Each year, Sida conducts a humanitarian allocation exercise in which a large part of its humanitarian budget is allocated to emergencies worldwide. The allocation and subsequent disbursement of funds takes place in the beginning of the year to ensure predictability for humanitarian organizations and to allow for best possible operational planning. In an effort to truly adhere to the humanitarian principles, Sida’s humanitarian assistance is grounded in the four humanitarian principles, and in particular impartiality, with its compelling urge to ensure that humanitarian action is carried out based on “needs alone”, giving priority to the “most urgent cases of distress”. Therefore, Sida’s allocation methodology is grounded in several objective indicators such as; the scale of humanitarian needs (number of people in need), the severity of humanitarian needs (including food insecurity/IPC levels), the number of people targeted for the humanitarian response, the financial coverage of the respective humanitarian appeal, national capacities to respond and underlying risks, as well as distinct indicators related to forgotten crises. Sida also strongly supports the humanitarian coordination structures. Besides this initial allocation, a part of the humanitarian budget is set aside as an emergency reserve for sudden onset emergencies and deteriorating humanitarian situations. This reserve allows Sida to quickly allocate funding to any humanitarian situation throughout the year, including additional funding to the Central African Republic.

For 2019, the Central African Republic (CAR) is allocated an initial eighty-one million Swedish kronor (81 MSEK). Close monitoring and analysis of the situation in CAR will continue throughout the year and will inform possible decisions on additional funding.

1. CRISIS OVERVIEW

The Central African Republic (CAR), is one of the world’s poorest countries, currently ranked number 188 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index list. It was for decades a forgotten and protracted humanitarian crisis characterized by political instability, chronic underdevelopment and localised emergency situations. Since a Coup d’Etat in 2013, the situation has worsened, and has been treated as a complex emergency with large humanitarian needs. Many atrocities and violations of human rights have been committed, resulting in massive movements of population including exodus towards Chad, DRC and Cameroon.

The underlying causes of the conflict are mainly related to public frustration caused by a failed democratisation process, failed demobilization, disarmament and reintegrations of combatants, and lacking security sector reform. In addition, there have been lacking development and economic opportunities, absence of a functioning state, as well as power struggles within the political elite. CAR is also rich in natural resources (such as oil, gold, diamonds, uranium, timber, pasture, water), and control over these resources is another source of conflict. A new transitional government was installed in 2014 with the support of international and regional powers, followed by peaceful elections in early 2016, thereby marking a return to constitutional order. However, there are many armed groups in CAR, mainly aligned with two factions – the ex-Seleka and Anti-Balaka, and each group has its grievances and claims. Civilians continue to suffer the consequences, including attacks on IDP camps. State presence outside of Bangui remains extremely limited, leading to a situation where “victor’s justice” is the norm, which has created an environment of widespread impunity. In addition, access to basic social services is scarce or non-existent, in part due to widespread destruction of social infrastructure since 2013.

The crisis in CAR remains mainly a crisis of protection. From January to August 2018, 7 270 protection incidents concerning the civilian population have been reported. Furthermore, humanitarian actors are increasingly becoming targeted, with the number incidents increasing from 232 in 2017 to 340 in 2018 (January-October 2018). Several organisations withdrew temporarily from attacked localities, depriving vulnerable populations of the humanitarian assistance they greatly needed.

There has recently been some progress in the political situation, including the signing of the 8th peace agreement between the government and armed groups in the country since 2013 – the first stemming from direct negotiations. The social infrastructure has also seen modest improvements through development assistance. Nevertheless, the security situation is still dire, and it is expected that insecurity, violence, attacks on civilians and human rights abuses will continue in 2019. Humanitarian assistance will support these victims while providing basic social services such as health and education in many parts of the country. Interventions will also target returns and reconciliation as well as trauma recovery.
1.1. Geographical areas and affected population

The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was developed in close coordination with the new National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPCA) in an effort to plan in parallel for recovery/development and humanitarian interventions. The HRP covers the period 2017-2019 although funding needs were only articulated for 2017. Complementary HRPs were produced for 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for 2019 estimates that the whole population of 4.6 million people is affected by the current crisis and that over half of the population, 2.9 million people (an increase from 2.5 in 2018), require humanitarian assistance in 2019. Of these people, 1.7 million need acute and immediate assistance, which is an increase by 16 % from last year. The people experiencing the most critical needs include IDPs (643 000 persons), returnees or repatriated people (252 000 persons), host communities (271,000 persons) and some non-displaced people (1.8 million persons). A major problem is that 25 % of the total CAR population is displaced (620 000 IDPs and over 569 199 refugees in neighbouring countries) with only 38 % of the IDPs living in formal settlements.

According to the inter-sectoral analysis in the HNO for 2019, a total of 17 sous-préfectures (districts) have serious needs. These are in the préfectures (provinces) of Basse Kotto, Haute Kotto, Haut Mbomou, Mbomou, Nana Gribizi, Ouaka, Ouham et Ouham Pendé. There are also 22 sous-préfectures with less severe needs. The areas with most needs are mainly in the north and centre of the country.

The violent clashes and inter-communal tensions that intensified since 2017 resulted in an even more widespread disruption of agricultural and marketing activities and exacerbated massive population displacements that, in turn, severely impacted both food availability and access. According to the most recent IPC (October 2018), 1.9 million people (43 % of the population) are in a situation of acute food insecurity with close to 550 000 people in IPC phase 4. The most vulnerable populations are the IDPs and host communities in the areas affected by the conflict, including Alindao, Obo, Bri, Rafai/Bangassou, Kaga-Bandoro, Bambari, Batangafo and Paoua.

1.2. Critical assumptions, risks and threats

The main risks and threats to the population, as well as to humanitarian actors, are related to the continued lawlessness and impunity in the country, driven by stalemates in the peace and reconciliation process as well as recurrent outbursts of violence. The UN Security Council has approved a United Nations Peace Keeping Operation called MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic), which has been operational since 2014. Although the security situation in Bangui has improved, security can still not be guaranteed in the countryside or along the major transport roads, nor for humanitarian operations. With regards to the latter, the security situation deteriorated during 2018. According to the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) there have been over 340 incidents involving NGOs in CAR during 2018, putting the country at the top of the list with 30 % of all recorded incidents worldwide. These incidents, having targeted NGOs’ property and staff, led to instances of temporary interruption of humanitarian assistance. The HRP 2019 indicates that humanitarian access in CAR is restricted by several factors: insecurity due to activities of armed groups and criminals, lack of acceptance of humanitarian actors by significant segments of the population and communities, physical obstacles such as poor roads and damaged bridges, as well as administrative harassment and corruption.

The health system has been seriously affected by the events since 2013 and has basically collapsed. The HNO 2019 estimates that over 23% of the health facilities were partially or completely destroyed by 2016. It is also estimated that humanitarian actors provide more than 70% of the health services in the country. There is a real possibility that CAR will experience further outbreaks of epidemics, in part due to low and decreasing vaccination coverage, and the country is often hit by meningitis, monkey-pox, measles and rabies outbreaks.

A generic risk in all countries with humanitarian needs is the risk of corruption. With general challenges in all societal pillars including law, order, stability and justice – the area of checks and balances becomes fragile. The risk of corruption in CAR is estimated to be significant, as the country ranks number 156 of 180 on Transparency International’s Index for 2017.

1.3. Strategic objectives and priorities of the Humanitarian Response Plan

The HRP 2019 targets 1.7 million people of the 2.9 million in need. The total cost of the HRP in 2019 is USD 471 million, a decrease by 10% from last year as a result of tightened targeting and prioritization. The strategic objectives for the 2017-2019 HRP are to:

1. Save Lives: Populations affected by chocks have access to integrated emergency assistance in order to ensure their survival while preserving their security and dignity.
2. **Promote respect of fundamental rights:** The protection of populations affected and at risk of violation of human rights is reinforced.

3. **Preserve human dignity:** Populations affected and at risk have access to basic social services and their livelihood mechanisms are restored.

In 2019, the humanitarian response will focus on integrating protection, humanitarian principles and proximity of the response to people in need across these objectives, according to the HRP.

The preservation of humanitarian space and access by promoting respect for the *humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence* will be a major task during 2019. Moreover, UNOCHA will continue to host a Civil-Military Coordinator in order to facilitate coordination with security operations.

### 2. IN COUNTRY HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES

#### National and local capacities and constraints

The government's capacity in CAR has always been very weak and mostly concentrated in the capital. The disruptions that started in 2013 deliberately targeted government institutions such as schools, health posts, police offices, tribunals and other administrative buildings and have further undermined the government's capacity. Furthermore, payment of civil servants’ salaries has been irregular since 2013. Following the return to constitutional order and with the promised international support for the RCPCA Plan, there are better prospects for an improvement of government capacity in the medium term.

Civil society in CAR is characterized by fragmentation and most Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are political in nature, with limited capacity to assist in any principled humanitarian response. Although the number of national NGOs has doubled since 2014, only a few have the operational and technical capacity or funding to deliver humanitarian assistance at a larger scale. The CAR Humanitarian Fund (CHF) has provided funding for capacity development of national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) through collaboration with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

At the community level there are many challenges related to displacement, lack of basic social services, lack of access to markets and/or employment, violence and impunity, and negative coping mechanisms are common.

#### 2.1. International operational capacities and constraints

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) leads the humanitarian work in CAR with the support of OCHA and eleven clusters headed by United Nation (UN) agencies. Overall cluster coordination has improved since 2014 as a consequence of the increased number of partners, the acuteness of the displacement situation, and the influx of qualified emergency staff during the early phases of the Level 3 (L3) response. In 2014-15, Sida strengthened its presence in the country through a humanitarian surge staff who spent around 30% of his time in CAR. OCHA opened sub-offices in various towns to facilitate field level coordination and Sida has committed to support MSB during 2019 in constructing and rehabilitating 4 facilities for interagency use in Berberati, Bangassou, Bria, and Kaga-Bandoro. Moreover, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) manages the in-country Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) responsible for rapid needs assessments and initial response to sudden onset crises.

The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General of the European Commission (ECHO) and the USAID/OFDA have field offices in Bangui whilst other donors rely on field visits from their headquarters (HQs) or regional hubs to monitor and gather information on the situation, making donor coordination difficult.

All major UN humanitarian agencies and international humanitarian NGOs are present in CAR. According to the Periodic Monitoring Review by OCHA, the total number of organisations involved in the international humanitarian response in 2018 was 137 – 68 national NGOs, 54 international NGOs, 10 UN Agencies, 3 members of the International Movement of the Red Cross, one regional organisation and the government of CAR.

One major constraint for humanitarian responses in CAR in general is the difficulty to recruit French-speaking international staff to a non-family duty station. In addition, staff turn-over is very high. A number of international NGOs have also been said to consider leaving CAR due to lack of funding and the difficult security situation.
2.2. **International and regional assistance**

The major humanitarian donors to CAR in 2018 were the following: USA (35%), Germany (10%), ECHO (9%), United Kingdom, (6%), Canada (4.7%) and Sweden (4.6%). In 2018, 10 donors contributed to the Humanitarian Fund (CHF) in CAR 2018 (Sweden, Ireland, UK, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg and Jersey). The funding level for the CHF was USD 40 million in 2018, of which 13 million was carry-over from 2017. The new funding amounted to 27 MUSD – about the same as in 2017. Allocations from the HF was USD 28.5 million, which makes up 11% of the funding received for the HRP. Total humanitarian funding for CAR 2018 was USD 281 million of which USD 249 million was for the HRP implementation. This reflected a HRP financing rate of 48%. This low level showcases that CAR has continued to be in the category “forgotten crisis”.

2.3. **Access situation**

Insecurity, logistical challenges and administrative bottlenecks represent the main constraints to humanitarian access in the Central African Republic. The access situation has steadily deteriorated every year and requires the development and implementation of strategies to prevent or mitigate these constraints and to contribute to an improved humanitarian response. The HRP provides common strategic and operational guidelines for strengthening humanitarian access. Humanitarian actors, building on a number of existing initiatives and mechanisms, will focus on four mutually reinforcing areas of action; (i) engagement and acceptance through dialogue with parties to the conflict, as well as with the authorities (executive and legislature) and communities. Common messages and common rules of engagement should continue to be developed with localised action plans given the complexity and multiplicity of stakeholders at the local level. (ii) Adherence to humanitarian principles: if the respect of humanitarian principles by the stakeholders (authorities, parties to the conflict, etc.) must be developed. It is also important that the adherence of humanitarian actors to the fundamental principles guiding action are strengthened and consolidated, including through common messages, common rules of conduct or standards, and awareness-raising and training of humanitarian staff. (iii) Security: in particular reinforcing the degree of the security analysis in order to make it possible to better identify the different contexts, more flexibility in the evaluations, of road axes for example, to answer the volatility of the context. (iv) Logistics with a focus on two areas: the strengthening of air transport capacity (cargo plane, runway maintenance), as well as common storage and rapid deployment capacities in crisis areas, such as mobile antennas with telecommunications means, etc.

3. **SIDA’S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN**

3.1. **The role of Sida**

Sida’s role in 2019 will be to continue to contribute to strengthening the humanitarian response with a focus on quality, e.g. through improved coordination, improved management of the Humanitarian Fund and further mainstreaming of protection, gender and accountability to affected populations, as well as contribute to flexibility in order to enable the humanitarian response to be adaptive to the highly volatile context. The initial allocation for CAR in 2018 was 73 MSEK but due to low levels of funding for this crisis, CAR received further support from Sida during the mid-year allocation. Furthermore, Sida provided approximately 110 MSEK to CAR in 2018 and was the 5th largest bilateral humanitarian donor to the country. Moreover, 9 MSEK was provided through the Sida RRM mechanism.

There are very few humanitarian donors present in CAR. For this reason, it is imperative that Sida continuously follow developments in the country through regular humanitarian updates, exchange of information with other donors and with partners receiving support. Sida will also continue the engagement in the management of the CHF and will be a member of the Advisory Board during 2019.

Sida plans to make two visits to the country during 2019 for follow-up. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the responsibility to cover developments in CAR has been transferred to the embassy of Sweden in Kampala which has taken a keen interest in CAR with several visits during 2018. Sida coordinates and shares information with the embassy and if possible will plan for one joint visit in 2019.

3.2. **Response Priorities 2019**

It is Sida’s assessment that the situation in CAR will remain very fragile and insecure during 2019 with frequent outbreaks of violence and continued displacements of the population. The return of refugees from neighbouring countries is expected to remain limited but increasing. Furthermore, the HNO for 2019 estimates that the number of returning IDPs
will reach 252,000 people in 2019. There is a need for better field coverage and presence by humanitarian actors despite the dangerous and volatile environment. Protection will be central and there is a particular need for protection of displaced populations, children at risk, and to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV). In 2017-2018, over 6,000 SGBV cases were reported of which 92% concerned women and girls. Moreover, with regards to health and livelihoods, there is need for vaccination and improved access to basic social services and livelihood assistance, particularly in areas most affected by instability such as the population-dense central and north western parts of the country.

According to the Cash Working Group (CWG) in CAR, there has been an increase in the use of cash in humanitarian operations and several agencies and NGOs report that the share of cash is up to 30% of their budget. However, the latest report from the CWG also highlights many difficulties in using cash in a country such as CAR with small and inefficient markets, highly centralised but rudimentary banking system, poor cell phone coverage as well as serious security challenges.

Geographically, Sida’s support will focus on some of the worst affected areas around the north and northwest of CAR because of the extensive population movements during 2018 that are expected to continue in 2019. An increased focus will be put on the area of Alindao because of the high number of recently displaced people and the challenges with regards to access. Few humanitarian actors present, and Sida will support ACF and FAO projects that will cover health, nutrition, mental health and food security. Many of the projects implemented by NGOs are under multi-year funding since 2018 and are therefore not shown in the allocation table below. This refers to the following partners (contribution in parenthesis for 2019 only): NRC (9 MSEK), OXFAM (5 MSEK), PLAN (8 MSEK), and IRC (8 MSEK).

3.3. Partners

Action Contre la Faim (ACF): ACF was a new partner for Sida in CAR 2018 with an emergency response intervention focused on nutrition, health and mental health and care practices. The project will be expanded in 2019 and will contribute to reducing morbidity and mortality of the conflict-affected populations in the impacted region of Basse-Kotto prefecture, around the town of Alindao, through a proactive approach providing a comprehensive package of live-saving and prevention nutrition activities to 7,000 beneficiaries.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): ICRC is a very important partner in the area of protection in CAR. ICRC have access to many areas of the country and they have the capacity and qualifications to have an impact in this conflict-stricken country. ICRC also have the much-needed flexibility to respond to urgent situations as needs arise. The program for 2019 emphasises assistance in the form of support to livelihoods, health, and WASH.

UNICEF/RRM: The Rapid Response Mechanism is designed to monitor humanitarian action, conduct multisector assessments (MSA) and respond with NFI and WASH interventions when there is no capacity on site. Between January and October 2018, 61 assessment missions, 40 NFI distributions and 31 WASH interventions were carried out, reaching 340,000 beneficiaries. The RRM has been instrumental in providing immediate support to populations affected by the various outbursts of violence in the country. Sida will therefore, continue to earmark the 2019 funding to the UNICEF RRM in CAR. The RRM is expected to reach 250,000 acutely vulnerable people rapidly providing them with i.a. essential household items after a shock. It is also planned to use funding for reaching 150,000 affected people with appropriate WASH interventions after a shock.

CAR Humanitarian Fund (CHF): The Humanitarian Fund in CAR was established in 2008 and remains a key financing mechanism to address critical needs in a country where needs change quickly, and few donors have a permanent presence. It is important for Sweden to continue its role as a key donor to the CHF in order to strengthen humanitarian leadership and to address the urgent needs in CAR through a flexible mechanism. Sweden is a member of the Advisory Board together with UK and Switzerland and the Management of the fund has seen steady improvement since 2015. Basic governance documents following the Global Guidelines have been developed and revised during 2018. Regular information bulletins have been published quarterly, and increased use of video/phone conferences between the CHF managers and donors has facilitated follow-up on performance.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA): Support to OCHA remains very important both at national and sub-national level. OCHA is also responsible for the administration of the Humanitarian Fund which has increased its volume substantially and witnessed a marked improvement in management systems. Decentralised coordination has improved, and it is important to continue to supply donors, many without representation in CAR, with frequent analysis, communication and results reporting.

World Food Programme/UNHAS: There is still a serious lack of road access in CAR and considering the frequent attacks and high level of violence it is important to continue funding UNHAS to ensure access to remote areas. A few airstrips have been rehabilitated, thereby increasing the coverage of air operations, and new routes have been added.
FAO: The project aims to strengthen the resilience and stabilization capacities of recent returnees, IDPs and host families affected by recurrent crises in the Central African Republic, by contributing in a rapid and sustainable way to the revival of food production through the implementation of food crop production and market gardening activities, allowing for increased food production (food crops and gardening) in the selected priority areas, Batangafo and Alindao, and to those most severely impacted by food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4). Beneficiary selection will be made according to the criteria agreed at the Food Security Cluster. The provision of agricultural inputs, such as seeds and tools, is therefore crucial to enable vulnerable farmers to produce enough food during the next cropping season (April 2019) as well as to meet the most vulnerable households’ immediate food needs. The proposed intervention aims to support 13,000 vulnerable households in priority areas (IPC Phases 3 and 4) affected by conflict, including 10,000 households for food kits and 3,000 households for market gardening kits.

UNHCR: UNHCR has a regional response plan for the CAR crisis, which addresses the needs of refugees in neighbouring countries. Inside CAR, UNHCR’s focus remains on life-saving protection and assistance, including the distribution of basic relief items to the newly displaced. New community shelters are being set up in response to the growing number of IDPs. UNHCR is also involved in the voluntary repatriation of refugees from CAR.

### SIDA’s HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC in 2019 (81 MILLION SEK)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended partner for Sida support</th>
<th>Sector/focus of work (incl. cross sectoral/ multipurpose programming) and response modalities (e.g. in-kind, services, CVP or a mix)</th>
<th>Proposed amount (MSEK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Nutrition and Mental Health</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>Protection, Health</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF-RRM</td>
<td>Multi-Sector, WASH/NFI</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP/OCHA</td>
<td>CBPF</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP UNHAS</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA Coordination</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food security and livelihoods</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4. Strategic funding in protracted crises

Several partners requested funding for multi-year projects in 2018 and these will continue in 2019. These are Plan International (8 MSEK), Norwegian Refugee Council (9 MSEK), International Rescue Committee (8 MSEK) and OXFAM (5 MSEK). The activities were described in the 2018 HCA.

#### 3.5. Synergies with long-term development assistance

Sweden does not have any development cooperation with CAR. However, as previously mentioned, the HRP was developed in close coordination with the new National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPRA) in an effort to plan in parallel for recovery/development and humanitarian interventions. Unfortunately, the RCPRA has faced substantial delays in implementation and will probably not be a major factor for 2019. Moreover, the EU Trust Fund Békou continues to link humanitarian and development actions and to support the resilience of the population by focusing on three main areas: basic services, reconciliation, economic recovery and job creation.