



International
Council of
Voluntary
Agencies

ICVA's Review of NGOs' Experience with the Syria-Related Pooled Funds

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November-December, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ICVA is grateful to its membership, Board and partners for dues, other contributions and in-kind support. We would also like to thank the following governments and organizations for their support in 2014.



Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations' International Development Fund (IDF)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark



Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO)



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



German Humanitarian Assistance

THE NANSEN INITIATIVE

DISASTER-INDUCED CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Sweden Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



US Department of State, Bureau of Population and Migration (PRM)

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Introduction

This review of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) experience with the Syria-related pooled funds was conducted during the months of November and December of 2014 within the humanitarian financing focal area of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).¹ Alongside OCHA, ICVA is the co-chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Task Team on Humanitarian Financing and member of the Pooled Fund Working Group.

The review analysed NGO experiences with the Syria-related pooled funds, both before and after the restructuring of the regional Emergency Response Fund (ERF) into country-based pooled funds (CBPFs). The study focused on: the accessibility of the Fund; its processes, including dissemination of information, application, allocation, disbursement, reporting and auditing; flexibility and timeliness; and the added value of the ERF to NGOs. The review identified both good practices and limitations of the Fund, harnessing lessons learned with the objective of offering observations and recommendations to the regional and global humanitarian communities in order to improve its efficiency and impact.²

Key findings

- The overall experience of the NGO community with the Regional ERF has been positive. The Fund is perceived as very useful for filling critical gaps and complementing existing projects with additional or expanded activities. The Syria ERF has claimed its place as a key funding mechanism for difficult-to-fund sectors and areas of intervention, such as in the case of secondary-displaced Palestinian refugees affected by the Syrian crisis. In some contexts, the ERF has also proven its potential for targeting unforeseen needs in a preventive manner, as in the case of the water scarcity over the summer of 2014 in Lebanon and winterisation in Jordan. The ERF mechanism is perceived as accessible and its allocation processes are generally rated as transparent and straightforward. NGOs generally agreed that the Fund is the easiest of all donors, especially in terms of flexibility and responsiveness to emerging needs.
- The study also examined the coherence and alignment of the ERF strategic priorities with other country-based and (Syria) regional strategies, and found that the Fund's

¹ ICVA is a global network of NGOs that advocates for effective humanitarian action by bringing the experience and views of over 70 national and international NGOs to international policy-making forums. As the only global humanitarian NGO network, ICVA gives NGOs unique opportunities to engage with other actors and each other on humanitarian policy issues, and to make sure the voices of southern NGOs are heard on the international policy level. ICVA is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) bodies: the Principals group, the Emergency Directors Group and the Working Group. It is also the co-chair, along with OCHA, of the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, and member of the Pooled Funds Working Group.

² For more information, please see the full Terms of Reference in Annex 4.

focus is considered relevant and appropriate by implementing partners and other key players in the Syria regional response, such as UNHCR.

- The ERF's short-term focus and the limited volume of funding – representing only around 1% of the total humanitarian financing for the Syrian crisis – is a concern. However, the Syria ERF is identified as pivotal for the NGO response systems in a context where the bulk of humanitarian financing is channelled through UN agencies. With the exception of ERF allocations that are primarily given to UN agencies in Syria, NGOs have collectively been the Fund's main recipients, receiving two-third of the Fund grants. An increased access to ERF funding has reportedly played the role of "seed money" for NNGOs, empowering them to participate in coordination and decision-making structures and increasing their access to other sources of direct funding.
- While strengthening the capacity of local organisations was not a strategic objective *per se*, the ERF has played an indirect role in enhancing local organisations' participation in the humanitarian response through ERF financing. NNGOs and smaller INGOs highlighted their appreciation of the Regional ERF management team's training and capacity-building activities carried out from 2012 onwards, across the region. However, at the time of writing, no such support has been given to NNGOs receiving funding from the Turkey Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF).
- The volume and duration of the funding allocations were not considered an issue for the ERF projects inside Syria and for the cross-border operations from Turkey. However, they were perceived as limited and limiting in the case of the ERF in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan.
- The overall slowness of the ERF processes has been the main criticism made by NGOs interviewed for this review. Across all five countries, the average length of the allocation process – understood as the period from submitting a proposal until the disbursement of funding – was reported to be around two and a half months (or 53 working days), taking significantly longer in Syria and Iraq. The timeframe of the first call for proposals (CfP) of the new HPF in Turkey was set at 60 working days. This is considerably longer than the target for sudden and unforeseen emergencies set by the OCHA's Strategic Framework 2014-2017 of 50 days.
- The majority of NGOs indicated strong preference for allocations on a rolling basis as the most adequate tool for addressing critical gaps and emerging needs in a protracted emergency context, such as in Lebanon and Jordan. However, stakeholders noted that delays tended to be greater when proposals are submitted in this way and also that the lack of real-time information on the ERF funding status turns the rolling basis modality into a 'first come, first served' system.
- Some key informants for this study have expressed concerns over the break-up of the regional Syria ERF into separate pooled funds. This is because government donors will have to allocate resources for specific countries as opposed to being able to support the overall ERF response to the Syria crisis and allowing OCHA to allocate funds where and when they are needed. There is an apprehension that this will lead to donors cherry-picking some countries at the expense of others, thus

undermining the ability of some of the new CBPFs to respond to their share of humanitarian needs.

- Limitations on funding speed and eligibility were felt by both INGOs and NNGOs, albeit more severely by the latter. NNGOs' inability to pre-finance activities led them to be more severely affected by delays in the allocation process. NNGOs also were most hampered by not receiving the full disbursement from the outset, with the final tranche being withheld until after full execution of the project.
- Finally, the level of staff and support costs covered by the Fund was ranked as low and was perceived to hinder organisations operating in sectors that are staff-heavy (i.e. protection) rather than distribution-heavy (shelter and non-food items).

In order to ensure that the Syria-related pooled funds in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria meet their objectives and fulfil their full potential, the following recommendations have arisen from consultations with NGO implementing partners.

Recommendations

Application process

NGOs expect that the rollout of the new Global Management System (GMS) will eliminate issues of inconsistent templates by changing reporting criteria, clarifying allocation guidelines, and explaining different stages of the review process. OCHA's Funding Coordination Section and the OCHA country offices must make sure that the GMS system is user-friendly, technically sound, and context-sensitive by including the possibility to submit proposals in other official languages of the UN, namely in Arabic. They also must ensure that adequate training is provided to staff involved in preparing ERF applications and managing funded projects. The GMS should reduce the length of the allocation process. OCHA should consider bringing the CBPF decision-making process from the regional/headquarters level to the country level. Further decentralising this practice will help to eliminate application duplicates and simplify the process all together.

Eligibility criteria

In terms of partner eligibility, a sound and clear vetting process must to be coupled due diligence and understanding for each CBPF's situation's specificities. In the case of the Turkey Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF), it is unlikely that many of the NNGOs currently receiving the HPF will pass a higher level of due diligence than the emergency one used to call the first proposals. OCHA should keep the current level of requirement while investing in alternative risk-management mechanisms, including technical mentoring for NNGOs in addition to closer and more regular monitoring of allocations. NGOs that maintain the same procurement mechanisms in all their countries of operations and also receive funding from

ERF bilateral donors or other UN agencies worldwide should consider a proxy approach to capacity assessment for the Syria-related pooled funds. This could reduce the due diligence process's time and workload.

Disbursement of funds

OCHA should consider providing a full disbursement of the allocated funding upfront, moving away from the current practice of withholding the final 20 per cent of the allocation until after a successful audit has taken place. This will facilitate the access of smaller NGOs that have limited ability to advance large sums of money for long periods of time to the Syria-related pooled funds. Finally, OCHA country offices should keep humanitarian actors better informed of ongoing processes, especially as to the set-up of the new CBPFs. This is particularly urgent in the case of Iraq and Jordan.

Capacity-building for NNGOs

The management teams of the CBPFs should maintain periodic training sessions as well as workshops on project proposals and project management in order to continue strengthening NNGOs' capacity to expand the Funds' reach to new NNGOs. At the same time, similar activities should be introduced regarding the Turkey HPF in order to ensure the success of the fund despite its recipients' limited humanitarian capacity.

OCHA should have Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) include more regular M&R missions (whenever the length of the projects allows it) in addition to mentoring and capacity-strengthening tools for NGOs. OCHA should consider supporting the cost of OCHA Monitoring & Reporting staff working as part of the various sectors at the country level. This would strengthen coordination structures, and also enhance OCHA's oversight of the CBPFs' allocations, increasing the impact of the Funds. Such support should not come out of the already-limited pooled fund budgets, but rather from the organization's core finances, as is the case with other CBPFs.

Methodology

The study reviewed NGO experiences in all five countries covered by the Syria-related pooled funds. Research was undertaken in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, while Skype and teleconference interviews were conducted with Iraq and Syria. In order to assess the NGOs' experience with the Syria-related pooled funds, the review carried out sixty-two interviews with key humanitarian organisations in the five countries covered by the pooled fund mechanism. These include thirty-one interviews with international NGOs (INGOs), twenty-three with national NGOs (NNGOs), six with United Nations (UN) agencies, and two with ERF donors.

1. Desk review

- Review of previous studies on humanitarian financing and the ERF mechanism, including the 'Global Evaluation of Emergency Response Funds (ERFs)' of March 2013; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Global Overviews of pool funding; and the 2013 'CERF and Country-Based Pooled Funds Stocktaking' report.
- Review of the Global ERF Guidelines from October 2012 and July 2013; relevant ERF Annual Reports; the terms of reference and strategy papers of the regional Syria ERF and the subsequent CBPF.
- Analysis of funding allocations to the Syria-related pooled funds for the period 2012-2014. All contribution data was extracted from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database, downloaded on 10 December 2014. For all analyses on funding allocation, the review has used data provided by UN OCHA Funding Coordination Section (FCS) or the respective CBPF managers. Such information is up-to-date as of early December 2014.

2. Semi-structured interviews with key informants:

- Representatives of INGOs and NNGOs³ with experience in seeking, receiving and implementing projects funded by the ERF and CBPF;
- Current and past members of the Advisory Board;
- NGOs that have been unsuccessful in their applications to the Funds;
- OCHA staff involved in the management of the Funds;
- Donors to the Syria-related pooled funds;
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for the purpose of assessing the coherence and complementarity of the Funds' strategy and the UNHCR's strategy for Syrian refugees.

³ For the purposes of this study, the term NNGO refers to a NGO based in a crisis-affected country with geographic scope of operations limited to its host country.

Limitations and challenges

The main limitation of the review was its short duration of 25 working days for a single consultant, including 11 days of regional travel. Obtaining the appropriate contacts, liaising with key informants, and managing the interviews schedule also required a considerable amount of time and continuous oversight by the consultant. In some cases, there were significant delays in obtaining feedback and interview confirmations from this review's stakeholders.

Overview of the Syria-related pooled funds

Syria has witnessed terrible violence since 2011, when a movement of popular protest in the city of Dera'a in March of that year sparked the start of the conflict. Unrest spread quickly throughout Syria, and continued to shift and escalate into a violent crisis with tragic human and socioeconomic consequences.⁴ By October 2014, there were 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Around 7.6 million people were internally displaced by violence, and 3.2 million Syrian refugees were registered with UNHCR in neighbouring countries.⁵

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for Syria was established by mid-2012 to support humanitarian response inside Syria and the neighbouring countries, under the leadership of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. The objective of the Syria ERF “is to mobilise and channel resources to humanitarian organizations to initiate life-saving humanitarian activities both inside Syria and in the neighbouring countries: Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.”⁶ The ERF may support critical, underfunded projects contained in the Syria Response Plan and the Regional Response Plan. The ERF intended to: **i)** Enable a rapid response to newly-identified or unforeseen needs; **ii)** Address immediate life-saving needs; **iii)** Fund urgent priority projects that are underfunded; and **iv)** Strengthen humanitarian coordination and partnerships.”⁷

Cross-border operations from Turkey were not included at the time and the Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF) in Turkey was not set up until the summer of 2014.

Emergency Response Funds, in general, represent around 10%, a very small share of all OCHA-led pooled funds, and only between 0.5% and 1% of the global humanitarian financing. The 2012 Global Evaluation of ERFs raised some concerns over the implications the mechanism's limited financial weight. The evaluation found that while ERF granting has contributed to the overall operational effectiveness of humanitarian response, contributions are composed of limited available resources. Moreover, it found that many ERFs do not possess a sufficient critical mass to make more than a nominal contribution to the attainment of their specified goals.⁸ However, despite limited grants size, the ERF is a key mechanism for supporting humanitarian response in the country by filling critical gaps, responding to unforeseen needs, and providing complementary funding to existing projects.

Moreover, by mid-2013 the Syria Crisis ERF Advisory Board (composed of donors, UN agencies and, later, INGO representatives) recognised the crucial role of NNGOs as well as the need for capacity-building and coaching activities for NNGOs in project management,

⁴ World Bank, Syria overview <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/syria/overview>

⁵ UN OCHA <http://www.unocha.org/syria>

⁶ UN OCHA, Syria Emergency Response Fund <http://www.unocha.org/romena/financing/syria-emergency-response-fund>

⁷ UN OCHA, Syria Emergency Response Fund Terms of Reference, 2012

⁸ UN OCHA and UNIVERSALIA, The Global Evaluation of Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) Final Report, March 2013, p.24 and p.32

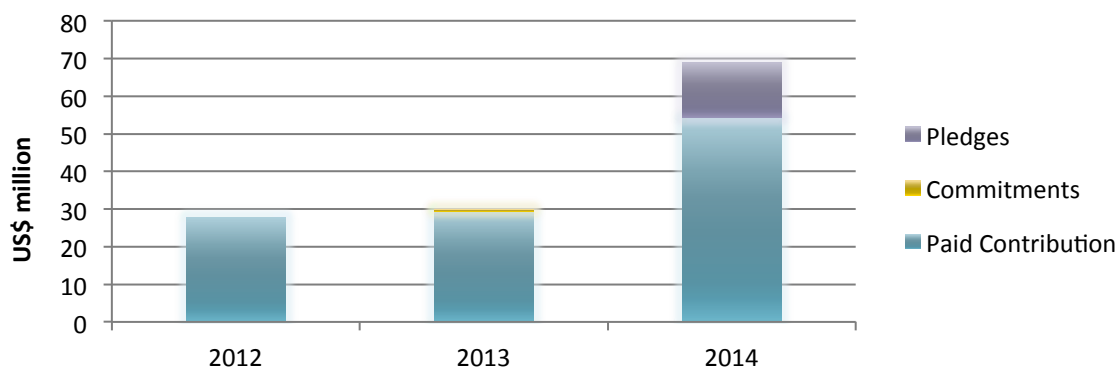
grant writing and budget preparation, monitoring, and reporting in Syria and the region. One challenge identified regarding NNGOs was their limited participation in existing sector coordination mechanisms, which might reduce their access to the ERF.⁹

In June 2014, in view of the evolution of the Syria crisis and the escalation of humanitarian needs in the neighbouring countries, Under-Secretary General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Valerie Amos established independent ERFs in Jordan and Lebanon, refocusing the objective of the existing Syria ERF. At the same time, the HPF in Turkey was created under the aegis of UN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2139 and S/RES/2165, with the objective of contributing to funding the cross-border humanitarian assistance in Syria.

However, as of early December 2014, the new CBPFs had not yet allocated any funding, and only one – the HPF in Turkey- which was not part of the former regional Syria ERF – had issued a Call for Proposals (CfPs). The remaining three CBPFs (in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon) were either in the process of defining their strategies or preparing CfPs, and thus not fully operational.

An analysis of donor contributions and pledges to the new ERFs and the HPF seem to indicate that some countries affected by the Syrian crisis, such as Lebanon and Jordan, will struggle to mobilise sufficient resources to address the needs of Syrian and Palestine refugees from Syria as well as their host communities. As of early December 2014, the new ERF in Lebanon had raised only US\$1 million (from Denmark), with another US\$3.2 million in pledges from Sweden and Germany. The ERF in Jordan has only recorded pledges from Sweden and Germany amounting to US\$2 million. In any case, this volume of funding is hardly enough for a meaningful and comprehensive first CfP for either CBPF. In comparison, the initial CfP for the HPF in Turkey was for US\$9 million.

Figure 1: Humanitarian funding to the Syria-related pooled funds 2012-2014



Source:

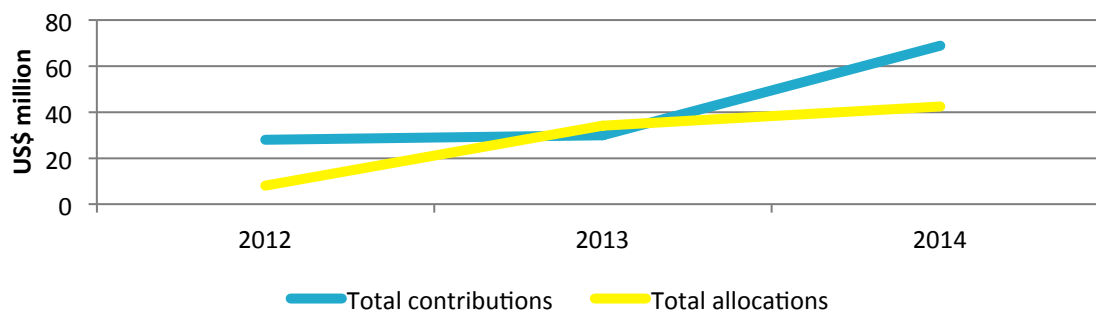
Based on UN OCHA FTS data

⁹ UN OCHA, Strategy Paper for the Syria Emergency Response Fund (ERF), June – December 2013

The Syria-related pooled funds have raised collectively US\$127 million in contributions¹⁰, commitments¹¹ and pledges¹² to date,¹³ reaching 13 million people.¹⁴ This represents approximately 1% of all humanitarian financing for this crisis. The bulk of the funding – US\$69 million – was received in 2014, and over US\$37 million represented donations to the new HPF in Turkey.¹⁵ Germany has been the most generous humanitarian donor to date with US\$36 million while the next one – Qatar – has made the single largest donation to the Funds with US\$20 million for the HPF in Turkey.

Allocations from the Funds have reached approximately US\$85 million,¹⁶ to date.¹⁷ Over 320 projects were submitted to the Regional Syria ERF in 2012-2014 with two out of every three proposals accepted by the Review Boards.

Figure 2: Contributions and allocations of the Syria-related pooled funds 2012-2014



Source: Based on UN OCHA FTS and UN OCHA FCS data

NGOs, both international and local, are key recipients of the Syria-related pooled funds. They represent 73 per cent of all projects registered (excluding the first CfP of the HPF as final allocations which were not yet known at the time of writing) and 63 per cent of all the

¹⁰ “Contribution” means the payment or transfer of funds or in-kind goods from the donor towards the appealing agency or the pooled fund’s managing agency, resulting from a commitment.

¹¹ “Commitment” is the creation of a contractual obligation regarding funding between the donor and appealing agency and almost always takes the form of a signed contract. This is the crucial stage of humanitarian funding: agencies cannot spend money and implement before a funding commitment is made. Once it is made, they can begin spending against it, using cash reserves.

¹² A pledge is a non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor.

¹³ Unless otherwise specified figures were taken from UN OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database <http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=home>

¹⁴ Syria Emergency Response Fund Monthly Update – August 2014 <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/ROMENA/ERF%20monthly%20update%20August%202014.pdf>

¹⁵ For a detailed funding information on the Syria-related pooled funds please see Annex 1: Funding overview

¹⁶ This figure includes an estimated US\$9 million for the first CfP of the HPF in Turkey, which was being processed at the time of this research.

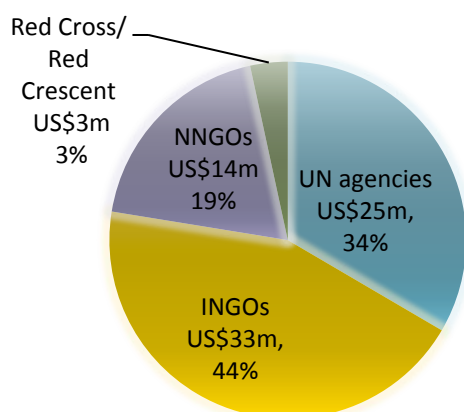
¹⁷ Based on data provided by UN OCHA Funding Coordination Section (FCS). Note that these figures are higher than the allocation figures available on the UN OCHA FTS database.

funding disbursed by the Funds. While in principle CBPFs do not establish any limitation or preferences in terms of the type of recipient organization, the share of NGO participation in ERFs has traditionally been higher than in Common Humanitarian Funds. The high proportion of NGO Syria ERF recipients makes their experience with the Fund crucial to analyse.

The INGO share is more than double that of NNGOs both in terms of number of contracts and funding received. However, when analysed over time, the funding figures show that the share of NNGOs has been steadily increasing from 5 per cent in 2012 to 23 per cent in 2014.

United Nations (UN) agencies¹⁸ represent a quarter of all projects and a third of the funding; however, in some cases part of this funding can subsequently be passed on to other partners, namely NGOs, to implement. Finally, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) national society had 5 projects funded, amounting to US\$2.5 million and representing 3 per cent of all the funding.

Figure 3: Aggregate allocations of the Syria-related pooled funds by type of recipient organisation, 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

The overall experience of the NGO community with the Syria ERF has been positive. As noted earlier, none of the new Syria-related CBPFs was fully operational at the time of the research. Therefore, the analysis of NGOs' perception of the Funds is largely based on the former regional Syria ERF and only a very limited degree is based on the initial steps of the new Lebanon ERF, Syria ERF, Jordan ERF, and the HPF in Turkey.

In terms of the funding process, the majority of NGOs consider the ERF to be an easy and straightforward donor, especially in comparison with accessing funds from UN agencies

¹⁸ For the purpose of this study and for ease of reference, the International Organisation for Migrations (IOM) is included under the category of UN agencies.

and some bilateral donors, such as ECHO. NNGOs receiving ERF funding are usually also implementing partners for UN agencies and appreciate the simplicity of the ERF process in comparison. Nevertheless, not all steps of the process are seen as equally smooth. While the application process was almost unanimously considered as clear and easy, it is the revision of applications that causes frustrations amongst ERF applicants. Over half of all organisations indicated that clarity on review criteria and decision-making process is needed.

The lack of clear guidelines and the excessive back-and-forth of comments and requests regarding information caused undue delays in the process and also posed an excessive work burden on smaller organisations. However, most partners expressed hopes that the review stage would be streamlined and expedited with the new Grant Management System (GMS), which is to be used for the new CBPFs. At the time of the research, GMS workshops had been carried out in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria; however, the Turkey HPF was the only CBPF to have actually used the system. Feedback from NGOs regarding the clarity of the GMS was good, notwithstanding some technical issues during the rollout of the online platform, and the challenges arising from having to complete all applications only in English.

In terms of meeting its strategic objectives of strengthening humanitarian coordination and partnerships, the regional Syria ERF has been successful in bringing together a wide spectrum of humanitarian organisations under the umbrella of common coordination structures, including the sector working groups and the strategic response plans (SRP). The ERF prioritisation mechanism has strategic discussions and technical reviews organised at the sectoral level. This provides implementing partners with strong incentives to participate and engage in such coordination structures. Key players in the Syria regional response, such as UNHCR, consider the focus of the regional Syria ERF and the new Turkey HPF relevant and appropriate. The perception is that the Funds strategy is well aligned with other country-level and regional plans and that communication and coordination between strategic plans are smooth.

Regional and country-level informative and formative workshops have been conducted, and participation of NNGOs has been especially enhanced through targeted outreach, specific support, and training sessions. While strengthening the capacity of local organisations was not a strategic objective *per se* of the Syria ERF, an increased access to ERF funding has reportedly played the role of “seed money” for NNGOs, empowering them to participate in coordination and decision-making structures as well as increasing their access to other sources of direct funding. Thus, the ERF has played an indirect role in enhancing local organisations’ participation in humanitarian coordination and response.

The Fund’s abilities to enable a rapid response to newly identified or unforeseen needs, and fund urgent priority projects that are underfunded are challenged by the overall slowness of the allocation process. The majority of organisations interviewed for this research considered the allocation process to be slow or too slow to allow them to respond to life-threatening situations and urgent needs in a timely manner. While it was not possible

to consistently record and verify the reported timeframe for the allocation process of each NGO, informants estimate the length of the process to be up to three months.

In a recent paper¹⁹, OCHA analyses 47 per cent of all CBPF projects against the standard target for speed set in OCHA's Strategic Framework 2014-2017. The review combines Common Humanitarian Funds (used in protracted emergencies) and Emergency Response Funds to determine the actual speed of the ERF application and disbursement process. The study looked into 121 projects from the Syria ERF, equivalent to 57 per cent of the total number of allocations made, not including projects approved under the Turkey's HPF first CfP (for which there was no data at the time of writing). The average speed in the case of the Syria ERF was determined to be 53 days, which is close both to the OCHA standard of 50 days for sudden and unforeseen emergencies, and the average time indicated by NGOs interviewed by ICVA. Nevertheless, the study also reveals that the process in Syria takes considerably longer than ERF allocations in Colombia (37 days on average); Haiti (34 days); Ethiopia (33 days); Palestine, Yemen and Zimbabwe (30 days); and Pakistan (15 days).

OCHA analysed that the time from the proposal submission to fund disbursement for all CBPFs stands at 51 days. OCHA thus considers that the reality on the ground is well aligned with the objectives set in the OCHA's Strategic Framework 2014-2017. This situation therefore poses the question whether the ERF mechanism, as conceived by OCHA, is fit for the purpose of delivering fast response in the event of rapidly arising or escalating needs. In the aforementioned paper, OCHA argues that "(...), understanding the difference between allocation speed and timeliness is critical to ensure a fair assessment of CBPF performance and effectiveness. In short: speed is a process indicator; timeliness is a principle that underpins the process. Speed refers to how quickly the allocation process is completed, while timeliness refers to how opportune the completion of the process is thought to be in relation to its intended objective (i.e. sooner than needed, as soon as needed, later than needed)."²⁰

However, humanitarian partners on the ground argue that the reality of ERF disbursement for the Syria response tends to be later than needed. This explains why the overwhelming majority of organisations indicate that they only use the ERF funding to complement the scale and reach of existing projects, bridge projects together, and maintain activities while processing funding from their regular funding sources. The reality thus appears to clash with the stated principle three of the management of CBPF: timeliness is the ability of CBPFs to allocate funds and save lives as humanitarian needs emerge or escalate.

Flexibility of the Syria ERF funding, on the other hand, was unanimously ranked as extremely high by NGOs interviewed for the present study. Organisations stated that the processes for amending projects in the face of changing needs, requesting no-cost

¹⁹ UN OCHA, Allocation Speed vs. Timeliness of OCHA-Managed Country-Based Pooled Funds: Understanding the Difference and What the Numbers Tell Us, 11 December 2014

²⁰ Idem, p.1

extensions to accommodate delays in implementation, and realigning budget costs were generally easy and straightforward.

The most frequently mentioned advantage of the Syria ERF is that it allows access to direct funding for smaller NGOs, be they national or international. Moreover, the Syrian response appears to be dominated by UN agencies and therefore any additional funding opportunity is highly valued by the NGO community. However, the direct impact of the ERF on how international organisations work with national partners appears to be minimal. Most INGOs have regular partnerships with NNGOs and did not consider that the ERF encourages them in any way to increase the level of those partnerships, nor is the nature of the mechanism- with its limited length of projects and volume of funding- conducive to giving greater support to national organisations. INGOs that incorporate capacity-building elements in their work with national partners do this through other sources of funding, rather than the ERF.

From the perspective of government donors, the Syria ERF and the subsequent CBPFs represent a funding line to non-traditional NGO partners, namely NNGOs, as well as good value for money due to the very low management costs of the fund (around 3%). Furthermore, the ERF is perceived to offer a well-designed and targeted response to pressing humanitarian needs for remote donations; through the allocation strategy and advisory board guidance, the ERF ensures that funding allocations are prioritised on the basis of needs and uses its technical peer review process to determine their merit.

Country case studies

Syria

The ERF context in Syria

The political and security situation in Syria deteriorated rapidly during 2012 with significant humanitarian implications both inside the country and in neighbouring countries. At the time when the first UN consolidated response plans were developed, it was estimated that one million people were in need of humanitarian assistance inside the country, while the planning for the neighbouring countries was based on meeting the needs of 98,000 refugees. The humanitarian situation, however, deteriorated very quickly and the response plans in and outside Syria were revised first in June 2012, then again in September. Within this rapidly worsening humanitarian situation, the Syria ERF was launched in June 2012. By August 2012 over US\$6 million was received towards the ERF and almost 90 per cent of the funds were allocated across 20 projects to assist an estimated 800,000 people inside Syria and 40,000 people in neighbouring countries.²¹

In December 2012, a decision was made to increase the budget ceiling for proposals inside Syria from US\$250,000 to US\$500,000 and to change the distribution of ERF allocations from 70 per cent inside Syria and 30 per cent for neighbouring countries to 60 and 40, respectively. These decisions were made on the basis of higher contributions received towards the end of the year, as well as on the rapidly increasing number of refugees, which grew beyond predictions made in September 2012.²² In February 2014 the maximum grant per project for ERF funding inside Syria was further raised to US\$750,000.

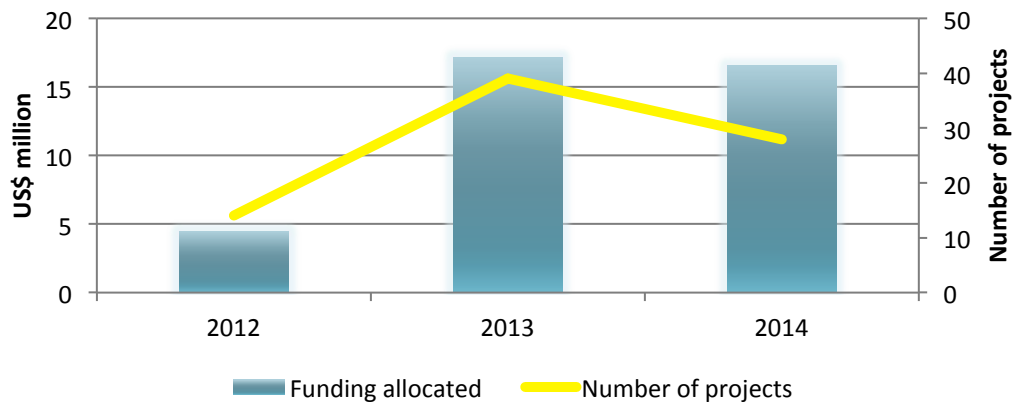
The allocation process inside Syria has remained unchanged since the inception of the Fund; project proposals can be prepared and submitted to OCHA at any time. They are screened by OCHA in consultation with the sectors before being submitted to the Review Board in Syria, and, then the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for a final endorsement.²³

²¹ UN OCHA, Emergency Response Fund Syria: Annual Report 2012
<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Syria%20ERF%202012.pdf>

²² Idem

²³ UN OCHA, Strategy Paper for the Syria Emergency Response Fund (ERF) February– July 2014

Figure 4: Allocations from the Syria ERF to Syria, 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Some US\$38 million (or about half) out of a grand total of US\$76 million from the Regional Syria ERF have been allocated to activities inside Syria between June 2012 and December 2014. On average, around half of all funding has gone to projects in Syria. The largest share (53 per cent) was registered in 2012, when US\$4.5 million out of US\$8 million was designated for humanitarian response in the country. The funds increased dramatically the following year reaching US\$17.2 million (or 50 per cent of all Syria ERF funding) and decreased slightly in 2014 to US\$16.5 million.

In contrast to the other three countries under the Regional Syria ERF umbrella, UN agencies are the main recipient of the Fund in Syria, representing between 41 and 59 per cent of all of the Fund's resources. Collectively, NGOs represent less than 40 per cent of all ERF funding in the country. INGOs' share has fluctuated between 26 per cent in 2012 - 2013 and 18 per cent in 2014. The share of NNGOs has been continuously growing along the lines of ERF allocations in other countries, beginning at 5 per cent and reaching 21 per cent in 2014. The SARC has experienced the largest variation: having received over a quarter of all allocations in 2012, the National Society did not have any ERF grants in 2013 and received an 8 per cent share in 2014.

The unusual balance between UN agencies and NGOs in the case of the ERF in Syria is due to the fact that direct funding from the Syria ERF to UN agencies outside Syria is limited in principle to funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and only exceptionally open to allocation of resources to other UN agencies' projects.²⁴ However, it is also owing to operational constraints for partnerships with NNGOs: no international organisation can work with a national organization that is not on the cleared list of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which dramatically reduces the number of eligible implementing organisations. The number of registered INGOs was also limited to some 15 organisations in 2014.

²⁴ UN OCHA, Syria Emergency Response Fund Terms of Reference 2012 and subsequent revisions.

NGO experience with the Regional Syria ERF inside Syria

Interviews with key stakeholders in Syria were conducted remotely during the period 10 November -5 December 2014. Seven organisations were interviewed: three NNGOs, three INGOs and the ERF Manager at UN OCHA.

As a whole, NGOs rated their experience with the Syria ERF as positive. NGOs appreciate the access to direct funding in a context dominated by UN agencies (some 62 per cent of all humanitarian assistance to Syria is channelled through UN agencies).²⁵ Yet, they also face a series of challenges that negatively impact on their ability to deliver quality humanitarian assistance to people in need. The speed of the ERF allocation process is the main issue for NGOs. All interviewees for this study indicated that the process is too slow to allow them to respond in an emergency situation. While NNGOs generally indicated a waiting period of five to eight months, INGOs usually took only two to three months to have their grant process completed. In response, OCHA has reportedly dedicated time to coaching NNGOs in Syria as well as investing time in improving their proposals, both of which may have contributed to such long waiting periods.

Because of its special status as local organisation and yet independent of the national structures in the country due to its affiliation to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA) was the exception amongst NNGOs in terms of speed of ERF allocation. This allows GOPA to operate with minimum restrictions from authorities in Syria and explains why it is a partner of choice for many bilateral donors, international organisations, and the ERF.

While delays in the allocation process inside Syria are arguably due to the extremely volatile context and to restrictions placed by the Syrian government on the operations of some humanitarian organisations, more efforts must be made to ensure the ERF mechanism's effectiveness in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. Another issue related to timeliness is the continuous fluctuation of exchange rates and currency depreciations, which hinder ERF's implementing partners' ability to achieve maximum impact with their activities since the time between the submission of proposals and actual disbursement are six or more months. In addition to the above, a protracted ERF process means that the reception of the final disbursement, equivalent of 20 per cent of the ERF grant, can be delayed by months, posing considerable strain on the resources of small organisations.

On the positive side, NGOs highlighted the Fund's ability to fill critical gaps, complement on-going projects, and support their response to increasing humanitarian needs as its main added values. Organisations also acknowledged ERF's flexibility to accommodate delays in the implementation stage of the projects. The Fund's ability to support core costs, such as staff and indirect project costs, albeit to a limited extent, is a critical advantage in the eyes

²⁵ Based on data downloaded from UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS).

of smaller and local NGOs, whose limited access to direct funding reduced their ability to fund organisational expenses.

In terms of the application process, only one implementing partner declared the process to be too difficult and cumbersome, and another decided not to re-apply for ERF funding because the size of the grants did not justify the time and resources required. The interactions with the OCHA ERF management teams, both in Amman and Damascus, were perceived as highly positive and satisfactory; the majority of NGOs emphasising the teams' support and responsiveness. However two-thirds of the interviewees would welcome better information management and a more proactive communication by OCHA, especially concerning the new re-focused ERF.

Amongst the challenges with the ERF process in Syria was the need for clearer guidelines regarding the format and content of the project proposal, which are expected to reduce the back-and-forth during the revision phase of the process. Secondly, the protracted nature of the conflict, which will soon be entering its fifth year, requires the ability to maintain on-going support to affected populations inside Syria. However, these delays in the application processes interrupt services and therefore harm the quality of humanitarian response as well as the relationship between the agencies and affected communities. Finally, organisations interviewed for this review were concerned regarding its refocusing onto activities only inside Syria and the delay in the re-purposing of the Regional Syria ERF.

Lebanon

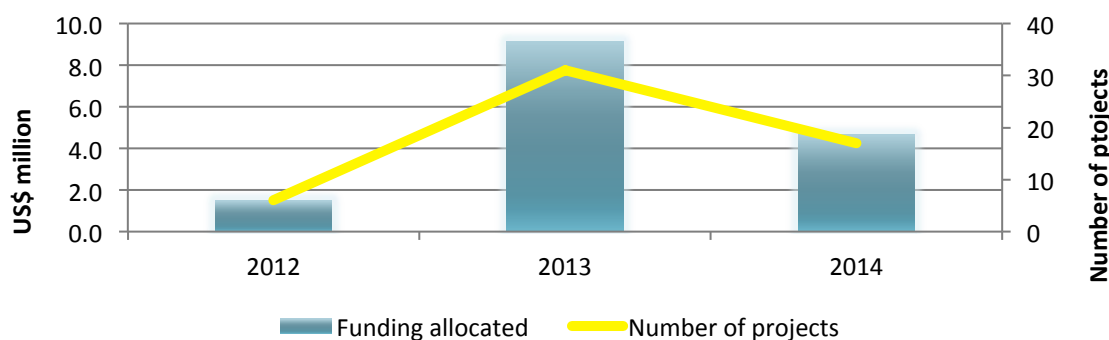
The ERF context in Lebanon

The ERF in Lebanon plays a crucial role in funding life-saving and urgent humanitarian needs, injecting money into prioritised as well as underfunded sectors.²⁶ Following a large influx of Syrian refugees during 2013, which continued albeit more moderately during 2014, Lebanon now hosts 1.2 million registered refugees, the second-largest population in the region, after Turkey.²⁷ In the absence of formal camps in Lebanon, Syrian refugees have sought support amongst local Lebanese communities, mainly in the poorest regions of the country. 800,000 refugees live side by side with the Lebanese host community in 242 of the most vulnerable areas. According to the Regional Response Plan Six, the Syrian Crisis directly affects an estimated 1.5 million Lebanese people, out of a population of four million.²⁸ This stems mainly from the increased demands on basic services, resources, and infrastructure.

The key focus of the Fund in Lebanon is geared toward activities targeting Syrian refugees (45% of all funding targets this beneficiary group) and host communities (31%). To a lesser degree the ERF funds activities aimed at Palestine refugees from Syria (13%), Palestine refugees in Lebanon (10%) and Lebanese returnees (0.8%).²⁹

The first ERF allocation to Lebanon was registered in September 2012. Since then, the ERF has grown considerably from funding 6 projects in 2012 to 31 projects in 2013, and 17 new projects as of December 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, almost US\$16 million from the Regional Syria ERF was allotted to activities in Lebanon, representing 20 per cent of all the Syria ERF funding. However, in spite of maintained humanitarian needs, the volume of funding allocated for Lebanon from the Syria ERF has decreased by 49 per cent in 2014.

Figure 5: Allocations from the Syria ERF to Lebanon, 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

²⁶ UN OCHA, Lebanon: Emergency Response Fund (as of 08 January 2014) <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ERFOVERVIEW08012014.pdf>

²⁷ UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

²⁸ UNHCR, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan Lebanon <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/docs/syria-rrp6-lebanon-response-plan.pdf>

²⁹ Data provided by OCHA and up to date as of 17 December 2014.

INGOs are key recipients of the ERF, with an average of 72 per cent of all funding allocations, while NNGOs and UN agencies split the remainder of the funding with 15 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. However, during the period 2012-2014 the shares of the different types of organisations have varied significantly: while INGOs began the period receiving 83 per cent of all resources and have seen their share decrease to 68 per cent, NNGOs did not receive any allocation in 2012 but represented 20 per cent in 2014 (and 23 per cent in 2013). Allocations to the UN have been steadily declining during the cycle with 17 per cent, 14 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

NGOs experience with the Syria ERF in Lebanon

A research mission in Lebanon took place from 19 until 22 November with the aim of interviewing key informants for the review, focusing mainly on NGO recipients of the ERF in country. Interviews were conducted with three NNGOs, ten INGOs (including the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum), UNHCR, and the ERF Manager at UN OCHA.³⁰

The overall experience of the NGO community with the ERF in Lebanon is positive. The Fund is considered very useful for filling critical gaps and complementing existing projects with additional or enhanced activities. The ERF has also proven its potential for targeting unforeseen needs in a preventive manner: in May 2014, a CfP was launched to address the anticipated water scarcity over the summer months in Lebanon. Projects were approved and funding was disbursed in time for partner organisation to implement the project in a timely manner.

The Fund's responsiveness to the needs of Palestine refugees in Lebanon as well as of Palestine refugees arriving from Syria was unanimously identified as a key value added. While other agencies operating in the country do not include assistance to Palestine refugees under their mandate (such as in the case of UNHCR), ERF's NGO implementing partners, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), provide continuous support to this vulnerable population. The Fund is perceived as a crucial source of income to complement critical gaps in the response by these organisations.

In addition to the above, the ERF in Lebanon is regarded as one of the very few sources of direct funding available to NGOs. A quick glance at all humanitarian financing recorded for the Syrian crisis in Lebanon³¹ indicates that around 75 per cent of the funding goes directly to UN agencies. In comparison, only 13 per cent of the ERF allocations were allocated to projects submitted by UN organisations. The ERF is also highly valued as a tool for supporting NNGOs. NNGOs interviewed during the mission consider that receiving direct funding raises their profile vis-à-vis international partners such as NGOs and UN agencies, gives them a place at the coordination table by participating in the sector working groups, and empowers them to seek funding from other donors.

³⁰ For information on the organisations please see Annex 2: List of interviewees

³¹ Data downloaded from UN OCHA FTS

The availability of information on the ERF process and CfPs was generally perceived as adequate. However, some interviewees raised the issue of the short deadlines of some CfP and the inability of smaller NGOs to prepare adequately for the application, as well as the need for wider dissemination of the ERF funding status, i.e. availability of funding at any time, and early notification of upcoming CfP.

The timeliness of the ERF is a major concern for NGOs with two-thirds indicating that the process is too slow for an effective emergency response mechanism. While the implementation, reporting, and auditing phases of the ERF grants process was generally ranked as quick and efficient, critical delays were reported at the review and disbursement stages. The average time was placed at 2.5 month (or some 50 working days), with a few organisations indicating much faster turnaround for some applications, while in a couple of other cases the process was said to have taken 3.5 months (or approximately 70 working days) to complete.

Flexibility of the Syria ERF funding, on the other hand, was unanimously ranked as extremely high by NGOs interviewed for the present study. Organisations stated that the processes for amending projects in the face of changing needs, requesting no-cost extensions to accommodate delays in implementation, and realigning budget costs were generally easy and straightforward. In relation to the above, exceptional accessibility of and support by the ERF Regional Management team in Amman and the ERF focal point in-country were highlighted as key strengths of the ERF success in Lebanon. NGOs also stressed the benefits of the regular training workshops on the ERF process, delivered by OCHA in different locations for both local and international partners, in both Arabic and English. NNGOs and smaller INGOs insisted on this training's positive impact on their ability to compete for ERF grants alongside more experienced organisations.

Changes in the ERF strategy, such as increasing the per-project funding ceiling from US\$250,000 to US\$500,000 in 2013 were welcomed by NGOs. NGOs interviewed in Lebanon generally consider this volume of funding to be adequate and commensurate with the length of the project. However, as humanitarian need increases, ERF recipients are raising the issue of the urgency to create longer-term solutions regarding the refugee and host-communities situations in the country. Organisations regret that no such activities can be funded by the Fund and stress the need for extending the project length in order to provide meaningful answers to refugees' needs in Lebanon.

The study also examined perceptions of the appropriateness of ERF's allocation modalities. Interviewees in Lebanon commonly agreed that allocation on a rolling basis was more suitable to the nature of the context and objective of addressing gaps and emerging humanitarian needs. When applying on rolling basis, the lack of clarity regarding timeframe and criteria used to select or reject proposals was identified as a potential challenge. NGOs complained to a higher degree of delays in the application process when submitting proposals outside a CfP. The CfP modality was favoured for the greater clarity of the process as organisations felt they had clearer information on the Fund's projects of choice (through pre-set priorities) and process duration. However, organisations that were

unsuccessful with some of their applications expressed that they did not receive a clear indication of why their projects were rejected, whether they were applying on rolling basis or for a CfP.

According to two-thirds of organisations interviewed in Lebanon, determination of priorities for the CfP was done in a clear and transparent manner. However, interviewees remarked that the quality process was very much dependent upon the sector lead agency and that different organisations had a different understanding of the humanitarian situation's needs and priorities. Organisations with stronger and regular presence in the sector working group felt in general that they had more say in the discussion of sector priorities. However, being a recipient of ERF funding did not appear to have much influence on how much organisations were to take part in coordination, with the possible exception of NNGOs that felt more comfortable taking part in sector group discussions after being selected for direct funding.

NNGOs see a clear capacity building element in the ERF's trainings where OCHA staff present and clearly explain the application and reporting process. Interviewees indicated that these sessions encouraged them to apply for ERF funding. The workshops are highly valued by NNGOs as well as by many INGOs and are considered a good practice that could be replicated in other CBPF in the region.

Several challenges with the Syria ERF process in Lebanon were highlighted in the course of the research. First, the need for clearer guidelines as to the format and content of the project proposal, which are expected to reduce the back-and-forth during the revision phase of the process. Organisations expect that the new GMS will offer a solution to this and improve the timeliness of the application process, which is currently considered unsatisfactory. Secondly, after nearly four years of an emergency in Syria, stakeholders consider that the time for longer-term solutions to the needs of refugees and host communities has arrived. They would welcome a broader focus of the ERF priorities, including expanding the span of the projects and possibly ceiling of the grants to better address humanitarian needs in light of the protracted Syrian crisis.

Thirdly, NGOs have experienced difficulties with the eligibility of costs and, more specifically, with the low degree of salary and support costs accepted by the Fund. While the maximisation of direct project costs and relief items is a key principle of the ERF as determined by the Advisory Board, this is particularly challenging for smaller NGOs that have a limited number of bilateral donors, and therefore experience challenges in covering these costs with other sources of funding. Fourthly, the issue of sustainability of projects funded under the Syria ERF in Lebanon has been raised by NGOs and other agencies alike; it was felt that the handover process of ERF projects was not always clear and that it would benefit from clearer criteria, especially in the case of co-funded and implemented activities alongside those funded by other donors. Finally, organisations that were interviewed for this review were concerned with the delay in the new Lebanon ERF set-up

and would welcome a more regular flow of information from OCHA regarding the Fund's status.

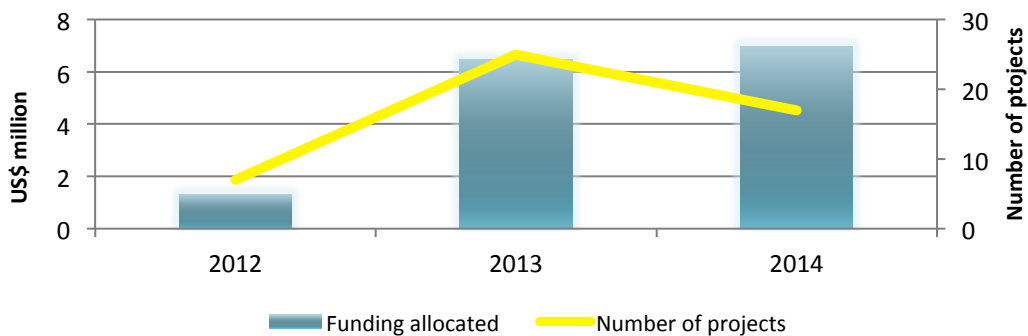
Jordan

The ERF context in Jordan

As the Syrian conflict enters its fifth year, the crisis in Jordan continues to deepen, protract, and escalate. An influx of over 620,000 registered Syrian refugees has sought refuge in Jordan so far.³² This represents 21 per cent of the Syrian refugees in the region. About 51 per cent of the population are females and 49 per cent are male, while 18 per cent of the overall population are children under five. Approximately 84 per cent are hosted within Jordanian communities with the rest being accommodated in camp settings.³³ The first half of 2013 witnessed a massive arrival of Syrian refugees fleeing to Jordan. Close to half a million Syrian refugees are living in host communities, concentrated in urban centres in the central and northern governorates of Jordan.³⁴

The first allocation from the Syria ERF in Jordan was registered in July 2012. Since then, the ERF has grown significantly from funding just 7 projects in 2012 to 25 in 2013, before falling to 17 in 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, US\$14.8 million from the Regional Syria ERF was allotted to activities in Jordan, representing 20 per cent of the overall ERF funding. Funding allocated for Jordan from the Syria ERF has remained stable in 2013 and 2014.

Figure 6: Allocations from the Syria ERF to Jordan, 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

NGOs are the main implementing partner of the ERF, receiving 92% of the cumulative allocations during the period between 2012 and 2014. INGOs accounted for 78 per cent of all funding allocations, while NNGOs represented 14 per cent. UN agencies carried the

³² UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

³³ UNCHR, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan Jordan <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/midyear/docs/syria-rrp6-myu-jordan.pdf>

³⁴ Idem for all information in this paragraph

remaining 8 per cent of the funding. However, during the period 2012-2014 the shares of the different types of organisations have varied significantly. While INGOs began the period receiving 82 per cent of all resources and have seen their share decrease to 75 per cent, NNGOs did not receive any allocation in 2012. However NNGOs represented 18 per cent of resources in 2013, and 14 per cent in 2014. Allocations to the UN have been steadily declining during the cycle with 18 per cent, 8 per cent, and 7 per cent respectively.

With exceptional funding for coordination, early action, preparedness, and resilience activities, the new ERF in Jordan is to focus primarily on responding to urgent humanitarian needs, mainly through filling funding gaps or responding rapidly to new or unforeseen emergency needs. Also the ERF in Jordan will address the humanitarian needs in southern Syria through supporting operational and logistical activities for the implementation of cross-border operations. The minimum funding target for the Fund has been set at US\$10 million.³⁵ However, as of early December 2014, no contributions have been made to the Fund, and only two donors – Germany and Sweden – have made pledges for a total amount of US\$2 million.

NGOs experience with the Syria ERF in Jordan

A research mission in Jordan took place from 23 until 25 November with the aim of interviewing key informants for the review, focusing mainly on NGO recipients of the ERF. Interviews were conducted with three NNGOs, ten INGOs (including the Syrian INGO Regional Forum), an ERF donor and the ERF Manager at UN OCHA.³⁶

The overall experience of the NGO community with the ERF in Jordan is positive. It resembles other countries in that it is considered very useful for filling critical gaps and complementing existing projects with additional or enhanced activities. Its adaptability and responsiveness to changing humanitarian needs, together with its support of NNGOs were unanimously identified as a key value added.

The vast majority of organisations rated the ERF as a largely easy and straightforward donor. However, not all steps are seen as equally smooth. While the application process was almost unanimously considered as clear and easy, as in other countries, the revision of applications caused frustrations amongst the ERF partners. Opinions on the reporting phase were divided, with some organisations indicating that it was unnecessarily involved and time-consuming, while others considered it to be straightforward and clear. Most organisations did not have specific comments on the monitoring and reporting (M&R) process, but those who did indicated that it was highly beneficial and stated their interest in having more visits.

The timeliness appears to be less of an issue for NGOs working with the Syria ERF in Jordan. The majority of stakeholders indicated that the speed of the application process was good, with some organisations completing it in under a month. But it is not the

³⁵ Idem

³⁶ For information on the organisations please see Annex 2: List of interviewees

timelines of the ERF allocation process that appears to be the greatest obstacle to the NGOs' work in Jordan. Nearly two-thirds of all organisations reported considerable delays and bureaucratic obstacles on the side of different Jordanian institutions, governmental bodies, and competent Ministries. Such delays can span several months and effectively halt all progress on otherwise-approved and agreed projects. This situation is highly prejudicial to NGOs' ability to meet on-going and emerging needs in a planned and effective manner. It also limits the ERF's ability to fulfil its purpose and to meet its key objectives. Last but not least, such obstacles by the Jordanian Government may be very detrimental to the ERF's future ability to attract funding and donor support for the needs of Syrian refugees, secondary-displaced populations (such as Palestinian and Iraqi refugees), and their host communities.

Considerable delays in the start of the implementation process are offset by the great degree of flexibility of the Syria ERF funding in Jordan. Organisations stated that requesting no-cost extensions and realigning budget costs were generally easy and straightforward. The exceptional degree of support offered by the ERF Regional Management team in Amman during all stages of the process were highlighted as key strengths of the ERF success. NGOs also stressed the benefits of the regular training workshops on the ERF process, delivered by OCHA in different locations for both local and international partners, in both Arabic and English. NNGOs and smaller INGOs insisted that this training had a positive impact on their ability to compete for ERF grants alongside more experienced organisations. However, several INGOs indicated the potential benefit of expanding the network of NNGOs currently applying for ERF funding to include smaller, community-based organisations outside the scope of the select group of the "royal" organisations and foundations.

Changes in the ERF strategy, such as increasing the funding ceiling from US\$250,000 to US\$500,000 in 2013 were welcomed by NGOs. There is a split between the NGOs interviewed in Jordan that consider this volume of funding to be adequate, and those who believe it needs to be further increased. The latter is founded on the argument that, as the humanitarian situations becomes more stabilised, ERF implementing partners' recipients will need to take a longer-view approach to the humanitarian response of the needs arising from the Syrian conflict inside Jordan. This is also congruent with the NGOs' belief that the current duration of projects is not sufficient to address existing needs.

The study also examined perceptions of the transparency and adequacy of the ERF prioritisation process with interviewees agreeing that priorities were defined in a structured and clear manner, albeit with some variation amongst sectors. Organisations with stronger and regular presence at the sector working groups level felt that they had more say in the discussion of sector priorities. However, being a recipient of ERF funding did not appear to have much influence on how much organisations take part in coordination, with the possible exception of NNGOs that felt more comfortable taking part in sector group discussions after being selected for direct funding.

Several challenges with the Syria ERF process in Jordan were highlighted in the course of the research.

Firstly, there are the aforementioned bureaucratic impediments on the side of governmental institutions to the quick implementation of emergency projects funded by the ERF. Many organisations have called for bilateral donors and UN agencies, including UN OCHA, to advocate on behalf of the humanitarian community in Jordan with the Government for a more efficient and speedy approval process. Other organisations suspect the Jordanian government of wishing to galvanise support for a government-led multi-donor fund and is thus obstructing all other indirect channels of humanitarian work in the country. Whether such theories are correct or not, Jordan's difficult operating environment for humanitarian implementation is not likely to increase the impact of the refugee response, nor is it likely to make the future Jordan CBPF particularly attractive for humanitarian donors

Secondly, NGOs have experienced difficulties with the eligibility of costs, more specifically with the low degree of salary and support costs accepted by the Fund. This is particularly challenging for smaller NGOs that have a limited number of bilateral donors, and therefore lack the ability to complement these costs with other sources of funding.

Finally, organisations interviewed for this review were concerned by the delay in the rollout of the new Jordan ERF and were calling for a more regular flow of information from OCHA regarding the Fund's status, including the level of financing and the expected sector-level priorities. Concerns were particularly high in the face of identified gaps in the winterisation of humanitarian response and fears over another harsh winter in the Kingdom.

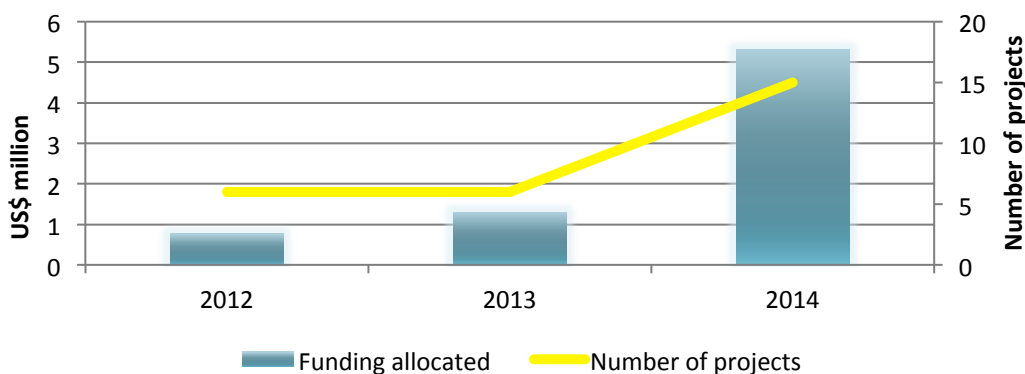
Iraq

The ERF context in Iraq

While Iraq was not initially perceived as likely to host a large number of refugees from neighbouring Syria, movements since early 2012 indicated the potential for a considerable influx. By the end of 2012, Iraq was hosting more than 67,000 Syrian refugees. This figure had more than tripled a year later and stood at over 230,000 in December of 2014. Despite stabilising numbers of Syrian refugees, humanitarian needs in the country are by no means remaining stable. Since the outbreak of fighting between government forces and armed groups in December 2013, internal armed conflict has swept quickly across large parts of Iraq with catastrophic humanitarian consequences. At least 5.2 million people are now estimated to be in need of protection and emergency humanitarian assistance.³⁷

The Regional Syria ERF did not begin funding projects in Iraq until late October 2012. The scope of the regional ERF focused exclusively on supporting Syrian refugees in the country. Iraq has received US\$7.4 million in allocations from the ERF, amounting to 10 per cent of the overall funding. Of all the countries experiencing the spill-over effect of the Syria crisis, Iraq has received the smallest share of the funding in both 2012 and 2013 (4 per cent and 9 per cent respectively). Only in 2014 did Iraq surpass Lebanon, receiving 16 per cent of the yearly ERF allocations vs. only 14 per cent for Lebanon.

Figure 7: Allocations from the Syria ERF to Iraq, 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Between 2012 and 2014, 82 per cent of the cumulative ERF funding in Iraq was allocated to NGOs, with INGOs and NNGOs taking equal shares. Of the top ten

³⁷ UN OCHA, 2014/2015 Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview Summary
http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Iraq_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview_Summary_%282014_2015%29.pdf

recipients of ERF money in Iraq, seven are NGOs, one is a Red Cross national society, and two are UN agencies. Four of the NGOs are local organisations, including the two ranking at the top in that category.

Following the ERC's decision to create a separate Fund based in Turkey and to reorganise the management of the Syria ERF by discontinuing the regional window and establishing CBPFs, Iraq was excluded from the Syria-related pooled funds as of 1 January 2015. While OCHA has not ruled out a continuation of the ERF activities in Iraq, no steps were taken during the Regional ERF transitional period of July-December 2014.

New sources of funding are emerging to support growing humanitarian needs in the country. In June 2014, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced an extraordinary contribution of US\$500 million to the UN to scale up operations and provide humanitarian assistance across Iraq.³⁸ The programme period for implementation covers three reporting cycles: 30 June to the end of October 2014; November 2014 to the end of February 2015; and beginning of March to the end of July 2015. The UN Secretary-General and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia agreed that UN OCHA would be responsible for disbursing the grant and for reporting on its use.

NGOs experience with the Syria ERF in Iraq

Interviews with key stakeholders in Iraq were conducted remotely during the period 10 November - 5 December 2014. Nine organisations were interviewed, including six INGOs and three NNGOs. This was the only context of the Syria-related pooled funds review where it was not possible to interview the Iraq ERF Manager at UN OCHA, despite every effort having been made to secure an interview.

Overall, NGOs considered the experience with the Syria ERF in Iraq as satisfactory. Four NGOs reported their interaction with the ERF to have been positive or very positive, while the same number indicated that it was acceptable, and one organisation rated it as negative due to long delays in the process. Over half of the interviewees qualified the speed of the process as slow, generally indicating waiting times of between 2 and 4 months. This was considered highly prejudicial to the effective planning and implementation of short-term projects, like those funded by the ERF mechanism. For that reason, one organisation indicated having pulled out of the ERF application process after it exceeded 70 days.

While the project submission phase was rated as generally smooth, delays in the review phase with excessive back-and-forth were perceived as the chief reason for the overall delay in the application process. Linked to above were the comments made by a third of all interviewees in Iraq concerning difficulties in their

³⁸ ReliefWeb, Saudi Humanitarian Fund for Iraq - First Progress Report, November 2014 [EN/AR] <http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/saudi-humanitarian-fund-iraq-first-progress-report-november-2014-enar>

communications with the ERF regional manager in Amman. It was considered that the remote management carried a lack of understanding of the local context and of implementing partners' work in the country, which led to minute details in project proposals being discussed over protracted periods of time. While the share of NGOs reporting any issues with the regional management of the fund is admittedly low, it is higher than in any of the four countries covered by the Regional Syria ERF. At the same time, four organisations stressed the availability and responsiveness of the team in Amman, while another one did not report any particular concerns with the Fund's management.

Like in other countries, the ERF is considered very useful for filling critical gaps and complementing existing projects with additional or enhanced activities. Applications on rolling basis were perceived as more appropriate for the NGOs' response to critical gaps. The clarity of the prioritisation of needs for both CfPs and allocations on rolling basis was believed to vary across sectors and was found to be somewhat insufficient in comparison with other ERF mechanisms outside the Syria context. This perception did not appear to be dependent on the level of involvement in the humanitarian coordination structures in the country. Overall, the impact of the ERF on the degree to which NGOs partook in coordination appeared to be limited. NGOs perceived overall humanitarian coordination on the country level to be weak at the time of the research. Thus, a stronger UN OCHA office leading to better information management and information dissemination was deemed to be a step in the right direction.

When it comes to NNGOs and capacity-building under the ERF mechanism, there were only a few mentions of the training workshops on the ERF process delivered by OCHA in different locations in Iraq. However, all stakeholders making reference to the training considered it to be very useful, with NNGOs highlighting its positive impact on their ability to compete for ERF grants alongside more experienced organisations. Still, some NNGOs called for separate revision and allocation processes for local and international partners in order to provide equal opportunities to all NGOs.

Alongside the concern over the timeliness of the ERF process, the lack of clear information on the future of the Syria ERF mechanism in Iraq has been a major grievance of NGOs interviewed for the review. The study found a certain degree of difference among the stakeholders in the information held in early/mid November and those consulted at the later stage of the research, with the vast majority of the former having no knowledge of the interruption of the ERF funding for operations in Iraq starting early 2015. Thus NGOs appeared to continue to rely on the ERF in their strategic planning for 2015. It is clear, therefore, that OCHA needs to issue immediate and clear communication regarding the future of the ERF funding in Iraq.

Turkey

The HPF context in Turkey

In June 2014, due to the increased operational complexity and scale of the Syria crisis, along with the demands of the UN Security Council through S/RES/2139 and S/RES/2165 to allow humanitarian access and assistance across conflict lines and across borders, ERC Amos decided to establish the HPF in Turkey, managed by the OCHA office in Gaziantep. The HPF is to focus primarily on expanding the delivery of assistance in Syria from Turkey but cross-border assistance delivered from other neighbouring countries can be funded through the HPF. Limited direct access to affected populations and high insecurity inside Syria remain the main constraints for humanitarian organisations. However, despite these risks and challenges, humanitarian assistance and services have been delivered across borders from Turkey by over 35 INGOs and a significant number of NNGOs, mainly Syrian diaspora organisations, as well as most recently by UN agencies under the aegis of S/RES/2165.

Within the programmatic framework of the Response Plan for Humanitarian Operations in Syria from Turkey, the HFP is set to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance by especially focusing on: **i)** supporting life-saving and life-sustaining activities; **ii)** filling critical funding gaps; **iii)** reaching population living in hard-to-reach and besieged areas; **iv)** prepositioning stock and response capacities for a more timely/flexible response; **v)** expanding the delivery of assistance by partnering with Syrian organizations while investing on building their institutional, technical, and operational capacity; **vi)** supporting logistics and coordination services to increase the operational capacity, outreach, and access of humanitarian partners in order to enable effective delivery of humanitarian assistance Investing on needs assessment activities and remote monitoring systems to increase the availability of critical information, as well as the transparency and accountability of aid delivery in a context of highly restricted access; and **vi)** supporting emergent resilience and early recovery needs wherever possible.³⁹

The HPF's allocation criteria and processes are largely different from those of the previous Regional Syria ERF and the new CBPF in Jordan and Lebanon. The maximum length of the projects is up to 12 months, rather than the 6 months for other Syria-related pooled funds. There is no funding ceiling for allocations under the HPF, however the recommended *minimum* budget size for HPF projects is US\$250,000. Where the budget is lower, the sector will need to provide a justification, as it may be the case for proposals submitted by smaller NGOs whose

³⁹ UN OCHA, Strategy Paper for the Humanitarian Pooled Fund in Turkey, 20 August 2014

absorption capacity is limited.⁴⁰ Thus, the HPF appears to be closer in nature to other CBPF such as the Common Humanitarian Funds used mainly in protracted emergencies, than to the standard Syria-related ERF.

The first HPF CfP was launched on 19 September 2014; it was an unprecedented feat of celerity in setting up a brand new pooled fund mechanism in a country for OCHA.

NGOs experience with the HPF

A research mission took place in Gaziantep from 26 until 29 November with the aim of interviewing key informants for the review. Interviews were conducted with nine Syrian NGOs (including the Syrian NGO Alliance), four INGOs, UNHCR, and the Acting HPF Manager at UN OCHA.⁴¹ Given that the very first CfP was underway during the research period, the review of NGOs' experience with the HPF is limited to the Fund's set-up, priorities, and first CfP rollout.

Expectations from the new HPF were set very high amongst humanitarian organisations in Turkey due to both ERC Amos's and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator's visits at the time. UNHCR welcomed the creation of the new CBPF and expect to further align strategies once UNHCR cross-border operations in Syria commence in 2015.

Syrian NGOs are expected to be the sole beneficiaries of this newly pooled fund, being amongst the very few organisations with direct access to Syria across the border from neighbouring Turkey. However, the CBPF mechanism not allowing in principle the exclusion of any group of humanitarian organisations, the CfP also opened its doors to INGOs, UN agencies, and Red Cross/Red Crescent organisations. Still, OCHA issued a special invitation to Syrian NGOs to participate as well as an invitation to INGOs and UN partners to give priority to local organisations. The effects of this strategy were evident in the distribution of proposals received: from a total of 49 projects, 86 per cent came from NNGOs, 10 per cent from INGOs, and 4 per cent from UN agencies. From those proceeding onto the next stage, 76 per cent of the proposals came from NNGOs, 19 per cent from INGOs, and 7 per cent from UN organisations. However such preferential treatment appeared to have only partly appeased Syrian NGOs who still see the inclusion of INGOs and the UN as undue competition.

The nature of the national NGO community based in Turkey is also unique amongst the countries affected by the Syria crisis. The large Syrian NGO community, estimated to comprise 150 organisations by some interviewees, is composed

⁴⁰ UN OCHA, Allocation Paper for the Humanitarian Pooled Fund in Turkey First Call for Proposals, 19 September 2014

⁴¹ For information on the organisations please see Annex 3: List of interviewees

mainly by new organisations with less than three years of existence. Those who have a longer history are not used to operating in emergency environments and therefore are unfamiliar with humanitarian principles, structures, processes, project cycle management, as well as funding and coordination mechanisms. All this sets a distinctive operating environment for the new HPF.

The volume of funding available for the very first HPF CfP represented another issue for Syrian NGOs as they had expected the scale of the Fund to be closer to US\$50 million rather than to the US\$9 million that was made available for allocations. However, it should be noted that at the time of the launch of the CfP, the donors had actually paid only US\$6.7 million. In total, over US\$37 million have been contributed or pledged to the Turkey HPF as of early December 2014. This US\$37 million was assembled seven government donors: Denmark, France, Germany, Qatar, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Over half of the funding corresponds to a single US\$20-million Qatari contribution from 29 September 2014, ten days after the launch of the CfP.

Despite some initial grievances, the overall NGO perception of the HPF ranged from adequate to positive. Unlike other Syria-related pooled fund contexts, the timeliness of the process was not systematically raised as a major issue. Only two NGOs (one national and one international) specifically remarked on the length of the process and the fact that by the end of November, organisations still did not know when contracts would be signed and the funding disbursed. According to the HPF Allocation Paper from 19 September, the first CfP was planned to take up to 60 working days (finalising on 8 December 2014).

The main added value of the HPF perceived by humanitarian organisations in Turkey is twofold: on the one hand is the direct access to funding for local, mainly Syrian, NGOs; on the other hand is the fact that the HPF gives cross-border operations into Syria the normative and operational framework they need in order to ensure that the needs of vulnerable populations assisted from Turkey are met in a planned, accountable and effective manner.

A series of procedural challenges were unanimously highlighted by NGOs (both INGOs and NNGOs) interviewed as part of the study. The shortness of the CfP – originally planned to last only a week and subsequently extended to three weeks – was identified as a major obstacle for Syrian NGOs who were applying for pooled funding for the very first time in their existence. The speedy rollout of the HPF was also considered to have had a negative impact on the transparency of the process as a whole because many NNGOs were not able to put forward their expressions of interest in order to be pre-cleared as eligible partners for the HPF's first CfP by OCHA.

The new GMS system, which had never been used before for the Syria-related pooled funds, was considered too cumbersome for NNGOs. Technical problems and not-so-well-thought-through functionalities, such as the impossibility to delete attachments once uploaded, and the need to fill all template sections (even where not applicable) further hindered the smooth running of the application process for Syrian NGOs. Some Syrian NGO representatives interviewed for the review were not able to submit their applications due to a combination of Internet connectivity issues and system failures of the online GMS.

The language of the application process was highlighted as a major pitfall of the HPF because the GMS is only operational in English and most Syrian NGOs – the main targets of the pooled fund process in Turkey – have limited professional knowledge of the language.

While the project proposal stage was deemed too hurried by all thirteen NGOs consulted for the study, the review process was considered to be quite the opposite. NGOs found four revisions to be excessive and unduly delaying the process. Some organisations sitting on the Review Board also raised issues over the clarity of application criteria, indicating that despite the Allocation Paper stating that individual grants for a volume of less than US\$250,000 could be exceptionally accepted when justification was provided by the relevant sector, they were all disqualified.

Having no limitations on the maximum amount available per project and allocations, NGOs did not report concerns with the overall availability of funding, but did question how the sector envelopes were decided. The HPF Allocation Paper had predetermined the allocations per sector (based on HPF Advisory Board discussions), with livelihoods and Health and Food security taking over half of the available funding for the first CfP. However, some Syrian NGOs considered that not all sectors had been allocated sufficient funds. NGOs also felt that there was a lack of clear feedback on the rejected projects and that was limiting the scope for lessons learnt.

The issue of building the capacity of Syrian NGOs in the context of the Turkey HPF has been a recurrent topic during all stakeholder interviews. Syrian NGOs (and their international colleagues) are acutely aware of the lack of preparation of Syrian NGOs when it comes to implementing large volumes of humanitarian funding in an emergency context. In this particular case, the limited humanitarian experience of Syrian NGOs raises an important need for capacity-strengthening on the CBPF project management and financial reporting, as well as on the humanitarian system as a whole. While OCHA offered a series of trainings on the GMS ahead of the CfP, there was limited capacity building going beyond the compliance with the HPF application process. Up until early December 2014, there had reportedly been one

single training session on the humanitarian cycle (led by OCHA in November). However, the UNHCR have been organising technical training in the three sectors where they are the lead agency. Different sectors have also provided support to Syrian NGOs during the HPF application process at the request of OCHA; however, this support has varied considerably across sectors, doing little to raise the general capacity of these organisations to cope with the process. There is a general recognition that more strategic and holistic capacity building is needed in order to ensure that successful Syrian NGO applying to the HPF are able to successfully deliver assistance, implement according to the Funds' criteria, and carry out the adequate financial and technical reporting.

While such training should come primarily from OCHA, the current HPF team in Gaziantep is too understaffed to be able to realistically take on such quantity of extra work. The solution should be a greater degree of support from OCHA headquarters and other OCHA offices in the region with experience in managing CBPF. Furthermore, OCHA in Turkey could galvanise support for local capacity building by coordinating such capacity building activities with bilateral donors who do not fund the HPF but finance the humanitarian response in Turkey and across the border in Syria. The United States of America, for instance, is a donor who does not support CBPF as a rule but who are very much involved in strengthening local capacities in the humanitarian context where it operates. In addition to the above, the OCHA HPF team should consider providing continuous guidance and mentoring to NNGOs that have been successful in the first CfP in order to ensure the new Fund is operating to its full potential from the beginning and to improve the chances of these NNGOs to be approved for further funding.

Finally, the OCHA should focus on developing a sound M&R mechanism for the HPF as soon as possible. Remote monitoring techniques used in other difficult-to-access settings, such as third party monitoring and beneficiary hotlines, should be considered. As a whole, there is a potential for expanding the use of M&R beyond safeguarding the correct use of the HPF resources as well as exploring its use as a mentoring and capacity building tool. Dedicated sector staff working on the HPF M&R would enhance OCHA's oversight of the Fund's allocations as well as strengthen local capacity in the country.

Annexes

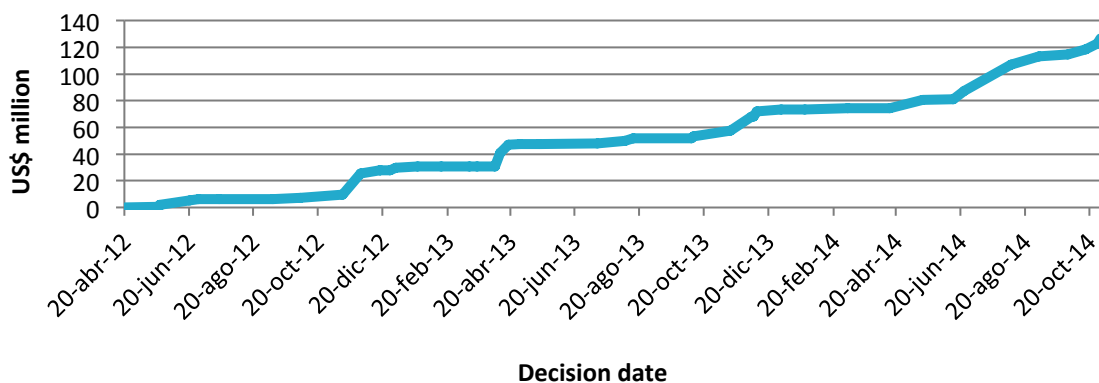
Annex 1: Funding overview of the Syria-related pooled funds

The Annex includes a financial analysis of contributions and allocations to the Regional Syria ERF and the subsequent CBPF. All data is valid and up to date as of 10 December 2014.

Global trends

The Syria-related pooled funds have raised collectively US\$127 million in contributions and pledges to date, targeting 13 million people. The bulk of the funding – US\$69 million – was received in 2014, and over US\$37 million represented pledges and donations to the new HPF in Turkey. Contributions to the Syria-related pooled funds have been growing steadily over the period 2012-2014 seeing a sharp increase in the second half of the year 2014.

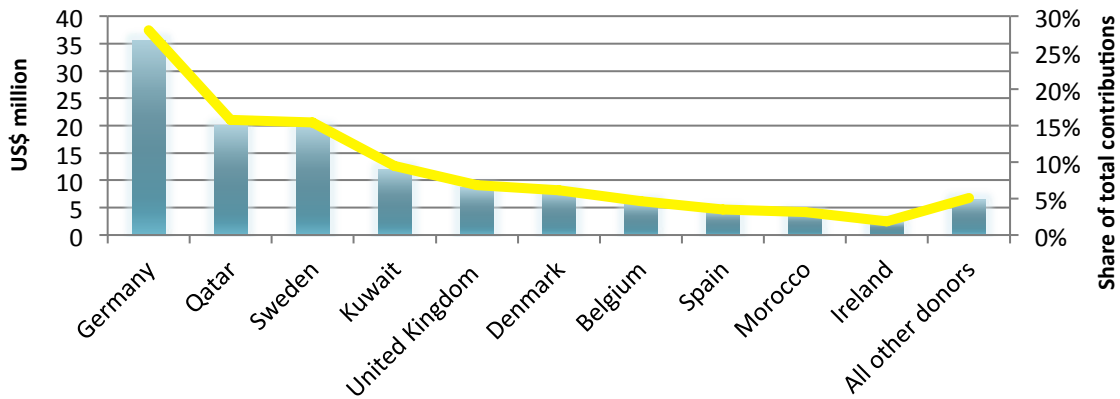
Figure 1: Cumulative contributions to the Syria-related ERF by decision date



Source: Based on UN OCHA FTS data

Twenty-five humanitarian donors, including private individuals and organisations grouped under a single entry, have supported the Syria-related pooled funds since March 2012. Estonia was the very first donor government to record a contribution to the Syria ERF in April 2012. Germany has been the most generous humanitarian donor to date with US\$36 million while the next biggest one – Qatar – has made the single largest donation to the Funds with US\$20 million for the HPF in Turkey. Collectively, the top ten donors to the Funds have donated 95 per cent of all the funding to the Syria-related pooled funds.

Figure 2: Top ten donors to the Syria-related pooled funds 2012-2014

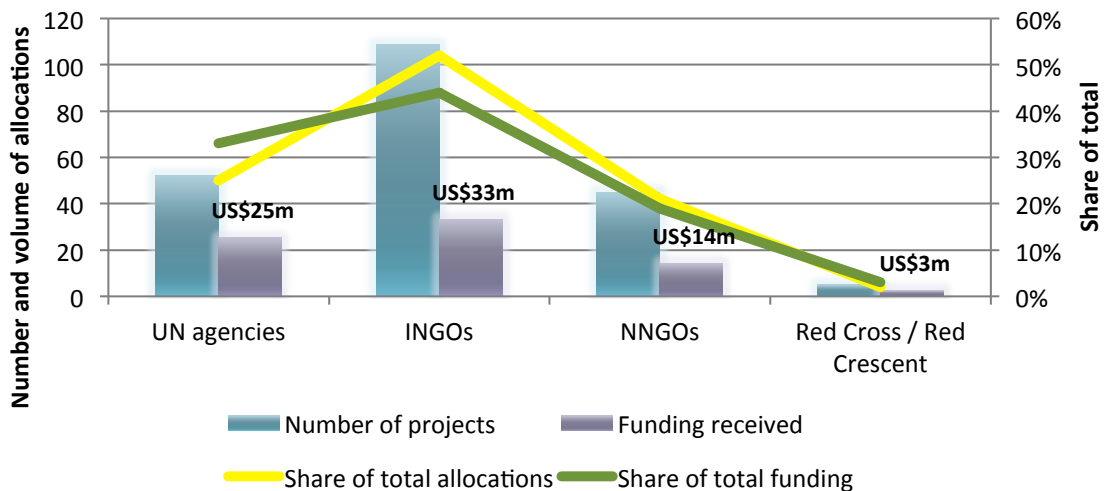


Source: Based on UN OCHA FTS data

NGOs, both international and national, are key recipients of the Syria ERF. They represent 73 per cent of all projects registered (excluding the first CfP of the HPF as final allocations are not known yet) and 63 per cent of all the funding disbursed by the Funds. The INGO share more than double that of NNGOs both in terms of number the contracts and funding received. However, when analysed over time, the funding figures show that the share of NNGOs has been steadily increasing from 5 per cent in 2012 to 23 per cent in 2014.

UN agencies represent a quarter of all allocations and a third of the funding; however, in some cases part of this funding is subsequently passed on to other organisations, namely NGOs, to implement. Finally, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) had only 5 projects funded amounting to US\$2.5 million and representing a mere 3 per cent of all the funding.

Figure 3: Aggregate contributions and allocations of the Syria-related pooled funds by type of recipient organisation 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

UN agencies appear to have retained a stable 32 per cent of the Funds resources over the years. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the World Health Organisations (WHO) were the best-funded UN agencies by the Syria ERF with some US\$6.4 and US\$6.1 million respectively. Funding to both agencies has steadily increased over the period. In addition to UNRWA and WHO, the World Food Programme (WFP) has also received ERF funding for all three years, while The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)⁴² and UNHCR have received funding in two out of three years. Finally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have all been allocated small volumes of money (between US\$0.7 and US\$0.3 million) in a single year.

During the period 2012-2014 the share of NNGOs has been steadily increasing from 5 per cent in 2012 to 23 per cent in 2014. At the same time, funding going to INGOs has decreased from 47 per cent to 41 per cent in the same period and that of the SARC has plummeted from 15 per cent to 4 per cent. UN agencies have experienced limited fluctuations.

Figure 4: Funding and number of allocations to the Syria-related pooled funds by year and type of recipient organisation

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
UN	2.6	32%	9	11.9	35%	26	10.8	32%	17	25.3	33%	52
INGO	3.8	47%	19	15.8	46%	54	13.8	41%	36	33.4	44%	109
NNGO	0.4	5%	3	6.4	19%	21	7.6	23%	21	14.4	19%	45
SARC	1.2	15%	2	0.0	0%		1.4	4%	3	2.6	3%	5
Grand Total	8.0	100%	33	34.1	100%	101	33.5	100%	77	75.67	100%	211

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

⁴² For ease of reference for the purpose of this study IOM is included under UN agencies rather than as separate category.

In terms of funding concentration, ERF funds appear to be fairly broadly distributed; no organisation concentrates more than 8 per cent of the total number of grants, and the bulk of ERF recipients manage portfolios equivalent to 1 per cent of the ERF funding. Analysed on an annual basis, there are a couple of exceptions: in 2012 the SARC took 15 per cent of all allocations (with two projects of US\$1 million and US\$0.2 million); and in 2014, allocations to WHO, totalling US\$3.1 million, reached 9 per cent of all allocations made in the year.

There are some notable differences in the type of ERF recipient organisation inside and outside Syria (i.e. allocations in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq). UN agencies are by far the largest recipients of ERF funding in Syria taking over half of all resources compared to only 12 per cent outside Syria. And while INGOs receive under a quarter of the ERF funding in Syria, they represent nearly two-thirds in the neighbouring countries.

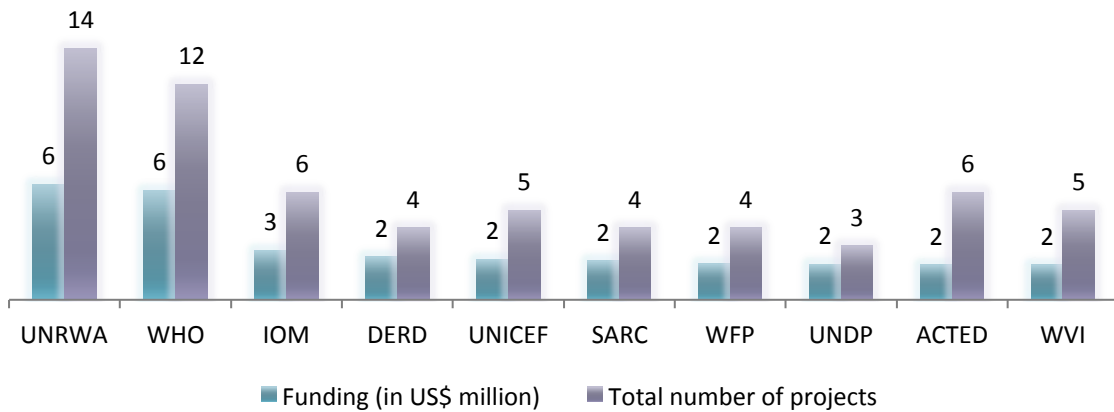
Figure 5: Total ERF funding inside and outside Syria by type of recipient organisation (2012-2014)



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

The top ten recipient organisations of ERF funding for the Syria crisis collectively took 40 per cent of the funds allocated between 2012 and 2014. Six are UN agencies (including IOM), two are INGOs, one is a NNGO and one is a Red Cross/Red Crescent national society. Generally, there appears to be a correlation between the total allocation and the number of projects approved, with the exception of WHO, UNDP and the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD) that have higher volume of funding to a lower number of allocations; and Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) that is in the opposite situation.

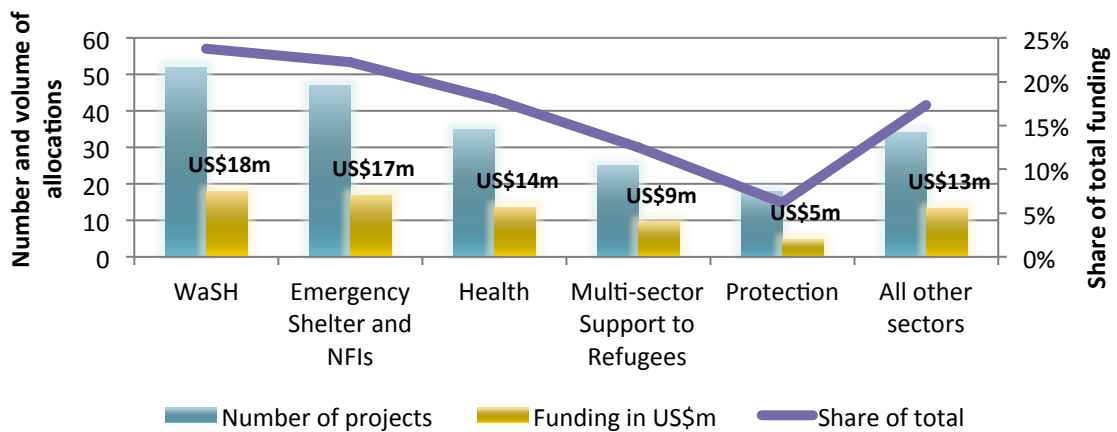
Figure 6: Top ten recipients of allocations from the Syria ERF 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

The three main sectors of support for the Syria ERF concentrate nearly two-thirds of all funding allocated during the period 2012-2014. Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), with almost a quarter of all funding, has been the sector best funded by the Syria ERF, followed by Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Item (NFIs) with 22 per cent and Health with 18 per cent. These three, along with multi-sector support and protection make up the top five sectors for the Regional Syria ERF. Agriculture and Nutrition did not receive any allocations.

Figure 7: Top five sectors 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Country level data: Syria

Some US\$38 million (or about half) out of a grand total of US\$76 million from the Regional Syria ERF have been allocated to activities inside Syria between June 2012 and December 2014. On average, around half of all funding has gone to projects in Syria. The largest share (53 per cent) was registered in 2012 when US\$4.5 million out of US\$8 million was earmarked for the humanitarian response in the country. The volume increased dramatically the following year reaching US\$17.2 million (or 50 per cent of all Syria ERF funding) and decreased slightly in 2014 to US\$16.5 million.

In contrast to the other three countries under the Regional Syria ERF umbrella, UN agencies are the main recipient of funding in Syria, representing between 41 and 59 per cent of all resources. Collectively, NGOs represent less than 40 per cent of all ERF funding in the country. INGOs' share has fluctuated between 26 per cent in 2012 - 2013 and 18 per cent in 2014. The share of NNGOs has been continuously growing along the lines of ERF allocations in other countries, beginning at 5 per cent and reaching 21 per cent in 2014. The SARC has experienced the largest variation: having received over a quarter of all allocations in 2012, the National Society did not have any ERF grants in 2013 and received only a modest 8 per cent share of all funding in 2014.

Figure 8: Funding and number of allocations to the regional Syria ERF in Syria by year and type of recipient organisation

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
UN	1,8	41%	6	10,2	59%	20	8,7	53%	13	20,8	54%	39
INGO	1,2	26%	5	4,5	26%	12	3,0	18%	5	8,7	23%	22
NNGO	0,2	5%	1	2,5	14%	7	3,5	21%	7	6,2	16%	15
Red Cross/Red Crescent	1,2	27%	2	0,0	0%		1,4	8%	3	2,6	7%	5
Total general	4,5	100%	14	17,2	100%	39	16,6	100%	28	38,2	100%	81

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Syria is the country with highest concentration of funding in the top ten recipients of ERF money- 67 per cent of all financing. Amongst the top ten ERF recipients inside Syria, only two are NGOs: the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD), a non-profit organization belonging to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA), and Terres des Hommes. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent takes the sixth place in the ranking. All remaining seven organisations are UN agencies.

Figure 9: Funding and number of allocations to the top ten recipients of the regional Syria ERF in Syria

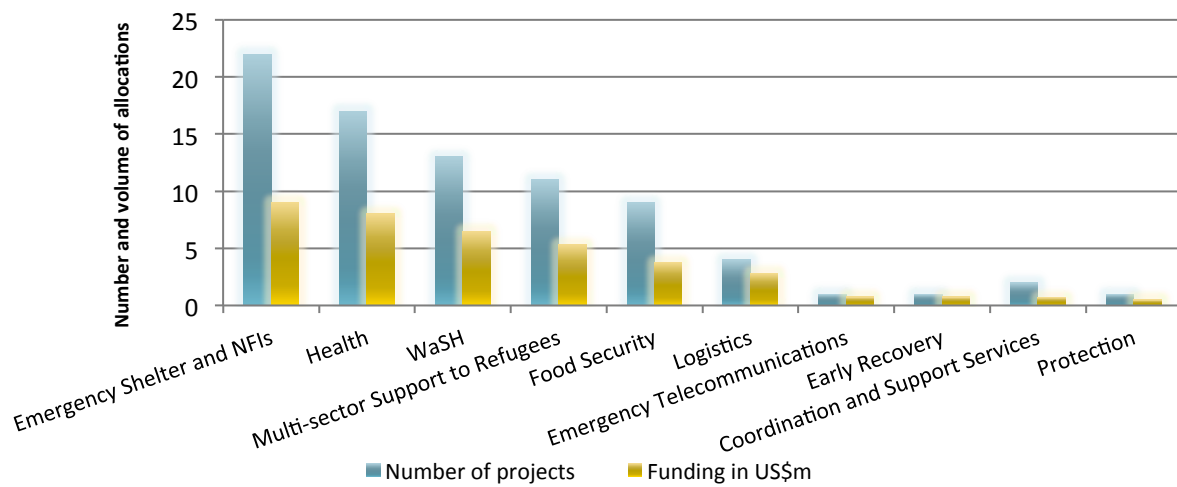
Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
WHO	502.365	11 %	2	2.498.606	15 %	5	2.533.476	15 %	4	5.534.448	14 %	11
UNRWA		0%		1.944.863	11 %	4	2.247.247	14 %	3	4.192.109	11 %	7
GOPA-DERD		0%		928.393	5%	2	1.459.915	9%	2	2.388.308	6%	4
UNICEF	249.845	6%	1	2.001.177	12 %	4		0%		2.251.022	6%	5
IOM		0%		1.000.000	6%	2	1.250.000	8%	2	2.250.000	6%	4
SARC	1.200.000	27 %	2		0%		967.013	6%	2	2.167.013	6%	4
WFP	500.000	11 %	1	1.500.000	9%	3		0%		2.000.000	5%	4
UNHCR	596.792	13 %	2	504.611	3%	1	750.786	5%	1	1.852.189	5%	4
UNDP		0%		745.575	4%	1	731.238	4%	1	1.476.813	4%	2
Terres des Hommes (TdH) Italy	217.852	5%	1	402.106	2%	1	748.112	5%	1	1.368.070	4%	3

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Sector priorities of the regional ERF in Syria are very much aligned with those of the Fund regionally. The five best-funded sectors are Emergency shelter and NFI with 24 per cent of the funding, Health (21 per cent), WASH (17%), Multi-sector (14 per cent) and Food security (10 per cent). Collectively they represent 86 per cent of all ERF sectoral funding in Syria.

Protection is the least funded sector in Syria with only 1% of the funding, while in the overall regional ERF distribution the sector takes fifth place.

Figure 10: Total contributions and allocations of the regional Syria ERF in Syria by sector 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Country level data: Lebanon

The Syria ERF in Lebanon has grown considerably from funding just 6 projects in 2012 (US\$1.5 million), 31 projects in 2013 (US\$9 million), and 17 new projects as of December 2014 (US\$5 million). However, the declining trend of ERF funding is a concern for the humanitarian community in Lebanon due to the growing needs of refugees and host communities.

INGOs in Lebanon are key recipients of the ERF, receiving two-thirds of all funding. During the period 2012-2014 the shares of the different types of organisations have varied significantly; while INGOs began the period receiving 83 per cent of all resources and have seen their share decrease to 68 per cent, NNGOs did not receive any allocation in 2012 but represented 20 per cent in 2014 (and 23 per cent in 2013). Allocations to the UN have been steadily declining during the cycle with 17 per cent, 14 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

Figure 11: Funding and number of allocations to the Syria ERF in Lebanon by year and type of recipient organisation

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
INGO	1.3	83%	5	5.8	64%	20	3.1	68%	11	10.2	67%	36
NNGO		0%		2.1	23%	7	1.0	22%	5	3.1	20%	12
UN	0.2	17%	1	1.3	14%	4	0.5	11%	1	2.0	13%	6
Total general	1.5	100%	6	9.2	100%	31	4.7	100%	17	15.3	100%	54

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

One UN agency (UNRWA), two NNGO (Developmental Action Without Borders – Nabaa and International Orthodox Christian Charities - IOCC) and seven INGOs constituted the top ten recipients of ERF funding in Lebanon between 2012 and 2014. The country presents the smallest concentration of funding in the top ten recipients of all regional Syria ERF countries: only 57 per cent of all expenditure goes to the top recipients.

Figure 12: Funding and number of allocations to the top ten recipients of the Syria ERF in Lebanon

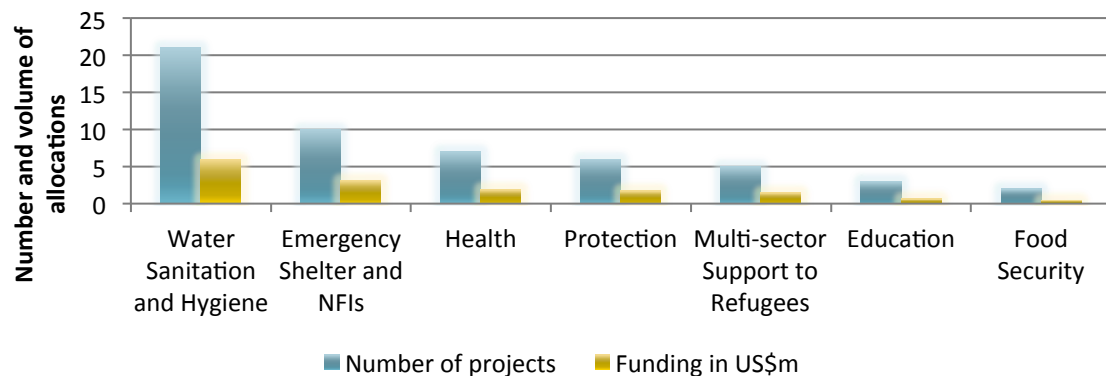
	2012			2013			2014			Total		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
UNRWA	0.2	17%	1	1.0	11%	3		0%		1.2	8%	4
CISP	0.2	17%	1	0.5	5%	1	0.5	11%	1	1.2	8%	3
ANERA		0%		1.0	11%	3		0%		1.0	7%	3
Nabaa		0%		0.5	6%	2	0.3	5%	1	0.8	5%	3
IOCC	0.3	17%	1	0.5	5%	2		0%		0.8	5%	3
WV		0%		0.7	8%	2		0%		0.7	5%	2
Polish Center for International Aid	0.2	17%	1	0.5	5%	1		0%		0.7	5%	2
War Child		0%		0.5	6%	2	0.2	5%	1	0.7	5%	3
INTERSOS	0,2	17%	1		0%		0,5	10%	1	0,7	5%	2
Oxfam		0%		0,4	4%	2	0,2	5%	1	0,6	4%	3

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Looking only at 2014, UNDP replaces UNRWA as the top recipient and only UN agencies in the top ten (US\$500,000). There are still three NNGOs on the list (Nabaa, the Lebanese Relief Council, and the Rene Moawad Foundation), and six INGOs, of which only Oxfam and War Child are on both lists. The Norwegian Refugee Council (the second largest recipient after UNDP), INTERSOS, Concern, and Medair are the new NGOs.

Sector priorities of the Syria ERF in Lebanon are very much aligned with those of the Fund regionally. The three best-funded sectors are Water, sanitation and hygiene with 39 per cent of the funding, Emergency shelter and NFIs (20 per cent), and Health (12 per cent). Protection is fourth with 11 per cent of all sector allocations and Multi-sector support to refugees is fifth (10 per cent) in an inverse ranking compared to the overall Syria ERF sector distribution.

Figure 13: Total contributions and allocations of the Syria ERF in Lebanon by sector 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Country level data: Jordan

The first allocation from the Syria ERF in Jordan was registered in July 2012. Since then, the ERF has grown significantly from funding just 7 projects in 2012 to 25 in 2013, before falling to 17 in 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, US\$14.8 million from the Regional Syria ERF was allotted to activities in Jordan, representing 20 per cent of the overall ERF funding. Funding allocated for Jordan from the Syria ERF has remained stable in 2013 and 2014.

NGOs are the main implementing partner of the ERF, receiving 92% of the cumulative allocations during the period 2012-2014. INGOs accounted for 78 per cent of all funding allocations, while NNGOs represented 14 per cent. UN agencies carried the remaining 8 per cent of the funding. However, during the period 2012-2014 the shares of the different types of organisations have varied significantly; while INGOs began the period receiving 82 per cent of all resources and have seen their share decrease to 75 per cent, NNGOs did not receive any allocation in 2012 but represented 18 per cent in 2013, and 14 per cent in 2014. Allocations to the UN have been steadily declining during the cycle with 18 per cent, 8 per cent, and 7 per cent respectively.

Figure 14: Funding and number of allocations to the Syria ERF in Jordan by year and type of recipient organisation

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$ m	%	#	US\$ m	%	#	US\$ m	%	#	US\$ m	%	#
INGO	1,1	82%	6	4,8	75 %	19	5,5	79%	13	11,5	78%	38
NNGO				1,1	18 %	4	1,0	14%	3	2,1	14%	7
UN	0,2	18%	1	0,5	8%	2	0,5	7%	1	1,2	8%	4
Total general	1,3	100 %	7	6,5	100%	25	7,0	100 %	17	14,8	100 %	49

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

It is not surprising that only a single UN agency – UNRWA – makes it into the list of top ten recipients of ERF funding in Jordan. The ranking is topped by a NNGO: the Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS); another NNGO – the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is ninth. The Red Cross/Red Crescent movement did not marshal any support through the ERF.

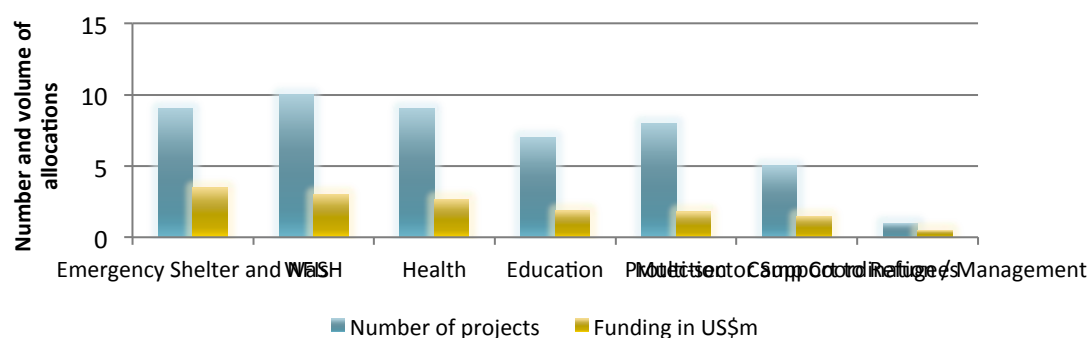
Figure 15: Funding and number of allocations to the top ten recipients of the Syria ERF in Jordan

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
JHAS				0,8	12%	2	0,5	7%	1	1,3	8%	3
ACTED	0,2	19%	1	0,5	8%	2	0,5	7%	1	1,2	8%	4
WV				0,2	3%	1	1,0	14%	2	1,2	8%	3
UNRWA	0,2	18%	1	0,2	4%	1	0,5	7%	1	1,0	7%	3
Oxfam				0,3	4%	1	0,5	7%	1	0,8	5%	2
DRC				0,2	4%	1	0,5	7%	1	0,7	5%	2
Mercy Corps				0,3	4%	1	0,5	7%	1	0,7	5%	2
CARE	0,2	19%	1	0,5	8%	2				0,7	5%	3
IOCC	0,2	16%	1	0,5	8%	2				0,7	5%	3
Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura				0,2	4%	1	0,3	5%	1	0,6	4%	2

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Sector priorities of the Syria ERF in Lebanon are very much aligned with those of the Fund regionally, with the exception of the high volume of funding channelled to the Education sector (US\$2 million or 13 per cent of the ERF spending). In comparison, education only represents 3 per cent of the overall ERF sector-level funding for the Syria crisis. The three best-funded sectors are Emergency shelter and NFIs with 23 per cent of the funding; water, sanitation and hygiene at 20 per cent; and Health with 18 per cent. Protection is fifth with 12 per cent of all sector allocations. Multi-sector support to refugees (10 per cent) and Camp coordination and management (3 per cent) are the least funded sectors in Jordan through the ERF mechanism.

Figure 16: Total contributions and allocations of the Syria ERF in Jordan by sector 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Country level data: Iraq

Iraq has received US\$7.4 million in allocations from the ERF, focusing exclusively on work with Syrian refugees. This represents 10 per cent of the overall regional Syria ERF funding. Of all the countries experiencing the spill over effect of the Syria crisis, Iraq has received the smallest share of the funding in both 2012 and 2013 (4 per cent and 9 per cent respectively). Only in 2014 did Iraq surpass Lebanon, receiving 16 per cent of the yearly ERF allocations vs. only 14 per cent for Lebanon.

Between 2012 and 2014, 82 per cent of the cumulative ERF funding in Iraq was allocated to NGOs, with INGOs and NNGOs taking equal shares. Of the top ten recipients of ERF money in Iraq, seven are NGOs, one is a Red Cross national society, and two are UN agencies. Four of the NGOs are local organisations, including the two ranking at the top in that category.

Figure 17: Funding and number of allocations to the Syria ERF in Iraq by year and type of recipient organisation

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
NNGO	0,2	26%	2	0,7	53%	3	2,2	41%	6	3,0	41%	11
INGO	0,3	41%	3	0,6	47%	3	2,1	40%	7	3,0	41%	13
UN	0,3	33%	1				1,0	20%	2	1,3	18%	3
Total general	0,8	100%	6	1,3	100%	6	5,3	100%	15	7,4	100%	27

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

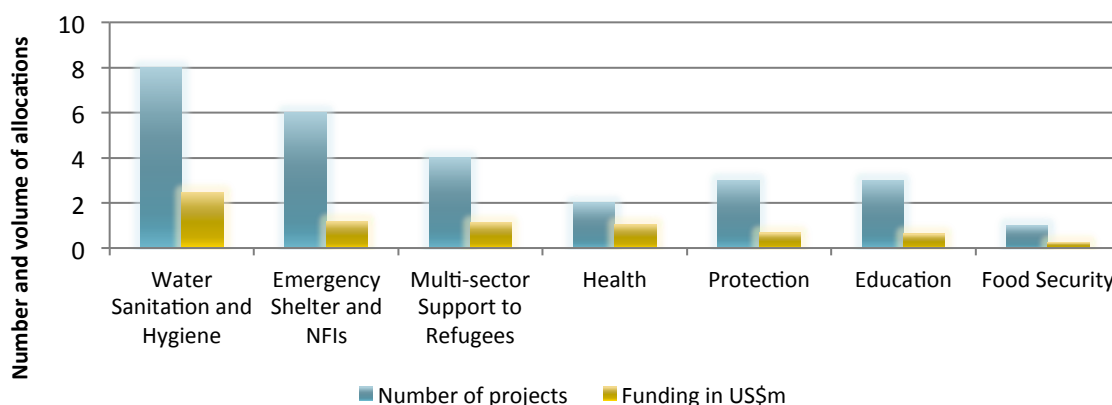
Figure 18: Funding and number of allocations to the top ten recipients of the Syria ERF in Iraq

Type of recipient	2012			2013			2014			Total 2012-2014		
	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#	US\$m	%	#
WHO							0,6	11%	1	0,6	8%	1
Harikar	0,05	7%	1				0,5	10%	1	0,6	8%	2
BAHHR	0,1	19%	1	0,2	16%	1	0,2	4%	1	0,5	7%	3
Peace Winds Japan							0,5	9%	1	0,5	7%	1
KURDS							0,5	9%	1	0,5	7%	1
YAO							0,5	9%	1	0,5	7%	1
UNFPA							0,5	9%	1	0,5	6%	1
ACTED							0,5	8%	1	0,5	6%	1
French Red Cross							0,4	8%	1	0,4	6%	1
Un ponte per	0,1	13%	1	0,2	18%	1				0,3	5%	2

Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Sector priorities of the Syria ERF in Iraq are very much aligned with those of the Fund regionally. The three best-funded sectors are WASH with 34 per cent of the funding, Emergency shelter and NFIs (16 per cent), and Multi-sector support to refugees (15 per cent). Health takes 14 per cent, Protection is fifth with 9 per cent, Education represents 8 per cent and Food Security 3 per cent.

Figure 19: Total contributions and allocations of the Syria ERF in Iraq by sector 2012-2014



Source: Based on data provided by UN OCHA FCS

Annex 2: List of interviewees

Country	Organisation interviewed	Person interviewed (surname, name)	Position
Lebanon	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	NATAF, Robin PETERS, Jake	Country Director Project Development Manager
Lebanon	Amel Association	LEFÈVRE, Virgine	Program&Partnership Coordinator
Lebanon	American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)	EL YASSIR, Samar ZAYAT, Dima	Country Director Health Program Manager
Lebanon	CARE	LAGES, Alexandra	Deputy Country Director – Program
Lebanon	Concern	LEIDEL, Elke	Country Director
Lebanon	Lebanese Relief Council	AL AYYOUBI, Ahmad	Project Manager
Lebanon	Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum	KEITH, Amy	Coordinator
Lebanon	Norwegian Refugee Council	BARA, Julie	WASH Advisor
Lebanon	Oxfam	KORSTEN, Vivian	Humanitarian Programme Manager Syria Crisis Response
Lebanon	Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF)	MOAWAD, Nabil	General Director
Lebanon	UN OCHA	EL ZIR, Rawad	Humanitarian Affairs Officer/ERF manager
Lebanon	UNHCR	GARELLI, Jean-Marie	Assistant Representative (Programme)
Lebanon	War Child Holland	GONZÁLEZ, Andrés	Country Representative
Lebanon	Welfare Association	EL YASSIR, Salma HOURANI, Mohamed	Country Director Programs Manager
Lebanon	World Vision International	LATIF, Christine	Grants Acquisition and Management Lead
Jordan	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	DURSINA,	Country Director

	(ACTED)	Toma TIFREA, Elena	Project Development & Donor Relations
Jordan	Danish Refugee Council	FITZCHARLES, Marieta	Program Quality Manager
Jordan	Institute for Family Health/Noor Al Hussein Foundation	Dr.TAHTAMOU NI, Manal	Institute Director
Jordan	International Medical Corps	KELLY, Joseph	Deputy Country Director
Jordan	International Rescue Committee	BYRNE, Jack	Country Director
Jordan	Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS)	Dr. AJLOUNI, Yaroup DABABNEH, Nicola A.	President Emergency Health Project Manager
Jordan	Medair	WEIR, Jo	Country Representative
Jordan	Mercy Corps	Eng. NIMRI, Raed	Deputy Country Director
Jordan	Norwegian Refugee Council	KOSTOHRYZ, Petr	Country Director
Jordan	Oxfam	POYNTER, Geoff	Country Director
Jordan	Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS)	ODEH, Hanin	Deputy Director General
Jordan	Syria INGO Regional Forum	VAN DER ESCH, Gaia	Board Member and ACTED MENA Deputy Regional Director
Jordan	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	DAJANI, Rula	Regional Programme Manager Humanitarian Assistance
Jordan	UN OCHA	SALAH, Amani	Syria Regional Emergency Response Fund Manager
Jordan	World Vision International	HORSTMEIER, Steffen	Response Manager
Turkey	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	MCGRANE, Kate	Country Director Turkey/Syria
Turkey	BINAA	Eng. ALAZMEH, Ammar	Administrative Officer
Turkey	Ghiras Annahda	ALSHAME, Roaa	
Turkey	Global Communities	MIDDLETON,	Country Representative

		Shane	
Turkey	Hand in Hand for Syria	AL-DAIRI, Fadi	Country Director
Turkey	Ihsan	OTHMAN, Mohannad	
Turkey	International Rescue Committee	JACOBY, Laura	Deputy Director for Operations
Turkey	Shafak	ALHALABI, Asa'ad	Partnership Department
Turkey	Syria Forum	OTHMAN, Mohannad	
Turkey	Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)	Dr. MONLA HASSAN, Tamer Dr. HANI	SAMS' Turkey Office Director Assistant Grants Manager and UN affairs
Turkey	Syrian NGO Alliance	AL HAKIM, Seba RAJJOUR, Hosam	Coordinator Information management officer
Turkey	UN OCHA	HUMMEIDA, Aisha	Humanitarian Pool Fund Manager (interim)
Turkey	UNHCR	TRANI, Vito MATTHEWS, Christine	Head of Office Cross-border Unit
Turkey	Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations (UOSSM)	OTHMAN, Mohammad	Communication Coordinator
Turkey	World Vision International	SLEIMAN, Khalil	Response Manager
Iraq	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	ROUQUETTE, Clement	Country Director
Iraq	Danish Refugee Council	DOZIN, Marie	Protection Project Manager
Iraq	Harikar	MAJID, Salah Y.	Program Coordinator
Iraq	INTERSOS	PIERETTO, Valentina	Emergency Coordinator
Iraq	Kurdistan Reconstruction and Development Society (KURDS)	AHMED, Shawkat	Executive Director
Iraq	Mercy Corps	TIREBUCK, Helen	Humanitarian Programme Director

Iraq	Peace Winds Japan	SAMI SABRI, Kawa	Country Representative
Iraq	Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH)	ANIS, Sanad	Project Manager & Deputy Head of Mission
Iraq	Youth Activity Organisation	MAJEED NAMIQ, Shirwan	Deputy Director
Syria	Al-Ihsan	DABBAGH, Fateh	PR officer and member of Al- Ihsan medical board
Syria	Armadilla S.c.s. Onlus	DI VICO, Monica	Regional Coordinator
Syria	Danish Refugee Council	BENEVELLI, Max	Head of Emergency operations
Syria	Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all of the East (GOPA) - Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD)	LAHAM, Samer	Director
Syria	Oxfam	ROTHERO, Matthew	Humanitarian Funding Coordinator - Syria and Lebanon
Syria	Première Urgence	MOULEM, Stéphane	Head of Mission
Syria	UN OCHA	DUBE, Thembekile	Emergency Response Fund Manager
Global	Danish International Development Agency	STENSDAL HANSEN, Jacob	Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Personnel Assistance

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Annex 4: Terms of Reference

Consultancy to review NGO experience with Syria-related pooled funds Terms of Reference

Summary

One of ICVA's thematic focal areas is humanitarian financing. ICVA is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) bodies (the Principals group, the Emergency Directors Group and the Working Group, representing a global consortium of NGOs). ICVA is the co-chair (along with OCHA) of the IASC's Task Team on Humanitarian Financing, and member of the Pooled Fund Working Group.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is a pooled-fund mechanism for financing humanitarian operations. It has been operational as a regional fund available to humanitarian agencies since March 2012. As of July 2014, the Fund has been restructured into country-based pooled funds.

ICVA is seeking a consultant to analyse NGO experience with the Syria-related pooled funds, both before and after the restructuring, and to draw lessons, identify good practice, and offer observations and recommendations to the regional and global humanitarian community in order to improve its efficiency and impact.

Background

The scale and complexity of the Syria crisis has and continues to represent a unique challenge to the humanitarian community. The ability of humanitarian agencies to respond effectively to the humanitarian needs in Syria and neighboring countries critically depends on amount and nature of funding available. The pooled funds' objective is not only to provide private sector and donor governments with a mechanism to pool their resources towards the humanitarian response in the particular context, but also for NGOs and UN agencies to have access to timely and flexible funding.

The earlier Syria ERF was unique in that it was constituted as a Fund with overall management and oversight of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, supported in the daily management and financial administration by the regional OCHA office. Humanitarian operations in five countries, namely Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt were eligible for funding. The Syrian Arab Republic (regional Emergency Response Fund) received contributions totalling over \$80m, \$73m of which has so far been allocated (as of August). This regional fund responded only to the needs related to the Syria crisis. Specifically, operations responding to the needs of those fleeing the conflict in Syria (and host communities in neighboring countries, as well as those affected within Syria's borders) were considered eligible. No cross-border

operations or programs responding to internally-displaced people in neighboring countries (e.g. Iraq were eligible).

In July 2014 following a restructuring, the Syria ERF continues as a country-based pooled fund for activities exclusively inside Syria. Additional country-specific pooled funds have been created in Lebanon and Jordan. Additionally, a cross-border Humanitarian Pooled Fund was also created in Turkey, managed from Gaziantep, Turkey.

The objective of the consultancy is to provide an independent review of NGOs' experience with the Syria-related pooled funds since March 2012 and their contribution to humanitarian agencies' ability to respond to needs in a timely and effective manner. The review will look at questions regarding the appropriateness of the scale (size of the funds, impact (especially with regard to partnerships with national NGOs, expanding access and capacity- strengthening and complementarity (linking with country and regional strategies. The review will also analyse NGO views regarding the processes, procedures, disbursement trends (amounts, recipient agencies, geographic distribution, etc., accountability, monitoring and governance structure of the Syria-related pooled funds. Finally, examples of best practice will be collected and practical recommendations will be offered to stakeholders, both in the region and at the global level.

Methodology

Gather and review existing documentation

- Review previous work and studies on humanitarian financing;
- Review official OCHA (IASC documentation on humanitarian financing, and country-based pooled funds (CBPF in particular, including the pooled-fund guidelines;
- Review the terms of reference and semi-annual strategy papers of the Syria ERF, and subsequent Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF in Turkey and the Lebanon and Jordan ERFs.

Semi-structured interviews with key informants

- Work with ICVA's MENA regional hub to identify key informants, particularly NGO representatives with experience in seeking, receiving and implementing the Funds, and including OCHA staff involved in the administrative management of the Funds, as well as individuals currently or previously members of Advisory Boards and Review Boards.

Produce a final report, including:

- Executive Summary;
- Introduction and brief analysis of the context;

- Description of the methodology used;
- Practical recommendations;
- Sources, bibliography, list of interviewees.

Costs

This consultancy is expected to take around 20 working days, and the final report should be completed by early December at latest. If security permits, it would cover travel to Beirut, Gaziantep, Amman and Erbil, in which case additional working days would be included. Otherwise, interviews should be arranged through Skype or telephone.

Management and Reporting

- The work of the consultant will be supervised by ICVA's MENA Regional Representative.
- The consultant will submit the report one week from the date of the completion of the consultancy.
- ICVA will conduct a final editorial review of the report and the consultant will then complete the final report.

Application process

Please send CV, motivation letter and a brief proposal (no longer than 2 pages outlining the process for conducting this work and the fees associated, excluding travel.

These documents should be submitted to recruitment3@icvanetwork.org by COB Wednesday October 8th. Successful candidates will be notified the week of October 13th.



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