

OCHA on Message: Consolidated Appeal Process



OCHA

What is the Consolidated Appeal Process?

Consolidated appeals are strategies more than fund-raising documents: addressing a major protracted crisis needs a strategic approach above all. The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP¹) brings aid organizations together to jointly plan, coordinate, implement and monitor their response to natural disasters and complex emergencies, and thus to appeal for funds justifiably, cohesively and collectively instead of competitively. Through the CAP, aid organizations identify and fill gaps, prevent overlaps, ensure that projects complement each other, and take a strategic, coherent approach to major crises. The CAP serves as a detailed workplan and continuous frame of reference for large-scale, sustained humanitarian action. Its aim is to ensure that people in need receive the best possible protection and assistance, on time.

A consolidated appeal consists of a common humanitarian action plan (CHAP) and a set of concrete projects necessary to implement that plan. The core elements of the CHAP are:

- An analysis of the context in which the humanitarian action takes place
- Best-case, worst-case and most likely scenarios
- An analysis of needs and a statement of priorities
- Detailed cluster response plans, including an outline of roles and responsibilities of participating organizations
- The link to longer-term objectives and goals
- A framework for monitoring the strategy and revising it if necessary

The CHAP is complemented by an inventory of projects, which serves as an itemized map of planned actions and funding needs. Donors may use the appeal as a catalogue to select projects to fund, or they may contribute flexibly to an agency or to an appeal's pooled fund. The projects should comprise those by all significant humanitarian organizations (NGOs and United Nations organizations alike) that support the common strategy. Only a few organizations, most notably the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Médecins Sans Frontières, do not allow their projects to be counted in CAPs on principle. To preserve independence, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) policy excludes affected country governments from presenting their own humanitarian funding needs directly in CAPs.

The CAP begins at the country level, where the Humanitarian Country Team analyses needs and identifies strategic objectives through a process led by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). Cluster leads play a central role in working with their cluster members to assess needs, jointly agree on priorities, make a plan to cover the priority needs, select projects that request funding for each organization's part of the plan, and assign priority ratings to each project. CAPs are typically annual appeals, usually launched each November (though new CAPs can be issued as needed) and revised the following May and June in a Mid-Year Review (MYR). The process of preparing a CAP already starts in the MYR. Detailed planning and document preparation occupy September, October and November. The annual set of consolidated appeals is launched globally by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), towards the end of each calendar year.

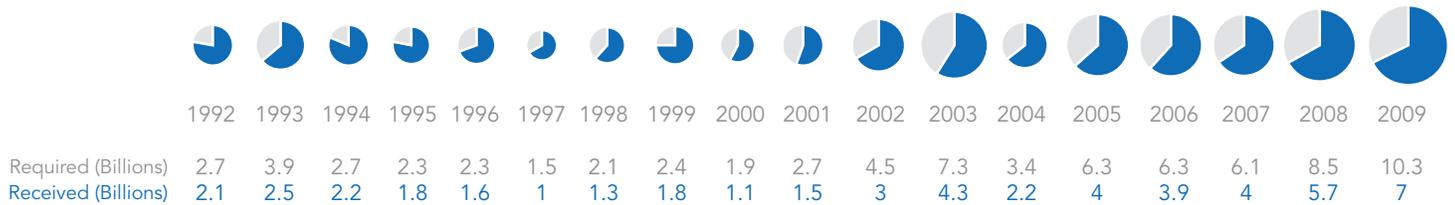
When a new disaster occurs during the year, humanitarian organizations and partners organize a flash appeal, usually within five days, and revise it a month later. If the crisis persists, a consolidated appeal may follow.

"The amount of humanitarian funding that we request for 2010 is far less than one percent of the amount spent on financial bailouts and economic stimulus packages."

John Holmes, Emergency Relief Coordinator, CAP launch 2009, Geneva

¹ In the common parlance, CAP can stand for Consolidated Appeal or Consolidated Appeal Process, depending on context.

The history of CAP funding



What is OCHA's role?

At the country level, the OCHA country office supports the HC in his/her lead of the CAP process. The country office must ensure integration of the CAP with the related OCHA core functions of needs assessment and analysis, resource allocation (such as pooled funds), monitoring and Who does What Where. A CAP requires considerable insight and imagination to devise a meaningful humanitarian strategy. Apart from that, producing a CAP is largely a matter of information management and process management.

CAP 2010:

- Number of organizations: 380²
- Number of beneficiaries: 48 million
- Number of countries: 25

At Headquarters level, the ERC has the ultimate responsibility for the CAP. OCHA has a dedicated CAP team in Geneva to support the CAP process at Headquarters and country level, including training and organizing the global launch. The CAP Section works closely with NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies and IOM, donors and governmental representatives. The CAP Section also manages the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which is a global, real-time database that records all reported international humanitarian aid, including that for emergencies where no CAP exists. The CAP Section also manages the Online Projects System (OPS), which is a web-based database that allows CAP partners to edit, manage, submit and revise their CAP or flash appeal projects online, and to peer-review all CAP projects. After review, OPS electronically publishes all CAP projects via FTS.

Do affected governments need to consent to a CAP?

Most governments are positive about the CAP, as they are about international humanitarian action in general. However, a significant minority of governments resist a CAP for their country. Reasons can be symbolic, such as the perception that a CAP implies a failed state or a government's inability to fulfill its responsibilities. Reasons can also be substantive, e.g. a preference to switch to developmental approaches, fears that humanitarian funding is subtracted from development funding, or a sense of partiality in a conflict. General Assembly Resolution 46/182 does not require government consent to a CAP, but only consultation about with it. Humanitarian action is easier if unopposed by a government, and CAPs are no exception. Therefore, HCs should be vigorous in their humanitarian diplomacy to mitigate any government objections to a CAP. When the basis for government objection is the perceived symbolism, it often suffices to refer to the appeal as a Common Humanitarian Action Plan instead of a Consolidated Appeal, which is a true enough description of the essence of the appeal.

Also at Headquarters, the IASC CAP Sub-Working Group reviews every CAP and flash appeal before publication, and meets each month to improve practices such as needs analysis and prioritization.

What does OCHA say?

- The CAP is how aid agencies join forces to provide people in need with the best available protection and assistance, on time.
- Since 1992, more than 100 donor countries have provided more than US\$42 billion for 330 appeals. These appeals have addressed people's needs in more than 50 countries and regions.
- The CAP has improved the efficiency of humanitarian agencies and helped donors allocate their funding strategically, efficiently and with greater accountability.

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To find out more

- CAP website: www.humanitarianappeal.net
- FTS: www.reliefweb.int/fts
- OPS: <http://ocha.unog.ch/OPS/>
- CAP Guidelines: [http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/guidelines/\\$FILE/CAP_2010_Guidelines_FINAL.doc?OpenElement](http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/guidelines/$FILE/CAP_2010_Guidelines_FINAL.doc?OpenElement)
- Flash Appeal Guidelines: <http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/webpage.asp?MenuID=12508&Page=1481>