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United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory

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Table of Contents

Note from the Humanitarian Coordinator

Humanitarian needs increased dramatically in 2014, which began with recovery from the impact of the December 2013 winter storm, one of the worst in the last 50 years, followed in the summer by the longest and most deadly round of hostilities since the beginning of the occupation in 1967.

Throughout the oPt, Palestinian civilians continued to be exposed to a range of protection threats, including threats to life, liberty and security; destruction or damage to homes and other property; forced displacement; restrictions to freedom of movement and access to livelihoods; and lack of accountability and effective remedies. The collapse of the peace negotiations in April exacerbated the resulting frustration and hopelessness. Intra-Palestinian tensions and lack of progress in the consolidation of the Government of National Consensus compounded the difficulties. When rights are not fulfilled, they inevitably become humanitarian needs.

The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) has proved to be an effective and efficient tool to ensure a timely response to some of these needs, particularly in the aftermath of emergencies and shocks.

In January and February 2014, the ERF funded more than 24 projects worth approximately US$5.35 million in response to winter storm Alexa. Following the start of the summer hostilities in Gaza, the ERF began processing project applications almost immediately. Twenty-eight projects totaling $6.3 million were approved to address priority needs for WASH, food security, education, protection, health, and emergency shelter and NFI (non-food items).. Overall, a record number of 64 projects addressing a range of needs received approval in 2014 for a total sum of $14 million.

Funding provided by the ERF in response to the Gaza hostilities was complemented by $10.8 million mobilized through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). CERF funded six projects from seven UN agencies to provide life-saving assistance to thousands of people in need, including food, medical supplies, clean water, and protection services. Together, funding from the CERF and ERF allowed the humanitarian community to address a range of priority needs for the most vulnerable people in Gaza. CERF funding also allowed us to jump-start a number of larger scale interventions better suited to its funding modality than to the ERF.

Also this year, we extended ERF coverage beyond emergency response needs, introducing a "call for proposals" system that was endorsed by our Advisory Board. As part of this move, in June 2014, I allocated over $2 million in support to ten time-critical Strategic Response Plan (SRP) projects.

The Advisory Board, under my leadership, continued policy discussions on expanding the ERF to become a more strategic funding coordination tool, transitioning into a Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HFP) that will better support cluster coordinators in addressing SRP priorities. Alignment with the SRP will enable the HPF to support and provide critical funding for the humanitarian response plans defined by the clusters. The HPF will provide flexible and timely resources to partners, thereby expanding the delivery of humanitarian assistance, improving humanitarian access to communities at risk, and further strengthening partnerships with local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Advisory Board in early 2015 approved the proposal to transition the oPt ERF into a HPF, with a more strategic alignment to the SRP and the humanitarian coordination architecture. The aim is to mobilize $ 20 million to enable the fund to deliver its objectives.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the ERF donors (Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) for their contributions of $8.1 million during 2014, the single highest annual contribution recorded since the ERF's inception. I also want to thank the Review Board and cluster coordinators for their commitment and dedication. Last but not least, I am grateful for the professionalism and continuous support of OCHA, the Fund Manager.
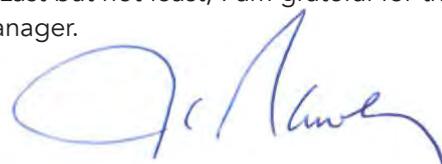
James W. Rawley,
Resident and Humanitarian
Coordinator

ERF Projects (2014): by Governorate and Cluster — OCHA

Cluster
- 📖 Education
- 🏠 Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items
- 🥣 Food Security
- ⚕ Health and Nutrition
- 🤲 Protection
- 🚰 Wash

Number of Projects per Governorate
- 2 - 3
- 4 - 8
- 9 - 18
- 19 - 26

Population per Governorate
- 50762 - 100000
- 100001 - 250000
- 250001 - 400000
- 400001 - 700000

Jenin
- 📖 1
- 🥣 1
- ⚕ 1
- 🤲 2

Tubas
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 1
- ⚕ 1
- 🤲 2
- 🚰 1

Tulkarm
- 🤲 2

Nablus
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 6
- ⚕ 1
- 🤲 3
- 🚰 1

Qalqilya
- 🥣 1
- 🤲 2

Salfit
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 3
- 🤲 2

Jericho
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 1
- 🤲 2
- 🚰 1

Ramallah
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 2
- 🤲 2
- 🚰 1

Jerusalem
- 📖 1
- 🏠 1
- ⚕ 3
- 🤲 1
- 🚰 3

North Gaza
- 📖 3
- 🏠 2
- 🥣 6
- ⚕ 3
- 🤲 7
- 🚰 5

Gaza
- 📖 2
- 🥣 3
- ⚕ 4
- 🤲 4
- 🚰 6
- 🚰 7

Deir Al-Balah
- 📖 1
- 🏠 2
- 🥣 3
- ⚕ 2
- 🚰 5
- 🚰 5

Khan Younis
- 📖 2
- 🏠 4
- ⚕ 5
- 🤲 4
- 🚰 5
- 🚰 6

Rafah
- 🏠 4
- 🥣 4
- ⚕ 2
- 🤲 6
- 🚰 8

Bethlehem
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 2
- ⚕ 1
- 🤲 3

Hebron
- 🏠 1
- 🥣 5
- ⚕ 1
- 🤲 3
- 🚰 1
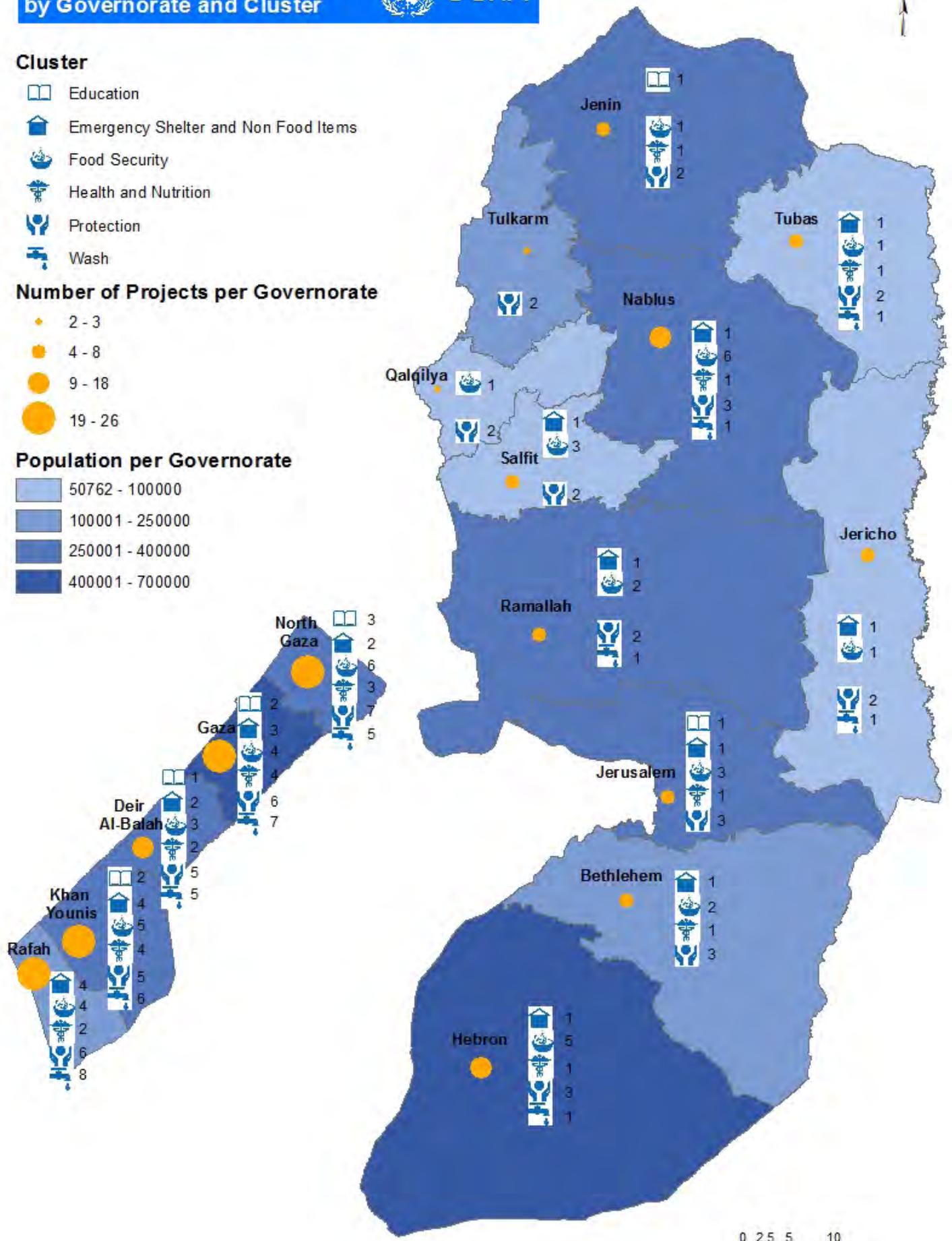
Some ERF projects were implemented in more than one governorate
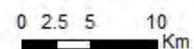
Executive Summary

In 2014 the Advisory Board asked the humanitarian coordinator (HC) and OCHA to promote increased alignment of the oPt ERF to the Strategic Response Plan (SRP), thereby complementing the emergency response mandate of the Fund with a more strategic approach to supporting humanitarian response in the country. Although clusters substantively improved prioritization for ERF allocations in 2014, donor funding did not reflect a collective consideration of these priorities, resulting in serious gaps in funding and in ability to respond. Nonetheless, the ERF alignment with the SRP, first tried in 2014, proved to be a critical contribution towards a more efficient use of humanitarian funds in the oPt.

The context of the oPt is a protracted protection crisis with humanitarian consequences, driven by insufficient respect for international law by all sides. Palestinians in the oPt face a range of serious security issues related to these factors, including threats to life, liberty and security, destruction or damage to homes and other property, forced displacement, restrictions on freedom of movement and on access to livelihoods, and lack of accountability and effective remedies. The inability of the sides to reach a political agreement that could end the longstanding occupation and conflict compounds the difficulties.

The winter storm of December 2013 and the summer 2014 escalation in hostilities increased the demand for humanitarian intervention and most ERF projects approved in 2014 addressed the impact of these two major events. For the first time, the ERF launched a new modality to filling gaps identified in the SRP through a "call for proposals" that invites clusters to present the most critically underfunded projects in response to key priorities defined by predetermined criteria [i].

The ERF response to the effects of the winter storm built upon the lessons learned from the previous winter storm of January 2013. In coordination with key stakeholders, OCHA worked to reduce the scope of unmet needs and duplications. Following a vetting process, the ERF funded 24 proposals worth $5.35 million in WASH, health, food security (FSS), education, emergency shelter and NFI.

The call for proposals initiated support for ten SRP underfunded projects in education, FSS, health, protection and WASH for a sum of $2.15 million. During the Gaza hostilities in the summer of 2014, the ERF started the processing of project applications from the first week of the emergency. 14 projects worth $3.8 million were approved to address priority needs. Later in the emergency, the HC requested that the ERF respond to priority needs as opposed to a "first come, first served" system. A new call of proposals was launched for the Gaza emergency, which resulted in the funding of an additional 12 projects worth $ 2.51 million.

Overall during 2014, a total of 120 project proposals were submitted to the ERF, of which 64 worth $14 million were approved, marking the highest funding by ERF in a single year since its inception.

Of the 64 projects approved in 2014, 41 were implemented in the Gaza Strip and 23 in the West Bank. All the projects approved in the West Bank were implemented either in Area C or in East Jerusalem.

All projects submitted to the ERF underwent a preliminary technical review by the relevant cluster/sector coordinators and OCHA. The two calls for proposals provided the opportunity to strengthen the role of cluster coordinators by facilitating a coordinated approach to need assessments, cluster and inter-cluster priority setting, and the identification of complementary interventions and partners. Proposals that passed this stage were reviewed by the ERF Review Board (composed of representatives of UN agencies and NGOs) and submitted to the HC for endorsement. Since the ERF is strongly rooted in the humanitarian coordination systems, it demonstrated once again its reliability in risk management, project selection, assessment of comparative advantages and technical expertise, minimizing costs and fostering partnerships.

In 2014, national NGOs continued to play a key role; implementing 61 per cent of all ERF projects either exclusively or in partnership with international NGOs. A further 28 per cent of projects were implemented directly by INGOs, and 11 per cent by UN agencies.

Donor support to the ERF in 2014 was particularly resolute and totalled $ 8.1million, the highest sum in a single year, donated by Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Since 2007, the ERF has received more than $40 million in total contributions from eleven donor countries.

INFORMATION ON CONTRIBUTORS

In 2014, donor contributions were $ 8,116,008.7, the highest annual contribution since the inception of the ERF in oPt in 2007, and bringing the total amount received since the establishment of the fund to $ 40,813,009. In 2014, Sweden was the largest contributor to the ERF, followed by Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland and Iceland respectively. Italy became new ERF donors this year.

| Donor	2007-2013	2014
Sweden	$ 8,342,481	$ 2,891,821
Spain	$ 8,315,554	$ 334,225
Norway	$ 5,605,175	-
Switzerland	$ 3,414,881	$ 2,596,793
United Kingdom	$ 3,036,782	-
Denmark	$ 1,045,296	$ 986,547
Germany	$ 774,276	$ 635,324
Ireland	$ 859,796	$ 133,690
Italy	$ -	$ 407,608.7
Iceland	$ 200,000	$ 130,000
Total	$31,594,241	$8,116,008.7

Donor contributions since 2007

Legend: 2007-2013, 2014
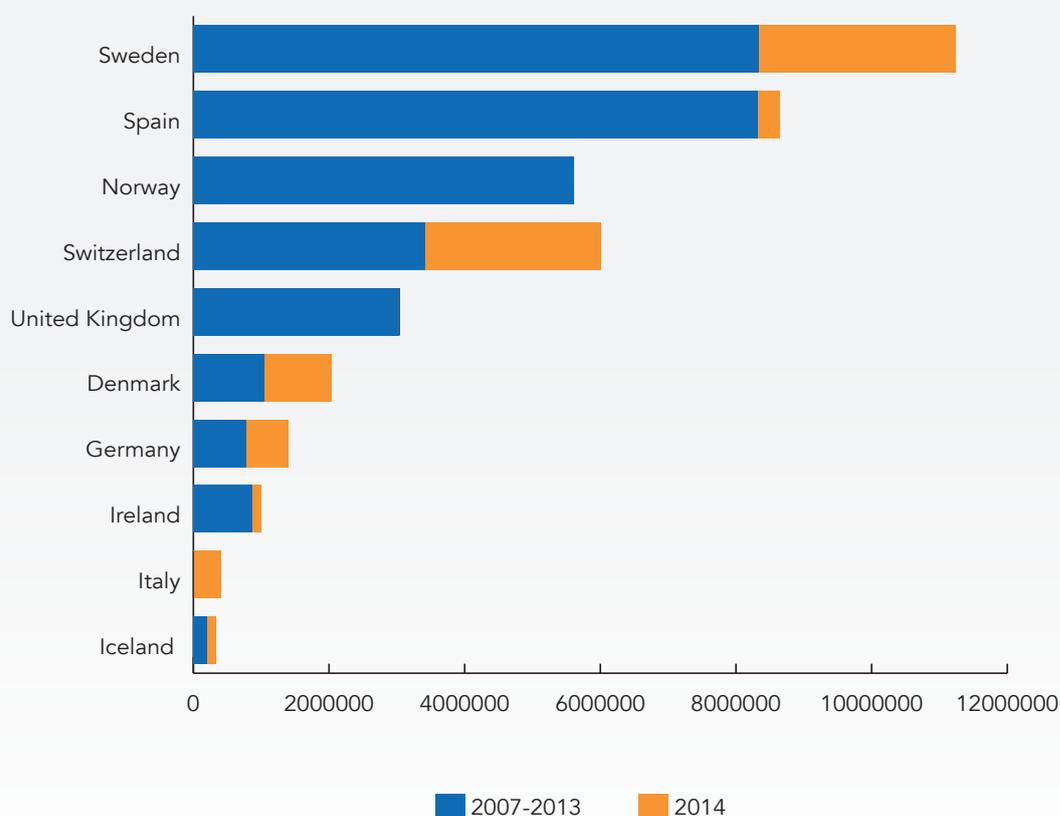
On average, 17 days elapsed between the initial donor pledge and the actual disbursement. In most cases this time lapse did not undermine the timeliness of the ERF response, except during November 2014, when a shortage of funds slightly delayed the clearance of two projects.

Donor	Pledge date	IMIS Amount US$	Deposit dates	Days between the pledge and the receiving the funds
Iceland	7 Feb14	100,000	31 Jan 14	-17
Iceland	7 Feb14	30,000	22 Jan 14	-16
Switzerland	5 Aug 14	725,389	12 Aug 14	7
Switzerland	10 Dec 14	364,204	19 Dec 14	9
Denmark	23 Jul 14	986,547	4 Aug 14	12
Ireland	31 Jul 14	133,690	15 Aug 14	15
Sweden	28 Jul 14	1,450,326	12 Aug 14	15
Germany	14 Oct 14	635,324	3 Nov 14	20
Sweden	27 Jun 14	725,163	178 Jul 14	21
Switzerland	31Dec 14	1,179,331	23 Jan 15	23
Switzerland	24 Sept 14	327,869	21 Oct 14	27
Italy	30 Jul 14	407,608.7	1 Sept 14	34
Sweden	26 Sept 14	716,332	14 Nov 14	49
Spain	4 Aug 14	334,225	2 Oct 14	59
Total		8,116,008.7		

Yearly donor contributions since 2007
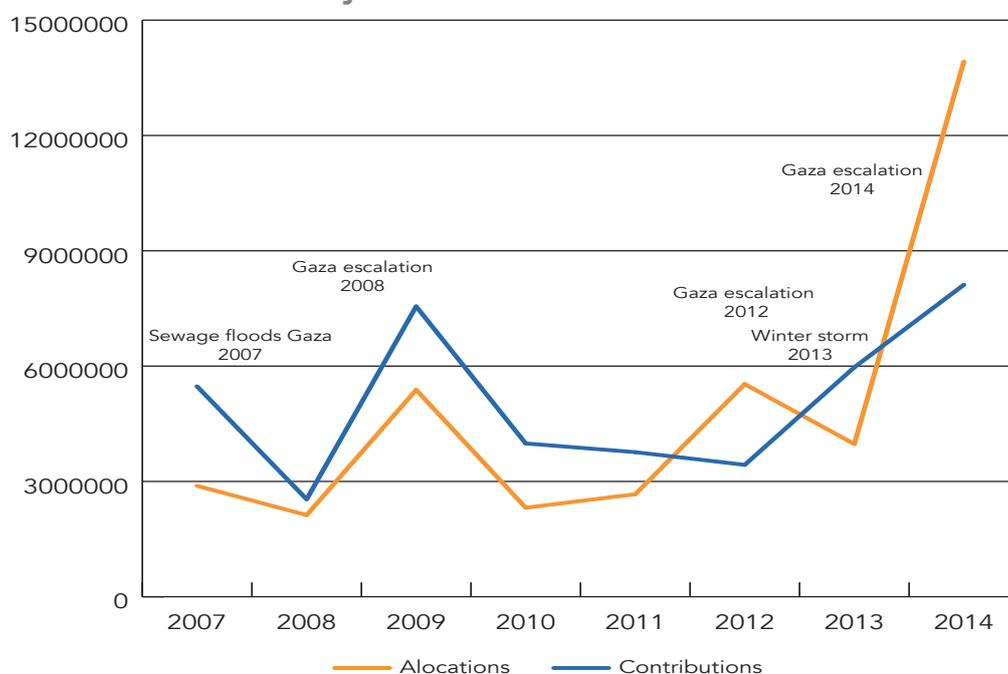
Since its inception in 2007, the ERF has served as a rapid response tool at the onset of emergencies before mainstream responses can mobilize. These responses cover urgent needs, prevent the further erosion of livelihood assets and act as coping mechanisms for affected communities.

ALLOCATION OVERVIEW

2.1 Fund Performance

In the oPt, the ERF has been an effective tool to ensure an immediate humanitarian response to emergencies and shocks, which have included two rounds of hostilities/wars (Pillar of Defense 2012 and Protective Edge 2014) and two winter storms/floods (2013 and 2014).

Winter storm Alexa, one of the strongest recorded in recent decades, struck the oPt from 11 to 15 December 2013. Characterized by strong winds, heavy snowfall and rainfall, coupled with exceptionally low temperatures, the storm exacerbated already fragile living conditions and livelihoods among large sectors of the Palestinian population. Low-lying areas across the Gaza Strip were flooded, resulting in the temporary evacuation of some 10,000 people and damage to around 21,000 homes. Hundreds of homes in the West Bank sustained damage.

Allocations from first call for proposals

Legend: Protection 20% | Health 12% | FSS 23% | WASH 23% | Education 22%

Building on the lessons learned from the response provided to the January 2013 winter storm, OCHA, in coordination with Palestinian Authority governorates, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Palestinian Civil Defence, launched an online monitoring and coordination system. The system provided detailed information on needs, responses and remaining gaps, and was designed to reduce as much as possible the scope of unmet needs and duplication of responses. This system proved an extremely useful tool in guiding needs assessments to inform the projects presented for ERF approval by the HC and via the cluster coordinators.

The ERF, in consultation with the cluster coordinators as a means to strengthen a coordinated response to needs, established a deadline for the submission of proposals for emergency actions to ensure a timely response. The ERF received 33 project proposals from five clusters for a total of $7.3 million: 24 proposals were approved worth $5.35 million in WASH, health, food security, education, emergency shelter & NFI.

In June 2014, the ERF Advisory Board endorsed the use of a gap filling window in the fund to support time critical priority projects in the SRP that aim to prevent displacement in Area C or to fill crucial gaps. An initial allocation of $2.15 million was used for the first ever ERF oPt call for proposals and ten projects were recommended (see chart).

The call for proposals promoted increased alignment with SRP and greater focus on priority needs identified by the clusters, enabling a more coordinated response to humanitarian needs.

The same method was used again in the wake of the Gaza crisis to ensure the allocation of resources for the most urgent needs and to ensure that the review board and cluster coordinators had a detailed picture of needs in Gaza. A deadline was set and vetting took place to ensure projects met the criteria. In total, 38 proposals were received for a total sum of $8.5 million. Following discussions with the HC, the ERF secretariat was instructed to allocate 60 per cent of the available ERF balance (equal to $2.5 million) to the call for proposals. The cluster coordinators pre-vetted proposals, 20 projects in a session, and rated them with score cards. The highest-scoring 12 proposals worth approximately $2.5 million were recommended for endorsement by the HC.
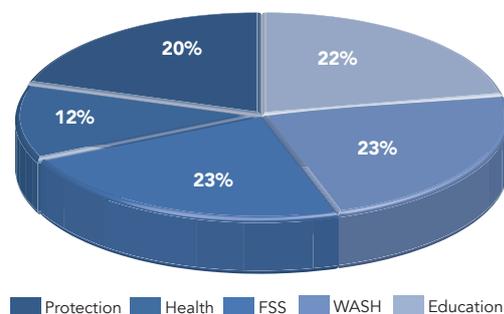
Allocations from second call for proposals

Protection — WASH — FSS — Education — Health

23% · 10% · 10% · 29% · 28%
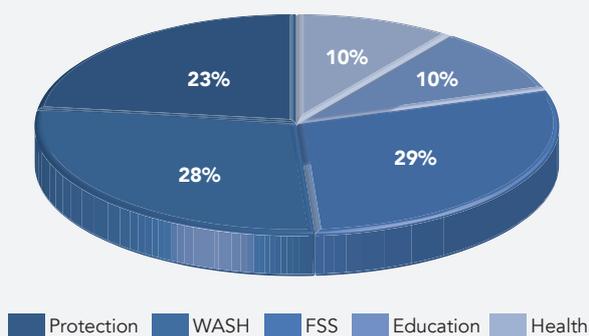
Overall in 2014, almost 88 per cent of all projects funded by ERF were implemented by NGOs. Moreover, nearly half of all projects were implemented by national NGOs, either directly or in partnership with international NGOs. There are three reasons for this effective NGO participation:

■ NGO capacity to be effective humanitarian responders;
■ Flexibility and timelines of the ERF procedures;
■ Role of the OCHA/ERF team in conjunction with the clusters.

Beyond the excellent technical capacities, both national and international NGOs have a long history of relations with the affected communities. This has allowed the launch of responses on the ground almost immediately, while larger resources were mobilized from CERF and other donors. Over the years, the ERF has managed to significantly shorten the time frame for the approval of funds, which has allowed the Fund to strategically support the HC and the cluster coordinators when crisis and shocks occur.

The increased participation of national NGOs is also the result of continuous efforts by the OCHA/ERF team, the cluster coordinators and the excellent partnership with the two NGO networks operating in oPt (AIDA and PNGO, international and national respectively). This is clearly illustrated in the number of projects implemented by national NGOs, which have increased from four in 2008 to 39 in 2014.

More recently in the 2014 emergency in Gaza, of the total projects approved, 24 projects (86 per cent) were implemented by NGOs, most of them (16 projects or 57 per cent) either directly by national NGOs or in partnership with international NGOs.

Allocation Breakdown

In 2014, national NGOs continued to play the biggest role in implementing ERF-funded projects: 28 projects were implemented directly by national NGOs; 19 projects were implemented directly by INGOs; 11 projects were implemented in partnership between national and international NGOs; and six projects were implemented by UN agencies. Two-thirds of the projects were implemented in the Gaza Strip in response to the summer hostilities and 35 per cent were implemented in the West Bank following the winter storm in late 2013, and as part of the call for proposals to fund underfunded projects in the SRP. Food security received the largest share of funding (41 per cent), followed by WASH (20 per cent) and equal shares for the other four clusters: health and nutrition, emergency shelter and non-food items, protection and education.

Alocations per Agency type

UN Agency 11%
Partnership 18%
INGO 28%
NNGO 43%

Partnership   INGO   NNGO   UN Agency
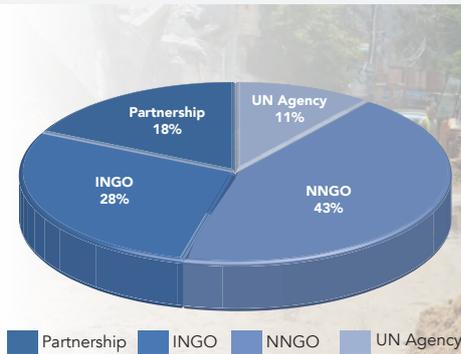
Allocations per location

4,855,125
9,076,828

Gaza Strip   West Bank

Allocation per Cluster

8%
10%
10%
11%
20%
41%

Education   Protection   Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items
WASH   Food Security   Health and Nutrition

Emergency Response Fund – oPt
Annual Report 2014
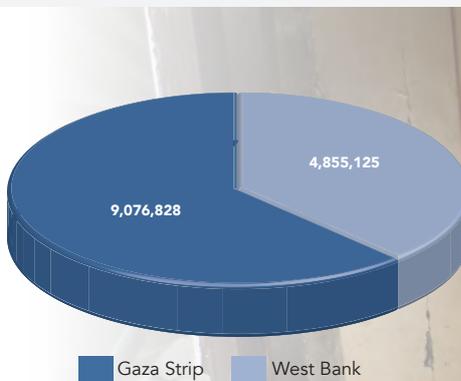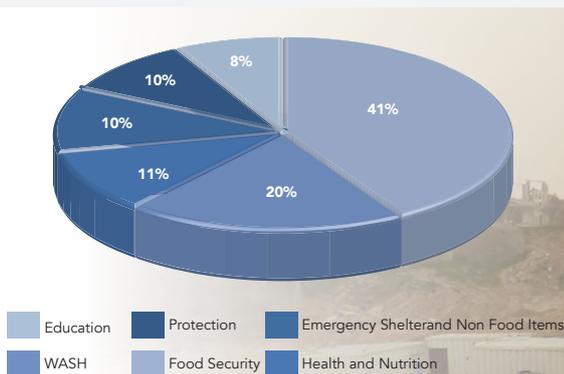
Education

The ERF was used for interventions in the education on three major occasions in 2014:

1. As a result of the summer 2014 hostilities in Gaza, many IDP families fled their homes and lost their belongings, including school uniforms and stationery. The education cluster identified the provision of uniforms and stationery to the most affected students as a priority to enable them to enroll in the scholastic year. Danish Church Aid (DCA) distributed uniforms based on the criteria identified by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and clusters. DCA identified families who had lost income completely, had their income dramatically reduced, or been displaced. The undertaking of this project was identified by the education cluster as a top priority because children were returning to their schools. This intervention secured a high level of involvement by the direct beneficiaries, who were given the right to select their uniform and shoes according to size needs and school dress code requirements. The action also supported mothers by enabling the child to return to school and thereby reducing parental stress levels.

2. As a result of the Alexa storm in December 2013, kindergartens and schools were damaged by flooding in the Gaza Strip, adding to the already deteriorating situation of educational infrastructure caused by the blockade and lack of regular maintenance. Without proper maintenance of educational premises, children are not provided with an appropriate learning environment. ERF funds were instrumental in protecting the safety of students in the targeted school premises, where damage incurred posed a risk to students and the overall educational process. Repair work on 40 schools and 38 kindergartens was completed.

3. Children in Bedouin and herder communities in Area C are among the most vulnerable groups of Palestinians in the West Bank. They are denied access to basic services, including formal and extra-curricular education. In Area C only 33 per cent of children continue to secondary school and the majority of them even lack access to primary schools in their own communities. They are forced to walk distances of several kilometers to reach schools, which is particularly dangerous for children living close to Israeli settlements or during inclement weather or heat. Young girls have to walk long distances alone and traverse checkpoints, causing many of them to drop out of education. ERF support for emergency repairs to Al Jabal School upheld the children's right to education and the community's right to sustainable development.

ERF achievements in the education cluster: A total of 6400 school students in north Gaza (grades 1-6) received school uniforms through a voucher system worth $35 per voucher. Forty schools and 38 kindergartens were repaired and renovated. In Al Jabal primary school, renovation work took place on six containers, recovering eight rooms (five classrooms, one room for the principal, two teachers' rooms) and new toilets, benefiting 121 students.

The funding responded to both unforeseen emergencies (the Alexa storm and the 2014 Gaza hostilities), as well as the ongoing underfunding of the chronic protection issues in the West Bank and its impact on the education system.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, the education cluster adopted the following steps:

- Clusters were given the responsibility to specify needs, priorities and responses before reaching out to partners to encourage them to submit proposals (December 2013 during and after Alexa storm; August 2014 during Gaza war).
- Partners contacted MoEHE for coordination, to collect data, conduct needs assessments and prepare proposals (January 2014 after Alexa storm; Sept. 2014 after Gaza war).
- Proposals shared with the cluster coordinator, who formed a panel (including the MoEHE) to review and comment (Jan-Feb 2014 after Alexa storm; Sept. 2014 after Gaza war).
- The final version of proposals submitted to ERF (Feb 2014 after Alexa storm; Sept. 2014 after Gaza war).
- The processing of the projects submitted was completed within the agreed time frame.

Coordination was strengthened by the provision of funds for high priority projects that had received inadequate donor attention, and by injecting additional funds into the cluster system to enable a response to unforeseen emergencies. During the crises, the education cluster coordinator collected data and information and shared it with all cluster partners. The partners were encouraged to draft proposals to respond to needs with the full partnership of all cluster partners, including national NGOs. Special attention was paid to understanding the differentiated impact of an emergency on women, men, girls and boys. The ERF projects were designed to promote gender and age-specific responses using, among other things, the consistent use of a gender marker.

Health

ERF filled a major gap in funding for the health sector and contributed to enhancing access to health services, and reducing morbidity and mortality rates for vulnerable groups in communities in the West Bank and Gaza. ERF funded six health projects with a total of $1.5 million (one million in the West Bank and half a million in the Gaza Strip). Some of the projects published in the SRP 2014 did not receive funds and the funding gap was filled for five months to sustain high priority services by mobile clinics in Area C. All the funded projects fell within the SRP 2014 of the health and nutrition cluster.

The health and nutrition cluster is co-chaired with the Ministry of Health and includes 38 humanitarian health organizations from United Nations agencies and nongovernmental and private sector organizations. It provides essential primary health care services to vulnerable communities with restricted access. In 2014, the health and nutrition cluster held weekly meetings to share information and coordinate response efforts to meet priority needs and health service gaps in the Gaza population during and in the aftermath of the mid-year conflict in Gaza. Immediately following the crisis, the health and nutrition cluster led health partners in a rapid analysis of the health situation for the multi-cluster assessment (MIRA) in Gaza. It also coordinated a comprehensive health assessment to highlight the impact of the conflict on the health sector and the main gaps and needs.

ERF achievements in the health cluster:

- Rehabilitation of damage to infrastructure caused by the winter storm in 10 public hospitals and four primary health care centers in the Gaza Strip.
- Responded to the emergency needs of neonatal units in Gaza hospitals by procurement of essential drugs and disposables in seven Gaza hospitals, serving 1800 neonates.
- Improved access to emergency health services for the vulnerable population affected by hostilities in the northern Gaza Strip by guaranteeing stocks of medications, medical disposables and fuel for Al Awda hospital. The beneficiaries numbered 6000 vulnerable persons, including children, women and men.
- Support for mobile teams in Gaza by an experienced health NGO to provide emergency, basic and primary health care, including psychosocial support and rehabilitative assistance.
- Provided basic health services to 42 vulnerable communities in Area C of the West Bank directly affected by lack of access and lack of health services via mobile clinics that served 30,000 women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly.
- Provided emergency primary health care to the population of Gaza affected by the military operation.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, the health cluster adopted the following steps:

Prior to applying to the ERF, the partner in the health cluster usually consults the cluster coordinator, who is aware of the gaps and needs in the health sector. The proposal is reviewed by both the health partner and the cluster coordinator; if an urgent need to fill a gap in health services is identified, the health partner submits the project to ERF. The ERF secretariat reviews the project, checks the need on the ground, then works with cluster coordinators to review the projects, prioritize them and approve them accordingly. This mechanism strengthens the leadership of the cluster coordinator in the health sector and also enhances coordination in general because partners should coordinate their activities in different communities. If a similar health service exists within the same community, the project will not be accepted. Three of the six projects funded were run by international NGOs in partnership with local NGOs. In all health projects, gender considerations were taken into account during the review stage of the projects.

Food security

The ERF was used for interventions in the food security clusters on three major occasions in 2014

- From 11 to 15 December 2013, winter storm Alexa covered the West Bank with heavy snow and brought unprecedented rainfall to the Gaza Strip, causing severe damage and losses to the agricultural sector. The storm produced winds of up to 80 km per hour and temperatures of -1°C. Alexa was described as the worst winter storm to hit the region since 1953.

In the West Bank, the storm brought up to 270 mm of cumulative precipitation. The Hebron area received the highest levels, receiving 15–56 per cent of its average annual precipitation in four days. Some 2,370 km2, or 41 per cent, of the West Bank was covered with heavy snow, primarily in Hebron, Ramallah and Nablus governorates. Around 25 per cent (593 km2) of the snow-covered area was agricultural land. In the Gaza Strip, precipitation totaled 256 mm. The highest levels were concentrated in the north, with 33–61 per cent of the yearly total rainfall recorded over the course of four days. Almost $27 million worth of plants, animals and infrastructure (e.g. greenhouses, open field crops, livestock and animal sheds) were damaged or destroyed as a result of the storm.

To secure resources required for the emergency response, FSS partners reallocated $1.5 million in resources from their ongoing interventions to repair damaged animal shelters and greenhouses. The remaining gap in resources of $3.3 million was covered by 14 applications to the ERF.

- On 7 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip. A ground incursion into the eastern parts of the Gaza Strip on 18 July caused unprecedented levels of destruction and triggered mass displacement and a sharp increase in causalities. The escalation marked the sixth escalation in hostilities on Gaza since 2006.

The crisis in Gaza worsened an already extremely fragile environment in terms of food security and livelihoods. Around 66 per cent of the people in Gaza were receiving food assistance prior to the crisis and 72 per cent of households were deemed food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. The forced displacement of around 500,000 people rapidly increased the level of food insecurity since all those displaced were in immediate need of emergency food assistance.

The livelihoods of farmers, breeders, herders and fishermen were severely impacted, partly as a consequence of the direct destruction of their land or productive assets, and partly due to their inability to tend to their land and livestock.

Seven projects were submitted to respond to this dramatic situation and around $1.8 million was used and approved to cover the huge needs.

- ERF funds played a vital role in enhancing the relationship between FSS partners. A FSS vetting panel was established to ensure transparency and the fair application of uniform criteria to applications from organizations.

The ERF fund targeted the basic needs of farmers whose livelihoods were severely affected by war. Most beneficiaries from the three projects (rehabilitation of greenhouses, assisting small poultry breeders and assisting small farmers with irrigation to crops) were small farmers/ breeders who are now able to resume their livelihoods thanks to obtaining the essential inputs required.

The first round of ERF response (during the war) focused on food assistance projects, while the second round focused on agricultural interventions.

The ERF fund helped to strengthen FSS leadership in coordinating between different organizations and with ministries, giving the sector a vital leading role. The tool for coordination used by the FSS

is the who does what where and when database "4Ws", a simple means used by all FSS partners to plan intervention and humanitarian actions. The membership charter used by the FSS strongly encourages different organizations to work under the umbrella of the sector and its working groups and distinguishes between active organizations and others. Also, cooperation with national NGOS sparked strong relations with local NGOs. Special consideration was given to gender considerations during the design and review stages of the projects.

ERF achievements in the FSS cluster:

- ERF funds were used to renovate and maintain 1,868 greenhouses damaged by the storm in the Gaza Strip, and also greenhouses damaged in the West Bank for 1,000 farmers. Livestock shelters were also repaired for 337 small scale herder families in the West Bank.
- More than 19,400 farming and herding families, 3,600 fishing families and 4,000 agricultural wage laborers' families were unable to continue their economic activities and suffered huge damages and losses of their productive assets.
- Overall, 87,095 beneficiaries (half of them female) were reached by ERF in 2014.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, the food security cluster adopted the following steps:

- FSS coordinated with its members to relocation resources and identify the remaining gap to be covered with the ERF in response to the winter storm Alexa.
- Only urgent and life-saving activities were approved by the FSS to guarantee the survival of beneficiaries and to reinstate their livelihoods.
- In accordance with the ERF guidelines and timeframe, FSS defined the agenda for the receipt of projects by its partners and issued advice and interventional priorities to meet humanitarian needs in cooperation with line ministries.
- A FSS vetting panel categorized the agricultural sub-sectors to avoid duplication and overlapping in activities and targeted localities, and FSS submitted a summary of projects to the ERF vetting panel based on the guidelines of both ERF and FSS.

Protection

During 2014, the ERF supported a total of nine projects that provided key protection responses outlined in the Protection Cluster Strategic Response Plan. These responses included psychosocial support, responses to gender-based violence, clearance of explosive remnants of war, legal assistance and protective presence, responses identified in the Protection Cluster Needs Analysis Framework (including increased levels of need following the deterioration of the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem from June 2014, and the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July and August 2014) and in the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment in Gaza.

ERF support enabled emergency responses to be strengthened and targeted during and immediately following the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July and August 2014.

ERF achievements in the protection cluster:

- Psychosocial support: A 24-hour psychosocial support telephone helpline was open to the population in Gaza during the hostilities, and also open to the population in the West Bank following the deteriorating situation from June 2014. Psychosocial support interventions targeted women in areas affected by the Israeli military operation, in addition to psychosocial support and remedial education for children. These responses were an important part of the overall protection cluster response to the devastating impact of the hostilities on the mental and psychosocial well-being of the population in Gaza.

- Mine action: Support for clearance and management of explosive remnants of war, and safety awareness briefings. This was a key area of need following the escalation of hostilities in Gaza.

- Gender-based violence (GBV): Multi-sectoral responses addressing gender-based violence followed the Gaza hostilities. This was previously identified as a need by the protection cluster and need increased following the conflict in Gaza.

- Legal assistance awareness and assistance to vulnerable groups of women, including women in IDP and host communities, and referrals to the Hayat Centre shelter for GBV responses (also funded through the ERF).

The ERF provided support in key areas of protection where there were funding gaps or increased needs due to the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, after June 2014 and the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July and August 2014. These included a protective presence in Hebron, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem and Nablus; maintenance of child protection coordination, including monitoring and documenting violations against children; and funding support to keep open the Hayat Shelter to provide GBV responses in Gaza.

One of the projects directly strengthened as a result of the coordinated responses to child protection (including advocacy) was through the UNICEF-led Working Group on Grave Violations Against Children and Child Protection Working Group. This supported the overall ability of the protection cluster to coordinate critical protection responses to the humanitarian situation in the oPt.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, protection cluster adopted the following steps:

- Only urgent and life-saving activities were approved by the protection cluster to guarantee the survival of beneficiaries during Gaza escalation. Gaps were identified and channelled to be covered by CERF.

- A cluster protection vetting panel pre-vetted proposals to avoid duplication and overlapping in activities and targeted localities, and protection cluster submitted a summary of projects to the ERF vetting panel.

Five projects (over 50 per cent) were submitted by national NGOs and other projects included close cooperation with national NGOs. The ERF has been an important funding mechanism for national NGOs who may otherwise have difficulties in directly accessing humanitarian donor funds. Protection interventions funded through ERF were designed effectively to ensure that women/girls and men/boys benefit equally and gender equality is advanced.

Shelter and NFI

ERF funds contributed significantly to meeting the emergency needs of people affected by manmade or natural disasters.

In early 2014, both Gaza and marginalized communities in Area C of the West Bank suffered from the consequences of the Alexa snow storm that hit the region and destroyed many homes completely or partially. Projects for the distribution of NFIs to 20,000 Palestinian refugee families by UNRWA in Gaza and the renovation of damaged shelters by ACTED to 408 households in marginalized communities demonstrate the importance of a rapid response to prevent displacement and overcrowding.

The hostilities in Gaza that started in July 2014 triggered the highest wave of displacement since the start of the Israeli occupation. Displaced people fled to collective centres and host families with few or no personal belongings. Some families lost everything under the rubble of their destroyed homes and urgently needed non-food items such as mattresses, blankets and basic personal hygiene items to survive in temporary accommodation. As an interim shelter solution, the cluster identified a rental subsidy and integration support package as a cluster priority for non-refugee caseloads identified by UNDP. This ensured equality with refugee caseloads supported by UNRWA, and helped those displaced to find temporary and decent homes pending reconstruction.

ERF achievements in the Shelter and NFI cluster:

- Responding to shelter/NFIs needs of 20,408 households affected by the Alexa winter storm.
- Provision of NFIs (bedding and hygiene kits) for 2,175 displaced families during the Protective Edge war.
- Cash for rent and integration support packages for 148 displaced non-refugee families in Gaza.

Funds were invested in the cluster's key priorities and emergency gaps according to cluster indicators, including assistance to the most vulnerable Bedouins and marginalized people living in Area C of the West Bank at risk of forcible displacement. Swift assistance to people at their place of residence reduces the likelihood of displacement and supports them with the means to withstand harsh weather conditions and other problems.

The hostilities in Gaza resulted in damage to around 40 per cent of shelter stock to varying degrees and left thousands of Gazan residents without adequate shelter solutions. Coupled with the lack of reconstruction materials and slow progress of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM), government and partners sought potential alternative solutions, including cash rental subsidies as an immediate option to reduce overcrowding and the attendant negative outcomes in collective centres.

In total, six ERF projects were funded under the shelter/NFIs sector. The cluster Strategy Advisory Group (SAG)/vetting committee is responsible for screening and ranking projects using prescribed vetting criteria to select projects that comply with the cluster priorities and ERF guidelines.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, protection cluster adopted the following steps:

- Regular updating by the cluster of urgent gaps, needs and priorities within the agreed indicators to secure funds for partners has enhanced the credibility of the cluster, not only financially, but also to highlight and coordinate priorities within the cluster. In some cases, ERF funds bridge gaps in funding to sustain resources and the presence of partners in the coordination mechanism.

- The organizations seeking funds were in direct contact with shelter cluster coordinators from the initial stage of their proposals. The cluster provided a situation overview and analysis, enabling better prioritization of interventions and an effective response to meet gaps.

- The diversity of multi-sectoral needs drives improved inter-cluster coordination and identification of priorities to respond to shocks, thereby saving time and streaming funds and efforts for pre-coordinated needs.

- The sector coordinator encourages partners to engage in community based organizations (CBOs), local councils, governorates and national NGOs in project planning and the delivery of assistance to guarantee an effective response. The cluster also encourages national NGOs to apply directly for

funds when they have the capabilities and experience to manage and perform the project.

- The cluster grants more points in the vetting criteria when the applicants are national NGOs or partners with NGOs.
- The sector coordinator ensures that funded proposals have taken gender into consideration in the design and implementation of interventions.

WASH

Vulnerabilities in WASH were heightened following the 2014 hostilities in Gaza, as shown in the inter-agency MIRA, in which damage was sustained to WASH facilities and infrastructure. PWA and CMWU damage assessment reports put the cost of the preliminary direct and indirect destruction on the WASH sector from the war at $34 million.

The severe winter storm (Alexa) that hit oPt in December 2013 caused extensive flooding in Gaza and damage to hundreds of houses and schools, forcing people to evacuate their homes. As part of the WASH cluster response, three interventions were undertaken in cooperation with the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility CMWU.

The WASH situation in Gaza is deteriorating on a continuous basis due to a complex variety of constraints, including the critical lack of a sufficient energy supply and the socio-economic decline of livelihoods and high unemployment rates resulting from the blockade. Access to funding remains a major challenge facing humanitarian assistance. The WASH cluster has experienced consistent underfunding over the last few years. ERF funding has allowed WASH cluster partners to mitigate WASH associated risks such as flooding and the spread of disease, and to intervene in a timely manner to minimize human suffering in the most vulnerable areas of the Gaza Strip. The proposals funded included gender considerations in their design and implementation

ERF achievements in the Shelter and NFI cluster:

Twelve ERF-funded projects by WASH cluster members enabled the WASH cluster to:
- Reduce the risk of flooding and prepare communities for future winter storms in the Gaza Strip by equipping CMWU with five standby mobile pumps with a pumping capacity of 1600m3 per hour for deployment in flooding locations when needed to eliminate the risk of flooding. The project targeted all the Gaza Strip population by strengthening flood emergency preparedness, especially the 137,000 residents living close to the WASH facilities liable to flooding.
- Repairs of generators for sewage pumping stations in the Gaza Strip.
- Intervention to heavily flooded areas in Gaza city and Rafah in the wake of the storm. Approximately 1200 households in Nafaq Street and Jemezat Al-Sabeel area whose properties had been damaged and contaminated benefited from the distribution of 1000 drinking water tanks and a clean-up campaign. The project outputs ensured that the flooded areas and their associated health and environmental risks due to water pollution were avoided and the problem was addressed in a timely manner.
- During the war delivering emergency assistance to families in Rafah and Khan Younis governorates. Approximately 21,000 beneficiaries received 11,250 m3 of drinking water and 1400 water storage tanks.
- Delivering assistance to approximately 30,000 people. Beneficiaries received 6,300 m3 of domestic water and 2,472 water storage tanks.
- Life-saving emergency assistance for residents in the centre of the Gaza Strip. Addressing damage to water infrastructure and water storage facilities for households in six municipalities by distributing 944
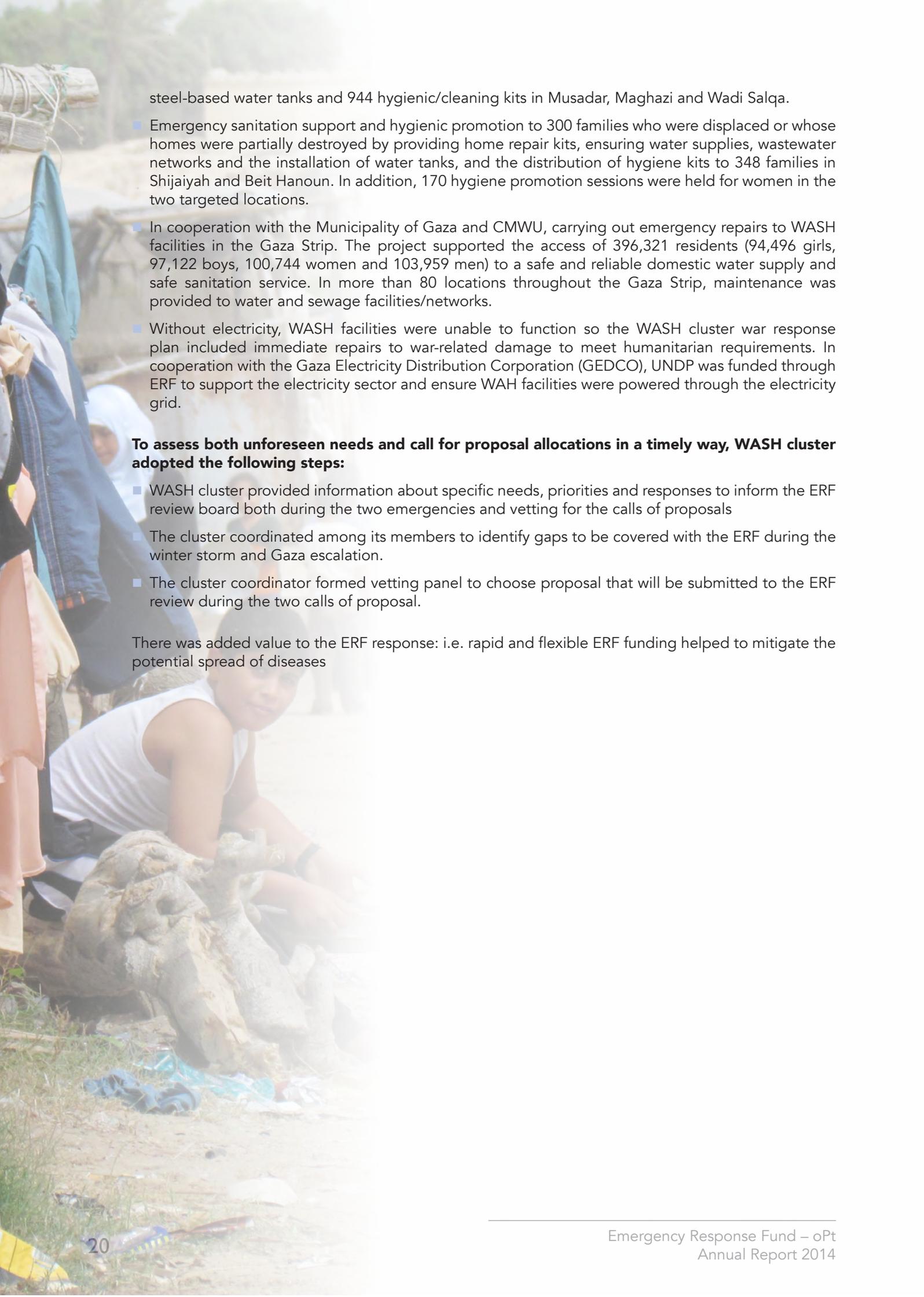
steel-based water tanks and 944 hygienic/cleaning kits in Musadar, Maghazi and Wadi Salqa.

- Emergency sanitation support and hygienic promotion to 300 families who were displaced or whose homes were partially destroyed by providing home repair kits, ensuring water supplies, wastewater networks and the installation of water tanks, and the distribution of hygiene kits to 348 families in Shijaiyah and Beit Hanoun. In addition, 170 hygiene promotion sessions were held for women in the two targeted locations.

- In cooperation with the Municipality of Gaza and CMWU, carrying out emergency repairs to WASH facilities in the Gaza Strip. The project supported the access of 396,321 residents (94,496 girls, 97,122 boys, 100,744 women and 103,959 men) to a safe and reliable domestic water supply and safe sanitation service. In more than 80 locations throughout the Gaza Strip, maintenance was provided to water and sewage facilities/networks.

- Without electricity, WASH facilities were unable to function so the WASH cluster war response plan included immediate repairs to war-related damage to meet humanitarian requirements. In cooperation with the Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO), UNDP was funded through ERF to support the electricity sector and ensure WAH facilities were powered through the electricity grid.

To assess both unforeseen needs and call for proposal allocations in a timely way, WASH cluster adopted the following steps:

- WASH cluster provided information about specific needs, priorities and responses to inform the ERF review board both during the two emergencies and vetting for the calls of proposals

- The cluster coordinated among its members to identify gaps to be covered with the ERF during the winter storm and Gaza escalation.

- The cluster coordinator formed vetting panel to choose proposal that will be submitted to the ERF review during the two calls of proposal.

There was added value to the ERF response: i.e. rapid and flexible ERF funding helped to mitigate the potential spread of diseases

One of every three ERF-funded projects is located in Area C of the West Bank. Palestinians in Area C are subject to a complex system of control by the Israeli authorities that includes restrictions on the ability of people to build or access land. Many of these restrictions relate to Israeli settlements and their infrastructure.

Humanitarian actors, including UN agencies and NGOs, have faced a range of impediments to the provision of adequate and timely assistance and protection to affected communities in Area C.

During 2014 communities and humanitarian partners were faced with tougher policies and practices in Area C. In February 2014, ICRC decided to halt the provision of emergency shelters in the Jordan Valley, and later in the rest of the West Bank, due to growing obstructions by the Israeli authorities to their responses. In April the head of COGAT presented the Knesset with a strategy to address "illegal activities in Area C", namely the repeated demolition of donor-funded structures, the increased use of confiscations and the potential criminalization of humanitarian workers by the establishment of a legal unit in COGAT. In the last quarter of 2014, 11 donors and implementing agencies received letters from COGAT calling for the dismantling of structures installed without permits. The UN received one of these letters in reference to ERF-funded projects.

During 2014, there were 13 demolition incidents, two stop-work orders and three confiscations of ERF-funded structures with a combined value of $61,291.5. A total of 179 people were affected by these incidents.

For the past few years, humanitarian actors have faced a range of restrictions on their movement and access to and within Area C, in particular seam zones and closed military zones (including "firing zones"). Applications have to be made for written "permits" or "prior coordination" to access specific areas and communities. These restrictions invariably impose unnecessary delays on, and increase the costs of, delivering assistance and essential services, and decrease the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian operations

The HC and donors agreed that the HC had regularly demarche with the Israeli authorities in relation to incidents involving the destruction and seizure (or risk of) of humanitarian assistance provided to Palestinians or of property owned and inhabited by Palestinians, as well as concerns over the displacement of communities, referring to the principles contained in the Area C framework. In addition, the HC will continue to communicate with donors impacted by the destruction and seizures to ask for their follow up with the relevant stakeholders (Israeli authorities, TLV embassies and capitals). In 2014, the HC issued seven letters to donors and three letters to the Israeli authorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and COGAT).

Humanitarian operations in the Gaza Strip continue to be hampered by a volatile security situation, a heavily militarized context and the accumulated effects of the Israeli imposed blockade on Gaza, in addition to the more recent Egyptian restrictions. In the wake of the ceasefire agreement concluded in August 2014, the Israeli authorities allowed a limited resumption in the transfer of goods between Gaza and the West Bank, and relaxed some of the restrictive criteria regulating the movement of exceptional cases between the two areas.

The July 2014 hostilities in Gaza resulted in emergency needs that were better responded to by national actors who could access more areas and exploit their connections with the community.

Strategies for treating risks were developed in a risk management framework prepared by the ERF secretariat and endorsed by the HC and ERF Advisory Board. The framework includes the following mitigating strategies:

- Increased advocacy with the host authorities (in this case the occupying power) as to the negative consequences of restricting the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

- Remind the host authorities of their obligations under international law to facilitate the delivery of aid.

- OCHA field staff with access permits to take on responsibilities for monitoring ERF projects. ERF management structure allows for considerable

remote management and effective communication technology to maintain links.

- Link the ERF risk mitigation strategy with the HCT Policy on Humanitarian Action in Area C, which details the standard operational procedures for humanitarian actors in the oPt.

- Link ERF-funded projects with cluster response plans and early recovery plans to increase the predictability and sustainability of interventions.

Through the HCT area C strategy, the HC and donors agreed that the HC had regularly demarche with the Israeli authorities in relation to incidents involving the destruction and seizure (or risk of) of humanitarian assistance provided to Palestinians or of property owned and inhabited by Palestinians, as well as concerns over the displacement of communities, referring to the principles contained in the Area C framework. In addition, the HC will continue to communicate with donors impacted by the destruction and seizures to ask for their follow up with the relevant stakeholders (Israeli authorities, Tel Aviv-based embassies, and donor capitals).

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

During 2014, OCHA increased the use of the ERF and reached a unprecedented level of contributions and allocations, which exceeded all previous annual levels since the Fund's establishment in 2007. The ERF contributed to the ability of humanitarian actors in the oPt to absorb two shocks and fill critical gaps in the SRP. It was used to respond to the aftermath of 2013 winter storm in the West Bank at the beginning of the year, to fill critical gaps in the second quarter of the year, and to help respond to the needs that emerged from the hostilities in Gaza in the summer and autumn. The fund continued to prove its efficacy as a well-placed reserve to respond to crises.

The fund has engaged in supporting humanitarian response planning, mobilizing resources, promoting accountability, and serving as a vehicle for defining strategic funding priorities for coordinated humanitarian action.

The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and SRP will guide the ERF allocation strategy in 2015 to ensure a more transparent, targeted, strategic and inclusive process for the definition of strategic and funding priorities. In the first half of 2015, the combined funding gap of all the clusters will define the exact funding target for at least two calls for proposals. Project appraisal criteria will be applied for the most critical projects.

In 2015, the HC will lead the transformation of the Emergency Response Fund into a Humanitarian Pooled Fund, following the endorsement by the Advisory Board. Four principles will continue to underpin the functioning of the fund:

Inclusiveness: A broad range of humanitarian partner organizations (UN agencies and NGOs) will participate in country-based pooled fund (CBPF) processes and receive funding to implement projects addressing identified priority needs.

Flexibility: The programme focus and funding priorities of the fund are defined at country level and may shift rapidly, especially in volatile humanitarian contexts. The fund will be able to adapt rapidly to changing priorities and allow humanitarian partners to identify appropriate solutions to address humanitarian needs in the most effective way.

Timeliness: The fund will allocate funds and save lives as humanitarian needs emerge or escalate.

Efficiency: The management of all processes related to the fund will enable timely and strategic responses to identified humanitarian needs. The fund will seek to employ effective disbursement mechanisms and minimize transaction costs while operating in a transparent and accountable manner.

OCHA will continue work on further expanding the number of ERF donors to give the fund a more solid base as the relatively small number of donors currently makes the fund susceptible to competing pressures from other crises around the world.

In 2015, a new online Grants Management System (GMS) will used by OCHA. The automated system will record the life span of a project and alert partners and the ERF secretariat of upcoming deadlines, ensuring a real-time flow of information to partners on the status of submissions. It will also enable the ERF secretariat to improve the allocation process and increase the efficiency of the grant management cycle from initial application to project closure.

Glossary

ARA: Access Restricted Areas

Area C: The division of most of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C was agreed in the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and was intended to last no more than five years. The built-up area of Palestinian communities does not correspond to the administrative division of Areas A, B and C. Moreover, between 1995 and 2000, the divisions changed multiple times following the phased re-deployments of the Israeli military from some areas and the gradual transfer of authority to the newly-created Palestinian Authority. Since 2000, there have been no official changes to these areas.

Alexa storm: The winter storm that hit the Middle East region from 11-15 December 2013, affecting Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian territories and Egypt

CBPFs: Country-Based Pooled Funds
CERF: Central Emergency Response Fund
CMWU: Coastal Municipalities Water Utility
CBO's: Community based organizations
DCA: Danish Church Aid
ERF: Emergency Response Fund
FSS: Food Security Sector
GBV: Gender Based Violence
GEDCO: Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation
GRM: Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism
HC: Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT: Humanitarian Country Team
HPC: Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HH: Households
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization
KGs: Kindergartens
MA'AN: MA'AN Development Centre
MoA: Ministry of Agriculture
MoEHE: Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoH: Ministry of Health
MIRA: Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
NFI: Non-Food Items
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oPt: Occupied Palestinian Territories
PHG: Palestinian Hydrological Group
PWA: Palestinian Water Authority
SAG: Strategy Advisory Group
SRP: Strategic Response Plan
UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH: Water Sanitation and Hygiene
IDPs: Internally displaced persons

ⁱ **Allocation strategy for the oPt ERF**

July 2014

- ■ **No. 1 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE and ELIGIBILITY:** The allocation will be limited to Area C of the West Bank and Gaza. Therefore only SRP projects in these locations are eligible for ERF funding.

- ■ **No. 2 OPERATIONAL SCOPE** Since the ERF will not be able to financially cater for entire projects, only critical activities of eligible SRP projects will be considered for funding. In particular, the allocation will prioritize activities as it follows:

  - » in Area C, activities aiming at preventing and responding to displacement through the provision of emergency assistance;

  - » in Gaza, activities aiming at preventing critical gaps that could generate life threatening needs.

- ■ **No. 3 TIME CRITICALITY:** In accordance with the cluster strategy. The allocation will prioritize time sensitive activities i.e. activities that are most urgent in nature and require immediate response that cannot be postponed..

- ■ **No. 4 EXCLUSION FROM THE ALLOCATION**

  - » Food aid will be excluded because of the limited impact that ERF funds can vis-a-vis the significant requirements

  - » All low priority projects, regardless if in Area C or Gaza are also excluded.

  - » In order to support the work of the cluster in reviewing and vetting proposals the following criteria are to be considered by clusters:

  - » Complementarity with other funding: Proposal recommending activities that have received funding from other funding sources should be weighted more favourably than activities that have no funding whatsoever, unless justified by the cluster with solid needs analysis. [Cluster should request their partners will be requested to provide most up to date funding update on FTS.]

  - » Gender main streaming: Projects with gender code of 2 in the SRP should be weighted more favorably in the vetting process.

  - » Indirect costs: Projects that can demonstrate low indirect costs as a proportion of direct costs should be weighted more favorably.

  - » Value for Money: Projects that can demonstrate the most 'value for money' (e.g. maximum outcome and beneficiary reach for each dollar invested and effectiveness of the intervention) relative to the project budget should be prioritized.

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Occupied Palestinian Territory

OCHA oPt