

HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME CYCLE

POOLED FUNDS

Pooled funds are a key part of **resource mobilization** in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle – and for a CCCM Cluster.

This section covers:

- Country-Based Pooled Funds
- CERF

COUNTRY-BASED POOLED FUNDS

WHAT ARE CBPF?

Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF) are humanitarian funds held at country level. They allow donors to pool their contributions into single, unearmarked funds to support local humanitarian efforts. They are established when a new emergency occurs or when an existing humanitarian situation deteriorates and are designed to complement other humanitarian funding sources.

CBPF are given country-specific names (and acronyms). For example: 'Yemen Humanitarian Fund' (YHF) or 'South Sudan Humanitarian Fund' (SSHF).

CBPF are managed by OCHA at the country level under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), in consultation with the humanitarian community. They support the priorities set out in Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), enabling funding to be prioritized locally to support highest-priority projects. Funds can be allocated to national and international NGOs, UN agencies, and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations.

These pooled funds are disbursed in “**allocations**”. If a CBPF is established in a response, there might be one or several allocations during a year, depending on the requirements of the context.

Find out more [here](#).

Governance & management

The HC has specific responsibilities for CBPF, including defining the strategic focus and amount of funding for each allocation and leading country-level resource mobilization efforts, and is supported by OCHA and an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board has a consultative role on CBPF strategic approach. It is made up of representatives from contributing donors, UN agencies, national NGOs, and international NGOs.

Programmatic and financial aspects of CBPF are managed and supported by a Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) that sits within the OCHA country office. CBPFs follow global guidelines, with an Operational Manual developed to describe specific arrangements for the country context.

TYPES OF ALLOCATION

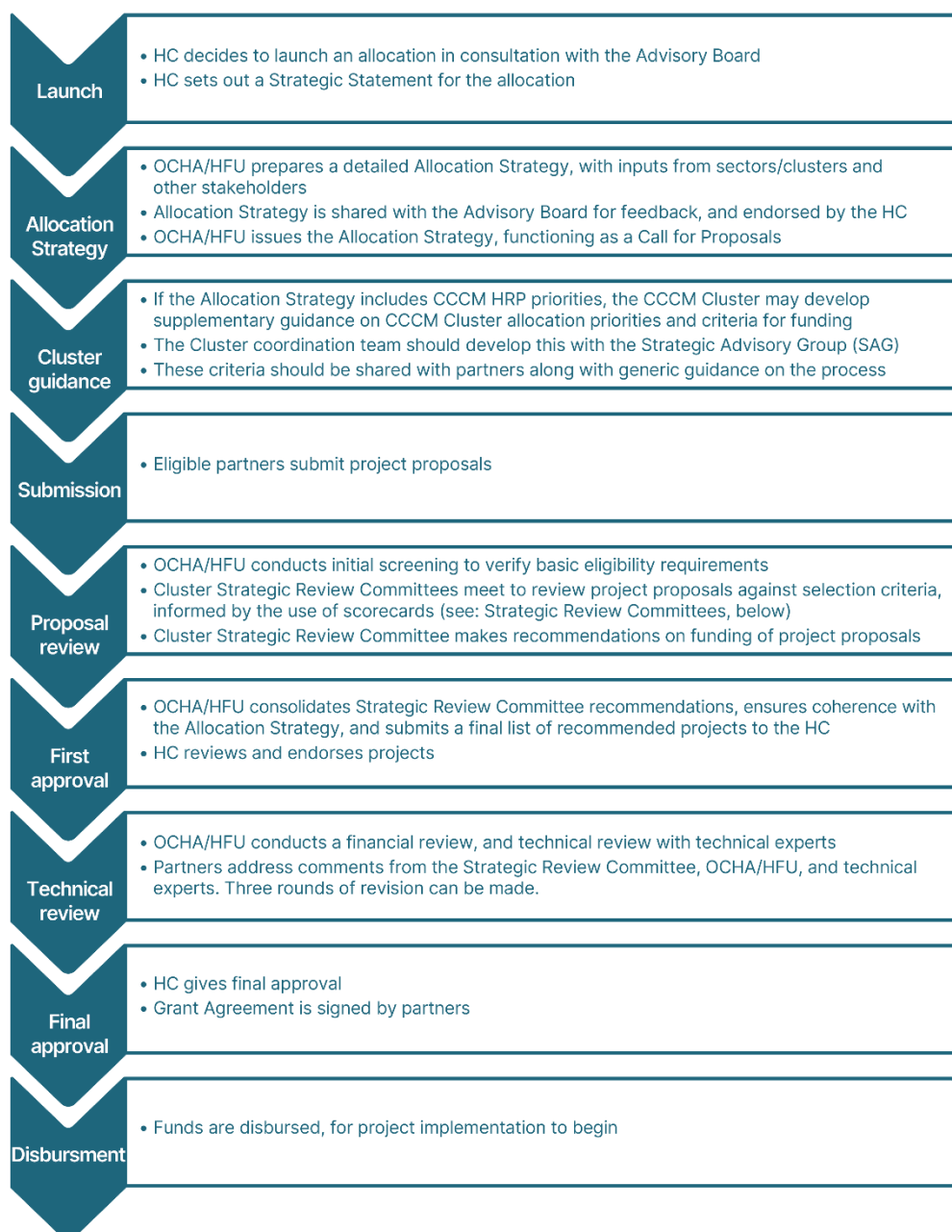
There are two types of allocation of Country-based Pooled Funds:

Reserve Allocations

A Reserve Allocation is primarily intended to respond to rapid onset and unforeseen circumstances. Exceptionally, it may be used to support special initiatives for which a Standard Allocation is insufficient. A Reserve Allocation has a streamlined process. Funding applications are from a limited number of partners by invitation, according to criteria. A short allocation strategy is drafted, and the timeline of project submission and approval is shortened.

Standard Allocations

A Standard Allocation is the regular process of a CBPF. It usually takes place against the backdrop of the HRP. There are set steps for a Standard Allocation:



CLUSTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Clusters are required to closely engage with CBPF processes. CBPFs are important for a cluster, as they are designed to support the priorities set out in HRPs and respond to highest-priority gaps or unforeseen circumstances. They can be an **important funding mechanism** for cluster partners, **especially for local organizations**.

During the Allocation Process

As CCCM Cluster Coordinator and Co-Coordinator you will be involved, to:

- Give **input to the Allocation Strategy**, often through the inter-cluster coordination group, identifying and advocating for highest priority CCCM gaps as per the CCCM HRP and funding status monitoring
- If CCCM HRP priorities are approved for inclusion in the allocation, **develop any necessary additional guidance** for CCCM partners. *Ensure to make provision for funding allocation to local and national actors.*
- **Form a Strategic Review Committee**, to review proposals (see below)
- Participate in **technical review** with OCHA/HFU, and engage with partners on finalization of proposals

During implementation of CCCM CBPF projects

If CCCM projects are approved, then during their implementation you might be required to:

- Review partner interim and final reports
- Participate in monitoring visits with the HFU team

Forming a Strategic Review Committee

For the Proposal Review step, each cluster ordinarily is requested to form a Review Committee – usually referred to as a Strategic Review Committee.

The Strategic Review Committee reads and meets to review each project proposal submitted to the CBPF by a CCCM partner, and scores them against scorecards. Standard scorecards are provided by HFU, and you might wish to add CCCM-specific criteria decided by the Review Committee to this. For example, to ensure good technical aspects to the proposal, or to promote funding for local and national actors.

The Committee decides whether or not to recommend each proposal for funding and decides if any adjustments needed to proposal activities and budget.

A Strategic Review Committee includes the Cluster Coordinator and Co-Coordinator, nominated Cluster members, and a member of the OCHA/HFU team. The existing Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) can act as the Strategic Review Committee, or the Cluster can form a separate committee. This should be done transparently. See Related Resources for **example Strategic Review Committee ToRs** and election processes.

Administration through 'GMS'

The Grant Management System (GMS) is an online platform used to manage CBPF processes, including partner registration and the full grant management cycle (project proposal submissions, proposal review and approval, narrative and financial reporting, project revisions, and closure processes).

As a Cluster Coordinator, you will likely be required to interact with the GMS platform to view partner proposals, add comments following the Strategic Review Committee stage, and to review partner project amendments and reporting, according to guidance set out at country level.

TIPS FOR LOCALIZATION

- ✓ Ensure local and national actors have information on how to access CBPF, and understand the processes. Consider holding briefings for local and national actors, and consider how the Cluster can support local actors to overcome any language and administrative barriers
- ✓ Advocate for and include funding for institutional capacity-building in pooled fund priorities
- ✓ Prioritise local actors' applications in pooled funds,
- ✓ Support the creation of consortium applications, based on partnerships between national and international actors

Read more about steps you can take to promote local and national actors' access to funding in *Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localization in Humanitarian Coordination* in [Toolkit Section 9 - Localization](#)

CERF

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a global funding mechanism that pools the contributions from donors, mainly governments but also private donors, into a single fund. The fund is set aside for immediate use, to jump-start critical relief operations and fund lifesaving programmes not covered by other donors in rapidly deteriorating situations and in underfunded protracted crises. CERF allocation mechanisms include rapid response grants, underfunded emergency grants, and loans.

UN agencies, funds and programmes can receive CERF funds for lifesaving activities in emergencies around the world. NGOs are not eligible to apply for or directly receive funding from CERF. However, NGOs may be recipients of CERF funding where they are implementing partners of the UN agency that is a recipient of the grant (or loan).

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) or Resident Coordinator (RC) recommends use of CERF and identifies priority lifesaving needs by consulting the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). UN organizations jointly apply for CERF funding through the RC or HC.

For the CCCM Cluster, the Cluster Lead Agency will be involved in discussions on CERF applications in the HCT. A CCCM Cluster coordination team might be required to provide analysis and consultation with Cluster partners to inform CERF allocation requests. This will likely be done in collaboration with the CLA, if it is needed.

RESOURCES

See Related Resources for example *Strategic Review Committee ToRs* for Country-Based Pooled Funds.

References and further reading

- [OCHA Country-based Pooled Funds Global Guidelines](#), 2023
- [Health Cluster Guide, A Practical Handbook](#), 2022
- [Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localization in Humanitarian Coordination](#), 2022