FINANCIAL TRACKING SERVICE (FTS)
TRACKING GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AID FLOWS
ReliefWeb

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DONOR 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 donor field offices?

- **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.*

- **Advocacy:** Financial tracking provides raw material for advocacy, by identifying crises with the greatest resource needs, and highlighting under-funded crises and sectors.

- **Cataloguing project proposals**: The FTS shows not only contributions, but also proposed projects (in Consolidated Appeals or CAs) with their budgets and unfunded balances. Donor field offices can therefore use the FTS as a continually updated catalogue of humanitarian projects and funding needs.

- **Visibility:** The FTS publicises donor contributions and the actions of their partners in various crises.

How can donor field offices help the FTS?

- **Check the figures and report errors or omissions to FTS.** 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). Donor field staff are often in the best position to spot errors or omissions, so your attention is needed—see below for easy ways to report. *Seriously incomplete data undermine the FTS' reliability and its usefulness for coordination and visibility. Conversely, full information makes a powerful coordination tool and helps all stakeholders see the full extent of humanitarian activities and resources in each country.* To inform FTS of errors or omissions, e-mail fts@reliefweb.int.

- **Encourage your headquarters, partner organisations and fellow field offices** to use FTS and to double-check its figures.

- **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 donor 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 "help" 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 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 assess its inter-relation 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.

How do donors report contributions to FTS?

Regular reporting mechanisms exist between most donor HQs and FTS, so if a donor field office spots a contribution currently missing from FTS, the first step is to have your HQ report it. If the field office exceptionally wants to report a contribution directly, reporting methods aren't too formal. Field offices 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 "report a 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 or letter of commitment. We aim to not cause field staff any significant extra work. If a donor uses something other than 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.

FTS also seeks information on agencies' use of private or unearmarked funds for humanitarian projects. If you are aware of any such allocations or expenditure that do not appear on FTS, please contact the agency and ask them to report it to FTS.

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 (Consolidated Appeal Process). FTS is a global humanitarian financial tracking service: in 2004, it posted 6000 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 occasionally happens), 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 registration 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.