FINANCIAL TRACKING SERVICE (FTS)
TRACKING GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AID FLOWS
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OCHA FIELD OFFICES AND THE FTS

What is the FTS?

The Financial Tracking Service is a global, on-line, real-time database of humanitarian funding needs and contributions. It serves to improve resource allocation decisions and advocacy, by clearly indicating to what extent populations in crisis receive humanitarian aid, and in what proportion to needs. The FTS offers a series of analytical tables that show humanitarian aid flows to specific crises, and also allows users to produce custom tables on demand. It covers all countries for which humanitarian funding is reported. FTS is managed by OCHA and located on www.reliefweb.int/fts.

How can the FTS help OCHA field offices?

- **Advocacy & fundraising:** Financial tracking provides raw material for advocacy, by identifying crises with the greatest resource needs, highlighting under-funded crises and sectors, monitoring changes in humanitarian resource needs in evolving situations, and tracking the timeliness of donor response to urgent needs. Financial tracking also gives credit where it is due.

- **Coordination:** FTS offers information at a glance on which implementing organizations and donors are working in which crises and sectors, and to what scale. Such organisations and donors can therefore *pool information via the FTS.*

- **Publicising project proposals, including OCHA's own**: The FTS shows not only contributions, but also proposed projects (in Consolidated Appeals or CAs) with their budgets and unfunded balances. Field offices can therefore use the FTS to publicise humanitarian projects and draw attention to funding needs, including their own.

- **Donor visibility:** The FTS publicises donor contributions to various crises, which donors appreciate.

How can OCHA field offices help the FTS?

- **Stimulate reporting!** FTS is not telepathic: it is a recording service that can only post what is reported to it. Regular reporting mechanisms exist, but they are imperfect (especially with UNDP and NGOs). If FTS shows a certain project or agency as un-funded, but you doubt that, pick up the telephone and call the agency to ask if that project truly is un-funded.[1] If not, have them get the info to FTS through their HQ (or directly from the field in the case of UNDP and NGOs) – see below for easy ways to report. *Seriously incomplete data undermine the FTS' reliability and its usefulness for advocacy and coordination. Conversely, full information makes a powerful advocacy tool and helps all stakeholders see the full extent of humanitarian activities and resources in each country.*

- **Inform FTS of errors or omissions:** e-mail fts@reliefweb.int.

- **Make suggestions for improving FTS.** FTS is currently undertaking a series of improvements to make data more complete and accessible to users. All stakeholders should feel free to suggest improvements. E-mail: fts@reliefweb.int.

How can OCHA field offices access FTS?

Online at www.reliefweb.int/fts. File sizes are small, so downloads are fast even with slow connections. If you cannot download, ask your HQ to download and e-mail or fax it to you. We hope the choices on the home page are self-explanatory. If not, start by clicking the "user guide" link.

What to look for on FTS

➢ For countries with a CAP, click "Focus on…CAP" on the FTS home page, then click the country you

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[1] A frequent response, especially from NGOs, is that "yes, that project was funded, but not through the CAP." Your response is, there is no such thing as "funding through the CAP." It is not a funding pool or channel; it is a tool for strategic planning and coordination, and a platform on which to state humanitarian needs. Information on any funding for any project registered in the CA can and should be shared with FTS.

cover. From that page, check Table I (requirements and contributions by appealing agency), Table II (listing of each contribution, grouped by donor), Table III (funding status of each project in the CA), and Table IV (funding to humanitarian projects not registered in the CA). Note which sectors and which projects are most under-funded (and any that are well funded). Investigate what has been the impact of lack of funding (and therefore of implementation), and **use that evidence to advocate for more or better-distributed funding.** Look at humanitarian aid outside the CA, and how it inter-relates (if at all) with projects in the CA.

➤ For countries without a CAP, do a simple search from the home page, selecting your destination country (and/or donor) of interest. For additional information and more filtering options, go to the advanced search ("Make financial tables using my own criteria") and read the instructions.

➤ Also, ensure that the information on the FTS is correct. **If you note any omissions or errors, please ask the relevant agency field office to follow up with their headquarters,** and also inform fts@reliefweb.int. Note that FTS posts contribution information from agency headquarters, not agency field offices (with the exceptions of UNDP and NGOs, both of whose field offices can report directly to FTS). However the field offices are often better at spotting errors and omissions, so their attention is needed.

How can agencies share project funding information to FTS?

Reporting methods aren't too formal. NGO field offices or UN agency HQs can inform FTS of contributions by e-mail (to fts@reliefweb.int), fax, letter, via our on-line form (www.reliefweb.int/fts, then click the "contribution" link at left), or whatever verifiable method they find most convenient. For example, they can simply forward to FTS a copy of the funding contract. (In some countries where OCHA has an information officer or NGO liaison officer, s/he may facilitate sharing project finance information.) We aim to not cause field staff any significant extra work. If a reporting agency does not use our on-line form, we only ask that they specify at least the following:

1. amount in original currency (e.g. euros, USD), or if in-kind, the amount, description, and value of goods.
2. donor country and organisation (e.g. US / OFDA, EC / ECHO).
3. date of contribution.
4. whether the contribution is a pledge, commitment, or disbursement (see definitions on FTS home page).
5. relevant CAP project code (if the project was registered in a CA) or project description.

We are equally interested in information on funds that come from private fundraising and unearmarked funds from official donors that are used for humanitarian action. NGOs and agencies should report such allocations or expenditures as well. (Some are reluctant to publicise the fact that they are already covering a part of a project's appealed needs, but in our experience donors are encouraged by seeing that an agency values a project enough to spend its own unearmarked funds on it.)

FAQ: Doesn't FTS cover only CA contributions, or only countries with CAPs?

No—and we have changed our on-line presentation to make it look less that way. FTS' database contains all humanitarian contributions reported by appealing agencies and donors, whether to projects registered or not registered in CAs, and for countries where there is no CAP. In 2004, FTS posted humanitarian contributions for 100 countries, from 400 donor governments and organisations, to 500 implementing organisations.

Why should NGOs bother to register project proposals in CAs?

The CAP increases donors' confidence that appealing agencies' projects are linked to the humanitarian community's collective strategy and goals in a given crisis. NGOs and UN agencies alike should perhaps think less in terms of "seeking funding for their proposals through the CAP" (though we would all be pleased if donors decide to fund projects on the basis of their summaries in CA documents, as they sometimes do), and more in terms of *registering* their proposals—which they will still pursue through their usual funding channels—in the CA as a way of publicising them and certifying the proposals' coherence with the common humanitarian action plan, and dovetailing with other proposed activities. Such inclusive listing of planned projects also helps to publicise the full scale of humanitarian action and resource needs in a given crisis.

How does FTS define humanitarian aid for statistical purposes?

For activities outside CAs, FTS has let donors and implementing agencies self-define humanitarian activities and contributions. To achieve more consistency, FTS and a working group of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative have developed a fairly broad definition to apply in case of doubt. The definition is posted on the FTS website.