

WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies

A critical investment in global health security



© WHO

Enabling a swift response

“Norway believes that flexible and predictable financing is at the heart of effective humanitarian action. We invest in the CFE because, in health emergencies, every hour counts. The CFE strengthens WHO’s first response capacity – this saves time, resources and lives.”

*Ms Anniken Huitfeldt,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Norway*

Public health emergencies are increasing and can escalate rapidly within and beyond borders. The ability to respond quickly can make the difference between mitigating impact and minimizing loss of life or seeing health emergencies spiral out of control, inflicting a heavy humanitarian toll on people’s lives and well-being. WHO’s Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) was created to save time, resources and lives by enabling WHO to respond rapidly to disease outbreaks and health emergencies, often in 24 hours or less.

The CFE’s speed and flexibility set it apart from other funding sources used in response to health emergencies. WHO country teams can quickly access this internal financing

mechanism to support relevant government ministries and other partners in affected countries to undertake rapid assessments, mobilize response teams, support the deployment of emergency supplies and coordinate and engage in the immediate response. The CFE has helped transform WHO into a first responder in health crises, enabling it to fulfil its vision to protect people in emergencies and keep the world safe.

The CFE relies entirely on the generous support of WHO Member State governments and other contributors who recognize WHO’s critical role in crisis response and understand that, in an emergency, every hour counts.

US\$ 227 million
in allocations (2015–2021)

53 countries and territories across all WHO regions

2 global responses, including COVID-19

130
emergencies

- **77** disease outbreaks
- **27** complex humanitarian crises
- **26** natural and other disasters



© WHO / Christopher Clark

“When Guinea faced a new Ebola outbreak this year, the CFE enabled the rapid and robust response necessary to end it in just four months. This wouldn’t have been possible without the donors who contribute to this critical resource, and we appeal for your continued support so we can face down these high-risk health threats, keeping Africa and the world safe.”


*Dr Matshidiso Moeti,
WHO Regional Director
for Africa*

IN FOCUS: Ebola outbreak in Guinea

The immediate availability of CFE funds at the onset of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea in February 2021 allowed WHO to support national health authorities to contain the outbreak through rapid redeployment of experts and resources.

WHO helped ship around 24 000 Ebola vaccine doses and supported the vaccination of nearly 11 000 people at high risk, including over 2800 frontline workers. More than 100 WHO experts were on the ground coordinating key aspects of the response, such as infection prevention and control, disease surveillance, testing, vaccination and treatment using new drugs. Collaboration with communities was also enhanced to raise awareness about the virus and ensure their involvement and ownership of the efforts to curb the disease.

WHO continues to support Guinea in its efforts to remain vigilant, maintain surveillance and build capacity to respond quickly to a possible resurgence of the virus. An Ebola laboratory, treatment infrastructure, logistics capacity and infection prevention measures have been reinforced to better respond to the disease as well as other health emergencies.



WHO on-call 24/7 for emergency response

WHO tracks hundreds of public health threats every year, any one of which can become a national, regional or global emergency. At the beginning of 2022, WHO was responding to no less than 74 graded emergencies, including major protracted crises. With the CFE and other resources, WHO country teams around the world are ready to support affected governments to respond to disease outbreaks and other health emergencies.

Frequently asked questions

How does the CFE work?

The CFE was established in 2015 by a resolution of the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of WHO. It was created as an internal financing mechanism to provide WHO with immediate resources to respond to emergencies.

The CFE operates within the WHO Emergency Response Framework, which guides the Organization's response to health emergencies. When an event such as an outbreak is confirmed and presents a serious threat, the CFE can allocate US\$ 50 000 immediately to finance a risk assessment. If an event requires a higher level of operational response, the event undergoes grading, an internal activation procedure that triggers WHO emergency procedures and activities for the management of the response. For graded events, whether new or an escalation of an existing emergency, there is no limit to the amount that can be requested from the CFE. Up to US\$ 500 000 can be fast-tracked in as little as 24 hours, with higher amounts requiring approval of the Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

For graded events, WHO's Incident Management System (IMS) and emergency standard operating procedures are activated. The IMS guides WHO's operational response,

How does WHO ensure accountability?

All funding that goes into the CFE is administered in accordance with WHO's financial rules and regulations. CFE income and expenditures are included in WHO financial reports and submitted to the World Health Assembly annually, where they are subject to internal and external auditing procedures. Standard operating procedures are in place to guide requests for and management of CFE funding. Oversight is further ensured through



identifying critical roles and responsibilities, including financial management. This ensures that resources, including from the CFE, are used as efficiently and effectively as possible with the highest levels of financial monitoring and accountability from all three levels of the Organization.

CFE funds are typically used within the first three months of a response (whether new or in response to an escalation of an ongoing crisis) and may be extended if needs persist. Allocations from the CFE should be reimbursed to the extent possible. All unspent funds are returned to the CFE.

WHO's corporate grant management system, which allows for precise tracking of CFE fund utilization and supports financial reporting. An annual report is issued highlighting the use and impact of the CFE throughout the preceding year. The [CFE website](#) contains up-to-date information on contributions, allocations and links to news stories on emergencies that have received support from the CFE.

How is the CFE different from other financing mechanisms?

The CFE is an internal facility that enables WHO's initial response to emergencies by providing immediate access to resources before other funding mechanisms can be triggered. The CFE's capacity to release funds within 24 hours or less for an event – and its availability to be used for most disease outbreaks or health emergencies – sets it apart from other financing mechanisms. When an event initially financed by the CFE requires broader and sustained support, WHO relies on bilateral contributions from donors and mechanisms designed to scale up the response, such as the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

“We believe a strong WHO means a safer world. This is why Germany contributes to the CFE. The CFE enables WHO to respond immediately to health threats, thus protecting the vulnerable in emergencies and supporting the fight for global health.”

*Susanne Fries-Gaier,
Director Humanitarian Assistance,
German Foreign Office*

*Ingo Behnel,
Director General for Central Services,
European and International Health Policy,
German Ministry of Health*



© WHO / Lindsay Mackenzie

How much funding has the CFE received to date?

Our generous contributors recognize that the CFE is a sound investment. Rapid response to disease outbreaks and other health emergencies saves lives, prevents unnecessary suffering and reduces economic impact. Since the CFE's inception in 2015 through

31 December 2021, the CFE has received more than US\$ 205 million from 24 Member States, including US\$ 46 million in 2021. More information, including a complete list of contributors, is available on the [CFE website](#).

Who can support the CFE?

The generosity of our contributors makes the CFE a fast and flexible financing instrument, and WHO welcomes contributions from governments, foundations and the private sector. Contributions to the CFE are pooled

and, crucially, are flexible rather than being earmarked for specific activities. This enables the CFE to fund the initial response to the broadest possible range of health emergencies rapidly and effectively.

For more information

Laila Christine Milad
Head of Unit, Health Emergencies
WHO External Relations and Governance
miladl@who.int

Jordan Ramacciato
External Relations Officer, Health Emergencies
WHO External Relations and Governance
ramacciatoj@who.int

Learn more about the CFE