

Including Early Recovery Requirements in Flash Appeals: A Phased Approach

Background

During and immediately after a crisis, national actors and the international community focus primarily on meeting immediate life-saving needs. Human lives are at risk and quick action is required to minimize damage and restore order. From the very beginning, however, there is a need for measures that, while not being (strictly speaking, at least) 'life-saving' in nature, would still address 'time critical' needs.¹ The foundations for sustainable recovery and a return to longer-term development, in fact, should be planned from the outset of a humanitarian emergency, with a focus on restoring national capacities to provide a secure environment, provide services, restore livelihoods, coordinate activities, prevent the recurrence of crisis, and create conditions for future development.

Over the last several months, the Inter-Agency Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) has developed various tools – including a formal “Guidance Note on Early Recovery”² – so as to provide clarity on the concept of Early Recovery (ER) as well as on how ER activities should be undertaken effectively. ER has thus been recognized as an effective and indispensable component of a response to a crisis, as it can stabilize a situation, prevent further deterioration of local and national capacities as well as foreshorten the need for humanitarian assistance. While being guided by development principles – and provided with specific objectives – ER begins within the timeframe of emergency intervention and occurs in parallel to relief activities. Consequently, ER should not be seen as a separate 'phase' between relief and recovery, but rather as “recovery that begins early”, i.e. in humanitarian settings. In practice, this means that ER coordination within the UN system falls under the overall responsibility of the Humanitarian Coordinator (or the Resident Coordinator, depending on the context), and that ER activities should be integrated into humanitarian planning/resource mobilization tools, such as Consolidated Appeals (CAPs) and Flash Appeals (FAs).

Rationale and Objective

The importance of reflecting ER financial requirements in a more systematic and consistent manner within existing funding mechanisms has been stressed repeatedly, including by key donors. The latter, in particular, have consistently emphasized that such systematization could not only encourage a more favourable consideration, on their part, of ER needs, but also help them in finding creative ways to address the relief/development 'dichotomy' that seems to persist within their own funding systems. Mobilizing financial resources for ER is recognized to be a continuing challenge, particularly given the lack of formal and predictable funding mechanisms aimed specifically at supporting ER programmes. Consequently, the inclusion of ER strategies and activities in resource mobilization mechanisms that have been developed by the humanitarian community (mainly CAPs and Flash Appeals, but also, to the extent appropriate,

¹ The concept of 'time critical' response is related, but distinct from that of 'life saving' interventions, and appears to better underpin the nature of ER interventions. Such notion “refers to necessary, rapid and time-limited actions required to immediately avert or minimize additional loss of lives and damage to social and economic assets” (see “CERF Life-Saving Criteria and Sectoral Guidelines – Guidelines”, CERF Secretariat, 7 August 2007). Therefore, the qualification of a response as 'time critical' implies that losses of human lives, while not necessarily being averted immediately, may well be prevented (a further reference to the concept of 'time critical requirements' was included in the TOR of the recent external evaluation of the CERF). In any case, it is worth recalling that the minimization/aversion of loss of lives and further damage to assets is only one of the critical functions fulfilled by ER – as others include, as already mentioned, catalyzing development opportunities and restoring national capacities.

² The document has been drafted with support from country-level colleagues and in consultation with the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition.

CERF³ and pooled funds⁴) remains a critical option, which should be pursued vigorously by all ER actors. In response to these concerns, the CWGER and the IASC CAP Sub-Working Group (SWG) have decided to further explore the matter. UNDP, as the CWGER lead and as a member of the CAP SWG, has taken the initiative to facilitate inter-agency consultations on this subject.

This paper seeks to develop a common understanding, especially among agencies implementing ER programmes and donors, on how ER funding requirements should be reflected within FAs⁵ and follows up on the outcome of discussions that took place and made some progress already in 2007,⁶ as well as on the recent adoption, by the IASC Working Group, of an important discussion paper adopted by the CAP SWG and titled “Flash Appeal Overhaul”⁷. The latter document brought greater clarity on the production process/timeline as well as on the content/structure of future FAs – all preconditions for an effective agreement on the modalities for the inclusion of ER projects. The same paper also includes a strong call for the IASC to “adopt guidelines on the inclusion of early recovery in flash appeals” and outlines a set of basic criteria that should guide such inclusion. This paper intends to build on the core elements included in the “FA Overhaul” document, as well as on those that have been proposed in a one-page draft document that was shared by UNDP with the CWGER members, in anticipation of the 8th Donors’ Retreat that took place in Montreux in February 2008⁸.

Guiding Principles

In line with the elements included in the above-mentioned paper on the “Flash Appeal Overhaul”, it is proposed that **ER needs (and related financial requirements) should be reflected in FAs in a PHASED manner**, in line with – and building upon – the recently revised FA standard production/revision timeline⁹. This approach will be based on the following principles:

- ER needs and projects should be mainstreamed, to the extent possible, within their respective cluster/sectors;
- The areas that fall outside of the main clusters/sectors (such as governance, rule of law, non-agricultural livelihoods, land & property, reintegration, basic infrastructure, etc.) would be presented in a section on ER, together with standard ER ‘start-up’ costs (for coordination, assessment, planning)¹⁰;
- The agreed approach for the inclusion of ER should also be reflected in any upcoming revision of the general FA Guidelines – as well as in future updates of the “Guidance Note on ER”.

Providing an exhaustive and authoritative list of all types of ER activities that are specifically suitable for inclusion in a FA does not fall within the scope of this paper. On the other hand, the “Guidance Note on ER” contains a comprehensive (although by no means exhaustive) set of

³ Central Emergency Response Fund.

⁴ Such as the existing Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs) and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs).

⁵ It is envisaged that the outcome of this exercise will eventually contribute to bring greater clarity on the issue of systematizing the inclusion of ER requirements into full-fledged humanitarian appeals (CAPs).

⁶ This process started in the spring of 2007, when UNDP – with valuable support from IOM – prepared and presented to the CAP SWG and to the CWGER a draft discussion paper on “Appealing for Early Recovery Funding within Humanitarian Flash Appeals.

⁷ “Flash Appeal Overhaul”, dated 28 April 2008.

⁸ “Appealing for ER in Flash Appeals: A Possible Approach”, 15/2/2008.

⁹ The essence of this approach has been tested – with positive results – in the preparation of several FAs, including the Myanmar Flash Appeal (as well as of the Revised Appeal that followed).

¹⁰ Such ‘ER section’ should include an opening paragraph aimed at clarifying that the section itself would not present the full range of planned ER activities (and related financial requirements), as other ER projects would be included in other sections of the FA, i.e. those corresponding to the clusters (Education, Health, WASH, etc.).

indicative ER activities, across all sectors/areas – and describes the key features that an ER programme should display, for each of ER's key aims¹¹:

- 1) Augment ongoing emergency assistance operations by building on humanitarian programmes, to ensure that their inputs become assets for long-term development and thereby foster the self-reliance of affected populations and help rebuild livelihoods;
- 2) Support spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities and change the risk and conflict dynamics;
- 3) Establish the foundations of longer-term recovery.

Proposed Approach

PHASE 1

This stage will coincide with the production and distribution of the initial FA (expected to be launched within 5-7 working days of a disaster – or of its declaration¹²). With regard to ER, this document should seek to systematically include the following:

1. A brief reference to a preliminary set of ER emerging priority needs, as well as to the already initiated (or foreseen) ER strategic planning and assessment processes.
 - This reference would aim at signaling to all stakeholders, including donors, that:
 - a. ER is a priority;
 - b. ER projects are not presented in an *ad hoc*, piecemeal manner;
 - c. Planning and assessments are already underway.
2. A set of standard 'start-up' funding requirements for ER.
 - These 'start-up' requirements would include the estimated costs for the following: the deployment of ER coordination/advisory support to the RC/HC; the implementation of a rapid inter-agency ER assessment; and the preparation of an ER Strategic Framework.
3. Financial requirements for selected ER projects.
 - These requirements should be moderate in scale and largely based on pre-existing approximate budgets/costs (which CWGER members are in the process of determining).
 - The projects in question should fulfill a set of core criteria. Adhering to these criteria will be crucial, if the credibility – and, consequently, the 'fundability' – of ER is to be seriously pursued.

In particular, ER projects suitable for inclusion will be those that:

- a. Address time-critical needs;
- b. Are based on rapid needs assessments (the results of which will be further refined at the time of the FA revision) or, at least, on solid inference;
- c. Have a strong advantage in starting immediately;
- d. Have a rapid impact on affected populations and/or relief activities;
- e. Are foundational in nature, i.e. provide necessary foundations for managing the recovery effort;
- f. Can preferably be completed within the FA's standard timeframe (up to 6 months);

¹¹ See pp. 10-11 and 30-33. The activities listed in the guidelines on "CERF Life-Saving Criteria and Sectoral Activities (Guidelines)" (August 2007) also include some useful examples of ER actions that can be relevant in the context of FAs.

¹² In the case of slow-onset disasters.

- g. Are presented within their own relevant cluster/sectors (where applicable). In the case of activities falling outside the scope of the 'core' clusters/sectors, ER projects should be grouped under a separate section on ER¹³.

Examples of ER activities that, according to circumstances, may fit these criteria include:

- Support to rubble removal, environmental clean-up and rehabilitation;
- Provision and/or repair of fishing boats and fishing equipment;
- Repair of flood control and irrigation schemes;
- Basic rehabilitation of primary social service facilities (such as health care facilities, schools, community centres, water and sanitation networks);
- Basic rehabilitation of small infrastructure, in order to enable: a sustained circulation of people and goods; access to means of production and strengthening of reintegration (road repairs and mine clearance for access to markets, repair of bridges, embankments, market places, etc.); the initiating of local recovery processes through labour intensive technologies and micro-enterprises that generate employment;
- Rehabilitation of essential government facilities and provision of material and equipment support (i.e. office equipment);
- Distribution of seed vouchers, fertilizers, hand tools; provision of credit to traders;
- Rehabilitation of productive assets (fodder production, animal health);
- Assessment shelter damage, capacity and needs;
- Provision of satellite imagery-based security situation maps (hot spots and safe havens);
- Reduction of insecurity through early mine action interventions.

PHASE 2

This phase will materialize through the issuing of the FA Revision (expected to take place, on a mandatory basis, 3-4 weeks after the launch of the initial FA). The revised FA should include:

1. The key findings of the ER inter-agency rapid assessment.
 - ER rapid needs assessments should thus strive for completion within approximately 4 weeks following the disaster. Should this turn out not to be possible, all available and relevant information should, nonetheless, form the basis of the requirements presented in the revised FA.
2. An updated overview of the status of the strategic planning effort for ER, which should be accompanied by the core elements of the 'ER Strategic Framework', so as to bring all ER activities together under a coherent strategic vision.
3. An update on the status of funding, implementation and impact of the ER 'rapid impact' projects that had been included in the initial FA¹⁴;
4. A broader set of additional ER projects, which should:
 - a. Be implementable within the FA timeframe (preferably up to 6 months)¹⁵;
 - b. Be presented within their own relevant cluster/sectors (where applicable). As previously illustrated, ER projects falling outside the scope of the 'core' clusters/sectors should be grouped under a separate section on ER.

¹³ The inclusion of a distinct, overall ER Section, gathering all ER projects, is therefore not envisaged.

¹⁴ The most recent update of requirements and funding are available online at: www.reliefweb.int/fts. All updates should be sent to fts@reliefweb.int as FTS relies on agencies and donors to report contributions and resources available (including the allocation of unearmarked funds).

¹⁵ In this regard, it should be noted that the final version of the above-mentioned "Flash Appeal Overhaul" paper states that in the initial FA "preference may be given to projects that can be completed within six months", while such preference "may be relaxed" in the FA revision.

Examples of ER activities that may be suitable for insertion in the FA appeal revision (in addition to those outlined above, if still relevant) include the following:

- Rapid impact, needs and capacity assessments, focused on local economic resources, employment and livelihood opportunities – including labour market surveys and analyses;
- Support to feasibility planning for early economic recovery, and provision of policy advice to national governments/local authorities on emergency employment plans and social finance;
- Introduction of social and community-based safety nets for vulnerable people and those with special needs – including psychosocial and post-trauma counseling;
- Provision of emergency access to potable water, in parallel with the promotion of sustainable and community-based water systems and maintenance;
- Completion of food and nutrition surveys, promotion of nutrition stabilization and food safety (at the household and community levels);
- Promotion of improved land management techniques (to prevent soil erosion and exhaustion); diversification of food crops (to improve nutrition as well as increase biodiversity and incomes);
- Natural resources management;
- Minor rehabilitation of infrastructure, such as traditional courts, police stations, police training centres, and correction facilities;
- Identification of alternative and affordable building technologies for repair and reconstruction that will improve building and planning standards, as well as provide access to affordable and environmentally sustainable building materials;
- Identification of detrimental coping mechanisms (such as child labour, prostitution, etc.) and development of appropriate preventive and responsive measures, including through the provision of cash grants and emergency social protection schemes;
- Awareness-raising and capacity-building of communities and authorities (lawyers' networks, judges, prosecutors, police, etc.) to identify and promptly address sexual and gender-based violence, together with the provision of assistance to victims;
- Provision of support to the active participation of women and women's organizations in all aspects of early recovery planning and implementation;
- Support to the planning of government authorities for the return and reintegration of displaced populations, prior to the return phase;
- Land and property situation analysis;
- Promotion of HIV/AIDS prevention activities;
- Rapid mapping activities: hazard mapping; structural/environmental damage assessment.

By opting to target the revised – and not the initial – FA as a primary vehicle to present ER needs, some concerns may remain on whether appropriate visibility can be secured for the latter. Normally, in fact, launch-related publicity (donor briefings, press releases, etc.) occurs mainly in relation to the presentation of the initial FA. This is a dilemma that cannot be easily dismissed or solved. If this approach is to work, it is essential that donors are engaged in a dialogue aimed at securing a firm acceptance of this approach, which should be followed by their commitment to fund the bulk of ER requirements – as outlined in the revised FA¹⁶.

Further Steps

This paper does not intend to formulate recommendations related to resource mobilization efforts for ER following the publication of a revised FA. On the other hand, it can seek to provide a brief outline for possible courses of action for ER resource mobilization. Similarly, while this document does not aim at outlining in detail the assessment/planning framework that should underpin the requirements included in the FA revision and continue afterwards, it is important to

¹⁶ In this regard, useful lessons should be drawn from the experience of the Myanmar Revised Appeal (although the latter was not technically defined as a 'Flash Appeal' any longer, in light of the long timeframe elapsed since the disaster hit).

recall briefly the key role played by two processes: a) the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)¹⁷; and b) the Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA) – including the ongoing work to develop a Post-Conflict Early Recovery Rapid Needs Assessment (PC-ERRNA)¹⁸. These tools are expected to be instrumental in establishing the evidence base that is required to build the Early Recovery Strategic Framework (see below). To this end, recovery-oriented needs assessment should commence as soon as possible after the crisis onset, and hopefully within the first few weeks. This should thus allow for the key findings of it to be available in time for the finalization of the FA revision.

The assessment and planning efforts prompted by the preparation of the FA should lead – ideally within the following few weeks – to the finalization of a full-fledged 'ER Strategic Framework/Action Plan'. This framework, which is to be adapted to the scope and particularities of the country's needs and requirements, will map out gaps, objectives, response strategies, activities and relevant actors. In very simple terms, the ER Strategic Framework/Action Plan outlines "**what** to do and **how** to do it"¹⁹ and should be formulated in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, starting with the government. The document, in particular, will map out a series of inter-linked ER programmes, which will be costed, phased and prioritized (usually over a timeframe of up to 18 months following the disaster – or its declaration). In addition, it will allocate precise roles/responsibilities for the implementation of programmes as well as set targets and indicators for effective monitoring and follow-up²⁰. The ER Strategic Framework/Action Plan will thus serve as the key platform for engaging donors.

Should a second revision of the FA, a CAP or another typology of 'appeal' be developed, the finalized ER strategic priorities as well the planned activities and related funding requirements – as drawn from the ER Strategy Framework/ Action Plan – will be included therein, with due regard to the timeframe entailed by the appeal in question. In the event that an appeal is not issued in the aftermath of the revised FA, all other residual funding opportunities for ER projects and programmes should be explored/advocated for. For example, funding could be sought from the window for Under-Funded Emergencies of the CERF, which also targets non-CAP countries, although funding prospects for ER projects would probably remain limited (given the life-saving focus of the CERF)²¹. In any case and as previously anticipated, the ER Strategic Framework/Action Plan will serve as a key tool for engaging donors in an effective dialogue, which all ER stakeholders should pursue jointly – under the leadership of the RC/HC (supported by the Country Team) and with the active involvement of national/local authorities.

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¹⁷ See, for example, the "Guide to a Multi-Stakeholder Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Recovery Framework", draft outline, 23 May 2008.

¹⁸ Based on the PCNA methodology, the PC-ERRNA should be developed to assess and prioritize needs rapidly, through an inclusive and participatory consultative process, so as to provide a platform for national and international actors to agree on joint immediate priorities, define their commitments, and prepare their activities.

¹⁹ See the "Guidance Note on ER".

²⁰ Further details on this are also included in the "Guidance Note on ER".

²¹ In this respect, the impact of the recent independent evaluation of the CERF itself, which was commissioned by the UN General Assembly, will obviously have to be taken into account (full report available at <http://cerf.un.org>).