

The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project

A chance to influence the humanitarian system



Guidance for Haitian NGOs on the Emergency Relief and Response Fund (ERRF) Steps to Develop a Proposal for the ERRF

This guide is intended to support national NGOs interested in submitting proposals to the Haiti Emergency Relief and Response Fund (ERRF). It includes a summary of the fund, an explanation of the *cluster system* as it relates to the ERRF and some key recommendations for organisations interested in submitting a proposal to the fund.

What is the ERRF?

The Haiti Emergency Relief and Response Fund (ERRF) is a pooled fund managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that exists to provide NGOs and UN agencies with quick and flexible funding for emergency response activities. The UN globally manages 15 emergency response funds (ERFs), and while each of these funds is similar in design and scope, the ERFs are country-level mechanisms. As such, the rules, guidelines and eligibility criteria for accessing them vary by country. In 2009, 75% of all funds disbursed from ERFs went to NGOs, including 111 national NGO partners.¹

The Haiti ERRF is open to applications from Haitian NGOs as well as international NGOs doing emergency work. Between January and May 2010, 30% of the ERRF funds went to NGOs, including two national NGOs. The strengthening of humanitarian partnerships, a priority of the cluster and humanitarian financing systems, depends on national NGOs being familiar with and having the tools needed to apply for ERRF funds, so that in the future, a greater percentage of the ERRF funds will be allocated to support national NGO emergency response projects.

This Guidance Note is funded by a grant from CAFOD. It is one of a series of initiatives undertaken by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project², aimed at strengthening the effective engagement of national and international humanitarian NGOs in reformed humanitarian financing and coordination mechanisms at global and country levels. The project is funded by DfID and runs till October 2011.

¹ For additional information on humanitarian financing mechanisms see <http://ochaonline.un.org/tabid/5839/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

² For more information see www.ngsoandhumanitarianreform.org

The Haiti ERRF focuses on response to the earthquake of 12 January 2010 and funds four types of projects:

- Emergency response to unforeseen disaster, including mitigation and preparedness work.
- Specific gaps and under-covered or forgotten target groups.
- Specific gaps in coordination and information.
- Pilot initiatives (especially focusing on supporting the reintegration of affected population into their original social fabric, promoting community based services, community and local authority mobilisation and livelihoods).

The ERRF is intended to be a gap-filling fund and not a primary source of emergency funding. Therefore, it does not fund core emergency response projects unless the projects fit into the categories listed above.

To apply for ERRF funding, an organisation should firstly submit the project proposal to the appropriate cluster coordinator; this process is explained further below in this document. Once the cluster coordinator has agreed that the project is appropriate and in line with the cluster strategy, the organisation should submit the completed application forms to the ERRF team. The ERRF team will, in consultation with cluster coordinators, review the proposal and will then accept or reject it, basing this decision on whether the project fits the criteria for ERRF funding and on the overall strength of the application. As this is an *emergency* response fund, the applications are reviewed and either accepted or rejected within several weeks, in order to support a rapid emergency response.

The detailed guidelines and the application forms for the ERRF are available on the OCHA/ERRF website:

<http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/WhereWeWork/Haiti/DonatingforHaiti/ERRFforHaiti/tabid/6489/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

What are the “Clusters”?

The Clusters are coordination groups, activated in most countries experiencing humanitarian emergencies in order to improve overall humanitarian coordination, communication, information sharing and partnerships during an emergency response. Each cluster focuses on a specific issue or sector—such as agriculture, health, shelter, or education. There are currently 12 clusters and 2 sub-clusters in Haiti, responding to the January 12 earthquake³.

³ Clusters: Agriculture, Camp Management and Coordination, Early Recovery, Education, Emergency telecommunications, Food, Health, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter, Water and Sanitation; Subclusters: Child Protection, Gender Based Violence. For information on clusters in Haiti, see <http://oneresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/Pages/Haiti.aspx>

Each cluster has one or two coordinators, either UN, NGO and/or government staff, who are, among other activities, responsible for hosting meetings, sharing relevant information among all cluster members, coordinating needs assessments, resource mobilisation, and strategic priority setting. UN agencies, international NGOs and Haitian NGOs all participate in the clusters, finding them a useful avenue for sharing information and ensuring good coordination in the wider emergency response.

To keep informed on what the cluster is doing, when meetings take place and what is going on in a particular sector, you can contact the cluster coordinator for information and request to be added to the email lists.

Cluster meeting schedules and updated cluster coordinator contact information is on the *One Response* website:

<http://onerresponse.info/Disasters/Haiti/Pages/default.aspx>

How do the Clusters relate to the ERRF?

The ERRF is directly connected to the clusters. This is because part of the role of the clusters is to collectively develop a response strategy that highlights where the humanitarian needs are the greatest, as well as where and how humanitarian actors should prioritize their response. The ERRF will fund projects that are in line with the response strategy developed by the clusters, so any organisation seeking funding from the ERRF should be familiar with this strategy.

To ensure that your project is in line with this cluster strategy, your organisation can communicate with the cluster coordinator, or another active member of this cluster such as an international NGO partner organisation, to discuss how your proposed project relates to the strategy and what might be changed in your project design to ensure that it *does* fit. The communication with the cluster coordinator can be done at cluster meetings, over email or by phone. It is the cluster coordinator's responsibility to work with cluster members on this.

If you consider that your project is already in line with the cluster strategy, another option would be to fill out the project proposal forms, then submit them to the cluster coordinator or possibly another cluster member for their review and comments, and copy this email to the ERRF team.

Tips for developing a strong ERRF Proposal:

- Review all of the guidelines, available in French and English, on the ERRF website.
- Attend the cluster meetings for the sector in which your organisation is working (for example Shelter, Agriculture, Health, Protection, Camp Management, etc).
 - See above for explanation of the clusters.
- If you are unable to attend the meetings, contact the cluster coordinator by email or phone to set up a time to discuss how your proposed project will fit into the cluster developed strategy.
 - See weblink above for directions to find the cluster coordinator contact information.
- Reach out to international NGO partners who may attend cluster meetings if you want additional information or need help in getting in touch with cluster coordinators.
- Form a partnership with a larger NGO if your organisation does not have the capacity to carry out the required budget reporting or monitoring of an ERRF project.
- Highlight in your proposal *how* your project connects with the cluster strategy.
- Ensure that your proposal fits into one of the four categories of projects that will be funded and highlight this in your proposal.
 - See above for description of projects ERRF will fund.
- Ensure that the type of project you are proposing to do is similar to work that your organisation has done in the past, in both activity type and size of the project.
 - Do not submit a budget for the maximum limit of US\$500,000 unless your organisation can demonstrate that it has effectively managed projects of similar scale in the past.
- Design a budget that is both detailed and realistic.
 - Do not submit a budget requesting the greatest amount that the ERRF will fund *unless* the budget makes sense; your project will not be approved if the budget is inappropriate.
- Ensure that your organisation is able to perform all of the budget monitoring and reporting required; be aware that 20% of the budget is withheld until a final external audit is completed, and this audit requires that the specific financial information is submitted for this audit.
 - Details about reporting requirements are found on the Haiti ERRF website (link above)
- Understand the following key terms, which are included into the project description/logical framework form: **objective; indicator; activity; impact.**