

COUNTRY AND REGIONAL FUNDS
GUIDANCE ON ALLOCATION MODALITIES FOR THE U.S. AWARD

A. INTRODUCTION

1. **This note outlines the parameters and process for allocating resources received through the U.S. Award via a “fast-track” Reserve Allocation, to guide RC/HCs, Heads of Offices (HoO), Fund Managers/Humanitarian Financing Units and humanitarian partners.**
2. **The existing Reserve Allocation procedure forms a solid foundation to administer the U.S. Award. However, additional Fast Track Procedures are needed to facilitate the urgent timeframe and scale of this particular grant.** A Global Waiver has been approved by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) setting-out the relevant provisions.
3. **The overarching objective of the U.S. award is to provide rapid life-saving assistance to people facing the most severe humanitarian needs,** categorized as inter-sectoral needs severity 4 and 5 as defined by the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) or other appropriate analysis in countries without an HNRP. To this end, the ERC has issued a Statement of Intent (see Annex 1) to guide the overall approach to the award, while RC/HCs will lead the development of country-level Allocation Strategies.
4. **The allocation of the U.S. award will adhere to specific parameters, primarily linked to speed of implementation, quality of response and enhanced accountability, including reporting.** A stand-alone Grant Agreement for partners receiving funding from the U.S. Award has been developed to capture these requirements.

B. GLOBAL WAIVER ENABLING FAST-TRACK PROCEDURES

5. **The ERC has approved a Global Waiver on Fast Track procedures for funding allocated from the U.S. Award,** given the scale of funding and the urgent need to expedite life-saving assistance to people in inter-sector severity 4 and 5 areas. This Global Waiver covers all exceptions from the CBPF Global Guidelines required to deliver the allocation, pre-empting the need for case-by-case approval. It will apply to this Fast-Track Reserve Allocation for the US Award only and is not transferable. Other Pooled Fund allocations will continue in line with standard CBPF Global Guidelines.

C. ERC STATEMENT OF INTENT & COUNTRY ALLOCATION STRATEGIES

6. **Based on the principles and priorities of the hyper prioritised Global Humanitarian Overview¹ and the Humanitarian Reset, the ERC has issued a Statement of Intent to outline the overarching strategic parameters for the U.S. Award.** This Statement provides a common understanding of the focused use of this funding across all contexts, while not replacing country-level consultation on each Allocation Strategy.
7. **At the country-level, the RC/HC is responsible for determining priorities and developing an allocation strategy, in consultation with the Advisory Board and supported by OCHA** (per paragraph 144 of the Global Guidelines). The short country-level Allocation Strategy should be developed, in consultation with the existing coordination mechanisms, which

¹ The Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) includes Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRPs) as well as refugee and/or migrant responses plans for agreed contexts. Where there is no plan for the respective country included in the [Global Humanitarian Overview \(GHO\)](#), available collective humanitarian needs analysis will be utilized.

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may include sectors/clusters and/or other relevant coordination platforms and other stakeholders, including the refugee coordination model in contexts where it is activated. It should include the Strategic Statement and other key parameters to execute the allocation quickly (such as geographical area(s), types of activities to be implemented, amount to be allocated, and criteria for the partner(s) invited to submit proposals), as per the Global Guidelines. To ensure transparency, the HFU will consult with sectors/clusters and/or other relevant coordination platforms and stakeholders to identify the criteria and the best-placed partners to be invited to submit proposals.

D. ADVISORY BOARDS

8. **In contexts where an Advisory Board is already in place, a U.S. representative will be invited to join**, in recognition of the large financial contribution and as part of continued efforts to build trust. The participation of a U.S. representative will not displace an existing member. Expanded membership will be time-bound, for calendar year 2026.
9. **For Regional Funds, an Advisory Board will be set up in each country in which a new Envelope is established**, drawing on existing coordination fora and including representation from all four constituencies (Donors, UN Agencies, International NGOs, National NGOs).² The U.S. will be invited to participate along with other non-contributing donors.

E. PARTNERS RECEIVING U.S. FUNDING

10. **Pooled Fund resources will be directed to partners best placed to implement the allocation strategy.** As noted above, to ensure transparency, the OCHA Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) will consult with sectors/clusters and/or other relevant coordination platforms and stakeholders to identify the criteria and the best-placed partners to be invited to submit proposals.
11. **For expediency, Pooled Funds will first consider existing partners in the country** who demonstrate established capacity to deliver large-scale lifesaving programmes at pace, scale and quality in the relevant areas outlined in the Allocation Strategy.
12. **However, the Pooled Funds can onboard new partners where needed to ensure full delivery of the allocation strategy and/or in countries where a new Country Envelope is being established.** These partners must meet the criteria in para 15 below. Given the accelerated timeline for implementing the U.S. Award, a number of facilitated, fast-track modalities for on-boarding new partners will apply:
 - UN Agencies can be made eligible without undergoing capacity assessment.
 - NGO Partners can be considered for fast tracked eligibility without undergoing the standard Pooled Fund capacity assessment if they are:

² The AB will operate in line with its Terms of Reference, with members representing their constituencies, not their institutional position. The AB will be established by the RC in accordance with the Global Guidelines (para 45), while allowing for flexibility in the composition considering the time-bound, exceptional nature of the US Award. In refugee settings, due consideration to the nomination of UNHCR should be given.

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- a. **Established Partners in other Pooled Funds.** Partners that are already eligible in at least three OCHA-managed Pooled Funds with an acceptable risk level.
- b. **Organizations recognized by other institutions.** Organizations that are not eligible in other OCHA-managed Pooled Funds but have successfully undergone at least two comparable capacity assessments in the past five years by other donors, UN agencies or recognized institutions.

To be considered, NGO partners must meet the criteria in para 15 below.

13. All NGO partners considered for fast tracked eligibility in this way must register in the UN Partner Portal and in the OCHA Grant Management System, providing basic information for required due diligence (contact details, certificate of in-country registration, banking details, a small number of statutory declarations).

14. All partners wishing to apply for funding must be willing and capacitated to meet the additional conditions of the U.S. award. OCHA Heads of Offices, Fund Managers and teams should familiarize themselves with these conditions, including the following:

- a maximum six-month project implementation period, without possibility of extension.³ At the request of partners, the agreed start date may be specified as early as the date when the budget was cleared by OCHA (i.e., approved by OCHA in the OneGMS system). Where supplies to be utilized in UN agency projects have been procured prior to the start of the project they may be charged to the project budget, provided that a robust cost allocation methodology is formally pre-approved by OCHA;
- inclusion in project proposals of the partner's robust, detailed project monitoring plans, including key process monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, etc., with data to be shared with OCHA in real time⁴, including utilizing partners' pre-existing tools and platforms;
- monthly sharing and reporting on a limited set of quantitative data on the number of people reached directly with life-saving assistance (one indicator per activity in the project), as well as mid-term and final narrative reports, through the OneGMS system;
- the nomination of a focal point to country-based Accountability and Impact Teams (AITs), and commitment to active participation and information-sharing, in accordance with data protection protocols (see AIT Concept Note for further details); and
- adherence to HCT Joint Operating Principles (or similar).

15. Only partners best placed to deliver the allocation strategy, and that meet and explicitly commit to the special conditions related to the U.S. award, will be considered. Criteria for partner and project selection will include, but not be limited to, partners demonstrating:

³ Monthly AIT meetings may be used to discuss any force majeure circumstances that are preventing delivery and identify course corrective actions to enable response in that specific area and/or redirect response to other areas facing intersectoral severity 4/5 needs and/or other partners under the award.

⁴ Real-time refers to sharing reports and results as they become available through partners' existing monitoring tools, platforms and mechanisms.

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- operational presence in the target geographical areas (including programmes in the area with a proven track record of delivery that may be funded to continue/expand through this allocation);
- institutional capacity to implement large grants in a short period of time;
- proven performance and the absence of any major issues or concerns identified regarding misconduct or capacity for grant implementation and management; and
- a focus on direct delivery, maximizing efficiencies and minimizing sub-granting to the greatest degree possible.⁵

16. **These conditions will enable the RC/HC to ensure a rapid, more effective, accountable and principled response**, and ensure that OCHA is able to meet reporting requirements to the U.S. Government. Noncompliance with the conditions of the special Grant Agreement can be grounds for suspension or termination of the project, and in case of misconduct may impact the performance rating of the Partner and future funding opportunities from the Pooled Funds.

F. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED

17. **The Fast-Track Reserve Allocation will support activities that reach people facing the most severe needs (inter-sectoral severity 4/5)** with direct life-saving assistance or services. Priority sectors are the following:

- Food security
- Nutrition
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Health
- Protection
- Emergency shelter and relief items
- Access and logistics that are directly linked to the delivery of life-saving assistance in inter-sector 4/5 areas may be considered as and where appropriate. Enabling services, and limited “coordination, thematic and system support” services will be considered where merited within the overall prioritization.

Note: integrated/multi-sectoral programmes, where appropriate and feasible, will be encouraged and Cash and Voucher assistance should be considered as a response priority where feasible and appropriate.

18. **Allocations will prioritize funding toward “direct” life-saving activities reaching individuals** (for example, food distributions, cash/voucher transfers, mobile clinics and case management, malnutrition treatment and counselling). “Indirect” activities, such as awareness-raising campaigns, may be considered as part of an overall project, but will not be considered as stand-alone items and will not be counted in reports on people reached with assistance.

⁵ Where sub-granting to local actors is planned, these should be duly vetted by the partner submitting the proposal and should demonstrate absorption/implementation/oversight/reporting capacity. If a consortia approach is planned, it should be implemented in accordance with the Global Guidelines.

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19. **Allocations will consider all population groups in the country, based on severity of needs,** including refugees, residents, host communities, internally displaced people (IDPs) and migrants.

G. PROGRAMME SUPPORT COSTS & DIRECT COSTS

20. **Programme Support Costs (PSC) are charged as a maximum seven per cent of the approved direct costs of the project.** All partners and sub-partners should ensure that they include as direct costs in project budgets all reasonable expenditures necessary to achieve the project objectives, commensurate with implementation of the proposed activities. Direct costs should be planned with consideration of the required performance and accountability standards, and in view of any contextual operational constraints. In the spirit of equitable partnership, the portion of the budget pertaining to the sub-grantee should be developed through collaborative dialogue between the main partner and the sub-grantee, such that the overall budget reflects the institutional and operational realities and cost implications of both parties, and that direct costs are apportioned reasonably and fairly while ensuring overall cost efficiency.

H. IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT

21. **Projects funded through U.S. funding will be subject to project monitoring (and, where stipulated, financial spot checks), in accordance with the Grant Agreement.**
22. **In addition, as per the conditions of the special Grant Agreement, partners implementing projects funded through the U.S. Award must:**
- a. **submit to OCHA monthly quantitative updates on a limited number of indicators** (as per template to be finalized), as well as mid-term and final narrative reports and a final financial report; and
 - b. **participate in and contribute to the AITs through their nominated focal point,** who will work closely with OCHA staff in support of the HC (see separate AIT Concept Note).
23. **All NGO-implemented projects are subject to external audits commissioned by OCHA.** For projects implemented by UN entities, the project shall be subject exclusively to the single audit principle and the relevant audit rules of the UN entity shall apply.

I. IMPLEMENTATION VISIBILITY

24. **The Recipient shall comply with the minimum visibility and communications requirements for projects funded through Country- and Regional Humanitarian Funds, as set out in the partner Grant Agreement and Addendum.** The Recipient shall submit materials on a rolling basis throughout the project cycle and, within ten (10) working days of project start, provide OCHA with a visibility/communications focal point and a brief content collection plan. Where a required deliverable cannot be produced due to access, safety, protection or operational constraints, the Recipient shall promptly notify OCHA and agree an alternative package.
25. **As a minimum, for each funded project the Recipient shall provide:** (i) two (2) social media posts acknowledging the [Country/Regional] Humanitarian Fund, tagging relevant

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OCHA/Fund accounts as advised by OCHA; (ii) one (1) impact story or short video (two where feasible), meeting technical/content standards communicated by OCHA; (iii) six (6) high-quality photos across the project cycle with captions, credits and consent confirmation as applicable; and (iv) acknowledgement of the [Country/Regional] Humanitarian Fund in public-facing communications related to the funded activity, using approved Fund branding (where provided).

26. **Submissions shall be publication-ready and include, as applicable, required files, captions, credits, links, consent confirmation and basic project metadata.** The Recipient confirms it has the necessary rights and permissions to share the materials and grants OCHA a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use, adapt, edit, translate and disseminate them for non-commercial UN communications, transparency, reporting and donor recognition related to OCHA-managed pooled funds, subject to safeguarding and protection considerations.

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ANNEX 1: EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S GLOBAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

As we enter 2026, the scale of global suffering is staggering: a quarter of a billion people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. This Reserve Allocation funded by the U.S. Government offers hope for millions of people in deep distress.

This year's Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) is laser focused on the most life-threatening needs of people who have been hardest hit by crises and presents our roadmap to respond. Our approach is rooted in solidarity, guided by evidence and bolstered by a set of reforms needed to maximize every dollar spent.

This allocation is intended to translate that roadmap into action, prioritizing life-saving assistance where needs are most severe and time is most critical.

The U.S. Contribution is a vote of confidence in the system's ability to prioritize, even in the face of impossible choices – empowering the leadership to turn commitment into timely, principled, and effective delivery. We must now focus on getting the job done, with all decisions anchored in the inviolability of the humanitarian principles that ensure delivery is impartial, independent, neutral and in furtherance of our shared humanity.

We must also demonstrate our steadfast commitment to manage the risks inherent to many of the places where we work. We need to augment our collective real-time risk management. We also have an opportunity to showcase how partners provide assurance and accountability through innovative technologies and sustain operations even on front lines – where so many humanitarian workers risk their lives daily in service to others – while maintaining the highest standards of fiduciary and programmatic oversight.

At the core of our efforts must be our accountability to the people we serve. We must demonstrate the best practice of how we engage with communities, listen to their needs, and deliver in ways that respect dignity and choice.

Administering this allocation will test the system's ability to act with the urgency required to match the need for a rapid delivery, at scale. A number of key elements will guide this work, as further elaborated in the guidance document on allocation modalities for the US award:

- To maximize speed and impact, this allocation will be managed as a “Fast-Track” Reserve Allocation, for a six-month period (without extension), targeting hyper-prioritized needs—inter-sector severity 4 and 5—as identified in the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) or other plans/analysis where no HNRP is in place.
- Best-placed responders should be identified who can deliver swiftly, and at scale, with enhanced real-time risk management and a commitment to timely and transparent reporting.
- The allocation should prioritize programmes that provide direct delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection across key sectors, with multi-sector programmes and cash and voucher assistance to be prioritized when they will meet these goals effectively and efficiently.
- At a time of extreme resource scarcity, the allocation should emphasize and augment our collective efficiency—pass through funding should be kept to an absolute minimum, with funding going as directly as possible to partners who are capable of delivering cost effective, life-saving, programmes.

The leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinators has been instrumental in shaping a hyper-prioritized GHO. I call on all Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators to now translate the same urgency, discipline and commitment that guides your work, to implement this fast-tracked Reserve Allocation. **Millions of people are depending on our collective ability to deliver.**

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ANNEX 2: ALLOCATION PROCESS & INDICATIVE TIMELINE

This section sets out the fast-track reserve allocation process for funding under the U.S. Award. It also explains how to make a complementary allocation using non-U.S. resources (if resources allow) in concert with the component funded through the U.S. award.

Part 1: Allocating the “U.S. Component”

The below table outlines an indicative timeline (15-20 working days) for the fast-tracked reserve allocation. Actual time taken for each of these steps will depend on multiple contextual factors. However, all country teams are urged to adhere as closely as possible to the proposed timelines.

Allocation Strategy Development	
Step 1: Strategic Statement. The RC/HC sets out the context-specific strategic parameters and top-level objective of the allocation, anchored in the ERC’s Statement of Intent.	1 day
Step 2: Preparation of the Allocation Strategy paper. The RC/HC, with support from OCHA, determines the priorities and develops an allocation strategy guided by previous HCT deliberations, in consultation with the Advisory Board. The allocation strategy paper will include: ○ Timeframe for implementation: 6 months maximum (without possibility of extension) ○ Geographical scope: severity 4 and 5 areas, as per the hyper-prioritized HNRP (or as defined by RRP/other in-country analysis in countries without an HNRP). ○ Prioritized activities/modalities and people targeted: the most time-critical life-saving activities that directly assist people (per Section H above). ○ Partner selection criteria, limiting admissible applications to those from partners best placed to implement the strategy and meet the conditions related to the U.S. award. To ensure transparency, the HFU will consult with sectors/clusters and/or other relevant coordination platforms and stakeholders to identify the criteria and the best-placed partners to be invited to submit proposals. ○ List of partners selected to apply for funding, based on the criteria above. ○ Other process details and stipulations, including proposal submission deadline.	2 days
Step 3: Advisory Board Feedback and Allocation Launch: The RC/HC shares the allocation strategy paper electronically with the Advisory Board for strictly red-line comments on a 24hr basis. The RC/HC will consider any comments and finalize the strategy. OCHA/HFU issues the Allocation Strategy and invites identified partner(s) to submit proposal(s).	1 day
Proposal Submission	
Step 4: Project Submission. Proposals will be submitted on OneGMS, using a simplified template that captures the key parameters and log frame required to inform funding decisions and provide the basis for monthly reporting on key metrics. These include activities, indicators, workplan, geographic location (admin level 2 or below if possible), people targeted (disaggregated by sex, age, disability), monitoring plan, cash programming (as relevant) and budget.	5 days
Proposal Review and Funding Recommendation	

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Step 5: Pre-screening of Projects. OCHA screens submitted proposals for admissibility against the published criteria. Inadmissible projects are rejected.	1 day
Step 6: Project Review. To ensure technical rigour, OCHA will conduct a rapid review of the proposals on a rolling basis as project submissions are received. The HFU conducts the final technical and financial review in liaison with subject matter experts (for example sector/cluster representatives, gender and disability inclusion experts), as needed, to ensure the appropriateness of project design and the proposed budget, including its conformity with relevant financial and budgetary rules. The subject-matter experts will preferably be independent from the organizations submitting proposals. Preference is noted for representatives of national NGOs. The review will recommend projects to be funded (or not).	2 days
Grant Approval	
Step 7: Approval and Grant Agreement Signature. OCHA will recommend projects to the RC/HC for approval. Upon approval, the RC/HC will sign the Partner Grant Agreement for countersignature by the Partner and final signature by OCHA EO. The agreed start date may be specified as early as the date when the budget was cleared by OCHA (i.e., approved by OCHA in the OneGMS system), without possibility of extension of the six-month project implementation period. At the request of partners, the date of final budget clearance can be taken as the start date of the project. The RC/HC informs the HCT and Advisory Board (including the U.S. representative) of the allocation decisions.	2 days
Disbursement	
Step 8: Disbursements: There will be a single disbursement of the full budget for each approved project, effected within 8 days of Grant Agreement signature.	within 8 days

Part 2: Allocating “Other Funds” in Complementarity

RC/HCs are encouraged to allocate the U.S. funding alongside other resources available in the pooled fund from other donors, in a complementary manner. Funding from other donors will not be subject to the specific conditions of the U.S. Award.