocation to Mongolia was also at an appropriate level since the combination of CERF and other funding covered 60-70% of humanitarian needs in key sectors. The CERF allocation for the 2016-17 Dzud was half of what Mongolia received in 2016 but it was deemed adequate and again helped to leverage additional funding.

In terms of additional funding, if CERF had responded to the drought in Viet Nam at its onset in late 2014, a further allocation as the situation deepened in 2016 would have been appropriate. Since CERF funding arrived after the peak of the drought and at the onset of rains in 2016, there was limited evidence that additional allocations would have added value to the response. For example, a government representative argued that it would have been helpful to have additional funding for the FAO project. The project covered only one crop season and, in his view, at least another crop season was required to embed changes in farming practice. At the time of the CERF project, FAO had not completed its in-depth market assessment, so it used CERF funds for in-kind assistance.[22] One interviewee felt that further CERF funding would have enabled it to provide additional cash assistance (although FAO used ECHO funding to provide cash and vouchers). Another UN agency interviewee also

[22] As part of the contingency planning process in August 2017, OCHA ROAP was supporting agencies with increasing capacity for assessing market conditions during needs assessments and with learning from regional cash groups.

noted that needs changed during the implementation of CERF-funded projects, with affected populations requesting cash assistance for livelihoods rather than water. As a result, there were some gaps in the overall humanitarian response. However, these did not appear to be severe enough to warrant further CERF funding.

3.2. The Pacific

In the Pacific, CERF funded two countries which were categorised as El Niño responses during 2015-16. PNG received funding for a drought (and frost damage in the highlands) and Fiji for the response to Category 5 cyclone Winston. Since the vast majority of CERF funding was allocated to drought emergencies, Fiji was an outlier in CERF's El Niño funding envelope since it was the only cyclone included. As described in the Methodology section, apart from the CERF allocation, another important reason for including Fiji in the field visit was because of its regional role, which, in addition to reviewing use of CERF funds for the cyclone response, also provided the team with a comparative regional perspective.

3.2.1. Regional context

The OCHA regional office in the Pacific issued an update in June 2015 warning that El Niño is predicted by climate models to be a major event, potentially more severe than in 1997-1998, the strongest on record.[23] Historical data led to predictions that impacts in the form of severe drought, rainfall and cyclones of higher than usual intensity would occur within the region (Figure 5). Risks associated with these extreme weather events included heightened risk of certain vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever due to abundance of mosquitoes and decreased immunity due to under-nutrition.

Figure 5 Anticipated Impacts of El Niño in the Pacific[24]

There were marked differences in national contexts and capacities. As an illustration, the Fijian government was able to have a reasonably comprehensive assessment of needs within 48 hours, whereas in PNG there were reported to be significant capacity gaps while conducting the comprehensive needs assessment due to a combination of lack of data, capacity and physical difficulties in accessing much of the affected population. The PNG Government undertook a country-

[23] OCHA (2015) Update: El Niño in the Pacific (as of 9 June 2015)
[24] ibid (adapted)

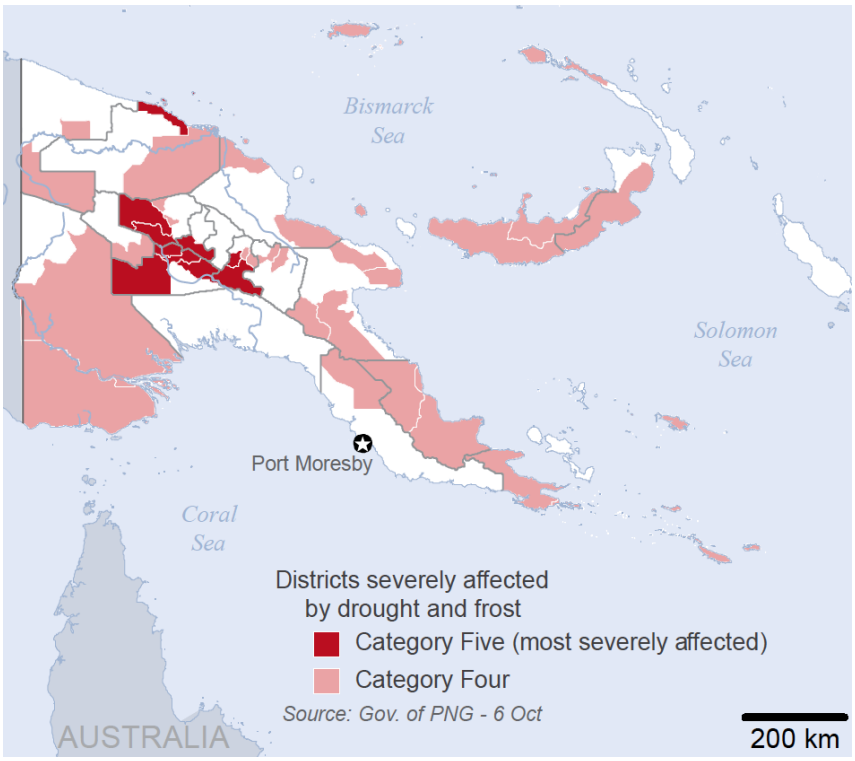
wide needs assessment during August-September in 2015 but was only able to share the findings two months afterwards.

While response capacities and disaster types were very different between the two countries, there was nevertheless a certain level of distrust by both governments regarding the international community. Based on key informant interviews and dialogues during the "Pacific Resilience Week" conference in October 2017,[25] this mistrust can be seen in other countries in the Pacific region, which can be attributed to an extent to the international response to cyclone Pam during 2015 when, as one agency representative who had been deployed to Vanuatu described; "*…International aid agencies, donors, and the United Nations swept in, bringing their own systems and ways of doing things. For Pacific Islanders in the aid community…it was a watershed moment that shaped how subsequent disasters have been managed*."[26] The theme chosen for the 2017 Pacific Humanitarian Partnership meeting was "Localisation of the Response" and a recurring topic during the three days of discussion was the importance of pre-existing relationships between Pacific Islanders and international actors as part of disaster preparedness when responding to disasters.

Papua New Guinea

The last El Niño experienced in PNG was in 1997 and 1998 when it was estimated that 40% of the population was seriously affected. Surveys carried out in November-December 1997 found people in life threatening food security situations and water scarcity had also been a problem.[27] Early warning signals of the El Niño event in 2015-2016 were already evident during May 2015, with evidence of significant humanitarian impacts emerging in July 2015 when the PNG government activated its Emergency Operation Centre. The Highlands region was the worst affected, with agriculture production impacted not only by the drought, but also in many areas by frost (Figure 6).

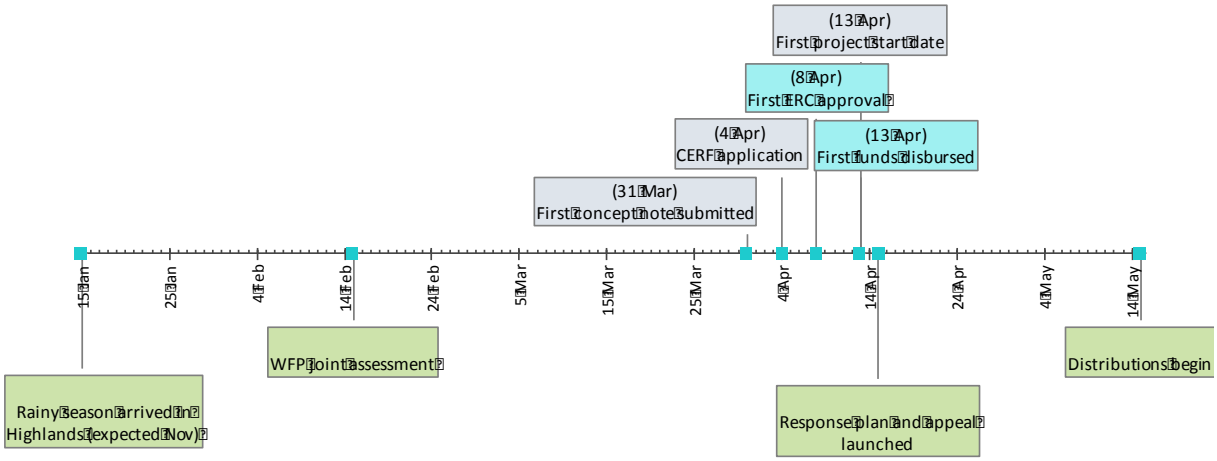
Figure 6 Districts in Papua New Guinea most affected by El Niño as of January 2016



[25] http://pacifichumanitarian.net/
[26] Quote from the Head of the Fiji Red Cross, from Loy, Irwin (2017) Aid reform in the Pacific held up by power, purse strings, and trust. IRIN. http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/259951
[27] WFP (2016) ibid

Despite the relatively recent 1997–98 El Niño event in PNG, and the national and international response to it, there was little practical or easily accessible information available. As the crisis unfolded, it became clear that a major challenge for the response in 2015–16 was few lessons learnt from 1997–98 had been institutionalised, with many organisations relying heavily on a handful of people with previous experience.[28]

Figure 7 Timeline of PNG response*



*Note that the National Emergency Operations Centre was activated on 31st July 2016.

Fiji

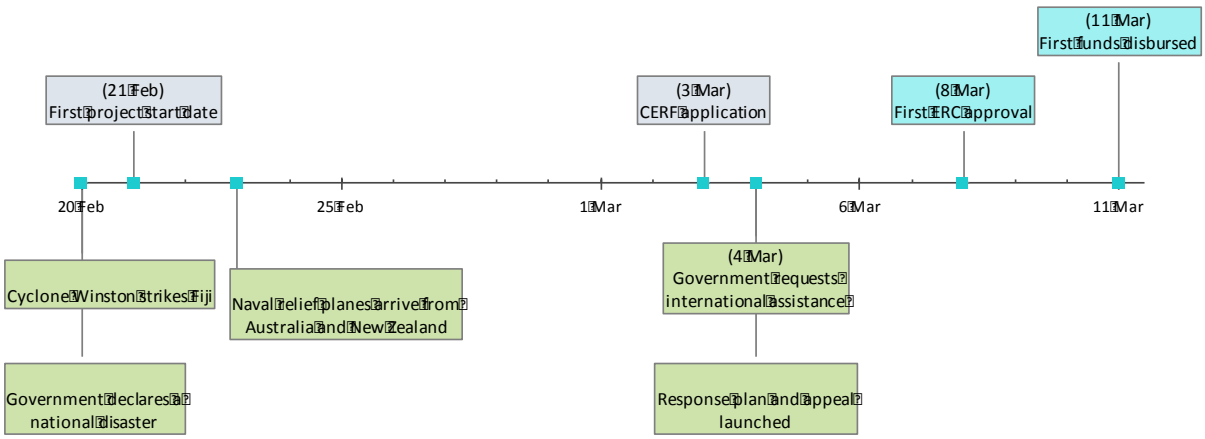
The El Niño episode during 2015-2016 was notable as several elevated climate indicators appeared to be affecting the frequency, intensity, and global geographic distribution of Tropical Cyclones (TC).[29] TC Winston was the first Category 5 cyclone on record to directly impact Fiji and, with sustained winds of 300 km., was the most intense cyclone recorded that affected the South Pacific.[30] Fiji's Eastern Division was the first to be struck during the evening of 19 February 2016, with Koro, Ovalau and Taveuni Islands sustaining severe damage and leaving tens of thousands homeless (Figure 8).[31] Cyclone-related losses were estimated at US$ 1.38 billion (31 percent of GDP).[32]

[28] Kanua, M.B. *et al*. (2016) Assessing village food needs following a natural disaster in Papua New Guinea
[29] Shultz, JM et al. (2015) Tropical cyclones in a year of rising global temperatures and a strengthening El Niño
[30] OCHA (2016b) Fiji: Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston: Situation Report No. 8 (as of 28 February 2016)
[31] Government of Fiji (2016) Fiji: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, May 2016 - Tropical Cyclone Winston
[32] Government of Fiji and WFP (2016) TC Winston - Joint Emergency Response Lessons Learned Workshop Report.

Figure 8 Path of Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Winston

Source: OCHA

Figure 9 Timeline of Fiji response



3.2.2. Appropriateness of CERF

Timing, scale and mandate of CERF funding

This section focuses on findings related to the timing and scale of CERF funding to PNG and Fiji (and the factors that influence this) since these were more relevant in these two countries than the CERF mandate. Issues relating to scale are also covered in following sections.

Papua New Guinea

The crisis occurred during the period leading up to national elections held during June 2017. The extent of humanitarian impacts of El Niño was unclear and varied according to location and the PNG government did not request external assistance. The Government relied on a decentralised response and authorised approximately PGK 200 million (US$ 64 million) to response efforts, with most of the funding being made available during late 2015. Of this, PGK 178 million (US$ 56 million) was implemented where each of the country's 89 districts was authorised to spend up to PGK 2 million (approximately US$ 630,000) of District Services Improvement Programme (DSIP) allocations for

drought relief. The Government separately allocated PGK 5 million (approximately US$ 1.6 million) in relief funds to the National Disaster Centre, the main government body responsible for managing disaster relief while a remaining PGK 20 million (US$ 6.3 million) was directly managed by the Prime Minister's Office. In addition, the Government formally authorised each of the country's 89 districts to spend up to PGK 2 million (approximately US$ 600,000) of DSIP allocations for drought relief. Although assessment data was lacking, there was a general feeling that this amount was insufficient to cover needs. However, there was no systematic tracking of relief goods together with the high costs of transporting food to remote areas and fears that aid was being politicised[33] indicated that it was difficult to ensure drought relief was prioritised according to vulnerability.[34]

From January–February 2016, the National Disaster Centre (NDC), supported by WFP, conducted a mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) assessment to determine the food security conditions across the country. The assessment included interviews of 3,708 people through a mobile operator. All Local Level Governments experiencing severe or extreme drought conditions as per the 2015 government assessment were included.

Delays in agreeing on needs, requesting CERF (including justifying the high operational costs), lack of awareness about CERF amongst UN agencies and lead times in arranging assistance delivery meant that CERF proposal was only submitted during April 2016 so that the first food distributions only took place in May 2016. This was a year after early warning signals had been registered and 8 months after the situation in the highlands region of PNG had become serious. It was also after rains had resumed and the first harvests of short season crops had already started.

Fiji

Fiji was the only quick-onset disaster amongst the sampled countries and the only tropical cyclone event amongst countries receiving CERF funding for the El Niño crisis. The government received approximately US$35 million in international humanitarian assistance for TC Winston. Of the total US$35 million, US$21.5 million counted as contributions against the UN Flash Appeal, of which CERF funding accounted for just over 37 percent. Of the total funding received under the Flash Appeal, approximately 60 percent went to projects implemented by the government.[35] CERF was one of the first available sources of funding for UN agencies and clusters.

Initial rapid assessments were mostly carried out by government departments, with support from the Fiji Red Cross. Fiji Military Forces were mobilized and were supported by sea and air lift capability provided by the Australia and New Zealand Defence Forces. Recipient agencies, notably UNICEF and WHO, who both participated in Fiji Inter Cluster Coordination and had long-standing relationships with counterpart government ministries tended to have better access to comprehensive assessment information. A UN-led assessment was carried out with support from the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the results were shared with Fiji's NDMO to ensure the coordination of data collected from field assessments to inform the ongoing relief phase.

Processes and strategy application

Papua New Guinea

UN agencies in PNG were not in the best position to support an effective response to the El Niño crisis. Although OCHA maintained a permanent presence during 2006-2015, UN agencies in the country had been mainly focusing on development programmes and interviews identifies a relatively low awareness amongst UN staff about CERF. OCHA closed their office in mid-2015 due to budgetary constraints even as El Niño early warning systems were sounding the alarm leaving the UN's RC and his staff to lead CERF processes. The RC helped to highlight the scale of the problem through the media

[33] Wiltshire, C. and Oppermann, T.C. (2016) Politicising drought relief in Papua New Guinea
[34] PNG National Disaster Centre *et al.* (2017)
[35] Financial Tracking Service https://fts.unocha.org/ (as of February 2017)

and other fora that subsequently helped in securing agreement from the former Minister of Planning for CERF funding to be used for the response.

WFP did not have an established country agreement with the Government or a permanent country presence. Once the findings of the mVAM assessment emerged in March 2016, the UN RC negotiated with the Government to issue a formal letter through the NDC allowing for a WFP operation to be implemented even though the government had still not made a formal request for international assistance to support the El Niño drought response. The UN RC and his staff were subsequently able to formerly convene UNICEF, WFP, FAO, NGOs and church partners and donors to support PNG National Disaster Centre's response to El Niño with integrated food and nutrition security interventions in close cooperation with provisional provincial administrations. The two agencies receiving CERF funding, WFP and UNICEF, worked through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and interagency partners who were members of the Disaster Management Team (DMT), co-chaired by the NDC director and RC and the NDC.[36] In the absence of a formal government request and subsequent reluctance by donors to support UN interventions, CERF proved to be a key support for both WFP and UNICEF involvement in the response which eventually led to additional funding from other donors.

Fiji

The Fijian Government quickly took on an overall leadership and coordination role for the TC Winston response. As in PNG, there were gaps in preparedness planning and relationship building with government counterparts as part of preparedness planning by UN agencies. The exception was UNICEF and WHO, who were able to engage early on with their respective government counterparts. The lack of pre-existing relationships affected the effectiveness of the response and some government interviewees felt there were gaps in coordination with UN agencies which resulted in a parallel response. Most UN agencies felt they could have significantly improved their performance if they had better access to government assessment data and had defined a clearer modus operandi with government as part of preparedness planning. UN Women made effective use of pre-existing relationships with civil society where, in some cases, CERF was virtually their only source of funding to address protection issues. Even so, according to interviewees, it took three months to complete a protection and safety assessment.

Knowledge of CERF's role, remit, procedures and added value as a humanitarian financing tool

This was the first CERF allocation for either country. In PNG, there had been little awareness of CERF amongst UN staff and the OCHA staff member deployed to PNG to support the process was perceived to have provided invaluable support. In Fiji, there appeared to be much more awareness of CERF and its functioning amongst UN staff. Once again, however, OCHA played a key support role for the HCT during CERF-related processes. The total process for Fiji took almost two weeks after the cyclone struck (21 February-8 March) with agencies submitting their application for CERF funding after 10 days (3 March). Projects had early start dates of 21 February these delays were not identified as a problem by recipient agencies.

3.2.3. Effectiveness of CERF

Timeliness and effectiveness

In both countries, the timing of the response (for which CERF provided most of the initial funding) was delayed for most recipient agencies with the exception of interventions by UNICEF and WHO in Fiji. As described above, both of these agencies benefited from pre-existing partnerships with government departments to mobilise a relatively rapid and effective response. The other agencies needed time to build relationships with governments and other humanitarian actors. WFP had no permanent presence

[36] WFP (2016) Food Assistance to El- Niño Affected Populations in Papua New Guinea

In PNG prior to the crisis and had only established a small office in Suva staffed by a logistician a few weeks before Winston struck.

WFP was the main recipient of CERF funding (approximately 25% and 85% in Fiji and PNG respectively) for food assistance but they were challenged in both countries by the absence of preparedness plans and a pre-existing network.

Papua New Guinea

WFP initially targeted the Highlands region in PNG using CERF funding, which proved to be a very challenging operating environment due to a combination of security risks, complex cultural issues and formidable logistics obstacles that in some areas doubled or even tripled the cost of food aid delivered.

There were a number of factors that undermined the effectiveness of the CERF allocation in PNG, notably lack of consensus about the scale of needs prior to March 2016 and the related unwillingness of the government to request international assistance. Another gap identified at a local level by government officials was that there was little useful or easily accessible guidance for local government staff to help them respond to the disaster. A major challenge was that few lessons learnt from 1997–98 had been institutionalised, with organisations relying heavily on a few individuals with relevant experience.[37] Early warning systems were put in place after the previous El Niño episode during the 1990s, but these early warning signals reportedly did not translate into early action. Another challenge faced was that there was relatively little data available for international agencies regarding the food security situation or security risk assessments in the Highlands. The availability of disaggregated data, and disaggregated vulnerability-related data in particular, was reported to be relatively limited in PNG. The government eventually shared their assessment reports with the international community in October 2015, but it was not sufficiently detailed to support a robust CERF application to guide a well-targeted response.[38]

WFP conducted a limited assessment after credible reports emerged of people dying from malnutrition and hunger from July 2015 onwards. In November 2015, a senior WFP representative visiting PNG reported to the NDC that he would recommend to the Regional Office in Bangkok the provision of emergency food aid for 300,000 persons, including tinned fish which was being requested by communities, although this did not eventuate.[39] Instead, WFP in consultation with the NDC, conducted a mobile Vulnerability and Mapping (mVAM) survey of Local Level Government areas categorised as 3, 4 and 5 by the Government's 2015 assessment that took place during January - February 2016. Over 3,000 people were interviewed by phone from Port Moresby and the results were made available in late March 2016. WFP subsequently reported that 1.31 million people were experiencing "high food insecurity impact" and that 223,700 people were experiencing "severe food security impact" and required immediate food aid. The latter included 162,000 people in Hela, Enga and Chimbu in the Highlands. WFP's survey found that areas most affected matched with El Niño predictions and was sufficiently serious to justify an emergency food aid operation.[40]

Although the PNG government continued to be reluctant to formally request assistance from the international community, they indicated a tacit agreement for the UN to intervene. The combination of a credible assessment, a more receptive government and advocacy efforts by UN agencies helped to increase donor funding. WFP signed contracts with contactors and with implementing partners for CERF-funded projects in the Highlands, but these were not based on an operational plan since it wasn't yet clear where the priority needs actually were. Distributions of rice started in May 2016, a year after early warning signals had been flagged in PNG after harvests of short season crops had already begun.

[37] IOD Parc (2017) Evaluation of Australia's response to El Niño Drought and Frosts in PNG 2015
[38] Kanua, M.B. et al. (2016) Assessing village food needs following a natural disaster in Papua New Guinea
[39] IOD Parc (2017) Evaluation of Australia's response to El Niño Drought and Frosts in PNG 2015
[40] ibid

PNG is a challenging operating environment for agencies due to a combination of a complex cultural environment, relatively low human development index[41] and, difficulty of access. WFP sent in a surge team and, based on interviews, team members struggled with the complex operating environment. The first team deployed had to be medevacked after contracting dengue a soon after their arrival, which increased staff turnover and contributed to further delays in delivery. WFP had no pre-qualified contractors in PNG, which also imposed challenges.

Although Nutrition Cluster members and beneficiaries reportedly requested a varied food basket, WFP only provided a rice ration. WFP reviewed various modality options but, in the end, decided to only distribute rice instead of a balanced food basket so as to be aligned with other donors, notably the PNG government. WFP discussed cash transfers as an option but decided against it due to a combination of factors including lack of experience with cash transfers in the country, difficulties in accessing markets by remote populations and donor resistance due to concerns about its potential negative impacts on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Two interviewees reported rice being transported back down the Highlands Highway and sold although a WFP interviewee claimed that selling had been minimal. WFP did not carry out any post-distribution monitoring and, since there was no project site visit included in the PNG review, it was not possible to estimate how much rice had actually been sold.

In August 2016, CARE withdrew early from the partnership agreement with WFP citing concerns about staff security. Interviewees from partners and other stakeholders felt that, while WFP's systematic approach to assessment and organising distributions had been helpful, WFP's lack of transparency and inexperience of working in PNG together with time pressures contributed to difficult working relationships. With decades of experience of working in the Highlands region of PNG, their active participation in food security and humanitarian actions and pre-existing local networks, CARE should have been a useful partner for WFP to help compensate for their lack of experience in PNG with its cultural complexities. However, a combination of internal management problems within CARE, the complex operating environment and nature of the relationship with WFP led to a situation where their staff were directly threated by communities they decided to suspend operations.[42] Despite being without a cooperating partner during August 2016, WFP decided to implement distributions directly to reach the Highlands populations that had been targeted. WFP completed the direct distribution more quickly than planned and under budget, achieved by reducing the ration size and dropping one targeted area (Hela) due to a combination of security concerns and a judgement that food availability was satisfactory since harvests had already begun.

CERF funding enabled UNICEF to reinforce ongoing capacity building for provincial government staff to screen for malnutrition, by targeting high risk areas and focusing on an emergency response. Prior to this El Niño crisis, there was reportedly no system in place that could trigger an emergency response when screening for malnutrition and CERF funding provided a way to promote this. A nutrition in emergencies package of staff training, procurement and transport of supplies, and programme monitoring on Nutrition in Emergency (NiE) had to be established by UNICEF in order to carry out a management of severe acute malnutrition to avoid excess morbidity and mortality. A specific area of technical capacity gap was the absence of an effective public health nutrition programme and trained nutritionists. This meant that health personnel needed more in-depth training than merely nutrition in emergencies training. Another challenge faced by UNICEF was that operational costs, including logistics costs, are extremely high in PNG and UNICEF staff found it time-consuming to convince the CERF secretariat to allocate sufficient resources to help cover these costs.

Although OCHA had closed their office in July 2015, leadership and coordination by the Resident Coordinator supported by an Adviser with a humanitarian background financed by the Australian Government together with periodic support from OCHA's regional office in Bangkok, was seen as

[41] PNG ranked 154 in 2015 with a value of 0.516 http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PNG
[42] CARE International (2016) After Action Review for CARE Papua New Guinea's Response to the 2015-2016 El Niño Drought

effective by interviewees from international agencies. Recipient agencies found the UN Resident Coordinator's office very responsive and supportive in supporting CERF interventions.

Fiji

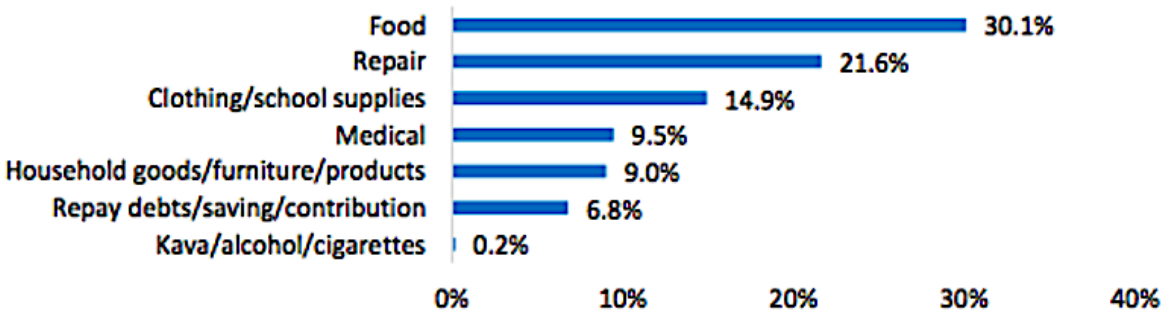
Assistance provided from CERF resources was generally appropriate to need, although in some cases under-utilised[43] since most UN agencies were not widely viewed by government as key partners during a disaster response due to issues described above, notably the lack of pre-existing relationships. UNICEF was an exception, due to its existing relationships with the water authority and Education Department.

The NGO Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was contracted by WFP to assess the progress and performance of the emergency response intervention. A survey using WFPs "Kobo toolbox" software carried out after the intervention found that 84 percent satisfaction rate and an average food consumption score of 66 percent, which was considered acceptable.[44]

Other good practice examples highlighted during interviews included UNICEF's temporary learning centres that facilitated a rapid return to school, WFP's cash-based assistance that supported the government's "top up payments" under their social protection programme (Figure 10) and the quick transfer of funds to UN Women's partners enabled them to conduct protection assessments soon after the cyclone struck.

During discussions during the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership Meeting in Suva in October 2017 it was evident that Pacific countries, including Fiji, had very little experience of cash-based programming in humanitarian responses. Doubts were expressed, notably by government officials, about the appropriateness and effectiveness and cash transfers. Figure 10 below is extracted from an in-depth post-distribution monitoring study commissioned by the World Bank Group of unrestricted cash distributions following TC Winston[45] that indicates that cash was used mainly to meet priority needs. A likely future outcome of CERF's support to WFP's cash intervention following TC Winston is to contribute to the increased use of cash transfer programming in the Pacific.

Figure 10 Use of Top Up Payments to Affected Households



Key informants from both UN agencies and their partners in both countries visited commented on the challenges of working within a 6-month timeframe for slow-onset crisis that requires time to achieve meaningful outcomes.

[43] One example of this was the 7 Mass Storage Units procured by WFP with CERF funding, of which only three were used by the Fiji Disaster Management Office during the response. The others were being moved to different provinces to support disaster preparedness.

[44] Government of Fiji and WFP (2016) TC Winston - Fiji Government & WFP Joint Emergency Response Lessons Learned Workshop Report

[45] Mansur A. *et al.* (2017) Social Protection and Humanitarian Assistance Nexus for Disaster Response: Lessons Learnt from Fiji's Tropical Cyclone Winston. Data includes CERF-funded WFP cash transfers.

Complementing funding from other donors

The most significant external support in both countries came from the Australian government, which already had joint contingency plans in place with the governments.

In PNG, Australia also contributed to the UN Response Plan launched in April 2016. Apart from CERF, other contributions were received from New Zealand, ECHO, USAID and Japan. The PNG government also contributed funding. CERF's contribution amounted to 27% of total contributions to the UN's Response Plan and 22% of the total amount reported to FTS as being allocated for the 2015-2016 overall response to the El Niño crisis.

Fiji was one of a handful of middle-income countries in the sample of countries visited and it is an example of how supporting government's existing social safety net mechanisms are likely to play an increasingly important role in international assistance efforts in future. At the same time, it highlights the need for streamlining systems to provide more timely support during a response. While CERF funding enabled timely transfer of funding to Fiji's Ministry of the Economy, WFP monitoring found that it took at least a month for cash to be distributed to beneficiaries by the Department of Social Welfare and Development after funds had passed through the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of the Economy. WHO's contributions to the Health Ministry took a year before funds were cleared by the Ministry of Economy.[46]

Working with local response mechanisms and safety nets

Papua New Guinea

WFP worked extensively with church-based social networks, which provided the primary social framework of many communities to establish WFP's 'social license' to operate. This relationship allowed WFP and partners to move across impacted areas and provide beneficiaries with information on the general distributions before they took place. Other international humanitarian actors similarly found that working with the church network was a critical element of a successful intervention.[47] The implementing partners for UNICEF were the provincial health departments and faith-based health services. These partnerships continued in a recovery and development programme after the response phase. The response by both recipient agencies was most effective where sub-national disaster management by both Government and partners was the strongest.

Fiji

WFP in Fiji provided a good practice example of modalities selection to maximise effectiveness of local response by identifying a mechanism for channelling cash transfers based on a rapid assessment. WFP's assessment found that loss of assets and livelihoods due to TC Winston had vastly increased the number of people who fell below the poverty threshold. WFP proceeded with signing an agreement with the government to supplement the existing safety net system managed by the Department of Social Welfare to help cover the increased numbers. WFP delivered a total of US$ 2.3 million in cash via beneficiary bank accounts, through additional food vouchers or by increasing the value of existing government vouchers for two months. Values were calculated based on a basic nutritious food basket that would provide 2,100 kcal per person per day, additionally meeting daily protein and fat requirements. The approach was reported to have worked well except that there was about a month's delay in WFP funds reaching beneficiaries due to challenges with synchronising payments with government systems.

[46] OCHA (2017) TC Winston One Year Anniversary OCHA Field Visit Internal Report
[47] IOD Parc (2017) Evaluation of Australia's response to El Niño Drought and Frosts in PNG 2015-17

The only CERF recipient that worked extensively with local non-governmental organisations was UN Women, who channelled the bulk of resources through local NGOs. Other UN agencies worked mainly with government counterparts.

3.2.4. Added value of CERF

This was the first experience with CERF in both PNG and in Fiji, and the allocation created awareness amongst several UN agencies and governments of CERF's potential added-value. In PNG, the delays in mobilising interventions, a limited food basket along with challenges of targeting in a data-poor environment made it difficult to assess the humanitarian impact on affected populations. An evaluation commissioned by the Australian government noted that it was fortunate, given the delayed international response, that the affected population was more resilient than had been implied by the original forecasts and assessments, although the scale of mortality due to the effect of El Niño is likely to continue to be the subject of debate.[48] A comparison of WFP's mVAM assessments before and after the project showed that the percentage of communities facing extreme shortages or having no food dropped from 26 percent to only one percent and 50 percent of households suffering from hunger dropped to two percent by the end of the project.[49] Since distributions were taking place after harvests of short cycle crops had already started, it could be assumed that CERF contributed to an overall improvement in the food security situation. The learning and experience gained from the CERF-funded operations in the Highlands helped WFP to improve subsequent operations in other Western and Milne Bay provinces that were funded by other donors.

CERF provided clear value added in both countries by strengthening UN coordination and facilitating a coherent response. It also helped to kick start the responses by the UN system. Other examples of value-added included learning that is likely to increase resilience of local capacities, including potential use of social safety net systems for channelling external aid in Fiji and food security assessment and targeting systems in PNG. and food security assessment and targeting systems in PNG. CERF also helped UNICEF to scale up and extend its malnutrition interventions with local governments, which raised the awareness, motivation and capacity to screen and treat for acute malnutrition. In PNG, nearly 20,000 children were screened in Hela and Enga provinces and acute malnutrition cases identified were treated.

CERF's comparative advantage

CERF provided around 22% of total funding for the El Niño response in PNG during 2015-2016, but it was the only source of funding using an inter-sectoral approach. This provided a useful catalyst for agencies to bring them together to develop a coordinated response plan and contributed to strengthening UN coordination mechanisms, both within the UN and with implementing partners and provincial governments.[50]

Leveraging additional funding

Some donors, notably the Australia government, had already started to provide funding for the El Niño response during the latter part of 2015, mainly through INGOs under its Humanitarian Partnerships Agreement Framework. Based on interviews, CERF was one of the factors that contributed to WFP's decision to begin operations in PNG and they were subsequently able to leverage an additional $5.1m in funding from other donors.

Value of larger or additional allocations

Since the response was initiated relatively late in PNG without the full engagement of the government, CERF funding allocated was not utilised as effectively as it could have been. Other donors, notably the

[48] ibid
[49] WFP (2016) Food Assistance to El- Niño Affected Populations in Papua New Guinea
[50] Key informant interviews, RC/HC CERF Report and CARE (2017) *2015-2016 El Niño Response Papua New Guinea: Gender in Emergencies Lessons Learnt*. September 2017

Australian government, had provided funding for the crisis prior to the CERF allocation and donors continued to fund interventions aimed at unmet needs after CERF-funded interventions ended. At the same time, many key informants felt there had been unmet needs and, if UN agencies had been better prepared, including better assessment and emergency response capacities and pre-existing relationships with government counterparts based on joint contingency planning, additional CERF funding could have been useful. In Fiji, most UN interviewees felt that additional CERF funding would not have been needed.

3.3. Africa

In Africa, CERF funded 11 countries for the El Niño response in 2015-16. This report covers Africa in one section but there were two main regions that received funding – Eastern Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) and Southern Africa (Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe). Although the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) forecast the El Niño in August 2015, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) did not launch an appeal till June 2016 whilst the Regional Inter-agency Standing Committee (RIASCO) for Southern Africa launched its action plan in July 2016 (Chapeyama 2017). There was no regional approach to the El Niño in Eastern Africa.

This section begins by presenting data on the timing and volume of CERF funding. It goes on to outline findings against the first three review questions, drawing on interviews conducted during visits to Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Nairobi (as a regional hub) as well as telephone interviews and on a document review.

3.3.1. Regional context

Three countries in Africa received funding from CERF's UFE window (round II) in 2015. These were Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. It should be noted that the impact of El Niño was not part of the UFE country selection process and not considered by the ERC at the time of his decision; rather the RC/HCs and HCTs in these countries decided to use their UFE grants partially toward El Niño response. Ethiopia received the largest amount of CERF funding for the El Niño response - $25.5 million through two allocations - an UFE allocation of $8.5 million in September 2015 and a RR allocation of $17 million to WFP in October 2015. Somalia also received funding from the RR window - $11 million in April 2016 for six UN agencies.

The timing of CERF funding to Africa ranged from October 2015 (Malawi RR allocation) to April 2016 (when Djibouti, Somalia, Lesotho and Madagascar all received RR allocations) (see Figures 11 and 12 for the timing of allocations to each of the CERF-recipient countries). Malawi and Zimbabwe were the only two countries to apply for RR funding in 2015. CERF selected Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia for grants from the second UFE window allocation in 2015 and they received funding in September-October. Somalia used only a small proportion of its 2015 UFE funding for an El Niño response (to flooding). Based on forecasts, aid agencies expected the El Niño to cause flooding in South-Central Somalia but the main impact was two seasons of drought in Somaliland and Puntland and the UN system applied for CERF RR funding to respond to this in 2016.

The timelines for Zimbabwe and Swaziland below provide an indication of key dates in the emergency and CERF funding process.

Figure 11 Timeline of response in Zimbabwe (April 2014-May 2016)

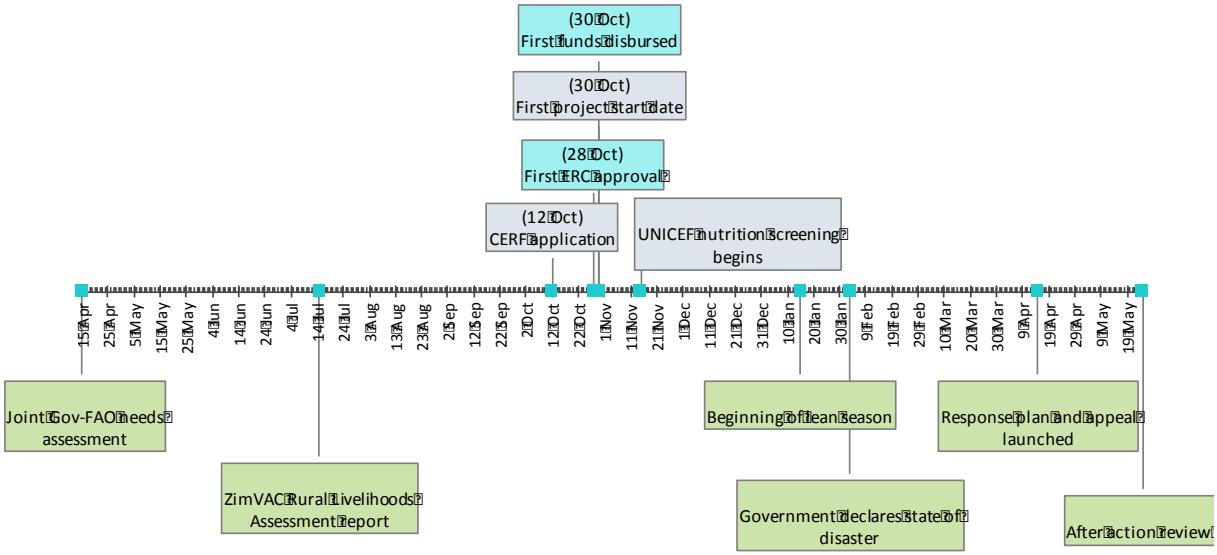
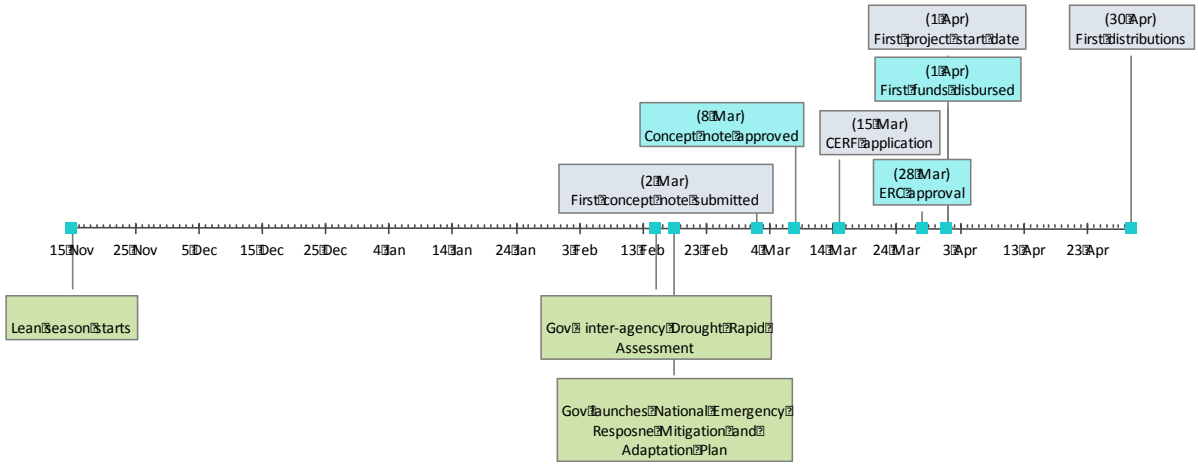

(30 Oct) First funds disbursed
(30 Oct) First project start date
(28 Oct) First ERC approval
(12 Oct) CERF application
UNICEF nutrition screening begins
Joint Gov-FAO needs assessment
ZimVAC Rural Livelihoods Assessment report
Beginning of lean season
Government declares State of disaster
Response plan and appeal launched
After action review

Figure 12 Timeline of response in Swaziland



3.3.2. Appropriateness of CERF

Timing, scale and mandate of CERF funding

This section focuses mainly on the timing of CERF funding to Africa but concludes with a brief assessment of the appropriateness of the RR and UFE windows for slow onset emergencies (i.e., mandate). The appropriateness of the scale of CERF funding is discussed in section 3.3.4 to avoid duplication.

The timing of CERF funding to Africa ranged from October 2015 (Malawi RR allocation) to April 2016 (when Djibouti, Somalia, Lesotho and Madagascar all received RR allocations) (see Figure 1 above for the timing of allocations to each of the CERF-recipient countries). Malawi and Zimbabwe were the only two countries to apply for RR funding in 2015. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia received grants from the second UFE window allocation in 2015 that were disbursed in September-October. Somalia used only a small proportion of its 2015 UFE funding for an El Niño response (to flooding). Based on forecasts, aid agencies expected the El Niño to cause flooding in South-Central Somalia but the main impact was two seasons of drought in Somaliland and Puntland and the UN system applied for CERF RR funding to respond to this in 2016.

The timing of CERF Rapid Response funding depended on country-level decisions to apply for it. The annual Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) Rural Livelihoods Assessment report is a key tool for highlighting food insecurity risks in Zimbabwe and was the main trigger for the 2015 response.[51] The report showed that approximately 924,000 people would require food assistance between October and December 2015, increasing to 1.5 million people (16 per cent of the rural population) during the peak lean season from January to March 2016 (CERF application). This was largely due to poor rainfall in 2014-15, which resulted in significantly lower maize production. The Zimbabwe RC was familiar with CERF and recognised that it could play a critical role in financing an early response to the food insecurity emergency in a context with limited donor funding. He decided to lead a funding application in October, meeting with the ERC and other key actors during a visit to New York. CERF was the first funding to the UN for the 2015 drought, with DFID and ECHO making contributions after that (although DFID funded a cash transfer programme through an NGO in July-August).[52]

[51] ZimVAC is a consortium of Government, UN agencies, NGOs and other international organisations established in 2002 and led and regulated by Government. The Food and Nutrition Council, a department in the Office of the President and Cabinet, chairs it (ZimVAC 2017).

[52] According to a UN agency, ECHO issued a call for proposals in December 2015. OFDA provided funding for the 2016 El Niño-induced drought, with projects starting in September-October 2016.

The Zimbabwe example illustrates that UN agencies can decide to apply for CERF funding before an official emergency declaration (the government of Zimbabwe did not declare a state of disaster till 3 February 2016, five months after the RC and UN agencies mobilised CERF funding). However, in some of the development-oriented countries in Southern Africa (such as Swaziland and Lesotho), aid agencies tended to wait for the government's declaration before mobilising resources and applying for CERF funds. This then delayed applications to CERF (and funding from other donors) because countries in Southern Africa were slow to declare a drought (for example, Swaziland) or to issue a red alert (Mozambique).[53] The RC/HC CERF report for Swaziland identified that the findings of the multi-sectoral Drought Rapid Assessment Report (conducted in February 2016 by the government and partners), reports of water scarcity, meteorological data and the forecasted decline in the national harvest triggered the application for CERF. However, the assessment showed that the impact of the drought was already severe, with over 60% of households resorting to negative coping strategies (the lean season had started in November 2015). As mentioned above, SADC and RIASCO did not launch an appeal/action plan till June-July 2016.

Challenges with the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) for countries in Southern Africa also slowed the activation of a humanitarian response in the region. According to a donor interviewee, IPC classifications did not "kick-in till three-quarters of the way through the lean season" because it took time to get governments and other actors on board. Also, IPC relies on nutrition data but good quality data was not always available in the region. Furthermore, IPC data conflicted with other data sources. SADC conducted vulnerability assessment updates in November 2015 and February-March 2016 and held its annual meeting earlier (in June 2016). By the time IPC data was available in September-October 2016, SADC had launched its appeal and RIASCO had prepared its action plan. Actors were then confused by IPC data that contradicted earlier assessments and, according to one donor, different governments chose politically whether to stand by the IPC data or not, depending on how they wanted to present the situation.

The availability of early warning systems and data to trigger timely CERF applications and emergency responses varied considerably across the countries that received CERF funding. Unsurprisingly, a country like Somalia, which experiences recurrent emergencies, has Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) forecasts and regular Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) assessments and analyses, which are critical for decision-making. In 2015, with warnings of an El Niño, each cluster undertook contingency planning and advocated with donors to ensure that NGOs also had sufficient funding in place. Agencies prepositioned stocks and were able to reduce the impact of the floods (which were also less severe than predicted). Nevertheless, there remains a challenge with translating early warnings into early action.[54] To address this, the FSNAU has established a dashboard for linking early warning and early action, based on five sets of indicators.[55] FSNAU has developed thresholds for the indicators to generate an alert or raise an alarm. This has great potential to trigger early action in Somalia but FSNAU has struggled to get agencies to contribute data.

In Southern Africa, most countries have a regular vulnerability assessment although these are not standardised across the region, which impacted decision-making around the El Niño response (Chapeyama 2017). However, Zimbabwe was a good example of a country with a number of data sources and mechanisms that can facilitate timely response and early action, particularly to slow onset emergencies. In addition to the ZimVAC assessments[56] and market analyses, actors can access climate

[53] Although the government of Lesotho declared a drought emergency in December 2015, it did not develop an emergency response plan till January 2016 or appeal for international assistance till February (RC/HC CERF report). Madagascar did not declare an emergency until August 2016 because of the weak institutional architecture for disaster management. (Chapeyama 2017.

[54] One exception was the warning of a potential famine in Somalia in 2017. Donors were cognisant of the catastrophic impact of the late response to the 2011 Horn of Africa crisis and ensured that they released funding early.

[55] http://www.fsnau.org/downloads/fsnau-dashboard-linking-early-warning-early-action-somalia

[56] One UN agency argued that, while the ZimVAC report is very useful, agencies need more granular data for programming purposes and more updates as the season evolves. For the 2016 drought, agencies conducted a rapid assessment of the food

forecasts from the SARCOF, which is coordinated by SADC, as well as FEWSNET food security analyses and forecasts. The Zimbabwe Meteorological Services Department is also increasing its currently limited technological capacity but the challenge of translating meteorological data into meaningful information for farmers and local communities remains.[57] In addition, the government collects a significant amount of data at sub-national levels. The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) is using data collected by district authorities against a set of indicators to identify when to trigger a crisis modifier for the three projects that it is funding. Aid agencies in Zimbabwe have discussed using these indicators for early action more broadly across the humanitarian system although some agencies were resistant because the indicators did not cover all sectors. This is unfortunate because the indicators have the potential to prompt early action in the most critical sectors for the food insecurity crises that Zimbabwe experiences.

In Somalia, both the Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) programme (funded by DFID and DEVCO) and the Somalia Resilience Programme consortium (funded by a range of donors) have a similar approach to the ZRBF in incorporating community-based early warning systems and the use of crisis modifiers (BRCiS 2016, SomRep and FEWS NET 2014. Such programmes can be useful early indicators of the need for a CERF response but they are also part of the broader financing landscape for the emergencies that CERF is funding.

Even when agencies applied for CERF funds well after the start of the emergency, it was often the first international funding to arrive, particularly for countries in Southern Africa. Although CERF disbursed funding to Swaziland at the beginning of April 2016, when the effects of the drought had peaked, and WFP did not begin food distributions till June (due to procurement timelines), the RC/HC CERF report stated that CERF funds enabled the UN to be the among the first government partners to deliver assistance to the targeted beneficiaries listed in the National Emergency Response, Mitigation and Adaptation Plan (NERMAP) and sector specific action plans. The RC/HC CERF report for Lesotho also noted that CERF was the first donor to provide funding.

CERF funding to Ethiopia and Somalia from both the UFE and RR windows offered an opportunity to compare their appropriateness for slow onset emergencies. There were no clear lessons from Somalia since only a small proportion of the UFE allocation in 2015 was used for the El Niño response and this was for flooding rather than drought. In Ethiopia, the RR allocation that immediately followed the UFE allocation was only for WFP's food assistance response and, again, this yielded no obvious lessons. However, UFE and RR funding to Somalia for the drought response in 2017 highlight how the two windows can play different but useful roles. The UFE allocation from round I came at the beginning of the year, when the response was starting to scale up and was also timely for a food security response. According to one interviewee, agencies mainly used CERF funding to procure supplies, which used up the funding quickly. Although donors had committed funding early in the year, agencies predicted a gap till the money actually arrived and applied for RR funding, which they received by the beginning of May. The RR funding also enabled agencies to respond to a serious cholera outbreak.

Processes and strategy application

Of the 19 countries that received CERF El Niño funding, only two received two allocations - Ethiopia and Somalia (as described in section 3.3.1). The CERF secretariat developed its approach of one allocation per country after Ethiopia received its RR funding so it did not apply. In Somalia's case, the secretariat was justified in allocating RR funding for the El Niño response as well because, as described in the previous section, agencies used less than 25 per cent of the UFE allocation for El Niño-related

security situation, which was very helpful. A donor that participates in the ZimVAC argued that the data is generally robust and it uses the raw data for its decision-making.

[57] This is a challenge across the region. A review of SADC's response to the El Niño crisis argues that indigenous knowledge systems should also be integrated into the analysis and dissemination of weather information (Chapeyama 2017).

flooding.[58]

Agencies and donors were unaware of the CERF secretariat's approach of providing only one allocation per country, so they did not comment on it. The approach was logical for the Southern African countries that only applied for funding in 2016. Some countries experienced drought in the 2014/15 season as well, with OCHA highlighting concerns about a second poor harvest in the region in 2015/16 because of the predicted strong El Niño (OCHA ROSA 2015). However, only Zimbabwe and Malawi applied for and secured CERF funding for a response in 2015. CERF applications for both countries make it clear that they were not yet responding to El Niño. Zimbabwe's CERF application stated that it was requesting funds to address a food insecurity emergency brought about by a poor rainfall season. It mentioned a poor outlook for the 2015/16 harvest, "with 90 per cent chance of El Niño in the Southern Africa region likely to result in further rainfall deficiencies" (pg. 8) but El Niño had not yet manifested in the region. Malawi applied for CERF funding because rains were late for the 2014/15 season but were above average when they did arrive, resulting in flooding. This reduced crop production, leading to the need for food assistance or cash transfers for vulnerable households (RC/HC CERF report). It is clear that this response was prior to the El Niño in 2016 when the RC/HC CERF report explains that there was no After Action Review for the overall response because "the impact of the El Niño made it imperative for Humanitarian Actors to engage in planning for the next response much earlier than normal, long before the completion of the 2015/16 response" (pg. 2).

When OCHA prepared situation reports on the regional impact of El Niño, the 2015 food security responses in both Zimbabwe and Malawi were ongoing. Therefore, it listed these two countries in the section on responses (since the humanitarian system was still in the planning phase, there were no actual El Niño responses for OCHA to list). Different iterations of the document translated these earlier responses into 'El Niño responses' and the CERF secretariat used its approach of one allocation per country to *reject El Niño-related funding requests* in 2016. According to one interviewee, this was less problematic for Malawi because it received sufficient funding from other donors.

Apart from the mistaken classification of the 2015 drought responses in Zimbabwe and Malawi as El Niño responses, the recurrent and extended nature of droughts in Africa raised questions about the definition and distinction of an El Niño event. This was particularly apparent in a context like Somalia, which went on to experience another severe drought in 2017 that could have resulted in famine.

Interviewees at country and regional levels were unaware of the secretariat's criteria for selecting countries or size of allocations per country so they were unable to comment on these. It could be argued that it was appropriate for CERF to make relatively small allocations for the more development-oriented Southern African countries because of their limited absorption capacity, at least in the initial stages of the emergency response. On the other hand, as discussed in section 3.3.4 below, Southern Africa was under-funded for the El Niño response, leading key donors to organise roundtables and conferences to raise awareness and mobilise additional funding. Larger CERF allocations might have mitigated the situation.

Knowledge of CERF's role, remit, procedures and added value as a humanitarian financing tool

Knowledge of CERF's role, remit and procedures varied across the region, depending on whether countries were experienced with CERF applications or not. Countries like Ethiopia and Somalia, which are amongst the largest recipients of CERF funding, are clearly well versed with its requirements and found procedures, including the concept note, straightforward. Others, like Angola, Swaziland and Lesotho, were less familiar with humanitarian responses and required support from OCHA's Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) with the application process.

[58] Four projects focused on the flood response – a UNICEF food aid project ($700,000), UNICEF and WHO health projects ($578,105 each although the UNICEF cost is an estimate since only part of its funding was used for the flood response) and an FAO livestock project ($3 million. This represents a total of $4.85 million out of the total UFE allocation of almost $20 million.

OCHA ROSA provided a range of support to countries with CERF processes, ranging from providing information to the HCT on CERF procedures (Zimbabwe) to reviewing proposals and supporting applications (Malawi and Angola) to helping with report writing (Lesotho). The RC/HC CERF report for Swaziland highlighted that support from the CERF secretariat to the in-country proposal development team also greatly enhanced the proposal development process and resulted in a stronger proposal. Interviewees in Zimbabwe appreciated OCHA ROSA's support and some expressed concern about the decision to close the office and cover Southern Africa from the regional office in Nairobi, given the region's vulnerability to crises. With climate change leading to natural disasters in countries that are not used to these, there is likely to be increased demand from development-oriented countries for CERF funding. OCHA plays an important role in supporting them with accessing CERF (although its role in supporting the RC is not formalised). There was a view that the reduced OCHA footprint should be balanced by strengthening the capacity of RCOs to support emergency response and CERF processes. When the OCHA office in Zimbabwe closed, the RCO absorbed one staff member who provided much-needed support for the emergency response and CERF application in 2015. However, this post did not exist at the time of this review due to lack of sufficient sustainable funding to the RCO. At the time of preparing this report, a locally recruited consultant with OCHA background was temporarily covering this function.

In development-oriented countries, where UN agencies have limited experience of humanitarian response, CERF funding requirements can bring a degree of rigour to planning and assessment processes. For example, the RC/HC CERF report for Swaziland noted that the requirements of the CERF application process strengthened WASH sectoral assessment processes and ensured better identification of needs and targeting of the response. Similarly, the RC/HC CERF report for Lesotho mentions that "The strong focus and demand for evidence by the CERF secretariat has led to the establishment of the joint inter-sector vulnerability assessment that ensures a needs informed approach to response planning" (pg. 10). This helped with both geographic targeting and thematic prioritisation. However, in some cases, UN agencies in non-humanitarian contexts struggled to provide the data required for CERF concept notes and this led to a lot of back and forth. In the case of Lesotho, the application process also took time, with agencies submitting the first concept note on 20 January 2016 and the first application for funding on 4 March 2016. According to agencies in country, the delay was due to a lack of availability of assessment data as well as delays in communications with the CERF secretariat. By contrast, it took three days for Somalia to get approval for its concept note for the RR application (on 18 February 2016). It is unsurprising that one participant in the process described it as "brilliant" since it was a faster way to get a funding decision from the secretariat. It also gave agencies the opportunity to build a shared understanding of the response before getting into the application process and this collaboration made the proposal submission smoother. The total process for Somalia took almost two months (15 February-13 April), with agencies only submitting their initial application three weeks later (on 10 March) and their final project applications another three weeks after that. However, six of the nine projects had early start dates of 29 February or 1 March so interviewees did not identify this as a problem.

Views on the appropriateness of CERF's life-saving criteria in slow-onset emergencies depended on context. In Somalia, which has ongoing and large-scale humanitarian needs, an interviewee argued that having very clear criteria makes CERF processes easier and avoids long discussions. . However, in Zimbabwe, UNICEF argued that the life-saving criteria as applied to WASH were inappropriate. CERF does not fund the drilling of boreholes, only the rehabilitation of existing ones. However, some of the drought-affected communities did not have water sources or there was a need to drill boreholes deeper. An FAO interviewee noted that it could sometimes be difficult to justify agricultural activities as lifesaving. Once the impact of a drought has become severe, food assistance is needed to save lives. However, it argued that it was important for CERF to appreciate that a timely response that saves livestock for those who are highly dependent on them enables farmers/herders to meet their own needs in terms of buying food or investing in their children's education.

CERF's requirement to demonstrate a clear trigger for the response can also be helpful. In 2015, actors in Somalia used this requirement to argue that the situation did not warrant an application to the RR

window. However, the food security cluster highlighted the challenge with separating chronic food insecurity and malnutrition in Somalia (which require long-term funding to avoid cases from becoming acute over time) from acute situations that should trigger CERF funding.

While CERF-recipient agencies did not identify the six-month timeframe for RR project implementation as a problem, an OCHA interviewee noted that the timeframe is ambitious in contexts where development-oriented agencies are switching to emergency mode. In Southern Africa, OCHA staff supporting CERF processes encouraged agencies to consider not only whether activities were life saving but also whether six months was a realistic timeframe for implementation when they were prioritising activities for CERF applications.

3.3.3. Effectiveness of CERF

Timeliness and effectiveness

According to the RC/HC CERF report, CERF funding to Zimbabwe, disbursed in early November 2015, was timely (the lean season occurs from January-March).[59] For FAO, it would have been helpful to receive CERF funding as early as July-August, at the start of the dry season, so that it could meet the high demand for livestock feed. However, it provided drought tolerant and short season varieties of seeds to farmers because of the forecasts of below normal rains, which provided to be very helpful. The RC/HC CERF report notes that WFP experienced delays in partner selection processes, contractual engagements, and government coordination meetings, which delayed the start of distributions by a month in two of the four planned districts. However, WFP was taking steps to address these challenges. All three agencies that received funding aimed for geographical convergence, i.e., implementing projects in agriculture, food assistance and WASH in the same geographical areas in order to maximise impact.

CERF funding contributed to facilitating future timely responses in Zimbabwe. The RC/HC CERF report highlights that CERF funds enabled UNICEF to start active community-based nutrition screening, which is critical in facilitating early identification and referral of children with acute malnutrition before their condition becomes severe and life threatening. UNICEF Zimbabwe highlighted that, without CERF funding, it would not have been able to start a timely response to the drought or have project results that it could use to advocate for additional funding. It hoped to transition from CERF to other donor funding but there was a delay, resulting in a two-three month gap in its WASH activities.

CERF funding was also important in helping WFP to start emergency activities in Swaziland and Lesotho, where it did not have an emergency operation in its country programmes. While USAID's Food for Peace programme would normally be an important donor for WFP, it was unable to provide funding until WFP had an emergency operation in place.

Interviewees and RC/HC CERF reports provide several examples of the effectiveness of CERF-funded projects. In Ethiopia, UNICEF was able to use CERF funding to ensure the timely supply of therapeutic foods and drugs for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). This was essential at a time when there was a surge in the number of SAM cases among young children (RC/HC CERF report for UFE allocation). Similarly, UNICEF in Lesotho was able to purchase therapeutic feeding commodities with CERF funds to ensure that health facilities did not experience gaps, which would have delayed treatment for children with SAM (RC/HC CERF report). The Ethiopia RC/HC CERF report on the use of the UFE allocation in 2015 also provides other instances of the effective use of CERF funding, including funding to FAO reducing the negative coping mechanisms of over 65,000 households and emergency food assistance improving food consumption and reducing malnutrition rates. CERF funding enabled WFP to be timelier through advance food purchases that reduced the time required to procure, transport and distribute food.

In Lesotho, UNICEF used CERF funding to provide top up payments through the government's Child

[59] Interviewees concurred, saying that it was helpful to start implementing projects before the peak of the lean season when communities were already showing signs of distress.

Grant Programme. This was effective because it enabled UNICEF to target the most vulnerable and distribute funds quickly (although the programme's management unit experienced administrative and human resources challenges). Therefore, it argued, "emergency responses can and should make use of existing government structures to reach the most vulnerable" (Lesotho RC/HC CERF report: 20).

In Zimbabwe, some UN interviewees felt that CERF should have funded protection activities as part of the drought response although agencies in country did not prioritise it as a sector. However, a donor argued that others had also not funded protection activities because the relevant agencies could not demonstrate how they would use funds effectively.[60] Therefore, it was more relevant to mainstream protection than to fund standalone projects. To ensure that other sectors took account of protection concerns, UNFPA re-programmed funding to conduct training workshops for members of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub-cluster and other sectors. It also planned to conduct training on mainstreaming GBV in late 2017/early 2018. In Swaziland, UNFPA used its own funding to complement CERF-funded projects. During food distributions, it worked with partners to provide mobile sexual and reproductive health services and raised awareness on gender issues. One UN agency in Zimbabwe argued that the impact of droughts on women and the issue of gender more broadly were not addressed adequately in rapid assessments and programming (although the ZimVAC report uses gender-disaggregated data and includes a gender analysis so this information should inform programme design). It highlighted the need for a greater focus implementing the UNCT's gender mainstreaming strategy and recommended that the CERF secretariat should ensure that agencies demonstrate that they are addressing gender issues adequately in reports as well as proposals.

In the more development-oriented countries, such as Swaziland, the delay in starting the humanitarian response reduced its effectiveness. As one interviewee in Swaziland pointed out, farmers would not have lost 80,000 livestock if the government and aid agencies had been more proactive in initiating the response earlier and providing water and feed. WFP did not have mechanisms for an emergency operation in place in Swaziland and Lesotho, only development programmes. In Swaziland, this delayed the start of food distributions by two months and WFP did not have the systems in place to provide cash grants instead (although it developed this and used ECHO funding later for a cash transfer programme at the beginning of the 2016 lean season).

Some challenges with effectiveness were common to CERF-funded projects and the broader humanitarian response. A donor expressed concern that, in Lesotho and Madagascar, UN agencies did not coordinate their cash grant programmes (resulting in agencies distributing different amounts to different households at different times). According to a UN interviewee, in Lesotho, the initial failure of CERF-recipient agencies to harmonise their cash grant amounts led to tensions within communities because different households in the same geographical area were receiving different amounts of money. This was addressed subsequently.

Complementing funding from other donors

Interviewees and RC/HC CERF reports on CERF funding provided a number of examples of ways in which CERF funding complemented other funding and contributions. In Zimbabwe, WFP used CERF funding to complement government assistance by covering the cost of the transportation and distribution of the government's in-kind maize contribution and to provide a cash transfer (of $6 per person per month) in lieu of vegetable oil and pulses (RC/HC CERF report). Other donors to WFP then adopted this approach. Similarly, other donors funded UNICEF's active nutrition screening programme in Zimbabwe, started with CERF funding. FAO Zimbabwe used CERF funding to provide animal feed to prevent animals dying. During the drought in 2016, FAO could use the lessons learned from the CERF project to obtain funding from other donors for similar activities.

UNICEF Swaziland was able to re-programme its resources to complement CERF funding, to provide the more sustainable interventions such as the drilling two new bore holes and rehabilitating 17 hand

[60] Agencies in Zimbabwe were in the process of finalising a protection strategy at the time of this review (September 2017). This had been delayed because of the shift from drought to floods earlier in the year.

pumps within benefiting communities (RC/HC CERF report). In Somalia, FAO used funding from USAID to complement cash-for-work activities in the same target area where it used CERF funds to support vulnerable beneficiaries (RC/HC CERF report).

In Lesotho, additional funding for food security and agriculture enabled agencies to scale up their geographical coverage (RC/HC CERF report).

In countries with pooled fund mechanisms (Ethiopia and Somalia), CERF also complements these. For example, Ethiopia's application for round II of the UFE window in 2015 lists the Humanitarian Response Fund's contribution to each of the sectors for which it is seeking funding and highlights complementarity in the nutrition sector in particular. The Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) complemented the CERF RR allocation for the drought response in 2016 in particular, aligning grants and jointly supporting the scale-up of the response (SHF 2016a, SHF 2016b). For the UFE window allocation in 2015, the SHF's ability to complement CERF funding was constrained by a funding shortfall (RC/HC CERF report).

Working with local response mechanisms

In countries with government capacity and programmes, such as Swaziland and Zimbabwe, CERF-recipient agencies complemented government efforts (the previous section described WFP's approach of complementing government assistance in Zimbabwe and it also complemented government food distributions in Swaziland). As noted above, UNICEF used the government's Child Grant Programme to distribute cash in Lesotho.

Agencies also worked with government systems in other ways. In Swaziland, WFP used the National Disaster Management Agency's targeting criteria to select households in drought-affected areas for assistance (RC/HC CERF report). In Zimbabwe, agencies worked with and supported sub-national coordination structures (provincial and district-level drought relief committees). These ensured that there was no duplication of effort and also supported the targeting of assistance at sub-national level.

3.3.4. Added value of CERF

CERF's added value

CERF added value to the humanitarian response by strengthening coordination in a number of contexts. Its funding for WFP's cash transfer programme in Zimbabwe enabled the agency to assume a leadership role and set up a cash sub-working group to harmonise the value of cash transfers across organisations (RC/HC CERF report). The RC/HC CERF report for Zimbabwe also noted that CERF funding led to the establishment of the Humanitarian Inter-Sector coordination forum with additional sectors joining as the humanitarian response scaled up. One participant felt that this not only facilitated information sharing across sectors but also lesson-learning and the sharing of good practice, which strengthened programming. In Somalia, CERF strengthened coordination with the government in the North. A donor in Southern Africa argued that CERF bringing UN agencies together to plan their humanitarian response and prioritise needs gave other donors confidence that they had a strategy.

Linked to coordination, CERF funding supported joint programming. Interviewees in Somalia gave examples of CERF funding joint projects for health and protection, including one cross-cluster project for health, nutrition and WASH that involved four UN agencies. While CERF-recipient agencies in Swaziland did not develop a joint programme, they tried to integrate the WASH and food assistance interventions and believed that this added value for beneficiaries (RC/HC CERF report).

Since CERF funding was usually the first to arrive, it helped to start up emergency responses, particularly in more development-oriented countries. For example, in Zimbabwe, UN agencies targeted the most affected areas that had not received any support at the time of the application for CERF funding. Therefore, it was instrumental for kick-starting activities while agencies mobilised resources from other sources (RC/HC CERF report Zimbabwe).

CERF funding filled gaps in countries with ongoing humanitarian responses. For example, in Ethiopia, CERF funding enabled WFP to fill a critical funding gap in the Targeted Supplementary Feeding

Programme at a time when resources were scarce and the rates of malnutrition were spiralling as a result of the El Niño-induced drought (RC/HC CERF report). The RC/HC CERF report on the use of UFE funding argues that, without this, vulnerable food-insecure drought affected households in the Somali region would have starved and resorted to detrimental/negative coping strategies.

CERF also filled funding gaps by funding neglected sectors or activities. Interviewees from USAID's Food For Peace programme pointed out that CERF's ability to fund a broad range of sectors and kick-start activities in sectors ignored by other donors was important. Otherwise, areas such as gender and protection might not have been funded at all. UNICEF in Zimbabwe described how CERF's willingness to fund kits for water purification, transport and storage was extremely useful because other donors were reluctant to fund sectors other than food security.

In countries that were undertaking a humanitarian response for the first time in many years, CERF-funded activities could lay the foundation for future support. For example, in Lesotho, a CERF project established food distribution points at community level in consultation with local councils and Chiefs. Subsequently, these have been used for other programmes such as general food distributions and education campaigns (RC/HC CERF report). The ability to trial complementing the government's food distribution with cash helped WFP Zimbabwe to draw lessons about the benefits of this approach. It could then have an informed discussion with other donors about appropriate modalities for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In Swaziland, CERF funding added value in an unexpected way. Household water treatment standards in Swaziland had not previously conformed to global standards. CERF funding enabled UNICEF to demonstrate the importance of having globally accredited household water treatment methods/reagents. As a result, the Swaziland government signed up to international water safety standards (RC/HC CERF report).

CERF's comparative advantage

Interviewees in Southern Africa highlighted that it is difficult to mobilise donors for emergencies that do not receive media attention. CERF's ability to respond on the basis of needs, without requiring an official government declaration, means that it can provide funding at an earlier stage of a slow onset emergency. Some donors were unable to release funding for the 2015 drought in Zimbabwe until the government declared a state of disaster on 3 February 2016. In addition, countries like Swaziland are not on the radar of donors for humanitarian funding, which makes it harder to mobilise resources.

CERF also has greater flexibility in its criteria for response than some donors. For example, ECHO can only fund an early response when there is a "firm forecast" that livelihoods will be compromised or there is a risk that under-nutrition will increase. In slow onset emergencies, it can be difficult to get such a "firm forecast". One interviewee argued that seeing CERF responding early could give ECHO a signal that it needs to do the same, particularly in a context like Southern Africa where early warning systems are not always well-developed.

In larger-scale emergencies such as in Somalia, agencies highlighted that CERF's speed is a comparative advantage. Its flexibility (compared to some donors) in financing the procurement of supplies (for example for nutrition programmes) was very useful in filling anticipated gaps. In the case of one UN agency, CERF funding is more flexible than its internal emergency funding and enabled it to overcome the restrictions, such as hiring short-term staff for emergency programmes.

Despite having the flexibility and ability to respond early, a donor interviewee pointed out that CERF was reactive to the El Niño rather than proactive, even though some UN agencies issued early warnings that other donors used. There was a perception that CERF waits for a disaster to happen because it requires a high level of certainty about needs to allocate funding. The back and forth on concept notes in some cases and discussions around the trigger for the response are likely to have contributed to

this.[61] Also, one agency in Somalia felt that, for the 2017 drought, donors such as DFID were willing to provide funding on a "no regrets" basis but this was not the case with CERF. A donor interviewee argued that the requirement for large amounts of data is not compatible with early action, which is based on scenarios, probabilities and thresholds rather than certainty. In the case of an El Niño and other weather events, there is also a need to be able to understand the science behind forecasts in order to respond appropriately.

Leveraging additional funding

There were numerous examples from across of the region of agencies using the results from CERF-funded activities to leverage additional funding. WFP Zimbabwe believed that CERF funding enabled it to showcase its humanitarian work, leading to contributions from a number of donors, including Finland for the first time. FAO Zimbabwe used its CERF-funded project to identify areas where it wanted to scale-up and specific activities for which it needed additional resources. The funding from other donors helped FAO to continue activities started with CERF funding and also increase its geographical coverage. Similarly, in Swaziland, UNICEF's ability to demonstrate results from its CERF-funded project enabled it to secure additional funding from the US and Canada to scale-up its emergency WASH intervention (RC/HC CERF report). IOM's experience with implementing a CERF project in Puntland, including its effective partnership with relevant government agencies, helped the agency secure long-term funding from the African Development Bank to support WASH service provision (RC/HC CERF report on the use of RR funding to Somalia). These examples support a donor interviewee's assertion that CERF support for agencies to start operations is likely to have encouraged other donors to "fund something that was already moving".

Representatives from a couple of the large humanitarian donors stated that they had very limited information on CERF funding (although one of them sought information from OCHA ROSA for the El Niño response). As a result, knowledge of CERF allocations did not directly influence their funding decisions.[62] An ECHO interviewee felt that a direct dialogue with the CERF secretariat would be helpful to provide information that could influence its funding decisions.

Some interviewees felt that CERF funding could leverage additional funding for a crisis as a whole, not simply for individual agencies. For example, since Zimbabwe did not have a humanitarian appeal at the time of CERF funding in 2015, there was a view that the allocation helped to confirm the scale of humanitarian needs and highlighted the need for other donors to contribute. Otherwise, donors tend to have a "wait and see" attitude that delays programming. There was also evidence of broader fundraising efforts for CERF-funded crises in Southern Africa. The Zimbabwe RC/HC CERF report highlights that the HCT (established in November 2015 and including donors) discussed the deteriorating food security situation in Zimbabwe extensively and that the RC and others approached various donors in bilateral meetings to raise their awareness on the crisis. One donor found the information provided at the HCT meetings (including on CERF funding) useful for mobilising resources internally. DFID and USAID hosted donor roundtables for Swaziland and Lesotho in April and September 2016 when they saw that the El Niño response in both countries was under-funded. These led to funding from a range of other donors and an in-kind donation of rice from China. DFID also co-hosted a conference with OCHA on the "Response to El Niño in Southern Africa" in London in July 2016 to mobilise resources (Kang 2017). One donor credited WFP's regional office in Southern Africa for influencing the major donors and lobbying for advance financing for its Global Commodity Management Facility.

Value of larger or additional allocations

As discussed in section 3.3.2, CERF's decision to make only one allocation per country (except in Ethiopia and Somalia) was largely appropriate. The one exception is Zimbabwe, where there was

[61] For example, the RC/HC CERF report for Lesotho highlights that the fact that some sectors lacked sufficient evidence for the CERF application, they 'held back' the overall joint application process (pg. 10).
[62] One donor funds up to 25% of an appeal as a 'rule of thumb' and CERF allocations do not affect this.

justification for an allocation in 2016 and where CERF funding might have led to an earlier response when other donors were slow to intervene. One interviewee also believed that a larger CERF contribution to Zimbabwe in 2015 would have enabled agencies to reach a larger number of people and would not have deterred other donors from contributing because of the scale of needs.

Some interviewees in Zimbabwe felt that it was difficult to make the case for funding protection activities at the earlier stage of the drought but that negative coping mechanisms as the drought worsens can lead to protection concerns (such as forced marriage and the separation of families). Droughts are often a recurrent emergency over two-three years (most countries in Africa were affected by drought in both 2015 and 2016 or in 2016 and 2017) and the effects of a drought are also extended (this led OFDA to allocate funding for two years for the El Niño response in Zimbabwe). Therefore, agencies argued that it would be helpful if CERF financed the more directly linked sectors such as food security and WASH in the initial phase and considered financing a broader range of activities, including protection, in later stages, as needs change.[63]

[63] Although Zimbabwe did not receive a CERF allocation for the drought response in 2016, the RC approached the secretariat during a visit to New York in 2017 for funding to respond to floods. Zimbabwe made an application and received $1.6 million from the RR window. This included funding for protection.

3.4. Latin America and the Caribbean

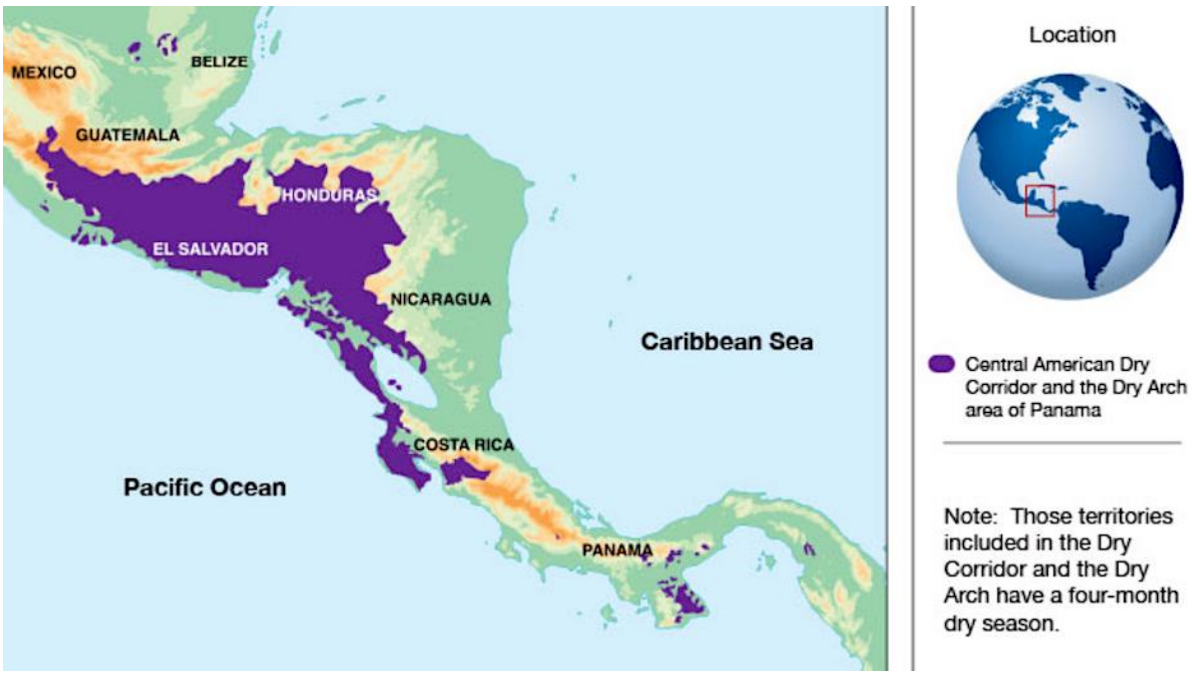
In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), CERF funded four countries categorised as El Niño responses during 2015-16 for drought-related emergencies - El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. Field visits to Honduras and El Salvador were followed by interviews with staff in the regional hub in Panama, which provided an opportunity to obtain a comparative regional perspective. As mentioned in the Methodology section, El Salvador was the only country visited during this review where the time available and logistics allowed a day's visit to project sites.

3.4.1. Regional context

El Niño affected LAC in different ways. It exacerbated a four-year drought in Central America, especially in the Dry Corridor which intensified the drought in the Caribbean, especially in Haiti, and in the northern region of South America.

CERF assistance for El Niño in Central America was targeted at the semi-arid region stretching through Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and parts of Costa Rica, the so called "Dry Corridor" (see Figure 13).

Figure 13 Central American Dry Corridor



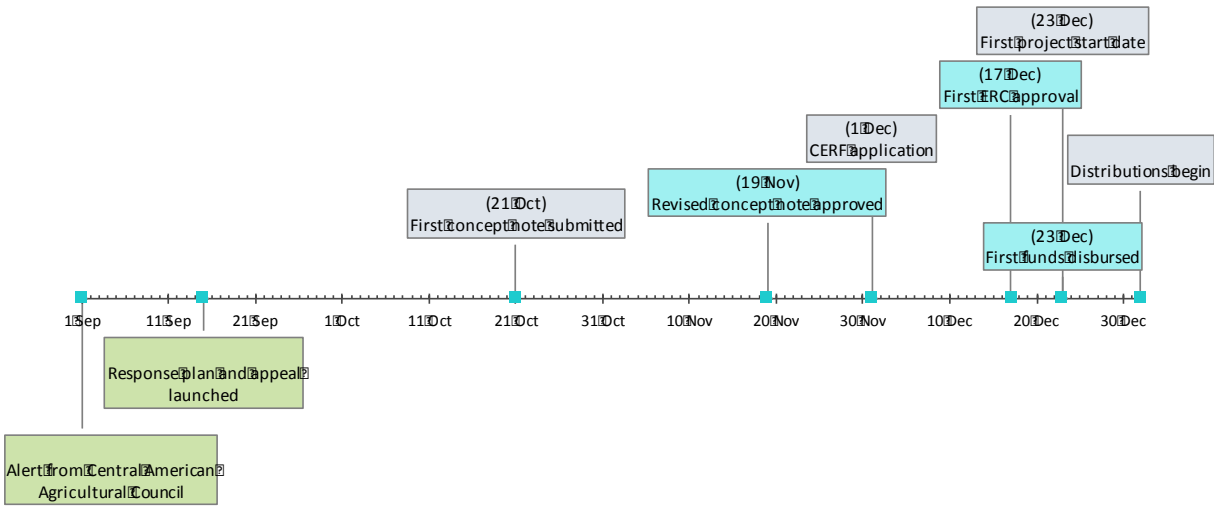
Source: Based on the Central American Atlas for Sustainable Territorial Management

Communities were already vulnerable in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras during 2015 since 60 percent of their maize crops was destroyed by the irregular rainfall the previous year.[64] In fact, CERF had accepted proposals from both Honduras and Guatemala during 2014. In Honduras, a total of just over $2.6 million was allocated at the end of 2014 for food assistance, agriculture,[65] nutrition, WASH and health as a contribution to their $13.2 million Emergency Response Plan.[66] For El Salvador, the funding received in 2015 was the first CERF grant that the country had received since 2011. As shown in the timeline below, Honduras was one of the few countries in this review that made an official request for international assistance. El Salvador did not make a request for international assistance and, like many other countries affected by El Niño, there was a reluctance to make an official request

[64] FAO News 14/09/2015
[65] $600,000 was allocated for an agricultural component led by FAO in Honduras in 2014.
[66] Source: CERF secretariat http://www.unocha.org/cerf/cerf-worldwide/where-we-work/hnd-2015

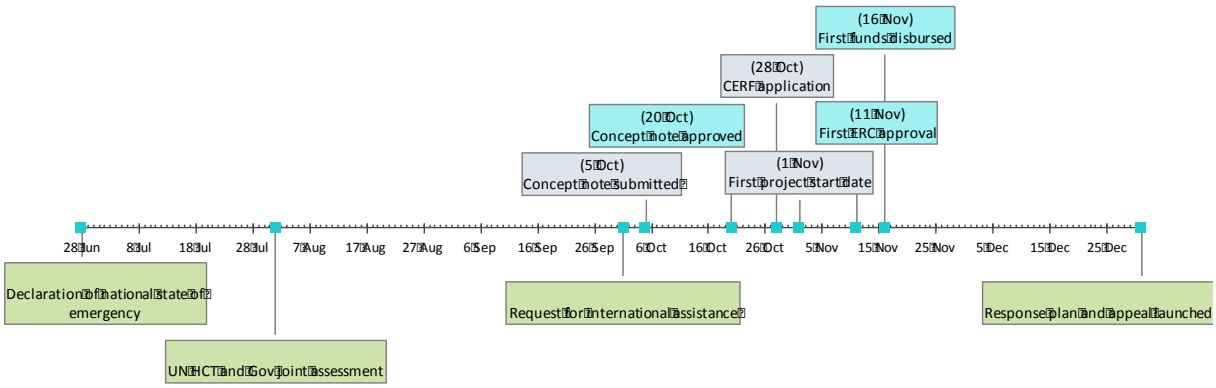
for international assistance for a drought response. Interviews with government staff indicated that the collaboration with UN agencies was viewed as constructive and generally appreciated.

Figure 14 Timeline of response in El Salvador*



* During the period between submission of the first concept note (21st October) and approval of the revised concept note (19th November), several exchanges occurred including CERF providing feedback (23rd October), submission of a revised concept (6th November), feedback from CERF on the revised concept (10th November), and submission of a further revised concept on 17th November.

Figure 15 Timeline of response in Honduras*



* During the period between submission of the first concept note (5th October) and approval of the revised concept note, albeit with a 50% reduction in the requested budget (20th October), several exchanges occurred including CERF providing feedback.

3.4.2. Appropriateness of CERF

Timing, scale and mandate of CERF funding

This section focuses on findings related to the timing and influencing factors CERF funding to Honduras and El Salvador since these were relevant in these countries than the CERF mandate. Issues relating to scale are covered in other sections below.

Apart from FAO-supported interventions, timing of CERF-funded interventions was designed to provide assistance at the time when humanitarian impacts were likely to be felt by communities. Due to the various factors, including a lack of familiarity of UN agencies with CERF processes, distributions

did not take place in El Salvador until early 2016. However, focus group discussions with beneficiary communities during site visits and review of post distribution monitoring reports by the review team member confirmed that the distribution of food vouchers was timely, soon after their food stocks had been exhausted. Water systems were also put in place when the impacts of the drought were being felt, although the significant increase in cost of water to fill tanks when it became scarcer was not planned for. UNICEF's initial nutritional assessments were also timely. However, since subsequent nutrition interventions were clinic-based in urban centres, there was no follow-up to monitor changing nutritional status in affected communities.

In Honduras, CERF-supported interventions had already started almost immediately afterwards. The work of UN agencies was facilitated by a combination of factors, including pre-existing relationships with government counterparts partially developed through joint preparedness planning, the government's request for international assistance in October 2015, learning from a drought intervention (including CERF processes) the previous year. Clusters and cluster leads played a key role throughout the process.

Processes and strategy application

According to UN interviewees, CERF funds provided a catalyst for the UN system in El Salvador to work together as they had never done before. One of the initial challenges is that the Government of El Salvador didn't request external assistance to respond to the El Niño crisis due in part to political sensitivities. OCHA helped with the UN Country Team with suitable phrasing. WFP's advice from a humanitarian perspective was also important in both countries, particularly in El Salvador where there was no permanent OCHA presence. WFP brought in a surge team member whose specific task was to coordinate CERF and each recipient agency nominated a focal point. In El Salvador, interventions by all recipient agencies were focused on four municipalities in eastern departments that had been amongst the hardest hit by the drought.

Governments insisted that food needed to be in the form of food for assets, not just a general distribution of food vouchers without the active participation of the communities. The community visited in El Salvador decided to work on rural road improvement. Beneficiaries worked once a week on the roads during the course of four months. Along with food vouchers, WFP also supported community trainings to improve hygienic practices for food preparation.

Knowledge of CERF's role, remit, procedures and added value as a humanitarian financing tool

As noted above, this was the first CERF allocation that UN agencies in El Salvador had received since 2011 and there was little remaining institutional memory of CERF. As a result, there was a steep learning curve for many UN staff and, since there was no OCHA presence, support from WFP and OCHA visits provide to be very critical. Honduras had received another CERF allocation the previous year, also for drought and had clearly learned from that experience. As a result, none of the projects in El Salvador utilized the early start option offered by CERF, whereas one (out of 6) projects in Honduras used a 1 Nov start data. The difference between the two countries was apparent not just in terms of their familiarity with CERF processes, but the 2014-2015 CERF allocation in Honduras helped the Country Team to improve assessment and delivery systems that more effectively addressed vulnerabilities, an issue that their colleagues in El Salvador struggled with during 2015-2016.

The visit to Central America was the final field visit during this review and it took place following the presentation to the CERF Advisory Group and workshop for UN agency staff in New York. Apart from the questions in the review framework, additional questions were explored around the theme of early action. As with other countries visited, there was little reflection on CERF's potential to support early action, but there was considerable consensus, and interest, about the potential value of using CERF. UNICEF's nutrition projects in both El Salvador and Honduras could be presented as examples of early action since acute malnutrition rates did not exceed emergency thresholds, but the "trigger" for support by CERF was the rapid rate of increase in areas selected for intervention of acute malnutrition

rates amongst children within a relatively short period of time from 1% in both El Salvador and Honduras to 2% and 3% respectively.

3.4.3. Effectiveness of CERF

Timeliness and effectiveness

In El Salvador, distribution of food vouchers (WFP), community water tanks (UNDP) and nutrition interventions (UNICEF, WHO) were timely with most activities taking place during the peak of the lean season in affected areas. This was confirmed during community visits in El Salvador. Food voucher distributions and water supplies on the whole satisfied CERF life-saving criteria for communities affected by El Niño. FAO interventions in El Salvador were in line with their ongoing programme of building resilience by promoting use of improved techniques and drought resistant seeds. Local authorities said that FAO-supported gardens and water tanks were useful, but the resulting harvests came too late to have an impact on affected populations during the lean season and provided a clear example of where early action during the previous agricultural season would have resulted in a more effective response. FAO procurement processes were also not suited to a quick response, but FAO was able to expedite procurement by using up to six different providers to reduce the number of approval signatures required for higher value single contracts.

In El Salvador, there was an initial effort to conduct the CERF-supported intervention as a joint action based on a joint assessment in the same areas. However, there were challenges in harmonizing timeframes and selection criteria. WFP, for example, have very efficient delivery systems and targeted the most vulnerable. FAO's procurement processes were more cumbersome, and their main target was farmers who owned their own land. Similarly, UNDP's systems were not set up to respond as a humanitarian agency and their entry point was contacts with municipalities through their work in water governance and climate change adaptation. Similar challenges with a joint approach was also encountered when working with different government counterparts since they each of the counterparts had their own systems that UN agencies needed to align with.

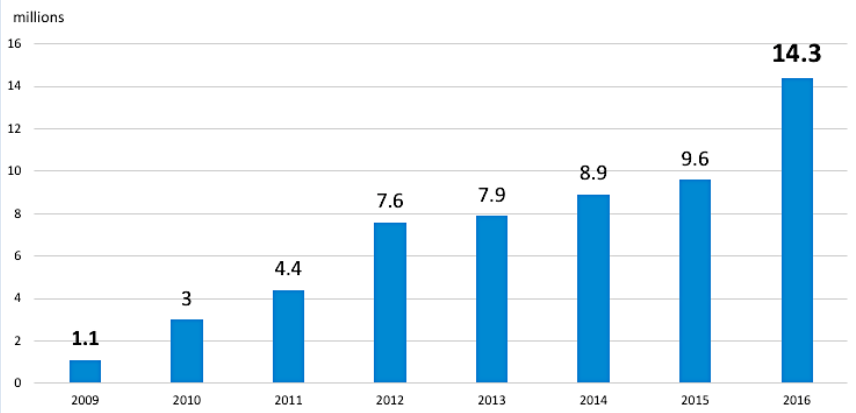
In Honduras WFP has been working with cash transfers since 2014. With the CERF grant in 2014, restricted cash transfers were done using food vouchers in the 46 districts that historically are most affected by droughts. In 2015-2016 they changed to unconditional cash and post distribution monitoring (PDM) results showed that 80% was used for food, including improved diversity. WFP in El Salvador provided restricted cash transfers where beneficiaries were provided with a choice of food items.

WFP used cash transfers in all three countries in Central America affected by El Niño (El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala) and post-distribution monitoring has shown positive results using either food vouchers, such as in El Salvador, and unconditional cash transfers, as in Honduras. As illustrated below, cash-based programming approaches used by WFP in the region during the El Niño crisis are likely to be observed elsewhere in the world in future.

Trends in Cash Transfer Programming and Implications for Early Action

WFP's operations in the LAC region have witnessed a rapid shift from in-kind to cash-based transfer modalities for target beneficiaries from 23 percent in 2013 to 77 percent in 2015.[67] Cash transfers are increasingly becoming part of social protection systems throughout the developing world, and Latin America in particular has played an important role in developing and testing cash transfer systems which have been replicated worldwide.[68] Over 14 million people received US$ 1.2 billion in cash transfers in WFP programmes during 2016, representing an annual increase of around 160% over the past five years (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Beneficiaries of Global WFP Cash-Based Transfer Interventions: 2009 - 2016



Source: WFP

This trend indicates that there will not only be a need for early warning trigger to finance early action, but also to be inform decisions on mitigation activities at a community level. This suggests a potentially important role for CERF, together with other early action funds, in supporting communities to mitigate disaster impacts by protecting assets[69] through cash-based transfers and at the same time helping to enhance community resilience[70].

Emergency Food Security Assessments were carried out jointly by Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and governments in both countries during 2015 and the prioritisation of municipalities for CERF proposals was similarly done jointly based on vulnerability indicators. This process successfully identified priority areas but, based on interviews, field visits and review of monitoring reports, agencies in El Salvador experienced some difficulties in targeting the most vulnerable at a community level. Along with the gaps in targeting, some community members who were absent during the registration who nevertheless met the criteria couldn't be included in beneficiary lists since the target number had already been reached. WFP Honduras had encountered similar challenges during implementation of their CERF-funded drought assistance project the previous year and the Country Team had improved their beneficiary selection system so that they had been able to successfully address these gaps during the distributions funded by CERF during 2015-2016. One of the recommendations during the debriefings for the Country Team in El Salvador and for regional staff in Panama was that capturing and disseminating good practice from could help Country Teams who are less familiar with CERF and related processes, as was the case in El Salvador.

[67] Diaz, B. and Betts, J. (2017) Operations Evaluations Series Regional Synthesis 2013-2017: Latin America and the Caribbean Region

[68] Beazley, R. *et al.* (2016) Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean

[69] OCHA (2016c) Preventing El Niño Southern Oscillation Episodes from Becoming Disasters: A 'Blueprint for Action'

[70] Climate Centre (2017) Social Protection in a Changing Climate: Making systems adaptive through climate information and early action

Following the initial assessment, UNICEF's approach to nutrition was largely devoted to setting up nutritional treatment units and training government staff in urban centres. While these centres appear to be sustainable as the government has provided continued funding, they have had relatively limited impact on communities affected by the El Niño drought. Most of the communities impacted are some distance from urban centres and they have been understandably reluctant to come and stay for extended periods while their child is being treated. Reflections on lessons learned during interviews with staff from UNICEF and the nutritional unit was that mobile nutritional units would have been a more effective way of reaching affected communities while at the same time providing an opportunity to regularly monitor nutritional status.

Many key informants from UN agencies and their partners in both countries visited commented on the challenges of working within a 6-month timeframe for slow-onset crisis that requires time to achieve meaningful outcomes.

In both countries visited, there was an emphasis that violence has had humanitarian consequences and it was difficult to separate chronic violence from humanitarian impact in such a context. This resulted in increased costs due to security and access. Some drivers didn't want to go into affected areas.

Complementing funding from other donors

Local authorities were positive about outcomes of CERF-funded interventions, feeling that there had been good coordination and found technical teams of UN agencies and their NGO partners very motivated and committed. Interviews with government staff showed there was an understanding that they felt that it was both a responsibility of the government to complement outside assistance and for strong participation from communities to improve coverage. Government staff felt that CERF had been very effective in bringing together diverse agencies from government, UN and NGOs. In El Salvador, the government contributed $1.6 million[71] to WFP's food voucher programme, which they viewed as an important complement to their social protection system.

Working with local response mechanisms

Early warning systems have been improved over the past few years in both countries, driven in part by the multi-year drought that preceded the 2015-2016 El Niño crisis. Interviewees from UN agencies and government noted there were still gaps in the data, particularly at a community level. Early warning data was relatively comprehensive in El Salvador where the government has set up a communication system to transmit relevant messages to both political leaders and communities. UN agencies have already started working with government counterparts to refine early warning indicators and it seems likely that El Salvador could yield some important learning for early action approaches. A key feature of translating early warning into early action highlighted in both countries and at a regional level was the importance of consensus on triggers/thresholds that would release CERF funds for early action/early response. UNICEF's nutrition interventions appeared to be examples of early action since it was not the nutritional indicators reaching emergency thresholds that was the trigger (1% acute malnutrition in both Honduras and El Salvador), but rather the relatively rapid rate of increase in acute malnutrition observed in some communities where rates doubled (El Salvador) or tripled (Honduras) during a relatively short period of time.

Violence between and within communities is prevalent in the region and UN agency staff stressed the importance of working with NGOs since they have valuable knowledge on how to deal with security risks and who to approach to gain access. Even so, occasional security issues did influence the efficiency of interventions since there were times when distributions had to be delayed or cancelled due to security incidents.

[71] This government contribution was sourced from the Fund for Civil Protection, Prevention and Mitigation of Disasters, which was established in El Salvador for either disaster prevention or to support a timely and effective disaster response.

Most UN agencies worked with national government counterparts. The exception was UNDP's water intervention in El Salvador, where there was no leading institution that was an obvious counterpart for UNDP's water intervention. UNDP proceeded to work with individual municipalities but found that they had to adapt their approach to the specific capacity and *modus operandi* of each municipality. Municipal authorities worked together with UNDP to select the areas where there was most need for water.

According to WFP in Honduras, they have increased cooperation with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to both help with targeting in communities and to improve PDM coverage, which WFP food monitors used to do in the past. During 2014-15, several gaps in targeting were identified but since involving CSOs, an estimated 95-98% have been targeted appropriately during 2015-2016.

An intriguing finding from the field visits and subsequent discussions with the National Disaster Management Office was the importance given in El Salvador to traditional early warning systems to complement scientific data. The example most often referred to, particularly by elderly community members, was that of the spot-breasted oriole (*Icterus pectoralis*, known as "chiltotas" in central America) which, depending on the positioning and size of their nests, has been a traditional way of predicting both droughts and strong winds.[72]

3.4.4. Added value of CERF

There was a consensus amongst the members of the UN Country Team in El Salvador that CERF had worked as a catalyst to change the way UN agencies worked together, which has had an impact beyond projects. They have since established a working group on resilience, using learning from the CERF experience to add value through joint action and peer learning. Based on this experience with CERF, UN agencies commissioned the organisation Maps Mission to map capacities of two humanitarian and two development agencies (UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDP, WFP) to help put in place a coordinated approach to help ensure a joint approach to addressing violent conflict.

Although UNICEF and FAO had relatively little immediate impact on El Niño-affected populations, it was evident that CERF helped establish structures and systems that have contributed to resilience.

CERF's comparative advantage

CERF played a critical role in the response in both countries given that it was the primary source of humanitarian funding and there was little alternative funding available. In Honduras, WFP was able to start operations during 2015 using a combination of their own funding and a contribution from the EU. CERF was nevertheless critical to kick-start interagency operations in Honduras and accounted to nearly 30% of the total contributions to their humanitarian response plan. In El Salvador, CERF covered 82% of the contributions to the response plan during 2015[73] and, for agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF, CERF was virtually the sole source of humanitarian funds. The main advantage, as found in other countries, was CERF's catalytic role in promoting joint action. A common challenge was the short timeframe for CERF implementation, which most recipient agencies felt is ill-suited to a slow onset disaster, especially in view of the fact that communities need to wait 8 months for a harvest.

[72] This example, along with others, was referenced in El Salvador's country report at the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe. Government of El Salvador (2005) Country Report. Conferencia Mundial Sobre Reducción de Desastres. Kobe - Hyogo, Japan, 2005. (page 29) https://www.unisdr.org/2005/mdgs-drr/national-reports/El-Salvador-report.pdf

[73] Source FTS

Leveraging additional funding

Apart from WFP and FAO, other agencies received very little humanitarian funding in addition to CERF. According to FTS data, apart from CERF's 82% contribution to the response plan during 2016 in El Salvador, the main additional contributions came from governments themselves. In El Salvador, the government contributed $1.6 million to WFP's food voucher programme. Apart from CERF, relatively little funding was available for the response, with the exception of WFP which received funding from private sources and an additional $1.3 million from USAID in 2016 to support their response and recovery operations.[74]

In Honduras, other contributors to the 2016 Response plan apart from CERF, there was WFP ($2 million), the Canadian government ($1.1 million) and Saudi Arabia ($700,000). Together this amounted to only 14% of estimated requirements according to the response plan. USAID was the largest single donor to the El Niño response in Honduras, allocating almost US$6.5 million during 2016.[75]

Value of larger or additional allocations

Initial requests from both UN Country Teams were for more funding than they actually received. Honduras requested just over $4 million and El Salvador, $3.1 million. El Salvador received $2.7 million, but Honduras only received $2.2 million, around 55% of what they had requested. In both countries, this resulted in reduction of areas covered, although there was a consensus amongst interviewees from government, NGO partners and UN agencies that they would have had sufficient capacity to mitigate the impact of the drought in additional areas if more funding had been made available. In addition, as noted above, some community members in targeted areas who satisfied selection criteria could not be assisted since they were absent when registration was taking place.

[74] USAID (2016) Food for Peace Report to Congress on Food Assistance in Central America
[75] ibid

4. Lessons for CERF's Role in Supporting Early Action

This section addresses review question 4. It begins by discussing how early action is different to preparedness (sub-questions 4.4 and 4.1) and why CERF could and should do more to support early action (sub-question 4.1). It goes on to identify CERF's niche in a broader financing landscape for disaster risks (sub-question 4.2). It concludes by considering how CERF could forge stronger links to early warning systems and existing initiatives in order to support early action (sub-question 4.3) and what CERF would need to do differently in order to finance early action more systematically (sub-question 4.1).

4.1. Early action: What could, or should CERF do more of or do differently and why?

How is early action different?

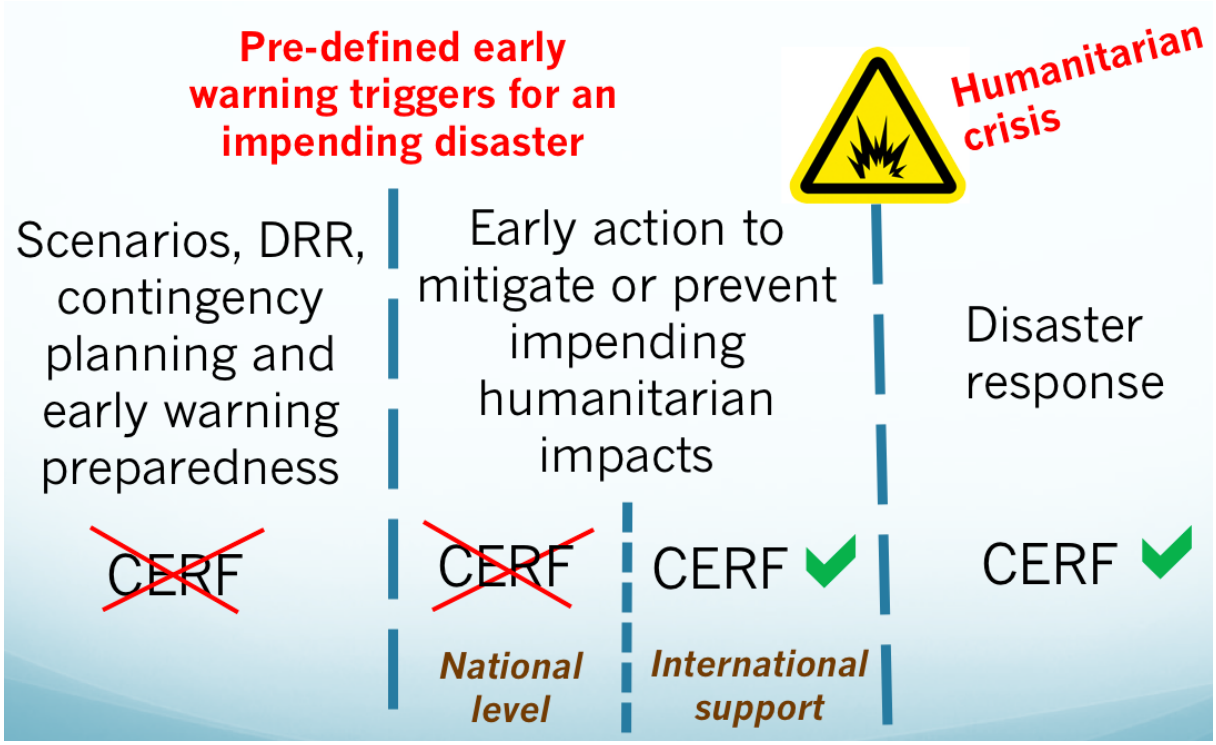
Financing for early action exists in the intersection of traditional internationally led crisis response and the growing movement towards putting financing in place in advance to respond to predictable risk. Its purpose is not simply to make funds available or available quicker in response to crises but based on analysis of risk, to put in place a predictable financing response in advance of a crisis happening. Early action often entails not just acting earlier but doing things differently in order to reduce or mitigate the impact of a forecast or anticipated crisis.

This review adopts the definition of early action in the draft inter-agency SOPs for early action to El Niño/La Niña episodes, which state that, "Early action consists of activities that can be implemented *before the anticipated hazard* to mitigate or even prevent its impacts" (page 5). This definition applies beyond El Niño/La Niña episodes, to hazards of all kinds. Early action is usually triggered once thresholds in risk levels are exceeded based on forecasts and relevant early warning indicators supported by a technical consensus. Early action is thus initiated in response to the high probability of a specific disaster event. This differs from longer-term disaster preparedness, which focuses on a range of different potential hazards and risks, with actions often identified and prioritised through scenario-based planning. Preparedness measures are normally a precondition for effective early action. Figure 17 below illustrates the sequential phasing and properties of preparedness and early action in relation to crisis events. From CERF's perspective, it is important to distinguish early action from preparedness because, while time critical interventions are part of its mandate, longer-term preparedness is not (see below).

Figure 17 also demonstrates that the "triggers" for CERF funding for early action might not be the same as for other funding instruments. While global events such as El Niño would have both global and national-level thresholds for early action, early action for country-specific slow onset disasters such as droughts would normally be initiated at a national level. In these cases, CERF (and other international funding instruments) could consider funding for early action when higher thresholds of probability have been reached.

Since early action is initiated on the basis of the *probability* of an event, rather than when an event has observably occurred, statistically there is a possibility that, sometimes, the anticipated or predicted event will not occur, or will not occur with the predicted level of severity and impact. Some donors are willing to provide 'no regrets' funding even when there is a possibility that the hazard will not materialise because there is evidence that this is less expensive than always providing funding late. Donors may also provide 'no regrets' funding when there is a relatively low probability of a hazard materialising because the types of early action that they are funding will deliver results and benefits to vulnerable populations even if the disaster does not occur. It is possible to adopt a 'low regret' approach in which actions are initiated when there is a higher degree of certainty of a risk materialising and funding is targeted at actions that are likely to deliver results whether the predicted event occurs or not.

Figure 17 Early Action Response Timeline



Source: Review Team

What are the advantages of early action?

Understanding the exposure of vulnerable populations to risk, making financial provision in advance, and putting in place plans to guide response are increasingly accepted as the most effective approaches to ensuring an adequate, timely and orderly response to emergencies (OECD, 2014; Clarke & Dercon, 2016). Also putting in place predictable financing for predictable risks has become both technically possible and a far higher political priority**.**

Financing early action can save lives, avoid unnecessary suffering and lead to a less costly humanitarian response. A shift away from ad hoc ex post responses to predictable crises received a high level of policy attention after the late and inadequate response to the Horn of Africa food security crisis and famine in Somalia in 2010/11. Global-level policy commitments within the humanitarian sector acknowledge the desirability of early action.[76] There is also increasingly compelling evidence that early action saves lives and money (Cabot Venton et al, 2012; Cabot Venton, 2016; CERF and OCHA FCS, 2013). [77] [78] There have been calls for new approaches to funding such as more flexible shock-responsive development financing and humanitarian funding that can support "pre-emptive or early response" (Hillier and Dempsey, 2012). In response, there is now a growing momentum in developing both a range of development-financing disaster risk financing instruments and humanitarian early

[76] For example, the 2015 High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing recommended "replicating this type of use of risk financing so that disaster-prone countries have preparedness mechanisms in place. This would create increased liquidity for early action, rather than relying on post- crisis 'relief-itemised' assistance."

[77] In a 2013 note on the role of OCHA pooled funds in financing early action, the CERF secretariat and OCHA FCS note that the IASC Lessons Learning Review on Early Action and Resilience in the Sahel 2011-2012 highlighted that "a number of quick impact projects...that helped reduce the impact of the coming food shortage, at a relatively small cost, such as destocking and support to market gardens in Mauritania and early cash transfer in Niger. These interventions diminished the impact of the crisis and were much less expensive than later responses".

[78] Cabot-Venton et al (2013) found that across a four-country study, the cost of food aid decreased between 11 and 45 per cent as a result of early procurement. From the household perspective, modelling across the four countries studied indicated that household food deficits decreased by 15 per cent on average as a result of receiving early transfers.

action financing instruments and programming approaches, though many are relatively new and not yet at scale (see section 4.2 below).

Early action approaches have the potential to reduce the politics and costly procrastination in resource allocation decision-making. The findings outlined in section 3 show that decision-makers and funders still often fail to respond to early indicators of crisis, partly because the system has a range of 'misaligned incentives' that continue to favour a late response. These include:[79]

- ***Accountability disincentives.*** Decision-makers do not feel, and are not held, accountable for failing to prevent crises escalating. There are no real incentives for them to respond early, and in fact there may be both real and perceived risks associated with initiating an early response only to find that the hazard later fails to materialise.
- ***Political disincentives.*** Crisis-affected governments often fear the political repercussions of declaring crises and, in many cases, it is difficult for international actors to respond without government invitation. Donors may also be reluctant to respond, particularly in settings where they have a difficult relationship with affected country governments or other domestic political actors. [80]
- ***Competing prioritisation incentives.*** Humanitarian donors faced with annual caseloads of urgent and acute humanitarian needs, which far outstrip available resources, may struggle to prioritise needs that have not yet breached a crisis threshold.
- ***Decision-making biases****:* Notably for drought responses there tends to be a 'status quo' bias, whereby change is resisted unless there is a very clear weight of evidence confirming that an alternative course of action is beneficial.

Why CERF could and should do more to support early action

The promotion of early action and response to reduce loss of life is one of CERF's three main objectives.[81] However, since the creation of the CERF in 2006, understandings of the benefits of responding earlier to mitigate the impacts of risk, of what early actions comprise, and indeed the possibility of responding to earlier to signals based on improved monitoring and forecasting, have moved on significantly. The humanitarian system as a whole has not been structured for early action (as highlighted by the findings in section 3) but policy and practice are changing, there are a number of reasons why CERF is well positioned and should adapt its approach and tools to keep pace with this shift towards enabling early action.

CERF has a number of potential advantages and opportunities in developing its early action financing role and capabilities. CERF is potentially less prone to the accountability and political disincentives and decision-making bias described above than other donors, which gives it a comparative advantage in financing early action. Also, findings from the field missions suggest that it is easier to work with

[79] Adapted from Hillier (2017).

[80] Bailey (2013) argues for example that the delayed donor response to the 2011 food security crisis (then famine) in Somalia "was an obvious and inevitable consequence of donor anti-terror strategies designed to prevent the capture of humanitarian aid by the Islamist organization al Shabaab." Sida et al. (2017) meanwhile note that analysis of responses to famines in the 1980s and 1990s found that famines were successfully prevented in democratic states, which were 'friends of the West', while famines escalated in non-democratic states with difficult relations with major donors, citing Buchanan-Smith and Davies who argue that "it is not the severity of the crisis, but relations between international donors and national governments which tends to be the single most important determinant of the timing and scale of the international response."

[81] UN General Assembly Resolution 60/124, 8th March 2006, which upgrades the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the Central Emergency Response Fund states the purpose of the CERF as follows: "to ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian emergencies, with the objectives of promoting early action and response to reduce loss of life, enhancing response to time-critical requirements and strengthening core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises, based on demonstrable needs and on priorities identified in consultation with the affected State as appropriate."

governments in advance of a disaster to take mitigating early humanitarian actions because it avoids the necessity for governments to make politically unpalatable disaster declarations. [82]

CERF is an established and respected instrument with a global remit, which already provides an important global balancing and catalytic functions, addressing critical geographical and temporal funding gaps which bilateral funding responses often struggle to address. Notably, CERF has financed responses in over a hundred countries and territories to date, including many which do not have existing international humanitarian response presence and systems.

As responding actors extend their programming earlier to deliver early mitigating actions and, given that there is a clear gap in readiness to fund early action across the humanitarian community, it is logical for the CERF to extend their balancing and catalytic functions into this expanding field of action. In addition, donors and recipients of the CERF, including UN Country Teams, have confidence in the established decision-making and accountability systems of the CERF, which they have invested in over more than a decade. Building on existing confidence, knowledge and systems represents a potentially relatively low-cost, low-risk option which is more likely to support coordinated funding response across the spectrum of early action and crisis response.

The following sections provide further discussion and detail on CERF's potential niche and likely challenges in financing early action.

4.2. Disaster risk financing landscape and CERF's niche

The broader disaster risk financing landscape includes both development and humanitarian financing instruments and has developed rapidly in recent years. This is partly due to growing demand for making financial provision against predictable risk as exposure to climate related risk continues to increase in many parts of the world. Notably, risk financing was recognised as a priority in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015; under Mexico's presidency of the G20 in 2012; and in the 2012 Sendai Dialogue (OECD, 2014). Technical innovations, including in the forecasting and modelling of risk, also mean that it is increasingly possible to anticipate and prepare for disasters (Clarke & Dercon, 2016). In addition, the creation of parametric triggers that enable rapid, automatic pay outs, eliminating the need for costly loss adjustment, is dramatically driving down the cost of insurance and has opened up new markets for risk financing instruments in high-risk, low-resource settings. It is useful for CERF to understand this broader financing landscape in order to identify its niche. This section outlines a range of instruments and mechanisms, categorised as development risk financing instruments, humanitarian risk-based financing mechanisms and internal early action mechanisms.

Development disaster risk financing instruments

Disaster risk financing and insurance have quickly become a growing field of action for multilateral development banks, the global reinsurance industry and a range of bilateral development financing actors. The last ten years has seen rapid growth in demand and experimentation in possible applications for risk financing instruments including large-scale parametric insurance schemes protecting individuals against climate-related shocks; sovereign risk financing bonds providing governments with financial protection against large-scale risks; and sovereign risk pools, sharing and driving down the cost of financial protection against risk across a pool of subscribers. Scaling up coverage of disaster risk insurance has become a global-level policy priority and, in 2017, the G20 launched InsuResilience Global Partnership for Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance Solutions, to support their commitment to increase the number of people in the most vulnerable

[82] Lessons from the first years of operations of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) regional sovereign risk pool acknowledge the political sensitivities for African governments in declaring disasters and note they have observed "a willingness in governments to find procedural ways around this complex issue." (ARC, 2017).

countries who have access to insurance coverage against climate related hazards by 400 million by 2020.[83]

In risk-prone regions, there are compelling reasons to devise collective solutions to particular risks and regional blocks and geographical groups with common cause have worked together to make financial provision against risks. There are a number of cases where governments have created regional risk pools, enabling them to approach reinsurance markets with a more diversified risk portfolio to negotiate more favourable market terms for risk transfer instruments (including index-insurance and bonds) to provide financial protection against specified disaster risks. Examples include: the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF); the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI); and the African Risk Capacity (ARC). ARC is of particular relevance to CERF's role in financing early action in slow-onset emergencies because it is one of the few disaster risk financing instruments that has focused specifically on droughts, including in a number of countries that are frequent recipients of international humanitarian financing.

With the increasing gap between humanitarian needs and the financing available to address them, there has been a growing interest in social protection mechanisms that can scale up in response to shocks in low-income countries and conflict-affected states, thus reducing the need for separate humanitarian responses.[84] Currently, the majority of social protection schemes are not designed and sensitive to shocks (Oxford Policy Management, 2017).[85] However, Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) is designed to build resilience and reduce household vulnerability in the most drought prone, arid counties of Kenya - Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera and Wajir. The HSNP is able to scale up payments within two weeks of objective triggers being breached. Notably, the HSNP registered all households in the four target counties and provided them with bank accounts so that it could accommodate newly vulnerable or at-risk groups and other donors and programming actors can use the HSNP registry and infrastructure to deliver cash payments. In 2015 the HSNP provided four emergency payments to 207,000 additional households including one payment in October 2015 to all households as a crisis preparedness payment in advance of anticipated El Niño rains and possible flooding (Fitzgibbon, 2016). Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) also plans to expand its registry to 10 million people, which will provide a common registry for both PSNP resourcing and targeting, and for humanitarian planning and fundraising (ibid.) In future, as social protection schemes are rolled out in developing countries exposed to risk, it is reasonable to expect that shock-responsiveness will be designed in from the outset. Also, as was the case in Fiji and Lesotho, humanitarian funding could be channelled through or complement national social protection schemes more systematically.

There are also resilience programmes that include shock-responsive early action elements and/or crisis modifiers. Section 3.3 referred to the ZRBF, the BRCiS consortium the Somalia Resilience Programme. In some cases, these include access to early action financing through insurance, and in others trigger-based contingency funding. For example, WFP and Oxfam America launched the R4 rural resilience programme in 2011, which provides 43,000 farmers in Ethiopia, Senegal, Malawi, Zambia and Kenya with a combination of programming interventions enabling them to reduce and transfer risk (including through weather-linked crop insurance); take prudent risks; and build risk reserves.[86] In 2015 and 2016, the insurance element of the R4 programme paid out around US$ 45,000 to farmers in Ethiopia,

[83] See http://www.insuresilience.org/about/

[84] DFID has financed a three-year study on shock responsive social protection systems. For more details, see http://www.opml.co.uk/projects/shock-responsive-social-protection-systems

[85] Their approaches to targeting may not map closely onto patterns of climate-related risk for example. Payment delivery infrastructure may not be designed to flex and respond quickly. In many cases, the financial protection against shocks has not been built into the financing architecture supporting social protection schemes.

[86] The R4 programme grew from the earlier HARITA programme developed by Oxfam America, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and Swiss Re in 2009 in Tigray in northern Ethiopia and which combined strengthened resource management with weather index insurance.

Senegal and Malawi. Access to early pay-outs triggered by parametric crop insurance enables farmers to avoid distress selling productive assets, enables more rapid recovery, and protects gains in resilience.[87]

Humanitarian risk-based financing mechanisms

There are currently two key humanitarian risk-based financing mechanisms for early action - the Red Cross Forecast-based Financing (FbF) mechanism and the NGO START Fund Anticipation Window.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (in collaboration with its Climate Centre) developed a FbF mechanism to support anticipatory humanitarian action in advance of a disaster, using scientific data to identify elevated risks and geographically specific pre-defined thresholds that automatically trigger the release of funding for pre-agreed early actions.[88] These thresholds or triggers are identified based on vulnerability data and weather and hazard forecasts by the FbF teams in country with scientific advice through the RCRC Climate Centre in close cooperation with national hydro-meteorological services and disaster risk management authorities. The German government has financed FbF pilots implemented by the German Red Cross and National Societies or WFP in seven countries.[89] In each pilot country the identified triggers, early actions, budget and responsibilities in the implementation are detailed in Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) or Early Actions Protocols (EAPs). The pilots have focused on rapid onset emergencies (particularly flooding and tropical storms) but the aim is to expand to slow onset emergencies as well. The pilot projects have already triggered early actions in 2016 and 2017 with funding allocated for early actions anticipating El Niño floods (Northern Peru) and cold waves (High Andeans) in Peru and cyclones and flooding in Bangladesh. The FbF pilots regularly convene international and regional Dialogue Platforms to gather collective knowledge of the practitioners and scientists involved in the pilots and to facilitate an exchange of learning.

Building on evidence and experience from the pilots, the German government is supporting the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to incorporate an anticipatory financing window in 2018 that will automatically release funding for pre-agreed early actions once a forecast threshold is hit. The anticipatory financing window within the DREF will open up the possibility of accessing early action financing for all RCRC national societies. Once the FbF window to the IFRC's DREF is launched, a Scientific Advisory Committee and a Validation Committee are expected to safeguard the quality of the EAPs and validate that thresholds and early actions are selected based on evidence and scientific data. The design of the facility was being finalised at the time of interviews, however in terms of expected scale, contributions of EUR 13 million between 2018 and 2020 are anticipated from the German government to support the establishment of the global-level facility with subsequent contributions of at least EUR 1 million. Contributions from other donors are not yet known.

The START Fund added a Crisis Anticipation window to its existing pooled fund model in November 2016, making START "the first global early action fund" (START 2017). In its first year of operation, the START Anticipation Window allocated 10% of the total value of the START fund (GBP 872,375) to eight anticipation alerts (ibid.). The START Anticipation Window is a multi-stakeholder, multi-hazard fund.[90] It follows a forecast-informed and rules-based decision-making system but has not attempted to fully automate triggers, recognising the challenges of forecasting and analysis across the diverse set of hazards to which its members respond. To address the technical challenges, START has built an extensive network of partnerships with expert third parties including scientists, forecasters, risk-financing experts, humanitarian experts in preparedness and food security and analysts. It convened the FOREWARN network (forecast-based warning, analysis and response network) in 2016 to provide

[87] See: http://www1.wfp.org/r4-rural-resilience-initiative

[88] See http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/risk-reduction/forecast-based-financing/about-the-project/

[89] http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/risk-reduction/forecast-based-financing/pilot-projects/

[90] In its first year, START allocated funding responses addressing threats of flooding, hurricane, election-related violence, heatwave, drought and volcanic eruption.

advice and a forum for exchange and learning. While the Anticipation Window does not work to thresholds, FOREWARN members validate and help interpret anticipated crisis trajectories.

The table below summarises the key characteristics and differences of the DREF's FbF approach and the START Anticipation Window that are relevant for CERF to consider.

Table 3 Comparative Approaches by IFRC and the START Network to Early Action

Characteristic	DREF Forecast-based Financing	START Anticipation Window
Thresholds and early actions	Pre-agreed	Risk-informed and rules based decisions on case-by-case basis
Pay outs	Guaranteed	Decided on case-by-case basis
Window	Promoted as a window so that donors can earmark funds but not likely to be a separate pot of money	Promoted as a separate window but part of the overall START Fund.
Level of Funding	Working with Frankfurt School of Finance to model funding required	Used data analysis of funding trends to establish a guideline of funding level. Was 10% of overall fund in first year.
Eligibility	National Red Cross societies	NGO members of the START Network

In addition to these, WFP and the START Network are working with ARC on Replica Coverage. Currently, ARC member states pay premiums through national budget processes and receive pay outs for pre-approved contingency plans. These pay outs cover from less than 10% up to 30% of the total disaster funding requirements. The rest is usually covered by the international humanitarian system. ARC's Replica Coverage allows humanitarian actors to match ARC country insurance policies, doubling coverage and freeing up scarce humanitarian funds for other risks and emergencies. [91] The German government has agreed to provide US$ 10 million for a pilot in 2018.

Internal early action mechanisms

Organisations, including WFP and FAO, have developed internal funding instruments to provide funds to country programmes at critical moments to enable early action.

FAO has created an Early Action Fund of US$ 3 million within its existing internal contingency financing mechanism, the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA). The Early Action Fund allows country offices to access funds once early warning triggers have been reached, with decisions calibrated against "precise criteria", including the likelihood and severity of the risk, FAO's comparative advantage and capacity, and the type and the timing of the Early Actions proposed.[92] Crucially, the Early Action Fund is linked to an Early Warning – Early Action (EWEA) System, which translates warnings into anticipatory actions. EWEA monitoring and analysis is tailored to country context with country offices to establish indicators, triggers and sets of pre-agreed early action responses. In September 2016, after piloting the EWEA system in Kenya, FAO Kenya activated their Early Action Plan and US$ 400,000 was released from the Early Action Fund for a set of pre-agreed early action livestock support activities (Hillier, 2017). FAO has been conducting case studies to establish the return on investment of these early actions and the Kenya case study identified that, for every US$1 that FAO invested, each beneficiary household had a return of almost US$3.5 (FAO 2017).

WFP's FoodSECuRE is an internal financing instrument designed to fund programming responses across the full spectrum of WFP's programming repertoire of early action, response, recovery and resilience building. FoodSECuRE has three financing 'windows': (1) early action funding for community-

[91] http://www.africanriskcapacity.org/replica/

[92] Examples of early actions include asset and livelihoods protection such as rebuilding riverbanks and repairing irrigation schemes, and prepositioning response stocks. The EWEA has been piloted in Paraguay, Kenya, Sudan, Madagascar, Pacific Islands; with Guatemala, and the Philippines in 2016 and 2017. See: http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/ewea/en/

level responses linked to climate forecast-based triggers (2) complementary funding supporting WFPs other early response financing mechanisms and programmes during crisis response phase (3) multi-year flexible funding to support resilience-building programmes in the post disaster recovery phase. WFP began piloting FoodSECuRE in five countries in 2015 and aspires to raise US$ 400 million to enable it to function as a global-level facility. FoodSECuRE implementation was brought forwards in Guatemala and Zimbabwe in anticipation of the 2015/2016 El Niño. In Zimbabwe, WFP released funds to WFP and FAO to train farmers on 'climate-smart' agriculture, to provide agricultural inputs including seeds and fertilizers, and provide training on business practices.[93] As a result, the farmers were able to harvest and did not require humanitarian assistance so WFP did not trigger the second window.

WFP has a range of other internal funding mechanisms that country offices can use for early action. One is an Immediate Response Preparedness fund of US$ 6 million per year. This allocates up to US$ 300,000 to a country office for preparedness activities (excluding food purchase) such as initial assessments or pre-positioning of stocks. A country office can also establish an Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP), usually at a government's request, and receive up to US$ 1.5 million. This can be used for early action. WFP is moving to a system of five-year Country Strategic Programmes. This can include the option of crisis response based on the risk of certain types of hazards. Since the government has pre-approved this option, the country office can immediately request IR-EMOP funding when the emergency occurs.[94] The challenge with this approach is when the country office has not forecast a particular type of emergency (e.g., the Bangladesh CSP had the risk of floods built-in but not a refugee crisis. Also, as highlighted in section 3.3, the CSPs for Lesotho and Swaziland did not have the crisis response option at the time of the El Niño crisis). Finally, as noted above, WFP is part of the German-funded FbF project.

This section has outlined a wide range of initiatives. Many of these are in experimental and learning stages. They also target specific dimensions of crisis response, particularly food security and livelihoods. While there are aspirations to scale up, many of the humanitarian instruments are relatively small in scale and limited in their coverage. Thus there is a gap in the financing landscape for early action financing at scale, which would enable a coordinated multi-sector response.

4.3. Linking to early warning systems and other measures for financing early action

As highlighted in Table 3 below, a pre-prepared disaster response plan and pre-agreed triggers or decision-making procedures for the release of funds and implementation of actions together with pre-agreed financing are three key pillars required for effective early action.

[93] See: http://www.wfp.org/climate-change/initiatives/foodsecure

[94] The country office needs confirmed donor funding or the high likelihood of donor funding to access more than US$ 1.5 million in advance funding.

Table 4 Three Pillars for Effective Early Action

1. Coordinated plan for post-disaster action agreed in advance
• A single, credible disaster response plan • Defines explicit responsibilities and liabilities of all stakeholders (who or what will be protected, against what, and who will pay for what) • Establishes clear decision processes • Clarifies what risks the national/local government will take on and what risks have to be shared with households and firms, as well as the role of international partners
2. Fast, evidence-based decision-making processes
• Identify ahead of time objective and transparent rules to guide decision-making • Requires investing in early warning systems and better data/information (ground data on damage to or losses of people and buildings, area average index data on damage and losses, parametric indices), including the human and technological capacity to collect data in a timely manner • Define rules and triggers that result in pre-agreed interventions to promote decisive, timely action
3. Pre-planned financing to ensure that the plan can be implemented
• Financial planning ensures that funds are available quickly when – and only when – they are required by the plan • It binds partners to pre-agreed objectives, decision processes and implementation modalities

Source: Mahul et al. (2017), extracted from DFID (2017)

The preparation of ***pre-disaster plans*** at country level is a pre-requisite for early action financing so that actors already know how they will use the funding when an emergency is imminent. They also help to place a price tag on risk, which enables budgeting and financial planning. In addition, planning responses in advance, in a transparent collaborative manner, may help to curb long-standing challenges of institutional competition for funding, and reduce time lost on reaching consensus on how to respond, and in applying for funding. The preparation of such plans is beyond CERF's role and remit but there are some processes on which it should be able to rely. For example, ARC works with government partners on contingency planning to ensure that the government has plans and delivery channels to use the insurance funding quickly and effectively. There is scope to explore the extent to which CERF-recipient agencies function as these delivery channels or could use the government's delivery channels (such as social protection systems for cash distributions). OCHA is also active in supporting multi-agency contingency planning processes for different types of hazards. The review found several examples from Asia (including Viet Nam).

Experience from the FbF project has shown that the availability of early action funding can incentivise the preparation of early action plans, particularly if a pre-prepared plan is one of the conditions for the release of funds. The findings in section 3 demonstrate that CERF's convening power is one important way in which it adds value to humanitarian response. Therefore, it is likely that CERF's shift towards more systematic funding for early action will motivate agencies to put plans in place for accessing this funding. However, this incentive will only work if there are sufficient assurances that financing will actually be committed when it is needed. As noted in section 4.2, existing early action financing tools have not yet been brought to scale. Providing assurances of funding when the overall amount required is modest may be manageable, but CERF needs to consider seriously the volumes of financing required and the levels of assurances it is reasonable to provide.

These pre-disaster plans need to identify ***appropriate early actions*** that relevant actors will implement. There is currently a lack of consensus and some confusion around the concept of early action.[95] While there is growing evidence confirming the theoretical case for responding earlier, operational realities have yet to catch up and humanitarian actors are clearly at a relatively early stage in learning how to adapt their programming to provide meaningful early action.[96]. Early actions may look somewhat different from standard humanitarian responses and respondents mentioned information, training, surveillance and cash transfers to enable mitigating action as playing a potentially important role.[97] Early actions will also differ according to the type of hazard and speed of onset. There is clearly a need to invest in evidence and learning about what works and what is feasible, as well as new approaches to measuring impact to enable the system to learn and adapt.

Early action depends on ***early warning systems*** to identify when thresholds for triggering financing and action have been reached. While surveillance and monitoring of risks continues to improve with increased investment and greater technical capabilities, including major global public goods such as satellite observation and global weather forecasting, at country-level, surveillance and monitoring remains extremely uneven (as demonstrated by the findings in section 3). Sufficiently good forecasts are needed for early warning systems to predict extreme weather events and countries need to invest into their hydro-meteorological services and in regional meteorological observational and modelling capacity to increase the certainty of forecasts (Hallegatte, 2012). There is a risk that without investment in meteorological information and early warning systems, early action will proceed unevenly with the greatest progress in the most data-rich contexts. However, even in contexts where data is limited, it is possible to draw on a combination of sources, local knowledge and expertise to construct reasonably effective early warning systems. In Sudan for example, FAO piloted their Early Warning Early Action approach in the absence of a formal early warning system and with limited meteorological and forecasting capacity. They relied instead on collating datasets, including livelihood indicators, and forecasting outlooks undertaken by a range of agencies, weighted according to their importance. This hybrid and pragmatic early warning system signalled an onset of drought in Kassala state in September 2017, which was followed by a rapid assessment of hydrology, vegetation and livestock conditions, which in turn triggered a set of early actions.

It is important to note that forecasts based on a narrow set of indicators are more susceptible to 'basis risk', that is a mismatch between observed indicators and the actual impact of risk. A combination of forecast information with observations can help to reduce uncertainty and improve the quality of operationally relevant analysis (Hillier, 2017). This requires not only investments in data collection and scientific forecasting and modelling, but also in the ability to interpret this information in context with other evidence and indicators, including information on the vulnerability of populations at risk and likely impacts. Analysis and predictions of impact are necessary to provide to provide decision-makers with indications of not only when but also where early action is most needed (WMO 2015). The ARC for example factors in impact when calculating payouts, and through its Africa Risk View platform, combines existing operational rainfall-based early warning models on agricultural drought in Africa

[95] Hillier (2017) asserts for example: "In practice, many organisations struggle to conceptualise activities that would constitute early action. There is a sector-wide lack of evidence to guide decision-makers and implementers with respect to what the most effective early action interventions might be, when they should be initiated, and what levels of investment would be appropriate."

[96] An evaluation of DFID's Internal Risk Facility (IRF) in Somalia found for example that responding organisations tended to put forward standard preparedness actions, particularly procurement and prepositioning, and regular response activities in their funding proposals and struggled to explain how early actions might differ from routine programming. (La Guardia & Poole, 2015). The START Network also notes in its lessons learned from its Mali early action response that "Experimentation with anticipatory project activities is key as this work is still relatively new for many agencies." (START, 2017).

[97] The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre noted that in Bangladesh they had provided households payments of around EUR 60 in advance of a flood to enable them to pay for transport to leave the area and other essential costs.

with data on vulnerable populations to form a standardised approach for estimating food insecurity response costs.[98]

Capacities to engage in these new fields of analysis may be lacking at country level and new analysis, planning and coordination tools may be required. The START Network for example clearly observed the need for investments in capacities at country level during its first year of operating the Anticipation Window so it offers small grant funding of up to GBP 10,000 to enable actors at county-level to undertake analysis, scenario and response planning (START, 2017).

The global-level availability of forecasting data and analysis is rather better than at country-level, though information may prove expensive and difficult to interpret.[99] First-movers in the early action financing field have already invested in tools, networks and platforms for forecasting and analysis, such as the Red Cross Climate Centre and the FOREWARN network. The growing commitment to scaling up risk insurance also provides opportunities to leverage existing investments in forecasting, analysis and product design. For example, the UK, Germany and World Bank established the Centre for Global Disaster Protection in London in 2017, which will convene experts from finance, science and the humanitarian communities to provide advice and develop innovative financial tools for managing risk.[100] ARC continues to develop its Africa Risk View tool and CERF will need to explore the extent to which it can use this as an effective early warning system for droughts.

For El Niño and La Niña events, the inter-agency SOPs for early action that are being developed provide guidance on the use of forecasting tools at global, regional and national levels. They also identify thresholds that should trigger certain types of actions at different levels. Finally, the SOPs include examples of early action programmes in different sectors (IASC Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness, 2017). These SOPs and the work of the Global El Niño Analysis Cell, which met twice in 2017 to identify high-risk countries that the international community should prioritise for support, will be key to CERF's support for early action in response to these emergencies.[101]

Even when early warning systems are in place, there can be a challenge with agreeing on the ***thresholds for response***.[102] It is particularly challenging to agree on thresholds for slow onset emergencies where there is no obvious 'event'. Section 3.3 described the FSNAU's development of the early warning early action dashboard for Somalia. It has taken several years to make this operational so that it can be used to inform decision-making and response actions (Feeny, 2017). Even when risks are measurable, their impacts and appropriate responses are highly context specific and vary according to localised geographical and political economy factors. It is not simply a technical exercise, therefore, and it might not be appropriate to aim for objective, scientifically derived triggers for some complex multi-causal risks. The START Anticipation Window provides an illustration of an alternative approach to complex risks whereby scientific evidence is rigorously tested and incorporated in decision-making processes, in combination with expert judgement and observation from the ground, in a transparent and well documented decision-making process.

[98] http://www.africanriskcapacity.org/2016/10/31/africa-riskview-introduction/

[99] Based on experiences from their first year of operations, the START Anticipation Window observes that, "Quality, bespoke forecasting information is expensive. Even trial partnerships with forecast information providers can incur high costs." (START, 2017). They are therefore seeking funding from outside of traditional humanitarian donor sources to help meet the costs of high quality evidence and analysis.

[100] See: https://dfidnews.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/20/centre-for-global-disaster-protection/

[101] The Global Cell is an inter-agency body formed under the IASC. With the forecast of a 50-60% probability of an El Niño episode in the second half of 2017, OCHA, WFP and FAO first convened the cell in April 2017 to identify countries at greatest risk from June-September 2017 (Ging, 2017a, Global El Niño Analysis Cell, 2017). It met again in November 2017 to identify countries most at risk from the forecast La Niña in 2018 (Ging, 2017b).

[102] The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre notes that attempts to develop triggers and thresholds have proved 'onerous and divisive, with little results', in part because expectations have been somewhat unrealistic in relation how prescriptive one can be in specifying what actions should follow the breaching of a threshold (Coughlan et al. 2014).

In the Somalia context, the discussion around developing triggers was largely confined within the humanitarian community, but in many other settings, a far wider set of actors, including National Disaster Management Agencies, Ministries of Finance and Planning, forecasting agencies, social protection schemes, private sector insurance actors, and development financing actors, might need to be engaged in agreeing thresholds, actions and responsibilities. In many contexts, achieving a shared understanding of risk and planning for early action will inevitably draw humanitarian actors into working across the humanitarian-development nexus. This will bring new coordination challenges. The ARC notes for example that coordination, shared analysis and inclusive dialogue is an area of "significant concern" and results from practical challenges including lack of familiarity with risk-based approaches, to political economy challenges including political sensitivities, vested interests and institutional competition (ARC, 2017).

This section has identified that, in order for CERF to provide effective early action financing, it needs the humanitarian and wider disaster risk management systems to create an enabling environment that includes pre-disaster plans that identify appropriate early actions, agreed thresholds for response and adequate early warning/surveillance systems to identify when the thresholds have been reached. CERF itself needs to put in place transparent decision-making systems and capacity to act on scientific and other evidence and decide what level of assurances of funding it can provide (and what level of funding it needs to have available for this).

5. Conclusions

This section outlines the review's conclusions, organised by review question.

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

The timing of CERF's response to any emergency depends on country-level applications for funding. The evidence presented in section 3 demonstrates that UN agencies tended to wait until the impact of the El Niño was clear before applying for funds. In development-oriented countries, agencies also waited for government emergency declarations and consensus around needs assessments (Zimbabwe was perhaps one exception to this). Despite this, CERF was usually the first international funding to arrive and agencies (as well as governments in countries like Viet Nam) appreciated it greatly.

Agencies and donors were largely unaware of the secretariat's criteria for accepting or rejecting funding applications and determining allocation size. Given CERF's approach of kick starting humanitarian responses and financing a small proportion of the overall humanitarian response, the size of allocations appeared to be appropriate. This was particularly the case for smaller and more development-oriented countries in Africa that had limited absorption capacity as they shifted from development to emergency mode. Respondents were also unaware of the approach of one allocation per affected country (with the exception of Zimbabwe and Malawi, which were refused El Niño-related funding on this ground in 2016). Nevertheless, it would be helpful for the CERF secretariat to consider carefully whether it is appropriate to adopt a policy of a one-off funding allocation for a phenomenon where the impact is not easily defined. While El Niño (and La Niña) are global phenomena, the impact can be very different in different regions and countries, and even within a country. Many countries experienced drought for two years while the El Niño exacerbated a four-year drought in Central America.

The knowledge of RC/HCs, recipient agencies and other partners about CERF's role, remit and procedures was context specific, but OCHA always played a crucial role in supporting CERF processes. Unsurprisingly, countries like Ethiopia and Somalia, which are regular recipients of CERF funding, were very knowledgeable and comfortable with the procedures. However, RCs in some development contexts also had a good understanding of the important role that CERF funding could play and used it accordingly.

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

The timelines for the field mission countries show that CERF funding usually arrived well after the onset of the El Niño-induced droughts. As noted above, this was mainly due to when agencies applied for funds. However, the CERF concept note and application process took a relatively long time for some countries, usually because agencies were not familiar with CERF requirements. This in turn influenced the effectiveness of some CERF-funded projects but there was also substantial evidence of ways in which CERF funding contributed to humanitarian responses, including kick-starting interventions in many contexts. In the Pacific and Central America, the pre-existing relationships between UN agencies receiving CERF funds and their government counterparts were a key influence on the effectiveness of the response. Unlike some donors, CERF financed sectors other than food assistance, agriculture and livelihoods in what were deemed to be food security crises. This was very helpful and contributed to the effectiveness of responses.

RC/HC CERF reports and interviews provided numerous examples of ways in which agencies used other donor funding to complement CERF-financed activities and also used CERF funding to complement government assistance programmes. The main examples of agencies using safety nets came from Fiji and Lesotho, where agencies used government safety net programmes to distribute cash. In some contexts, government entities were the main implementing partners for CERF-funded projects.

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

Section 3 outlined the many different ways in which CERF added value to the humanitarian responses to the El Niño crisis. In terms of CERF's potential role in financing early action, the key added value is CERF's convening power, bringing agencies around the table to develop coordinated and, sometimes, joint responses. The fact that CERF was usually the first international funding to arrive also gave UN agencies credibility vis-à-vis the government in development-oriented contexts. This could also be very useful for engaging governments in discussions around early action.

CERF's ability to release funds even without a government emergency declaration and its relative speed are a comparative advantage. Again, this would be important for financing early action because it could enable agencies to work with governments on early action to mitigate the impact of disasters and reduce the need for an emergency declaration. Agencies also appreciated CERF's needs-based, impartial approach, particularly in contexts that are not on the radar of traditional humanitarian donors and/or which do not receive media attention.

Agencies provided several examples of ways in which CERF funding helped them to leverage additional donor funding. This was particularly the case when CERF financing kick-started activities. Donors rarely had information about CERF allocations and, consequently, knowledge of CERF allocations did not directly influence their funding decisions.

In Honduras and El Salvador, interviewees argued that the size of the CERF allocation and the lack of other humanitarian funding meant that they had to reduce the coverage of the response. This suggests that CERF needs to consider the size of its allocations in contexts with limited sources of humanitarian funding. Also, as argued in section 3.3, an allocation to Zimbabwe for the 2016 drought response could have facilitated an earlier response.

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

Section 4 outlined the potential for early action to deliver more effective humanitarian outcomes through reducing loss of life and suffering as well as the cost of response. There is strong evidence and growing political support for early action, resulting in a growing range of programming and financing tools that are based on early warning signs and risk indicators. Given its convening role and that CERF funding incentivises coordination, CERF, as a fund with truly global reach, has the potential to play a unique and influential role in early action. This would have both system-wide benefits and deliver improved humanitarian outcomes within individual programmes. CERF could:

- **Enable coordinated multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral response:** Individual agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and NGO members of the START Network are already well on the way to establishing effective financing solutions for early action, but there remains a clear gap in the financing architecture to support multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral early action at scale.
- **Promote evidence-based decision-making:** CERF can channel funds to early actions based on available evidence/risk analyses and through ongoing operations of UN partners, side-stepping the challenge of waiting for an official disaster declaration or a full funding appeal.
- **Catalyse additional funds:** As noted in section 3, CERF funding often played an important role in in convincing other donors to commit funds. By committing relatively modest resources at an early stage, CERF funding would provide a powerful signal to other donors and catalyse other funding for early action.
- **Incentivise joint risk-management:** If CERF is able to provide a degree of assurance of access to early action funding, this could provide an incentive for actors at country-level to invest in collective risk analysis, anticipation and contingency planning, areas in which there is consistent under-investment at present.

There are a number of wider strategic benefits for CERF and OCHA of moving into financing early action. Financing early action would situate CERF in a progressive policy space that contributes directly

to the Agenda for Action aspirations to 'end needs' and aligns CERF with the emerging global policy consensus around pro-active risk-based financing. The practical demands of working in early action would also provide CERF with incentives and opportunities to develop strategic partnerships with technical actors – particularly in the scientific and financing fields – which will help to diversify CERF's added value and position CERF closer to sites of innovation in a changing financing landscape.

In addition, should OCHA choose to move into the early action financing policy pace, CERF's global platform and respected neutral voice could be used to advance global policy dialogue on the role of the UN system and other multilateral actors, and the role of member states, in making financial provision against global risks.

CERF will need to address several practical challenges if it moves into financing early action systematically. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and NGOs through the START Network have been the first-movers in financing early action, investing in forecasting, analysis and the establishment of thresholds, triggers and decision-making protocols; early action planning and coordination at country-level; development of SOPs/EAPs (Early Action Protocols) providing consensus on concepts, roles and actions; and the design of financing models and tools. CERF can benefit from relevant learning, but it should not underestimate the levels of commitment and investment required or the need for quick and decisive action. The recommendations section lays out suggestions for how CERF can address these challenges.

6. Recommendations

The key recommendation from this review is that CERF should finance early action systematically. The promotion of early action and response in order to save lives is already codified as one of CERF's three main objectives. Moreover, in the context of an expanded CERF, enabling financing for early action is one of the areas for which there is broad support (Willits-King, 2015). Since the creation of the CERF, understandings of the benefits of responding earlier to mitigate the impacts of risk and the technical feasibility of responding earlier have advanced considerably. As responding actors extend their programming to deliver early mitigating actions, it is logical for CERF to extend its balancing and catalytic functions into this expanding field of action before a disaster event. Therefore, investing in CERF's capabilities to fund early action is consistent with its founding objectives, and may be viewed as simply keeping pace with the demands of an evolving system. While the recommendations below focus on slow-onset emergencies, CERF should also consider its role in funding early action in other types of emergencies, i.e., rapid onset natural disasters and conflict-related crises, when acting on these recommendations.

As noted in sections 4.1 and 5.4, CERF has a number of potential advantages and opportunities in developing its early action financing role and capabilities. There is currently a gap in the financing landscape for early action financing at scale, which would enable a coordinated multi-sector response. CERF is an established and respected humanitarian financing instrument with a global remit. Building on existing confidence, knowledge and systems represents a potentially relatively low-cost, low-risk option, which is more likely to support a coordinated funding response across the spectrum of early action and crisis response.

In order to make this shift into financing early action systematically, CERF needs to make key decisions about its approach on the following issues:

- ***The degree of assurance it will provide about the availability of early action funding:*** Guaranteeing funding for early action (the FbF approach) incentivises investments in anticipation and planning and could make strategic use of OCHA's convening role. If funding is uncertain however, these advantages are significantly diminished. Although there is agreement that CERF's funding target should be expanded,[103] even with generous contributions, funds will nevertheless be finite. In the context of finite resources, CERF will need to decide, the degree of funding assurance it can provide to country teams undertaking risk analysis, planning and anticipation for early action. CERF will also need to consider carefully the nature and scale of early actions it can support. The scale and levels of certainty of impact would be key criteria to consider, with CERF potentially focussing on large-scale anticipated crises where there is a relatively high degree of certainty of impact occurring.
- ***Agreeing a process for releasing funding:*** CERF needs to decide whether it should release early action financing on the basis of pre-agreed 'hard' thresholds and early actions (FbF model) or adopt a fast and transparent decision-making process that combines scientific evidence with expert judgement (START Network approach). Hard thresholds are desirable because they provide clarity, objectivity and predictability for decision-making. In practice, however, they are difficult to achieve for slow-onset crises and depend to a great extent on the availability of forecasting and analytical capabilities at country-level, over which CERF has little influence. Since CERF will be funding early action in a potentially wide range of contexts, building a transparent rules-based decision-making processes that rigorously and transparently weighs the best available evidence and expert opinion, will be most appropriate, at least in the initial stages.
- ***Establishing a separate window alongside the existing RR and UFE windows:*** CERF should establish a separate early action 'window' similar to the existing UFE and RR windows. This would

[103] In December 2016, the UN General Assembly (GA) endorsed the Secretary-General's call to expand CERF's annual funding target to US$1 billion by 2018 in UN GA resolution A/RES/71/127.

operate according to clear criteria and guidelines for the use of funds but would permit CERF to retain a degree of flexibility across its portfolio of funding 'windows' to respond to changes in demand. Unlike the UFE and RR windows however, where a one-third to two-thirds ratio has been applied, the appropriate level of funding for an early action window would need to be determined.

- ***Establishing the level of funding for early action:*** The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and START Network have used different approaches to establish the level of funding that they need to have available for early action, based on their different decision-making approaches. There is an opportunity for CERF to build on country-level contingency planning processes to develop an aggregated global costing of early action, which would provide evidence to advocate for expanded contributions to CERF and could inform the design of innovative financing solutions to cover this tranche of global risk. However, this is a long-range ambition given that early action contingency planning and programming capabilities are likely to proceed at an uneven rate at country-level. Therefore, like the START Network, CERF should undertake an analysis to estimate likely demand for early action funding. As a first step, CERF could establish an initial small amount of financing (perhaps with funding from supportive donors) to pilot the early action approach in a limited number of countries that are capable and motivated to undertake sufficiently rigorous risk planning before moving to fully-fledged early action financing.
- ***Use a learning approach when supporting early action pilots***. Similar to the approach used by FAO and others, it will be important for CERF and recipient agencies to systematically assess performance while capturing and communicating relevant learning of early action pilot interventions funded by CERF to both improve the effectiveness of support and build an evidence base over time.

Aside from making these decisions, the CERF secretariat will need to work with other actors to address the following practical challenges associated with a move to financing early action:

- ***Reach consensus on the conceptual and practical definition of what early action means for the CERF.*** Agreeing a clear definition of early action for CERF and communicating this in such a way that it is clearly distinguished from preparedness and response to a crisis, will be a necessary first step to enable integration of early action into planning and programming and to promote and build support for early action financing among CERF donors. The inter-agency El Niño SOPs and FAO's work on defining early action provide a critical resource that CERF can use and endorse. In the same way that the CERF provides practical illustrations of the CERF life-saving criteria, CERF may also wish to build on the El Niño SOPs and work with engaged actors, to identify a set of illustrative "low regret" early actions to provide guidance to agencies and country teams. CERF should also work with donors that are champions of early action financing, such as Germany and the UK, to help reach consensus.
- ***Agree on how CERF will work with country-level actors to ensure CERF early action allocations are based on appropriate analysis and early action planning.*** Early action depends on pre-agreed risk analysis and planning at the country-level, activities which are outside CERF's control. However, OCHA has a key role through its coordination and needs analysis functions at country-level. In the context of high-level commitments to strengthen risk-informed planning and response among Member States and UN agencies,[104] ongoing reforms of country-level

[104] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/133 (December 2017) on "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" for example "*Encourages* humanitarian and development actors to pursue, where appropriate, common risk-management and resilience objectives, achievable through joint analysis and multi-year programming and planning cycles.". UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/132 "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development" for example emphasizes "*Encourages* the United Nations to continue to increase its support for Member States in their prioritized implementation of the Sendai Framework, including through the revised United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards

coordination within the UN system, including the Secretary General's reform agenda for the UN Development System and the New Way of Working, may provide significant opportunities for OCHA and the UN system more broadly to build a more risk-informed collective response.

- ***Adapt CERF's technical capabilities and processes to accommodate early action and establish strategic partnerships.*** Early action requires different technical capabilities, decision-making processes and accountability. CERF will need to invest in strategic partnerships, particularly with those working on early warning systems and financing triggers, and the in-house ability to engage with technical actors and evidence in an informed way. It will also need to invest in new tools and processes (for example, to move decision-making away from hard data and evidence towards risks and probabilities) and ensure that country-level partners are engaged appropriately.
- ***Build a critical mass of support for financing early action.*** There is still limited awareness of, and support for, early action among the humanitarian donor community. This is largely due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. In order to bring its core donor supporters with it into this new area of action, CERF will need to work with other informed supporters and allies to build donor support for early action. CERF would also benefit from taking a frank and realistic approach with donors about the challenges associated with financing early action. It should commit to investing (with its partners) in generating evidence about the benefits of early action and ensuring transparency around challenges encountered and how these have been managed.

a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development, in line with the Sendai Framework, to ensure that the implementation of the Sendai Framework most effectively contributes to a risk-informed and integrated approach to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular through building resilience against disasters, reducing displacement risk in the context of disasters and supporting national and local preparedness and response capacities."

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

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

Terms of Reference - 1 June 2017

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.[105]

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 activities in 19 countries[106]. 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

[105] 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

[106] 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

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[107], 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 questions 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 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

[107] 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.

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 ouputs:

(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 2: Review framework

Review questions	Indicators	Data sources
Key question 1: How appropriate is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?		
1.1 Is CERF funding (through the Rapid Response and Underfunded Emergencies windows) appropriate in timing, scale and mandate for slow onset, climate-related emergencies such as El Niño?	• Relevance and use of early warning systems and assessments • Timing of CERF application process and disbursements • CERF as a proportion of total humanitarian El Niño funding by country • CERF as a proportion of funding (required and received) for projects funded by CERF, where relevant • Differences in processes for, and uses of, RR vs. UFE funding • Appropriateness of CERF life-saving criteria • Appropriateness of CERF implementation timeframe	• Document review • Financial analysis • Key informant interviews with RC/HCs, recipient agencies, implementing partners • Early warning systems
1.2 Were the processes and strategy (including country selection, size of allocations per country and the policy of one allocation per country) applied by the CERF secretariat to El Niño allocations appropriate?	• Criteria for country selection • Criteria for determining size of allocation per country • Criteria for determining number of allocations per country	• Document review • Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, RC/HCs, recipient agencies, donors, global and regional level El Niño fora participants
1.3 Are partners, RC/HCs and other actors involved in the El Niño response at country level clear about the CERF's role in climate related emergencies, remit and procedures? Do they understand CERF's value added as a humanitarian financing tool in the context of broader development needs?	• Knowledge of CERF guidelines and procedures, including life-saving criteria and eligibility criteria for RR funding for a slow-onset disaster. • Number of questions and clarifications during CERF application process • How many countries approached CERF compared with how many CERF approached and reasons • Extent to which guidance on the CERF's role and approach in slow onset emergencies is clear to partners	• Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, RC/HCs, recipient and non-recipient UN agencies, implementing partners, OCHA
Key question 2: How effective is CERF as a funding mechanism for El Niño response?		
2.1 Did CERF funding help enable more timely and effective response to humanitarian needs associated	• Extent to which timing of CERF funding was optimal compared to other funding for humanitarian response	• Financial analysis • Document review

Review questions	Indicators	Data sources
with El Niño effects? Did CERF funds make a specific difference to the response?	• CERF funds supported activities that would not have been funded otherwise • Extent to which CERF guidance and secretariat support facilitated a timely and effective response	• Key informant interviews with RC/HCs, recipient agencies, implementing partners, non-recipient UN agencies
2.2 In what ways was CERF funding complementary to other funding sources?	• Extent to which CERF and follow-on funding from other donors was coherent • CERF funding filled temporal and sectoral gaps in other funding	• Document review • Key informant interviews with RC/HCs, recipient agencies, implementing partners • Financial analysis
2.3 Did CERF work well with local response mechanisms/systems and safety nets?	• Ways in which local response mechanisms/systems and safety nets responded to humanitarian impact of El Niño • Extent to which CERF recipient agencies aligned funding to local response mechanisms/systems and safety nets • How did CERF recipients use local systems to trigger their response	• Document review • Key informant interviews with local actors, RC/HCs, recipient agencies
Key question 3: What, if any, is CERF's added value in this type of emergency?		
3.1 What was the value added of the CERF to the El Niño response, beyond the provision of funding?	• CERF funding leveraging additional resources • CERF processes promoting coordination of humanitarian response • CERF funding promoting analysis of needs • CERF processes promoted a more coherent strategy and coordinated approach to responding to El Niño-related needs, for example due to the joint nature of CERF allocations • Extent to which applicants sought CERF funds for early response compared to other sources and effects of this early response	• Document review • Key informant interviews with RC/HCs, recipient agencies, OCHA, NGOs, donors
3.2 What, if any, is CERF's comparative advantage in responding to slow onset crises such as the El Niño?	• Effectiveness of criteria used to trigger CERF funding compared to other donors • CERF funding was more timely than other sources • CERF funding filled gaps in funding (geographical, sectoral or temporal)	• Document review • Financial analysis • Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, RC/HCs,

Review questions	Indicators	Data sources
		recipient agencies, selected humanitarian actors
3.3 Did CERF recipient agencies and other actors actively use allocations as an advocacy tool for raising awareness and mobilising resources at global and country levels? Did the allocations leverage additional funding?	• Advocacy efforts by CERF recipient agencies and others (e.g. RC/HCs) to raise awareness and mobilise resources • Additional funds leveraged	• Financial analysis • Key informant interviews with recipient agencies, RC/HCs, OCHA, donors
3.4 Would larger or additional CERF allocations have affected the response to the crisis and, if so, how?	• Evidence of needs left unfunded or gaps or delays in the response that CERF could have met/filled/prevented	• Key informant interviews with RC/HCs, recipient and non-recipient UN agencies • Financial analysis
Key question 4: What lessons can be drawn from the El Niño response for CERF's role in support of early action more broadly?		
4.1 What could a larger CERF do more of, and differently, in responding early to slow onset emergencies, including to climate-related ones?	1. How might the response have been different if more CERF funds were available? 2. Appropriateness of scale of CERF funding for El Niño response	• Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, RC/HCs, recipient agencies, selected humanitarian actors • Document review (reviews, evaluations, strategies)
4.2 What could be CERF's niche in addressing an apparent gap in the humanitarian financing architecture in responding to such emergencies?	• Comparative advantage of CERF funding compared to other funding sources used for the response • Extent to which needs and gaps in humanitarian financing architecture could be met by CERF • How might a larger CERF have filled financing gaps • Extent to which development or climate-related financing could fill the gap	• Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, donors, RC/HCs, recipient agencies, selected humanitarian and development actors • Document review
4.3 How could CERF forge a stronger link to early warning systems to inform risk-based allocations?	• Existing early warning systems and risk-based financing mechanisms for climate-related emergencies • Early warning systems used by the CERF secretariat • Triggers for emergency response • Risk-based financing procedures used by other donors	• Key informant interviews with CERF secretariat, donors, early warning mechanisms (in country and global), host

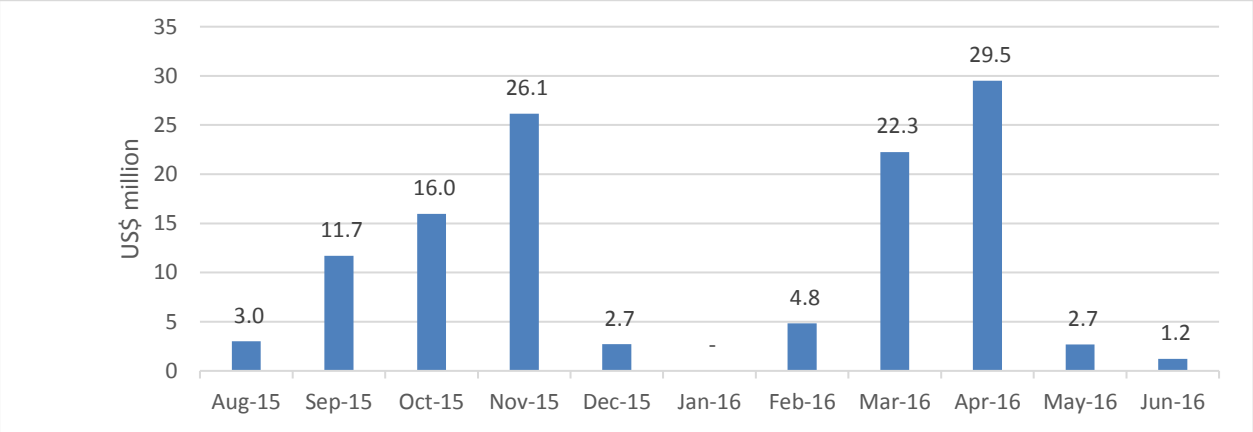
Review questions	Indicators	Data sources
		country governments, development actors • Document review
4.4 How and with what criteria would CERF delineate its early action work in such crises from preparedness?	• Comparison of CERF life-saving criteria and definitions of preparedness activities • Examples of complementarity of CERF-funded and preparedness activities • Extent to which CERF's life-saving criteria would still apply for slow-onset crises with a larger CERF	• Document review • Interviews with CERF secretariat, donors, RC/HCs, recipient and non-recipient UN agencies, development actors

Annex 3: CERF data analysis

Timeline of the response

CERF allocations to El Niño crisis responses are clustered around the third quarter of 2015 and March-April 2016.

Figure 18 Timeline of CERF funding allocations August 2015 – June 2016



ANGOLA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0	-	-	-
DJIBOUTI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	-
EL SALVADOR	-	-	-	-	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
ERITREA	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ETHIOPIA	-	8.5	-	17.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FIJI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.0	-	-	-
GUATEMALA	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	-	-	-	-
HAITI	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HONDURAS	-	-	-	2.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LESOTHO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.1	2.7	-	-
MADAGASCAR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.0	-	-
MALAWI	-	-	10.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MONGOLIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.4	-	-	-
MOZAMBIQUE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.7	-	-	-
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.7	-	-
SOMALIA	-	0.7	4.9	-	-	-	-	-	11.0	-	-
SWAZILAND	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	-	-
VIET NAM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7	1.2
ZIMBABWE	-	-	1.2	7.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

CERF contribution to the overall response

The median allocation per crisis was US$ 4.7 million, however in the cases of Ethiopia and Somalia, allocations were far higher, at US$ 25.5 and US$ 16.6 respectively. The relative importance of the CERF contributions to the overall financing response to these crises tells a rather different story. For many of the smaller country allocations, these represented a far more significant share of funding to the crisis. In Angola for instance, CERF funds represented 39% of total funding to the crisis, whereas in Somalia, and Ethiopia, despite the relatively large size of the CERF allocations, these accounted for just 2.5% of the total funding to the crisis in each case. The relative influence of CERF funding in convening and incentivizing coordinated action therefore should be reviewed in context with the scale of CERF contributions within the wider funding response.

Table 5 CERF funding by country relative to the total funding response

	CERF usage year	Total CERF allocations (US$ million)	All other funding to the crisis (US$ million)	CERF as % of total funding
Angola	2016	5.0	7.7	39.3%
Djibouti	2016	2.0	28.2	6.5%
El Salvador	2016	2.7	2.2	54.7%
Eritrea	Sept 2015-June2016	2.5	5.5	31.1%
Ethiopia	Sept 2015-June2016	25.5	1,008.4	2.5%
Fiji	2016	8.0	38.9	17.1%
Guatemala	2016	4.8	14.7	24.7%
Haiti	2016	3.0	57.9	5.0%
Honduras	Nov 2015-Apr 2016	2.2	3.7	37.2%
Lesotho	2016	4.8	22.1	17.8%
Madagascar	2016	6.0	55.9	9.7%
Malawi	Oct 2015-Apr 2016	10.0	115.9	7.9%
Mongolia	2016	2.4	5.6	30.2%
Mozambique	2016	4.7	70.6	6.2%
Papua New Guinea	2016	4.7	12.4	27.7%
Somalia	2016	16.6	651.6	2.5%
Swaziland	2016	3.1	17.6	15.1%
Viet Nam	2016	3.9	5.8	40.3%
Zimbabwe	Nov 2015-Apr 2016	8.1	148.7	5.2%

Source: Based on UN CERF data and OCHA FTS data for total response funding. Note however that it is not possible within the FTS data to separate out funding only for El Niño related responses. In several countries, the proportion presented will be an under-representation as combined funding to more than one country was reported to the FTS for Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti which could not be attributed to particular countries. When CERF allocation implementation periods spanned more than one calendar year, total funds were calculated on a proportionate basis across the two years. For example if 2 months of a six month implementation

period fell in 2015 and four months in 2016, 1/3 of the total funds for 2015 and 2/3 of the total funds for 2016 were calculated to provide the total funds allocated to the crisis in the study period.

Funding by recipient agency

The top three recipient agencies collectively received 89% of the total funds awarded. WFP received 52% of the total funds overall.

Figure 19 Total CERF allocations to El Niño responses by recipient organisation 2015-16

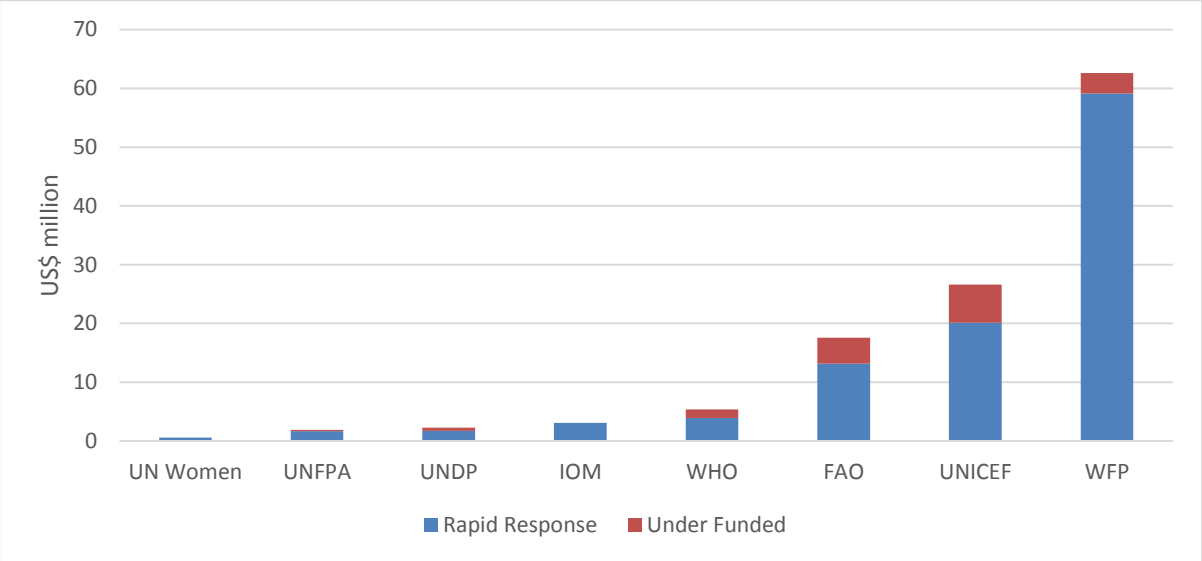


Table 6 CERF allocations to El Niño responses by recipient organisation 2015-16

	Rapid Response	*Under Funded*	*Total*	*% of total*
UN Women	0.6	-	0.6	0.5%
UNFPA	1.7	0.2	1.9	1.6%
UNDP	1.7	0.5	2.2	1.9%
IOM	3.1	-	3.1	2.6%
WHO	3.9	1.5	5.4	4.5%
FAO	13.2	4.4	17.6	14.6%
UNICEF	20.1	6.5	26.6	22.2%
WFP	59.1	3.5	62.6	52.2%
Total	103.5	16.6	120.1	

Table 7 CERF allocations to El Niño responses by country and recipient agency 2015-16

	FAO	IOM	UNICEF	UNDP	UN Women	UNFPA	WFP	WHO
Ethiopia	3.9%	0.0%	15.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.3%	0.0%
Somalia	27.2%	9.5%	23.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	30.2%	7.5%
Malawi	20.1%	0.0%	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%
Zimbabwe	26.2%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	52.4%	0.0%
Fiji	6.7%	16.2%	30.2%	1.5%	2.4%	6.2%	28.4%	8.4%
Madagascar	11.7%	0.0%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	53.6%	10.0%
Angola	16.7%	0.0%	77.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%
Guatemala	0.0%	0.0%	10.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.2%	14.4%
Lesotho	23.6%	0.0%	50.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	2.7%
Papua New Guinea	0.0%	0.0%	15.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	84.4%	0.0%
Mozambique	15.7%	0.0%	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	74.9%	0.0%
Viet Nam	17.1%	0.0%	38.2%	20.1%	10.4%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Swaziland	0.0%	0.0%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	89.2%	0.0%
Haiti	31.2%	0.0%	33.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	35.7%	0.0%
El Salvador	22.5%	0.0%	5.9%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	59.0%	0.0%
Eritrea	16.0%	0.0%	31.9%	20.0%	0.0%	8.0%	0.0%	24.1%
Mongolia	35.0%	0.0%	25.0%	20.5%	0.0%	19.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Honduras	0.0%	0.0%	18.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	67.0%	14.4%
Djibouti	27.9%	10.1%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	36.5%	15.2%

Funding by sector

Funding is heavily concentrated particularly in food and nutrition (47%) - the top five sectors account for 93% of the total funding allocated.

Table 8 Total CERF allocations to El Niño responses by CERF primary sector 2015-16

CERF primary sector	Total (US$ million)	% of total
Common Telecommunications	0.045	0.04%
Protection	0.2	0.2%
Common Logistics	0.2	0.2%
Sexual and/or Gender-Based Violence	0.6	0.5%
Early Recovery	0.6	0.5%
Education	0.8	0.7%
Shelter	1.1	0.9%
Livestock	4.6	3.8%
Health	9.3	7.8%
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	11.7	9.7%
Agriculture	13.5	11.3%
Nutrition	20.5	17.1%
Food Aid	56.9	47.4%
Total	120.1	100.0%

Annex 4: Brief description of CERF and allocation processes

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to ensure the impartial provision of life-saving assistance to people in need. CERF pools voluntary contributions from donors around the world into a single fund with a $450 million annual target.[108] CERF funds are released immediately to humanitarian agencies on the ground, anywhere in the world, at the onset of emergencies, in rapidly deteriorating situations and in protracted crises that fail to attract sufficient resources.

During emergencies, humanitarian organizations on the ground, under the leadership of RC/HCs, jointly prioritize needs and apply for CERF funding. This ensures that CERF funds are directed to the most critical humanitarian needs in a strategic and coherent manner. The CERF secretariat provides support to decision makers to ensure an effective and efficient prioritization and application process. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as Fund Manager, approves CERF grants. Applications are reviewed against CERF's criteria (i.e., needs are urgent and proposed activities are life-saving).

Only UN organizations are directly eligible to receive CERF funding. However, CERF grants are implemented in partnership with local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), host Governments and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. CERF leverages the far-reaching global network of partnerships that UN agencies have established over decades to reach people quickly wherever and whenever the need is greatest.

CERF is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. All countries are vulnerable to circumstances that can create humanitarian need. CERF is a fund "by all, for all", and one third of the countries that have donated to CERF have themselves benefited from CERF funding during an emergency.

During its first decade, CERF has been instrumental in ensuring critical humanitarian assistance to people in need in 98 countries and territories around the globe. This was possible due to donations from 126 UN Member States and observers, from regional and local authorities, and from private organizations and individuals. CERF allocates funds for life-saving work at the most critical phases of an emergency:

- At the onset, when resources can jump-start a humanitarian response.
- When an ongoing crisis deteriorates.
- When a response to a slow-onset crisis requires time-critical funding.
- When a crisis fails to attract enough resources for an effective response.

The Fund issues grants through two channels or "windows":

- The Rapid Response Window provides assistance to new emergencies, to existing emergencies that have deteriorated significantly, or in response to time-critical needs.
- The Underfunded Emergencies Window delivers support for critical needs in underfunded and often protracted crises. Grants from the Underfunded Emergencies Window are decided through a headquarters lead process, informed by an analysis of global risk, vulnerability and funding needs and allocated in two rounds: at the beginning and in the middle of each year.

Concept Note Process

The CERF secretariat introduced the concept note process for drought applications to the Rapid Response window at the end of 2015 due to the volume of applications. The secretariat wanted to avoid agencies spending time and effort on a full-scale application that might be rejected or require significant revisions. The secretariat's aim was to ensure that agencies had sufficient data to identify the trigger for the response and a credible response strategy and were proposing activities that fit CERF criteria before they embarked on developing detailed project proposals.

[108] The General Assembly recently endorsed an increase of this target to $1 billion by 2018.

Annex 5: Technical Workshop Agenda and Working Group Summary Outputs

Workshop: CERF's contribution to the El Niño response /CERF's role in slow onset emergencies
Thursday, 26 October 2017 *(ver. 171024)*

Background

Two members of the review team will co-facilitate the workshop where they will present provisional findings and emerging conclusions based on the team's desk research, interviews and field visits to three regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific). The workshop will give participants a chance to review provisional findings and emerging conclusions in plenary before breaking into small groups to discuss emerging conclusions to assess their relevance and provide an opportunity to suggest revisions and emerging recommendations that will be considered during the final field visit to central America and while drafting the report.

Workshop Objectives

The aim of the workshop is to brief partners on the findings emerging from country visits and to seek feedback to inform the continued review process. Specifically, the workshop aims to:

- Generate a better understanding of CERF's contribution towards promoting early action to the humanitarian consequences linked to the El Niño phenomenon.
- Based on El Niño findings discuss more broadly CERF's potential role and niche in responding to slow onset emergencies.
- Validate emerging conclusions and get your input for developing recommendations.
- Provide an opportunity for you to share experiences of the response to El Niño and related slow-onset disasters.
- Exchange information on other initiatives to promote early action in slow-onset emergencies, including risk-based and forecast-based financing, and gain a better understanding on how CERF can add value.

Agenda

Time	Topic	Format
09:00 – 09:15	Introduction of Participants	Plenary
09:15 – 10:00	Introductory Session: • Objectives of the review • Presentation of findings & emerging conclusions • Clarification questions • Instructions for the Working Groups	Plenary
10:00 – 11:00	Working groups (discussion questions)	Working Groups
11:00 – 11:45	Discussion on emerging recommendations	Plenary
11:45 – 12:00	Wrap-up	Plenary

Working Groups

Some participants will be physically present in New York, others will be joining remotely. The aim is to also give the opportunity to participants joining remotely to join "virtual" working groups via Skype.

Inter-Agency Workshop 26 October 2017 hosted by the CERF secretariat

Summary outputs from the group work based on discussion questions:

1. How should CERF define early action as opposed to preparedness?

- FAO will share its internal paper on definitions.
- Preparedness is based on "what if" scenarios, whereas early action/early response happens when there are early warning signals of a specific disaster event.
- Lack of understanding about the area of early action is a challenge. Need technical understanding and guidance to ensure that actors at country level know what process to follow to request funding and initiate early action.
- Need to be concrete about what early action looks like in a sector (e.g., WASH) compared to resilience, response, preparedness, etc.
- Need to have preparedness measures in place for effective early action (e.g., can't procure if cyclone due to hit in 5 days).

2. What thresholds should CERF use to release funding for early action in a slow-onset emergency?

- There is already a body of work and mechanisms to provide data. Thresholds should be based on context-specific and risk-specific indicators. There is a need to complement climate-related data and thresholds with social and economic indicators.
- Can define thresholds in terms of percentage of population likely to be affected by impending disaster.
- To evaluate whether to respond, also look at potential magnitude of the risk and existing vulnerability, response capacity, comparative advantage, how well different actors can do early action.
- In future, Red Cross early action funding likely to be for once in every 5-year events rather than regular/annual occurrences
- Important to have national structures to make systematic use of forecasts and create consensus. Hazard models and thresholds will not foresee all the different factors influencing vulnerability and hazard impact. Contexts also change frequently so need locally based groups that bring together national & international expertise under a common analytical framework. Availability of pre-agreed financing is an incentive for dialogue.
- Important to have CERF-specific guidance to help interpret lifesaving criteria from an early action perspective.
- Useful to try and understand from lessons learned, etc. how agencies in countries could have applied early action approaches.

3. How do Forecast-based Financing and risk-based financing mechanisms target assistance/identify vulnerable HH?

- Goal of future DREF window for early action is to use impact-based forecasting, i.e., to overlay weather-related forecast with specific disaster-related vulnerabilities. Most efficient way to target is to use existing social protection/assistance lists to identify vulnerable HH. Funding released on basis of forecasted or projected impact, not actual impact. If lists not available, need to do a quick vulnerability assessment.
- CERF should build on existing work in the Sahel to map vulnerabilities and those likely to be affected by disasters such as crop failure.

4. As Forecast-based Financing and risk-based financing mechanisms are rolled out, what is CERF's niche?

- CERF's "convening" role: mitigating or preventing multi-sectoral humanitarian impacts due to a likely disaster event.
- Support reorientation of development actors and funding streams to focus on humanitarian issues.
- Forecast-based financing and risk based financing mechanisms are often influenced by political factors. CERF is perceived as relatively impartial and less subject to political influence.

5. What are the pros and cons of a separate funding window?

- A new window could attract new funding from interested donors. Risk is that donors will earmark to it from existing contributions rather than providing additional funding.
- If CERF has a separate window for early action, need to bear in mind that the number of disasters in a year is variable. There may be a large number of forecasts/requirements in an El Niño year but not in others. If money is ring-fenced into a window, use money left over in a quiet year to build up reserve for a year with high number of disasters. Alternative is to use an insurance mechanism to top up the window in busy years so CERF doesn't have to hold the liquid amount.
- To ensure flexibility, START network markets early action funding as a 'window' but, as with CERF's Rapid Response and Under-Funded Emergencies windows, there is no concrete separation from other START funding so money can be used for response. START has adjusted procedures for funding for anticipatory action but money comes from the same overall fund. Developed guidance notes, videos, etc. to let people know that they have permission to use the fund in a different way. Aim is to use around 10% of the START fund for anticipatory actions.
- One advantage of communicating this as a separate window (even though it may not actually be structurally separate, as with the START network) is that it is a signal and invitation to agencies to submit proposals for early action.
- An advantage of designating a ceiling (START network's "ceiling" is 10% of the total) is that donors should be reassured that the bulk of CERF resources will still be available to respond to large humanitarian crises…which many see as CERF's core mandate.

Annex 6: List of documents reviewed

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Country- and region-specific documents

In addition to RC/HC CERF reports and After Action Reviews for CERF recipient countries, the team reviewed the following country- and region-specific documents:

Central America (including El Salvador and Honduras)

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Papua New Guinea

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Zimbabwe

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Annex 7: Interviewee List

Global Level – UN agencies and Clusters

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*
Shelly Cheatham	Rapid Response Lead (CERF secretariat)		1	29-Jun-17	New York (Skype)
Stephanie Julmey	Thematic Adviser on Resilience, Preparedness (OCHA)		1	28-Jun-17	New York (Skype)
Greg Puley	Chief, Policy Advice and Planning Section and Thematic Adviser on Resilience, Preparedness (OCHA)	1		2-Nov-17	New York (Skype)
Jessica Bowers Kiyanja	Underfunded Emergencies Lead (CERF secretariat)		1	22-Sep-17	New York (Skype)
Lisa Doughton	Chief (CERF secretariat)		1	26-Oct-17	New York
Michele Messina	Emergency Specialist/Preparedness, Humanitarian Field Support Section (UNICEF)	1		25-Oct-17	New York
Dominique Burgeon	Director of Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)	1		18-Oct-17	Rome
Patrick Jacqueson	Senior Programme Officer and OiC Response Team Leader, Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)	1		18-Oct-17	Rome
Neil Marsland	Senior Technical Officer and El Niño focal point, Emergency aand Rehabilitation Division (FAO)	1		18-Oct-17	Rome
Mario Zappacosta	Senior Economist in the Economic and Social Development Department and manager of GIEWS (FAO)	1		18-Oct-17	Rome
Dunja Dujanovic	Technical Officer (Early Warning Early Action) in the Agricultural Development Economics Division (FAO)		1	18-Oct-17	Rome
Carolien Dejoode	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer and former El Niño focal point for Asia in the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)		1	18-Oct-17	Rome
Angela Hinrichs	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer and former El Niño focal point for Southern Africa in the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)		1	18-Oct-17	Rome
Jacqueline Were	Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer and former El Niño focal point for Eastern Africa in the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)		1	18-Oct-17	Rome
Roberta Canulla, Juan Coll, Shamini Mathur	CERF focal points (FAO)	1	2	18-Oct-17	Rome
Fabio Bedini	Sr. Programme Policy Officer, Climate & Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes (WFP)	1		19-Oct-17	Rome
Rasmus Egendal, Pasqualina DiSirio, Alex	FGD: External Relations - Deputy Director, Government Partnerships Division, Programme Officers (WFP)	2	1	19-Oct-17	Rome
Sheila Grudem, Manuela Reinfeld, Jerry Bailey	FGD: Emergencies & Earlly Warning - Deputy Director, Emergency Preparedness & Support Response Division, Head, Analysis and Early Warning Unit, Sr. Programme Policy Officer & Head, Food Security Cluster (WFP)	1	2	19-Oct-17	Rome

Global Level – Other Key Informants

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*
Chris Porter	Humanitarian Head of Profession (DFID)	1		22-Sep-17	London
Richard Ewbank	Global Climate Advisor (Christian Aid)	1		17-Oct-17	London (Skype)
Patrice Chataigner	Senior Analyst (ACAPS)	1		18-Sep-17	Geneva
Fergus McBean	Humanitarian Advisor (DFID)	1			London
Luke Caley	Crisis Anticipation Advisor and Project Manager (Start Network)	1		17-Nov-17	London
Erin Coughlan	Manager, Climate Science (IFRC)		1	13-Oct-17	NY (Skype)
Alison Milton	Director, Humanitarian Aid Unit (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland)		1	25-Oct-17	NY
Jelte van Wieren, Hans van den Hoogen	Director of the Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department, Humanitarian Adviser (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands)	2		2-Nov-17	The Hague (Skype)
Deborah Hillier	Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor (Oxfam)		1	31-Oct-17	Oxford (Skype)
Raymond Zingg	Project Manager for Forecast based Financing (German Red Cross)	1		29-Nov-17	Dhaka (Skype)
Nicola Ranger	Sr Insurance and Risk Advisor, Financial Sector Team, Private Sector Department (DFID)		1	14-Nov-17	London

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location
Kaavya Ashok Krishna	Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance Programme (World Bank)		1	14-Nov-17	Wash, DC (Skype)
Elisabeth Hedin	Programme Officer (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)		1	15-Nov-17	Stockholm (Skype)
Sandra Aviles	Independent Consultant, former Senior Adviser (FAO)		1	13-Nov-17	Rome (Skype)
Julie Dana	Lead Financial Officer, Finance & Markets Global Practice (World Bank & IFC)		1	21-Nov-17	Wash, DC (Skype)
Dr. Thorsten Klose-Zuber	Division for Humanitarian Assistance (German Federal Foreign Office)	1		13-Nov-17	Berlin (Skype)

Asia – UN agencies and Clusters

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
Anthea Webb, Christian Usfinit,Anthea Webb, Christian Usfinit, Ageng Herianto, Oliver Lacey-Hall	Representative (WFP), Technical Officer (UNDP), Assistant Representative (FAO), Head of Office for ASEAN (OCHA)	3	1	13-Oct-17	Jakarta	1
Rajan Gengaje	Head, Prepareness and Response, Operations Unit (OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)	1		3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
W.A. Kumudu Sanjeewa	Information Management Officer (OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)	1		3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
Yindee Lertcharoenchok	Humanitarian Affairs Analyst for Disaster Response (OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)		1	3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
Samantha Orr	Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific		1	3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
Autumn Petersen	Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)		1	3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
Kristen Knutson	Head of Regional Partnerships (OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)		1	3-Aug-17	Bangkok	
Youssouf Abdel-Jelil	Representative (UNICEF)	1		8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Mizuho Okimoto-Kaewtathip	Social Policy and Economic Analysis Speciaist (UNICEF)		1	8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Jessica Holterhof	Office of the Resident Coordinator (UN)		1	8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Sunita Giri	Head of Office, Office of the Resident Coordinator (UN)		1	8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Pham Thi LienPhuong	Project Officer (UNDP)		1	8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Roberta Tranquilli	Operations Officer (FAO)		1	8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Ton Tuan Nghia	Project Officer (WHO)	1		9-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Emanuel Eralye	Communications Officer (WHO)	1		9-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Vu Xuan Viet	Emergency WASH Specialist (UNICEF)	1		10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Ly Phat Viet Linh	Emergency Coordinator (UNICEF)	1		10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Tran Thuy Anh	Programme Analyst (UN Women)		1	10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Kamal Malhotra	UN Resident Coordinator for Vietnam	1		10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Jenty Kirsch-Wood	Technical Specialist Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change (UNDP)		1	31-Aug-17	Vietnam (Skype)	

Asia – Other Key Informants

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
Adelina Kamal	Executive Director, AHA Centre (ASEAN)		1	12-Oct-17	Jakarta	
Diane Francisco	Country Representative (American Red Cross)		1	7-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Dao Phi Hung	DRR Senior Programme Officer (American Red Cross)	1		7-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Ruth	Swiss Red Cross		1	7-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Le Van Duong	National Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs Coordinator (World Vision)	1		8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Nguyen Van Vuong	Vice Head, Food Crops Division, Department of Crop Production (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)	1		8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Miguel		1		8-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Dzung Huy Nguyen	Disaster Risk Management Specialist (World Bank)	1		9-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Trịnh Ngọc Quang	National Centre for Health Education	1		9-Aug-17	Vietnam	

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
Dr. Do Manh Cuong	Health Environment Management Agency	1		9-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Dr. Hoang Duc Ngan	National Institute for Nutrition		1	10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Nguyen Bich Ngoc	National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation		1	10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Cao Tuyet Hanh	Health Environment Management Agency		1	10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Nguyen Thi Minh Huong	Viet Nam Women's Union		1	10-Aug-17	Vietnam	
Brian Heidel	Regional Advisor for East Asia & Pacific (OFDA/USAID)	1		17-Oct-17	Bangkok (Skype)	

Africa – UN agencies and Clusters

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
Bishow Parajuli	UN Resident Coordinator for Zimbabwe	1		4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Kanako Mabuchi	Head (UN Resident Coordinator's Office)		1	4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Andrea Danti	Vulnerability and DRM Coordinator (UN Resident Coordinator's Office)	1		4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Jens Nylund	Emergency Coordinator (WFP)	1		4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Sherita Manyika	Lean Season Assistance Unit (WFP)		1	4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Tinashe Mubaira	Donor Relations, Reporting and Communications Unit (WFP)	1		4-Sep-17	Zimbabwe	
Matija Kovac	Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA Somalia)	1		13-Sep-17	Kenya	
Nicholas Wasunna	Regional Emergency Specialist (UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office)	1		14-Sep-17	Kenya	
Daniel Christensen and Isabel Burchard	Regional Emergency Advisor and Head of External Relationships and Partnerships (WFP Regional Bureau for East and Central Africa)	1	1	15-Sep-17	Kenya	
Patricia Nyimbae Agwaro	Humanitarian Affairs Specialist (OCHA Somalia)		1	13-Sep-17	Kenya	
Mulugeta Shibru	Food Security Cluster Coordinator	1		14-Sep-17	Kenya	
Rados Cvetic, Liljana Jovceva, Yuko Tomita, Dr Humayun Rizwan, Dr John Haskew, Samia Hassan	Representative (FAO Somalia), Head of Programme (WFP Somalia), Project Development and Donor Liaison Officer (IOM Somalia), Acting Representative and consultant (WHO Somalia), Humanitarian Coordinator (UNFPA Somalia)	3	3	13-Sep-17	Kenya	1
Steven Lauwerier	Representative (UNICEF Somalia)	1		13-Sep-17	Kenya	
Dr. James Teprey	Health Security in Emergencies (WHO Kenya)	1		14-Sep-17	Kenya	
Slvatore Sortino	Chief of Mission (IOM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa)	1		14-Sep-17	Kenya	
Noroarisoa Rakotomalala-Rakotondrandria, Regina Chinyanga, Gemma Connell, Julius Lenanyokie	Deputy Representative for Southern Africa, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Head of Office, Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa)	1	3	14-Sep-17	Kenya	1
Yolanda Cowan	Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa)		1	16-Oct-17	Kenya (Skype)	
Israel Dessalegne	UN Resident Coordinator for Swaziland	1		8-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Margherita Coco	Head of Programmes, WFP		1	8-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Khanyisile Mabuza	Assistant Representative, FAO		1	11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Bheki Ginindza	Monitoring and Evaluation consultant, FAO	1		11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Sharareh Amirkhalili	Representative, UNFPA		1	11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Tanya Radosavljevic, Boniswa Dladla	Deputy Representative, WASH Officer, UNICEF	1	1	11-Sep-17	Swaziland	1

Africa – Other Key Informants

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*	*FGD*
Federico Doehnert	Early Warning and Risk Analyst (ARC)	1		28-Nov-17	South Africa (Skype)	
Ekhosuehi Iyahen	Director of Policy (ARC)	1		28-Nov-17	South Africa (Skype)	
Nicola Jenns	Climate Risk Insurance Adviser (DFID)		1	21-Nov-17	London	
Dr. Simon Young	Chief Executive Officer (ARC)	1		10-Nov-17	South Africa (Skype)	
Killian Mutiro and Kaya Adams	Monitoring, Evaluation & Assessment Specialist and Director (Office for Food For Peace, USAID)	1	1	27-Sep-17	South Africa (Skype)	
Enock Dlamini	National Director, ACAT Lilima Swaziland	1		27-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Alexandre Castellano	Technical Assistant for Southern Africa and Indian Ocean, ECHO	1		11-Oct-17	South Africa (Skype)	
Yves Horent	Senior Humanitarian Adviser, Africa Regional Dept (DFID)	1		12-Oct-17	London	
Niamh Dobson	Second Secretary (Somalia/Humanitarian), Australian High Commission		1	15-Sep-17	Kenya	
Peter Burgess and Johan Heffinck	Head of Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and Head of Office, Somalia (ECHO)	1	1	15-Sep-17	Kenya	
Nancy Mutunga	Regional Food Security Specialist (FEWS NET)		1	13-Sep-17	Kenya	
Don Owino	Food For Peace (USAID Kenya and East Africa)	1		14-Sep-17	Kenya	
Seb Fouquet	Senior Humanitarian Adviser (DFID Somalia)	1		15-Sep-17	Kenya	
Russel Dlamini	CEO, National Disaster Management Agency	1		8-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Khangeziwe Mabuza	Principal Secretary, Deputy Prime Minister's Office.		1	8-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Princess Fakudze	Project Officer, Caritas		1	8-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Francis Dube	Country Program Director, World Vision	1		11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Danger Nhlabatsi	Secretary General, Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society	1		11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Wendy Githens Benzerga	USAID Country Director - PEPFAR Swaziland		1	11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Hamfrey Sanhokwe	USAID SI/HSS Advisor - PEPFAR Swaziland	1		11-Sep-17	Swaziland	
Sifiso Mdluli	Field Coordinator, Save the Children	1		11-Sep-17	Swaziland	

Latin America and the Caribbean – UN agencies and Clusters

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*	*FGD*
Gloria Isabel Elvir, Marco A. Couray, Elbyn Ramirez	Nutrition Cluster: Coord proyecto de gobernalided y Genera (Asociación de Municipio de Honduras), Programme Manager (WFP), Emergency Officer (UNICEF)	2	1	6-Nov-17	Tegucigalpa	1
Hernán Aguilar, Herbert Yanes, Joel Cruz, Lenin Gradiz, Susan Lopez, Gabriela Padilla, Rene Frenken, Amelia Santos, Alex Padilla	Food Security Cluster: Emergency Coordinator (WFP), Food Security Analysis & Monitoring-VAM Officer (WFP), Information Assistant (OCHA), Deputy FAO Representative (FAO), Dirección Adjunta (UTSAN), Coordinator (GOAL), Regional Programme Coordinator (GOAL), CERF Consultant, Project Manager (PAHO)	6	3	6-Nov-17	Tegucigalpa	1
Andrew Stanhope, Nadine Perrault, Alan Gonzáles, Mónica Merino, Sr. Christian Salazar, Sergio Aguinada	Focus Group UN Country Team: Senior Logistics Office (WFP), Representative (UNICEF), Representative (FAO), Deputy Representative (UNDP), UN Resident Coordinator, Programme Officer (UN Resident Coordinator's Office)	4	2	7-Nov-17	San Salvador	1
Marco Minelli, Pieter van Lierop	Expert in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR-DRM), Forestry Officer (FAO)	2		13-Nov-17	Panama City	

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*	*FGD*
Giorgia Testolin, Allan Brown	Regional CBT, EPR and Resilience (WFP) / Donor Relations Officer	1	1	13-Nov-17	Panama City	
Luz Tantaruna	Regional Emergency & Post Crisis Adviser (IOM)		1	13-Nov-17	Panama City	
Douglas Reimer and Yvette Fautsch	Chief of Regional Emergency Unit and Nutrition Consultant (UNICEF)	1	1	14-Nov-17	Panama City	
Lorenzo Barraza, Geronimo Venigas	Emergency Consultant, Logistics Officer (PAHO)	2		14-Nov-17	Panama City	
Wendy Cue	Head of Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OCHA)		1	14-Nov-17	Panama City	
Gianni Morelli	Regional Disaster Response Adviser Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	1		14-Nov-17	Panama City	

Latin America and the Caribbean – Other Key Informants

Name	*Org. and function*	♂	♀	*Date*	*Interviewee Location*	*FGD*
Julio Cesar Zuniga, Rigoberto Matote, Tania Canas, Carolina Carias, Nancy Pagoada, Miraim Narvaez, Beikis Rodriguez, Mario Padilla, Wilfredo Cervantes, Ruben Leiva, Omar Delcid	Partner Focus Group: Gerente de Proyecto Agua (CRS), Punto Focal (ADRA), Puntos focales (SANAA), Punto Focal Emergencias (Save the Children), Responsible de Emergencias (Cáritas América Latina), Tecnico de campo (Sur en Acción(, Coordinador Planificación (Consejo Nacional de Agua Potable y Saneamiento)	6	4	6-Nov-17	Tegucigalpa	1
Lourdes Ardon, Jorge Alberto Solis Paz, Francisco J. Argerial P.	Focus Group COPECHO: Assistente técnico, Adviser of the National Direction of Emergencies & Disasters, Meteorólogo	2	1	6-Nov-17	Tegucigalpa	1
Rene Ramos, Jaime Arrayo Martinez, Jose Magret Padisere, Vicente Ruben Figueroa,	Focus Group: Departamental de Usulután: Goberrnador, Project Officer, Extension Officer	4		9-Nov-17	Departamental de Usulután, El Salvador	1
FGD - FAO Beneficiaries (irrigation)	Project Site Visit	3		9-Nov-17	Departamental de Usulután, El Salvador	1
FGD - UNDP Beneficiaries (water supply)	Project Site Visit	2		9-Nov-17	Departamental de Usulután, El Salvador	1
FGD - UNICEF Beneficiaries and health staff (nutrition)	Project Site Visit	2	10	9-Nov-17	Departamental de Usulután, El Salvador	1
Pablo Ernesto Ayala and Luis Garcia Gui	Coordinador Area Clima y Agrometereorlogia, Gerennte de Meterorologia - Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Centro Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria y Forestal	2		10-Nov-17	San Salvador, El Salvador	
Ana Mercedes Vásquez	Directora de Cooperación Multilateral, Regional y Organismos Financieros Internacionales		1	10-Nov-17	San Salvador, El Salvador	

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
FDG - NGO partners: Jose Nelson Chavez, Mercedes G. Garcia, Julio Cesar Moz Preza, Karen Ramirez, Aberto Vargas	Humanitarian Manager (World Vision), Humanitarian Manager and Security Coordinator (Oxfam), Emergency Coordinator (CORDES), Gerente de Programa (PRO-VISION), Equipo EFSVL (Oxfam / Fondesa)	3	2	10-Nov-17	San Salvador, El Salvador	1
Yris de Avalos and Dr. Ahele Dubon,	Unidad de Nutrición, Director of Non-Contagious Diseases, Ministry of Health		2	10-Nov-17	San Salvador, El Salvador	
Pablo Ernesto Ayala	Coordinator Area Chicca y Agromete, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	1		10-Nov-17	San Salvador, El Salvador	
Inigo Barrena, Phillipe Delcid (IFRC)	Head of Disaster and Crisis Department, Coordinator of Operations for the Americas			14-Nov-17	Panama City	
Enrique Torrella Raymond	Regional Manager, Norwegian Refugee Council	1		14-Nov-17	Panama City	

The Pacific – UN agencies and Clusters

Name	Org. and function	♂	♀	Date	Interviewee Location	FGD
Brown Konabe, Hanifa Noamusoke, Metkave Pupune	Food Security Cluster: Director, Food Security Branch (PNG Government), Nutrition Specialist, (UNICEF), National Programme Assistant (FAO)	3		27-Sep-17	Port Moresby	1
Khusrav Sharifov	Technical specialist, Disaster Risk Management Project (UNDP)	1		29-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Gilbert Hiawalyer	Assistant Representative (UNFPA)	1		28-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Gerard Ng	Humanitarian Coordination Specialist (UNDP)	1		28-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Roy Trivedy	UN Resident Coordinator/Representative Papua New Guinea at UNDP	1		29-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
George Gigauri	Deputy Chief of Mission (IOM Indonesia) and former Chief of Mission for IOM PNG during 2013-2016)	1		16-Oct-17	Jakarta (Skype)	
Mats Persson	CD a.i and DCD, WFP Philippines Team leader for the PNG response (WFP)	1		20-Oct-17	Manila (Skype)	
Parvathy Ramaswami	Deputy Regional Director in the Asia and the Pacific (WFP)		1	20-Oct-17	Bangkok (Skype)	
Venkat Dheeravath	GIS Officer (WFP)	1		20-Oct-17	Port Moresby (Skype)	
Osnat Lubrani	UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative		1	4-Oct-17	Suva	
Iosefa Volau & Iris Low	Co-leads for the Education Cluster (UNICEF and Save the Children)		2	4-Oct-17	Suva	
Dr. Nasir Hassan	Health & Nutrition Cluster Lead, WHO	1		4-Oct-17	Suva	
Sune Gudnitz	Head of OCHA	1		4-Oct-17	Suva	

Marc Overmars & Wagairopoa Tikaisuva	WASH Specialists, UNICEF	2		4-Oct-17	Suva	
Naeemah Khan	Safety and Protection Cluster Lead, UN Women		1	4-Oct-17	Suva	
Joseeph Nyemah Nyemah	Nutrition & Food Systems Officer, FAO	1		6-Oct-17	Suva	
Pasqualina Disirio	Sr. Govt. Partnership Officer, WFP		1	5-Oct-17	Suva	
Florent Chane & Joseph Choi	Head of Logistics and Partnerships & Innovation Officer, WFP	2		5-Oct-17	Suva	
Sandra Hart	Regional Food Security Cluster Coordinator (Pacific)		1	12-Oct-17	Suva (Skype)	
Dan Gilman	Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Regional Partnerships Unit, OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	1		16-Oct-17	Bangkok (Skype)	

The Pacific – Other Key Informants

Name	***Org. and function***	♂	♀	***Date***	***Interviewee Location***	***FGD***
Nige Kaupa, John Francis, Sandrine Giansily	Program Manager (DFAT), Second Secretary (Australian High Commission), Programme Manager (EU)	2	1	27-Sep-17	Port Moresby	1
Dickson Guina	Acting Secretary for the Department of Provincial & Local Government Affairs (PNG Government)	1		27-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Martin Moise	Acting director of the PNG's National Disaster Centre (PNG Government)	1		27-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Samuel Maiha	Director, National Weather Service and Chairman of the National Awareness & Preparedness Committee (PNG Government)	1		28-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Joy Waffi	Project Manager (CARE International)		1	28-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Kali Sete	Development Secretary (United Church of PNG)	1		28-Sep-17	Port Moresby	
Nigel Cole	Chairman of the Agricultural & Livestock Council	1		3-Oct-17	Suva	
Raymond Bojczuk, Stephen Close & Tu Tangi (Donor FGD)	First Secretary for the Australian High Commission in Suva, Asst. Director, Humanitarian Policy & Partnerships, Canberra (DFAT) and Program Manager [DRR and Water Sanitation (NZ MFAT)	3		3-Oct-17	Suva	1
Kathryn Clarkson & Lamau Afanasaga	Head of Country Cluster Support, Disaster Management Programme Manager (IFRC)		2	5-Oct-17	Suva	
Filipe Nainoca	Director General (Fiji Red Cross)	1		5-Oct-17	Suva	
Sunia Ratulevu	Director, National Disaster Management Office (Govt. of Fiji)	1		4-Oct-17	Suva	
Raijieli Nicole & Kata Duaibe	Regional Director & Programme Officer (Oxfam)		2	6-Oct-17	Suva	
Jennifer Poole	Executive Director (MSP)		1	6-Oct-17	Suva	
Bipan Prakash	Acting Principal Climatologist (Fiji Meteorological Service)	1		3-Oct-17	Suva	