

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Call for Expression of Interest

Global Evaluation of the Emergency Response Funds (ERFs)

I. RATIONALE AND USE OF THE EVALUATION

As per Pooled Funds Evaluation Policy, instituted by OCHA Funding Coordination Section (FCS) in 2011, a global evaluation of Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) will be conducted triennially in lieu of individual ERF evaluations periodically undertaken in the past. This evaluation meets the requirements of the ERFs Evaluation Policy by providing an independent assessment of the contribution of the mechanism to improvements in the humanitarian community's ability to address critical unforeseen humanitarian needs in a timely and effective manner.

In addition, the evaluation will provide information on progress made since the creation of OCHA Funding and Coordination Section in 2008, identify strengths and weaknesses of the ERF mechanism, and provide specific recommendations regarding areas that need to be strengthened. The results of the evaluation will at the global level inform the review of the ERF Standardization Guidelines and the development of policy in relevant areas; at the country level, the evaluation is expected to lead to improvements in ERF management, processes and operations. The recommendations of the evaluation will be addressed through the Management Response Plan as per OCHA Evaluation Policy.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDS (ERFs)

The name Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is used as an umbrella term covering a broad number of country-based funds. The main objective of ERFs is to provide NGOs and UN with rapid and flexible in-country funding to address unforeseen humanitarian needs. ERFs provide governments and the private sector with an opportunity to pool their unearmarked contributions to a specific country to enable timely and reliable humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies. The aim of an ERF is to provide initial funding to enable humanitarian partners to respond to small shocks and meet the short-term emergency needs of vulnerable communities without delay. An ERF is not intended to provide core funding to projects or programmes in a protracted crises, although some ERFs, especially when they are sizeable, may fund critical gaps in the CAP (Consolidated Appeals Process).

As of September 2011 there are 15 ERFs in operation: Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, oPt, Pakistan, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe. Generally, ERFs are relatively small in size (less than \$10 million), provide small to medium sized grants (less than \$500,000), and predominantly fund NGOs. The first ERF, established in Angola in 1997 to respond to increasing humanitarian needs caused by years of conflict, had received US\$ 24.5 million from eight donors until its closing in 2004. The Haiti/ERRF, with the largest annual portfolio in the history of the mechanism, has received a total of approximately \$85.2 million in donations from at least 42 different donors since August 2008 (majority of the funding was triggered by the 2010 Earthquake).

An ERF is under the overall management and oversight of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) with day to day management and financial administration performed by OCHA. In response to emerging humanitarian needs, partners submit proposals for ERF funding to OCHA, and the HC, supported by a technical Review Board and by sector/cluster groups, makes decisions on grants. An Advisory Board, comprised of donor, UN and NGO representatives, advises the HC on policy issues and strategic direction of the fund. The specifics of the individual funds reflect the country contexts in which they have been established and therefore differ to varying degrees in purpose, approach and practice.

III. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Provide an independent assessment of the contribution of ERFs to the ability of the humanitarian community's to address critical unforeseen humanitarian needs in a timely and effective manner;
- Provide OCHA with information on progress made since 2009, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and present specific recommendations for improving current policy and operational approaches related to the management of ERFs; and
- Examine the contribution of ERFs to the humanitarian reform process.

The evaluators will examine the processes, outcomes, operational effects and operational impact of ERFs. The evaluation will cover the period from 2009 to 2011 and be global in scope.

IV. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach will be aligned as much as possible to that of the 2011 global evaluations of CHF and CERF. The evaluation will use mixed method analysis, employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches and data types.

Data will be derived from primary and secondary sources, including key informant interviews in headquarters and field, focus groups, surveys of stakeholder groups, direct observation in the field, financial and monitoring reports, meeting minutes, previous evaluations and audits of humanitarian pooled funds, and evaluations of the use of funds or of the projects funded that might have been conducted by recipient agencies. All data, quantitative and qualitative, will be disaggregated and analyzed by gender and age where possible. All data used should be triangulated for validation.

The Evaluation Team will conduct field visits to five recipient countries and produce a short standalone report for each country's ERF in addition to the main evaluation report. The country reports should identify any improvements that would help strengthen the functioning of the funds, and areas working particularly well which might be systematized and applied in other ERF contexts. The evaluation team will propose the sampling criteria to identify a cross-section of ERF recipient countries for field missions. The final decision on the country selection will be made by OCHA Evaluation and Guidance Section in consultation with Funding Coordination Section and the Reference Group. The data collection tools and methods will be standardized across countries; fund-specific issues or questions may, however, be addressed in country reports should they arise during consultations. Selected projects funded by ERFs

should be analyzed to provide insight into full project cycles and the impact that ERF funding had on particular projects.

Perspectives from all stakeholders should be solicited including: recipient organizations, the RC/HC, the HCT, advisory groups, clusters, OCHA, government stakeholders in recipient and donor countries, civil society groups and members, and beneficiaries.

The Evaluation Team will propose detailed methodology during the inception phase, which will include a description of indicators, tools, triangulation plan, gender/age analysis to be used, and validation strategy.

The evaluation will employ the criteria for humanitarian evaluations¹ recommended by ALNAP, namely: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coverage, Appropriateness and Relevance, Coordination and Coherence. The evidence will be collected at all levels of the results hierarchy, including process/inputs, outcomes, operational effects and operational impact. In line with the recent evaluations of CERF and CHF, the analysis will focus on 'operational impact', that is, the 'impact' of the ERFs on the humanitarian system as a whole and whether their presence has led to improved humanitarian response. Impact at the beneficiary level is not the primary focus of this evaluation; the underlying assumption is that effective and principled financing will contribute to better humanitarian outcomes.

V. TIMELINE AND PHASES OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation has been divided into four phases for which dates are estimated. Final dates for some components on the evaluation will be dependent upon the date of completion of the procurement process and date of contracting.

Table 1: Anticipated Timeline and Phases of the Evaluation

Recruitment	May – June 2012	Initial planning and concept Development of Terms of Reference Recruitment, including consultant selection and contracting
Inception	July 2012	Desk Review and methodology development Field mission planning and preparation Inception Report
Research	August – September	Meetings with headquarters-based stakeholders Field research Validation presentations
Reporting	October - December 2012	Production of draft and final reports Presentation of findings

¹ Tony Beck, *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria for humanitarian agencies: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies*. Overseas Development Institute: London (March 2006).

VI. EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation will require the services of an Evaluation Team comprising of two to three members with the following experience and skills:

- Extensive evaluation experience of humanitarian strategies and programmes and in the areas of key humanitarian issues, especially humanitarian finance and funding;
- In-depth knowledge of the humanitarian reform and coordination processes and issues;
- Proven experience with and institutional knowledge of UN and NGO actors, at both headquarters and field locations;
- In-depth knowledge of inter-agency mechanism at both headquarters and in the field, particularly in the IASC context;
- An appropriate range of field experience;
- Proven experience in facilitation of consultative workshops involving a wide range of organizations and participants;
- Knowledge and experience with gender analysis, specifically with evaluations that reflect use of a gender-sensitive lens;
- Excellent writing and communication skills in English.

The Evaluation Team will include a **Team Leader**, who is responsible for the overall conduct of the evaluation in accordance with the ToR, including:

- Developing and adjusting the evaluation methodology;
- Managing the evaluation team, ensuring efficient division of tasks between mission members;
- Representing the Evaluation Team in meetings with the Reference Group, ERF Advisory Boards, and EGS;
- Submitting all outputs in a timely manner.

The Team Leader will have no less than 10 years professional experience in humanitarian action, including experience in management of humanitarian operations. S/he will, further, have extensive experience in conducting evaluations of humanitarian operations and demonstrate analytical, communication and writing skills.

National consultants may be employed for in-country support during the field visits. The Evaluation Team will, to the extent possible, represent gender and regional diversity and equality.

VII. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested evaluation teams are invited to submit an application to OCHA Evaluation and Guidance Section by May 3, 2012: ochaesu@un.org, Reference: 0112b_ERF Global. The application should contain the following:

1. CV and UN P-11 of candidates
2. Letter expressing interest and clearly identifying how the team meets each of the criteria/ skills listed above
3. Sample of work in similar area
4. Indication of availability

5. Expected remuneration

Only short listed teams will be contacted. Individual applications will not be considered. Contracting is subject to funding.