

Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) are country-based pooled funds that provide NGOs and UN agencies with rapid and flexible funding to respond to unforeseen, sudden-onset humanitarian emergencies.

The first ERF was successfully piloted in Angola in 1997. In different countries the fund is known under different names, including the Humanitarian Response Fund.

ERFs allow Humanitarian Country Teams—who are best informed of the situation on the ground—to swiftly allocate resources where they are most needed.

Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) oversee the ERFs, while OCHA oversees the day-to-day management and financial administration.

The HC makes decisions on ERF grants with the support of a Technical Review Board and the sector/cluster groups. An Advisory Board with donor, UN and NGO membership advises the HC on policy and strategic issues.

ERFs predominantly fund NGOs and actively support local NGO capacity-building. In recent years, the funds have increased direct allocations to NGO partners: They have provided almost three quarters of total 2011 funds to international NGOs and close to 20 per cent directly to local NGOs.

ERFs can increase opportunities for local actors to respond in areas where international organizations face access challenges due to security or political issues.

ERFs are relatively small (less than US\$10 million per year) and provide small- to medium-size grants (less than \$500,000). These are broad and flexible parameters that vary depending on country-specific characteristics, specific emergencies and the HC's final decisions.

ERFs complement existing funding channels, such as Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs) or the Central Emergency Response Fund. ERFs are not intended to provide core funding to projects in protracted crises, although some ERFs may provide funding to high-priority projects, or bridge funding in the consolidated humanitarian appeals on an exceptional basis.

ERFs contribute to the coordination of response activities through a detailed consultation process with humanitarian partners in-country at different levels, in order to fill critical gaps and avoid duplication.

ERFs also strengthen partnerships among humanitarian actors through equitable access to funds, broad representation on advisory and review boards, and a transparent decision-making process.

ERFs are active in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo<sup>1</sup> (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Zimbabwe.



*Credit: Dan De Lorenzo, OCHA*

For more information on ERFs, please visit the Humanitarian Financing section at the OCHA website and the Pooled-Fund page of the Financial Tracking Service: [fts.unocha.org](https://fts.unocha.org).

<sup>1</sup> In DRC there is a CHF and an ERF.