Rapid Response Fund (RRF)

Overview

The Rapid Response Fund or RRF is an umbrella grant managed by IOM. In the RRF mechanism IOM holds funds that can be rapidly allocated to support to international and national non-governmental organizations (INGOs and NNGOs) to implement life-saving interventions. RRF programmes are accompanied by capacity building of local organizations. RRF programmes prioritize rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations affected by natural or man-made crises, such as outbreaks of disease, conflict, flood, and drought. These grants provide urgent support to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees and vulnerable members of the host communities across a variety of humanitarian sectors, including Shelter and Settlements, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Agriculture, Food Assistance, Health, Nutrition, Protection, Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management and Assessments (HCIMA) (including Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) initiatives). In 2023 RRFs were primarily funded by USAID /BHA and are managed by IOM in 5 countries.

Key Points

- The Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is a tool that IOM is implementing successfully in countries affected by emergencies, including man-made and natural disasters, to quickly mobilize resources for service providers, local and international.
- The RRF is a grant making mechanism to support INGO and NNGO implementing partners.
- Active RRF programmes fund interventions in the following areas: Shelter and Settlements, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Agriculture, Food Assistance, Health, Nutrition, Protection, Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management and Assessments (HCIMA).

Key Considerations

The purpose of any RRF programme is to provide immediate life-saving assistance during times of man-made or natural disasters. As such, it is critical that any given RRF project be able to act quickly, requiring both IOM programme and programme support teams (e.g. procurement, finance, legal) to work together to rapidly facilitate INGO and/or NNGO partners throughout the proposal development, agreement signing, payments and financial management as well as technical capacity to support project implementation stages. As with any emergency response, collaboration is key, particularly within IOM and with relevant external parties such as the NGO partner, Technical Cluster/Sector Leads, and the donor.

Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

IOM has strong institutional capacity and staffing with expertise in overseeing small grant programmes in emergency contexts. Funds to INGO and NNGO partners are disbursed according to a systematic selection process based on the RRF Guidelines, and in alignment with each country's humanitarian response plans and Sphere standards. An emphasis is placed on technical and organizational capacity building when working with NNGO partners, in an effort to strengthen local organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to local humanitarian emergencies long after receiving RRF support. IOM's RRF methodology can be quickly replicated for fast start-up of RRF programming by IOM Missions worldwide.

IOM has offices in over 100 countries, plays a strategic role within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), UN structures, and various humanitarian coordination bodies, and works alongside many INGOs and NNGOs to implement RRF projects. IOM also enjoys good working relationships with host governments and Cluster Leads, and is the UN Agency addressing movement and migration issues, particularly with regard to the mobility dimensions of crises.

Guidance on the Process

IOM Granting Cycle

The granting cycle within the RRF programme consists of four main phases: pre-grant, proposal review and selection, monitoring grant implementation, and capacity building.

Pre-Grant Activities

To be ready to respond to emergencies as quickly as possible, the RRF works to raise awareness, coordinate and engage with potential partners, including assessing their capacity to implement project activities as well as manage funds prior to an emergency occurring.

Coordination with established mechanisms

IOM is a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and participates actively in the Humanitarian Communities' coordination mechanism, the Cluster system. IOM RRF works closely with Clusters coordination mechanisms within the countries where they operate. In areas where Clusters are not active, IOM RRF coordinates closely with established mechanisms such as sector working groups.

Engage with potential partners; due diligence

Organizational assessments of potential partners cover programmatic implementation experience (staffing levels, sector knowledge and training; M&E systems and practices), information on past projects, geographic area of operations, and existing financial systems to manage grants. IOM RRF crosschecks available information from relevant Cluster leads and reporting, and through past performance information requests from partners specified. After review, organizations are notified of recommendations for improvement, connected with relevant Clusters and Sub-Clusters, and advised of whether they would qualify to apply to the RRF in the event of emergency needs. Those who do not qualify are encouraged to keep in contact with IOM RRF, who may make referrals to other relevant opportunities. All assessments are entered into the RRF database, noting the capacity building recommendations. Based on IOM Procurement Policy IN/168, IP assessments are valid for up to two years. For sub-grantees to be a recipient of funds from the RRF, they must meet the following basic conditions:

a) Registered locally as a humanitarian organization or non-profit organization;

b) Established sectoral competence in the area of potential intervention to be supported by the sub-grant;

c) Established geographical presence in area of operation, or established capacity to mobilize in a short period of time;

d) Able to meet standards of financial probity acceptable to IOM/UN, with IOM able to provide additional support as needed within the context;

e) Recipients will have a Code of Conduct (CoC) conforming to international standards, particularly incorporating Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in line with IASC Guidance and IOM's IN/234, or agree to adopt a CoC based on IOM's IN/15 Standards of Conduct.

Proposal Review and Selection

IOM RRF evaluates proposals and selects sub-grantees based on the sector-specific requirements set forth above and according to the following principles:

§ Funding is granted based on proposals from organizations with the capacity to respond;

§ Proposals respond to acute humanitarian needs caused by an external shock;

§ Proposals should establish clear connections between identified needs and proposed activities, and reference those specific needs assessments and data sources (i.e. rapid needs assessments, SMART survey results, clinical data);

§ Proposals do not duplicate existing activities able to meet the current needs implemented by the same applicant or other organizations. IOM RRF will consult with the relevant coordination mechanisms to ensure activities fit within the sector strategy for

the particular emergency response;

§ Proposed activities assure the maximum coverage of regions and population, as well as different target beneficiaries (including vulnerable populations, such as older persons, female headed households);

§ Realistic exit or transition strategies are referenced describing the planned transition of activities, and any steps planned to continue the programme post RRF funding.

§ Cost-effectiveness;

§ Articulation of synergies with existing community resources.

The RRF prioritizes emergency activities lasting three months, with the potential for longer programming based on actual needs in the field.

Monitoring Sub-Grant Implementation

IOM has established internal mechanisms to quickly issue grant agreements, and initial tranches of funds to support partners' quick start-up of project implementation. Following the grant agreement signing, IOM's RRF staff will travel to the field location for supportive supervision, monitoring and initial project introduction meetings. Monitoring visits throughout project implementation allow for verification of reporting by sub-grantees, with the support of IOM field offices where possible. Sub-grantee's project activities are monitored against stated targets within the logframe, monitoring and evaluation plan, work plan and budgets specified in the sub-grantee's project proposal. IOM verifies data provided by the sub-grantees through several tools which vary by project, sector and indicator. These tools may include post-distribution assessments, focus group discussions, interviews, direct observation, and reviews of documentation and photos.

Reporting

IOM requires sub-grantees to provide: Weekly updates which identify challenges in implementation and actions taken to address the challenges; Interim reports within month 1 or 1.5 of the start of the programme; and a final report between 14 and 30 days after project completion. IOM RRF liaises with sub-grantees to ensure reports are submitted on time and meet the required criteria. IOM RRF supports IPs to meet Cluster or Sector reporting requirements relevant in the area.

Capacity building

As part of IOM's Grand Bargain commitments, the Organization works to increase the capacity of national organizations to respond to emergencies. Many national NGOs focus on development interventions and have limited experience or capacity to respond to emergencies. Through the RRF mechanism, IOM invests in strengthening national NGO's humanitarian sector-specific technical capacity as well as programme management, monitoring and evaluation and proposal writing skills. During field monitoring visits, IOM RRF staff support trainings, development of monitoring tools and provide technical advice to national NGO partners. Skills transferred through this methodology assure that displaced populations receive the highest quality services as well as build capacity of responders to use in future emergencies.

Support from other IOM Offices

Depending on the donor supporting the RRF project, other IOM Offices will assist in coordinating closely with the donor; these offices can include IOM Washington, DC for USAID/OFDA funding, IOM Tokyo if supported by the Government of Japan or IOM Brussels if funded through ECHO.

As the sub-granting process touches on many administrative aspects within the IOM processes additional offices will provide support, such as IOM's Manila Administrative Center (MAC) supports through legal agreement clearance and procurement clearance (SCD).

Links

- IOM Sudan RRF site

- IOM South Sudan RRF site
- IOM Ethiopia RRF site
- USAID Handbook

References and Tools

- IOM RRF One Pager (2023)
- RRF Activity Cycle (2018)
- IOM Ethiopia RRF Infosheet
- IOM South Sudan RRF Factsheet
- IOM Sudan RRF Factsheet

Other Entries in this Topic

- Selection of Implementing Partners
- Procurement and Supply in Emergencies

Contacts

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