Overview of the Humanitarian Financing Architecture: Opportunities for NGO engagement

Resourcing humanitarian action is one of the key issues for NGOs and all other actors involved in providing humanitarian assistance. Below is an attempt to map out existing platforms where humanitarian financing is discussed, information shared and analysis provided to facilitate increased access to funding for NGOs.

1. IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT)
2. Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) – NGO Dialogue Platform
3. Pooled Fund Working Group (PFWG)
4. ICVA Humanitarian Financing Working Group

1. Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT)

What is it? The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT) is a forum currently co-chaired by UNICEF and ICVA while OCHA function as the Secretariat for the Task Team. It is attended by UN agencies, IOM, ICRC and NGOs. The Humanitarian Financing Task Team was established by the IASC Working Group in 2013 and works against a work-plan agreed upon by members of the Task Team every year during the annual retreat.

Aiming at? Objectives of the current work-plan seek: 1) Adequate humanitarian financing, which is context appropriate and accessible to operational organizations on the ground; 2) Re-negotiate donor requirements or conditions that contribute to reducing the burden of recipient organizations; 3) Contribute to aid effectiveness by reducing the humanitarian/development divide; 4) Improve transparency through strengthening empirical knowledge base on funding flows. One of the main focuses of the Task Team is to support coherence among multiple initiatives on humanitarian financing and strengthen related tools. Activities against the approved work-plans are updated during the Mid-year retreats.


Meetings: The Task Team meets regularly on a monthly basis (generally on Wednesdays from 15:00 to 17:00) via video/telephone link. Participants can attend face to face both in Geneva and in New York.

Further information for the HFTT are available here

How can you participate? Participation is open to interested organizations. You can contact the co-chairs or the secretariat for more information or directly liaise with ICVA (icvasecretariat@icvanetwork.org)

Why should you engage? The Task Team is a unique forum for discussing and identifying common interagency advocacy strategies on humanitarian financing, and working together with UN agencies and international Organizations at improving and shaping the humanitarian financing architecture.
2. Country Based Pool Fund\textsuperscript{ii} (CBPF)- NGO Dialogue Platform

What is it? The Country Based Pool Fund (CBPF)- NGO Dialogue Platform is an informal forum created in early 2014 for regular dialogue between OCHA and NGOs to inform global policy issues related to the management of CBPFs. The Platform was established to respond to the need identified by NGO partners to strengthen partnership with OCHA on CBPFs and complement the dialogue between OCHA and NGOs that is already taking place at country level. The Platform is a consultative forum where inputs, suggestions and feedback on CBPFs are shared and offers an opportunity for NGOs to express their views in a coordinated way. Discussion focus on

- Alignment between CBPF and Humanitarian Programme Cycle
- Improved access to CBPF for first responders “Global Facility”
- Partner capacity Assessments\textsuperscript{1}
- Roll out and feedback from implementation of new CBPF guidelines\textsuperscript{2}

Membership of the Platform is open to all NGOs interested in CBPF. The Platform is currently co-hosted by OCHA and Oxfam.

Meetings: The Dialogue Platform meets twice per year in June in Geneva and in December in New York. OCHA and ICVA can facilitate participation of NNGOs if needed.

Terms of Reference of the Platform are available here: https://icvanetwork.org/humanitarian-financing

How can you participate? If you are interested in attending the Dialogue Platform meeting please contact either ICVA Melissa.pitotti@icvanetwork or OCHA- Julia Gietmann gietmann@un.org.

Why should you engage? NGOs are key actors in the implementation of CBPF and the Platform offers a great opportunity to engage with OCHA by bringing in expertise, knowhow and feedback from the ground to tackle operational issues and improve the way CBPF are managed and implemented. National and local NGOs in particular have in-depth knowledge of local contexts, languages and cultures and are better positioned to provide quicker and more targeted responses.

3. Pooled Fund Working Group (PFWG)

The Pooled Fund Working Group was established in 2007 and consists of major CBPF stakeholders including contributing donors with decision-making authority at the capital or HQ level, recipient UN agencies and NGOs, CERF secretariat, administrative agencies such as OCHA and UNDP (the full list of members is provided in the Terms of Reference). The PFWG is co-chaired by two members of the PFWG, OCHA is the permanent co-chair while the donor seat rotates (Ireland is the current co-chair). OCHA’s Funding and Coordination Section functions as Secretariat. The objectives of the PFWG are:

- Advise on global policy underpinning the functioning of CBPFs
- Advise to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the management and accountability of CBPFs
- Address common issues identified by operating agencies or by country based advisory boards with a view to providing guidance and/or corrective action.

Membership to the PFWG: NGOs have three representatives - current ones are: Kristelle Younes, International Rescue Committee’s Director for Humanitarian Affairs (representing Interaction), Ben Garbutt, Humanitarian Funding Manager for Oxfam GB and Dr. Abdelrahman Tamimi, Director General of the Palestinian Hydrology Group for Water and Environmental Resources Development.

Meetings: Regular meetings of the PFWG take place twice a year, once at the margin of ECOSOC

\textsuperscript{1} ICVA study on Partner Capacity Assessment available at: https://icvanetwork.org/icvas-humanitarian-financing-working-group
\textsuperscript{2} New CBPF Guidelines introduced in January 2015 and available here: http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/cbpf-global-guidelines
Humanitarian Affairs Segment and once towards the end of the year at the margin of the CERF High level conference.

Terms of Reference are available here: http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/site/search/PFWG

How can you participate? You can engage with the NGO representatives in advance to the PFWG meetings by sharing inputs, suggestions and concerns related to the CBPF and CERF. ICVA facilitates the link through the Humanitarian Financing WG and the CBPF Platform Dialogue.

Why should you engage? The WG plays an advisory role and consists of major CBPF stakeholders. NGO’s must engage bringing first-hand experience with humanitarian financing mechanisms to improve efficiency and ensure NGOs participation in strategic discussion.

4. ICVA Finance Working Group

The ICVA Finance Working Group: this is a forum for ICVA members to discuss humanitarian financing developments, exchange information, increase understanding and identify opportunities for collective advocacy. It serves as well as a forum for NGOs to debate amongst themselves about issues further discussed at global level, provide evidence from programming, further inputs into global initiatives, etc. . Topics discussed in recent meetings are: UNICEF new PCA, OCHA Global Facility for NGOs, UNHCR draft guidance note on audits, Interaction with High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, etc.

Current members are: OXFAM, HI, WVI, World Vision, Save the Children, AIRD, Interaction, NRC, IRC, CAFOD, SCHR (observer), Start (observer)
Meeting: The group meets regularly, normally on Tuesday between 15:00 to 17:00 Geneva time) on a monthly basis either face to face or via teleconference.
Terms of Reference for the group and latest minutes of meetings are available here https://icvanetwork.org/icvas-humanitarian-financing-working-group (for members only).

How can you participate? If you are an ICVA member please contact the ICVA secretariat to register: icvasecretariat@icvanetwork.org

Why should you engage?
This is an optimal opportunity to stay informed, share experiences, input into relevant discussion at regional (through ICVA regional hubs in Dakar, Amman and Bangkok) and global level, increase understanding and influence policy and mechanisms related to humanitarian Financing.

Acronyms

CBPF - Country-Based Pooled Funds
CERF - Central Emergency Response Fund
ERFs - Emergency Response Funds
FTS - Financial Tracking Service HC - Humanitarian Coordinator HCT - Humanitarian Country Team
HFTT - Humanitarian Financing Task Team
HPC - Humanitarian programme cycle
HNO - Humanitarian needs overview (UN OCHA) HRP - Humanitarian response plan
IASC - Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICVA - International Council of Voluntary Agencies INGO - International non-governmental organization PCA - Partner Capacity Assessment
PF - Pooled funds (see definition below)
PFWG - Pooled Fund Working Group
I Pooled Funds
There are two types of pooled funds: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs). The CERF can cover all countries affected by an emergency through UN agencies; CBPFs operate in 17 countries and can allocate funds directly to international and national NGOs for the implementation of projects. Currently, the majority of CBPFs funds are allocated to NGO partners and OCHA is aiming at increasing that participation.

Pooled funds enable humanitarian organizations to provide the most urgently needed assistance following a natural disaster; fill critical gaps in the response in countries with large, on-going humanitarian operations; and provide basic life necessities for people struggling to survive in many of the world's forgotten emergencies.

Funds come from the voluntary contributions of over 126 countries and private-sector donors.

II Country Based Pooled Funds
CBPFs are multi-donor humanitarian financing instruments established by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). They are managed by OCHA at the country-level under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). Donor contributions to each CBPF are un-earmarked and allocated by the HC through an in-country consultative process. OCHA has managed CBPFs since 1995, when the first Emergency Response Fund (ERF) was established in Angola. Since then, CBPFs have been established in more than 20 countries. As of 2015, CBPFs operate in 17 countries.

How do CBPFs work? CBPFs allocate funding based on identified humanitarian needs and priorities at the country level in line with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). Allocations go to UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations.

III The Humanitarian Programme Cycle
The humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) is the coordinated series of actions undertaken to prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. The HPC process in each country is owned and managed by humanitarian actors on the ground. The first step in the planning cycle for protracted crises is a coordinated needs assessment and analysis, the outcome of which is a humanitarian needs overview (HNO) detailing the key humanitarian issues.

Based on the HNO, the country team formulates a response analysis with targets and boundaries, sets strategic objectives and develops cluster plans aimed at meeting those objectives. These strategic country objectives and cluster plans form the humanitarian response plan (HRP), which is the primary planning tool for the humanitarian coordinator (HC) and the humanitarian country team (HCT).