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ERFS 2018 Application Guidelines

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the attached application, budget and reporting formats.

1. Introduction and overview

Irish Aid established the Emergency Response Fund Scheme (ERFS) in 2007 to enable aid agencies to respond quickly and appropriately to humanitarian crises. The scheme is particularly geared towards the initial weeks after the onset of a sudden emergency or spike in an existing protracted crisis when the bulk of the expenses for the immediate response phase for the agency are incurred.

The scheme pre-positions a defined amount of funds with participating NGOs. This will facilitate them to react immediately through access to these standby funds and thus allow time for:

- Rapid assessment of need (including in collaboration with other partners);
- Rapid and appropriate response to identified need;
- Consideration of next steps, i.e., whether to develop a full-scale and longer-term programme of response and/or a more substantive application for funding from Irish Aid or other donors.

Funds are transferred at the beginning of the year to allow for drawdown over the course of that year on the basis of needs and taking into account the previous year's expenditure.

2. Objectives

The specific objective of the ERFS is to promote early action and response to time-crucial requirements based on demonstrable needs in sudden onset humanitarian crises or spikes in an existing protracted crisis.

3. Eligible Agencies

Applicant agencies must have an established funding relationship with Irish Aid for humanitarian sudden-onset response. In addition, applicant agencies must demonstrate:

- Experience and a successful track record in the effective and efficient delivery of emergency assistance;
- That assistance will be allocated impartially and on the basis of need;
- That they have the legal authority necessary to operate in the country concerned.

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4. Eligible Countries

All countries classified as developing countries by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. In the event of exceptional circumstances other countries may also be considered.

The annual country categorisation process conducted by Irish Aid's Humanitarian Unit should inform ERFS funding requests and utilisation as it outlines core humanitarian priority countries each year on the basis of need. The country categorisation is based on an assessment of a number of vulnerability and crisis indices from a variety of EU and UN sources and is updated based on early warning information and changing needs throughout the year.

5. Funding Criteria

ERFS funding should focus on essential humanitarian, life-saving activities.

- Activities proposed for funding should generally have a timescale for implementation of three months. In exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of six months duration will be considered;
- Support to activities where there is a sudden spike in humanitarian need in a protracted crisis situation, particularly where Irish Aid is already providing funding and there is a compelling and overwhelming need to provide additional funding to save and protect lives.
- While the size of projects supported will vary according to the needs of the situation and the capacity of the organisation making the application, it is intended that the ERFS will be largely used by NGOs as catalytic funding to jumpstart the most urgent humanitarian activities;
- It is expected that partners will mobilise additional funding to cover for the full package of humanitarian response required at country level.

Priority will be given to activities such as the following:

- Need assessments including joint needs assessment which avoid duplication;
- Provision of water, sanitation, health services and emergency feeding programmes to disaster affected areas;
- Procurement and distribution of emergency supplies;
- Refugee and IDP protection and support activities.

Ineligible expenditure includes:

- Funding gaps in regular project activities
- Activities that are not immediately life-saving, such as disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness, economic recovery, poverty reduction, and disarmament, are not suitable for ERFS grants. While such activities are essential to reduce vulnerability, the ERFS grant component cannot support projects of that nature due to the limited scope of the ERFS, its mandate and its relatively modest size. Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) funding is more appropriate in this regard.
- International travel.
- Democratisation and Human Rights projects.
- Insurance costs.

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- Visibility costs

6. Application Procedure

Step 1: Email or telephone contact between NGO Partner and Irish Aid. Both sides discuss the possibility and likely means of response to the sudden-onset emergency. Irish Aid will advise at this stage if an ERFS application will be considered or not.

Step 2: Following the submission of a two page **ERFS Application Form** (see attached, consistent with other Irish Aid humanitarian funding application formats) and summary budget, formal agreement of the amount of support authorised from ERFS will be issued by email between Irish Aid and the NGO partner organisation. Funding will already have been pre-positioned with the NGO partner's bank account from the beginning of the year with accompanying contract, and can be drawn down once formal agreement is reached.

Step 3: Submission of a **Results Framework**, full **Budget** and **Flow of Funds Analysis** should be provided to Irish Aid within fourteen days of date of the formal email agreement of Step 2. This allows time for the NGO partner to gather necessary data and identify indicators and expected outcomes for the project proposed.

It is recognised that the planned needs assessment and any assumptions made by the partners regarding the intended nature of their emergency response often need to change to reflect the dynamic and unstable environment of any emergency response. Clear, timely written communication is vital between the partner agency and Irish Aid to inform if a planned response needs to be altered significantly.

7. Appraisal of ERFS Applications

Appraisal is carried out by Appraisal Teams within the Humanitarian Unit of Irish Aid, in the same way as appraisal of HPP and Call for Proposal submissions are assessed. Appraisal Teams consist of the responsible Desk Officer and Deputy Director. Applications are rated, in accordance with Irish Aid sectoral guidelines as they apply, and inter alia, according to:

- The overall capacity of the agency in the region/country;
- The record of the Agency in effective and efficient delivery of emergency relief including in the affected region;
- The agency links to other emergency or rehabilitation initiatives;
- Coordination with relevant authorities and other humanitarian actors;
- Whether they address needs in an area most affected by the given disaster or emergency;
- Whether actions could unintentionally create long-term dependency
- Involvement of both men and women with a particular focus on protection;
- The ability of the Agency to monitor and evaluate projects and to integrate experience and lessons learned into its work;
- Benefit to the population groups most affected by the emergency (which may include host communities)

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- Conflict-sensitive approach
- Integration of/evidence of mainstreaming of gender, HIV, sustainable environment, learning and governance.
- Application of humanitarian principles of (humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence);
- Application of relevant humanitarian best practice standards, including Core Humanitarian Standards and Sphere standards

All applicants will be provided with feedback on their applications

No cost extensions:

If a partner organisation requests a no cost extension, they must submit a formal request to Irish Aid providing a clear rationale one month before the end of the programme/project. If a no cost extension is granted, this will be communicated formally to the partner. In addition the organisation should complete the budget report template to illustrate expenditure against the budget to that date and should also resubmit a revised budget in line with the no cost extension timeframe agreed if the budget has changed.

8. Reporting Requirements

NGO Partners are requested to submit a final report.

Step 1: Final narrative and detailed financial report submission by partner to Irish Aid three months after the end of the project funding period using the standard **Final Narrative Report** format.

Content, suitable for communications purposes, such as a short case study, photo essay, short video or other material illustrating how Irish Aid support has helped the beneficiaries must be annexed to the final report.

Step 2: Irish Aid Desk Officer and Deputy Director to review report and submit follow-up questions and comments to partner with eventual sign off of final report on receipt of satisfactory responses.

Step 3: ERFS funding in subsequent years is dependent on receipt of due reports which outline performance and results, and are of good quality.

Publicity

Participating NGOs are required to show the amount of assistance received from Irish Aid in their annual reports. Irish Aid should also be given appropriate acknowledgement in all publicity/educational material issued by the implementing aid agencies.

Evaluation

Each year Irish Aid selects a number of projects at random for evaluation and audit. Applicant agencies which do not comply with the conditions set out by Irish Aid in the management of the project are most unlikely to receive further assistance.