INDUCTION

VERSION 02 | JUNE 2016

WELCOME TO THE START FUND

This brief outlines how your organisation can use and expand the Start Fund to build a more collaborative and innovative humanitarian system. It is just one of many introductions to help your organisation better understand how the Fund works, what to expect and how to actively participate.

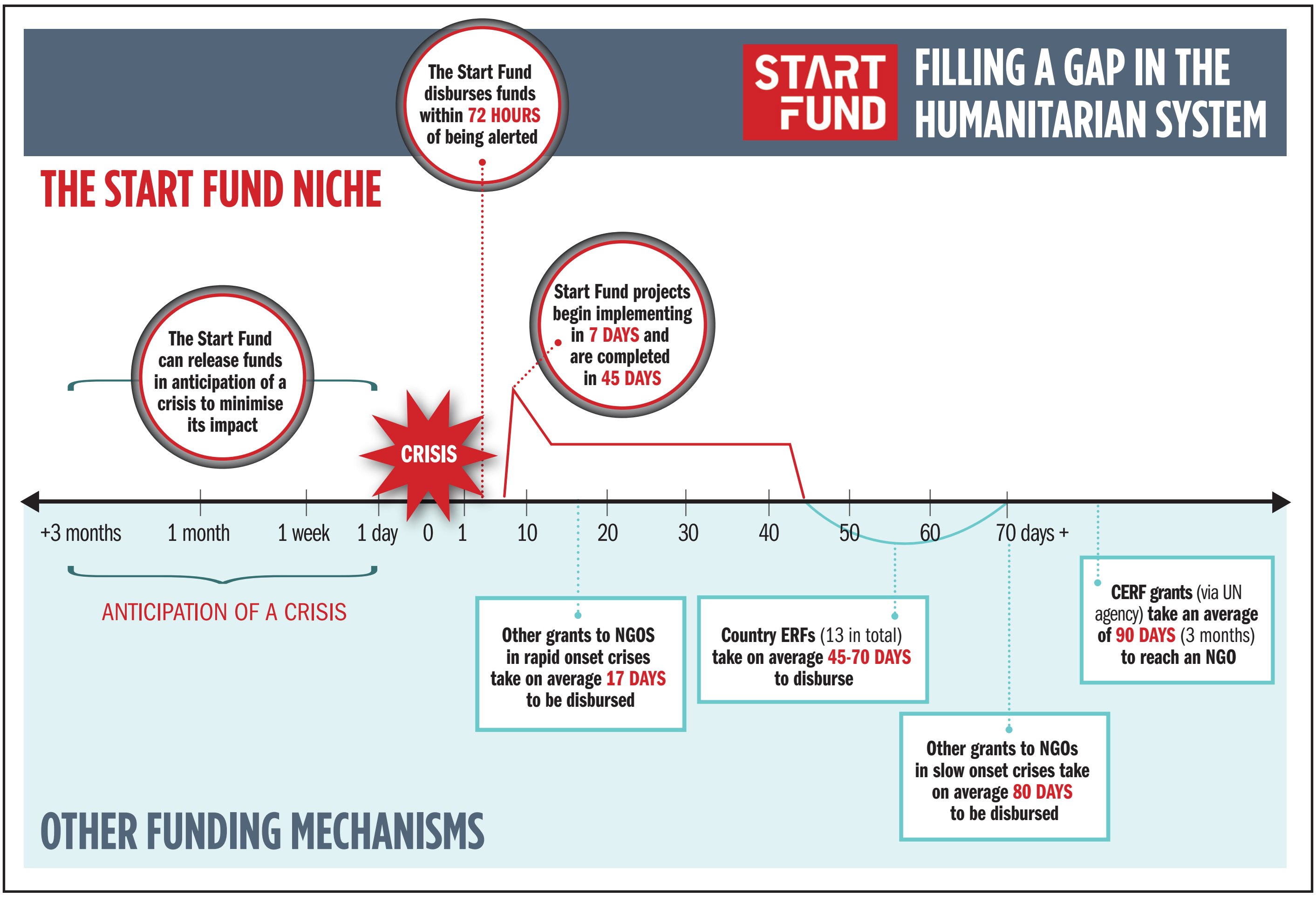
IN THIS BRIEF YOU WILL LEARN...

WHAT IS THE START FUND?

The Start Fund is a multi-donor pooled rapid response fund that disburses money in 72 hours. It is collectively owned and managed by the Start Network Members. It is designed to fill gaps in the humanitarian funding architecture in three main areas:

- **Underfunded small to medium scale crises;**
- **Forecasts of impending crises;**
- **Spikes in chronic humanitarian crises.**

The Fund has an annual disbursement of approximately £9 million (GBP). By June 2016, since its launch on 1st April 2014, the Start Fund has been alerted to 91 crises. The Membership collectively responded to 65 crises worldwide, reaching an estimated 3.5 million crisis affected people. For more information on the Start Fund's scope and reach, see **the Start Fund Report** published in 2016.



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE FUND

Membership to the Start Network automatically gives your organisation access to the Start Fund, enabling your organisation to respond to small to medium scale crises around the world. This will require investment to ensure that your organisation can identify and alert the Fund. The timeframe of the Start Fund is faster than other mechanisms, and therefore requires your staff to be knowledgeable and ready to contribute.

With the other 38 Members by 2016, your organisation is responsible for the stewardship of the Start Fund through:

1

Information sharing and strategic input to each and every alert raised to the Fund

2

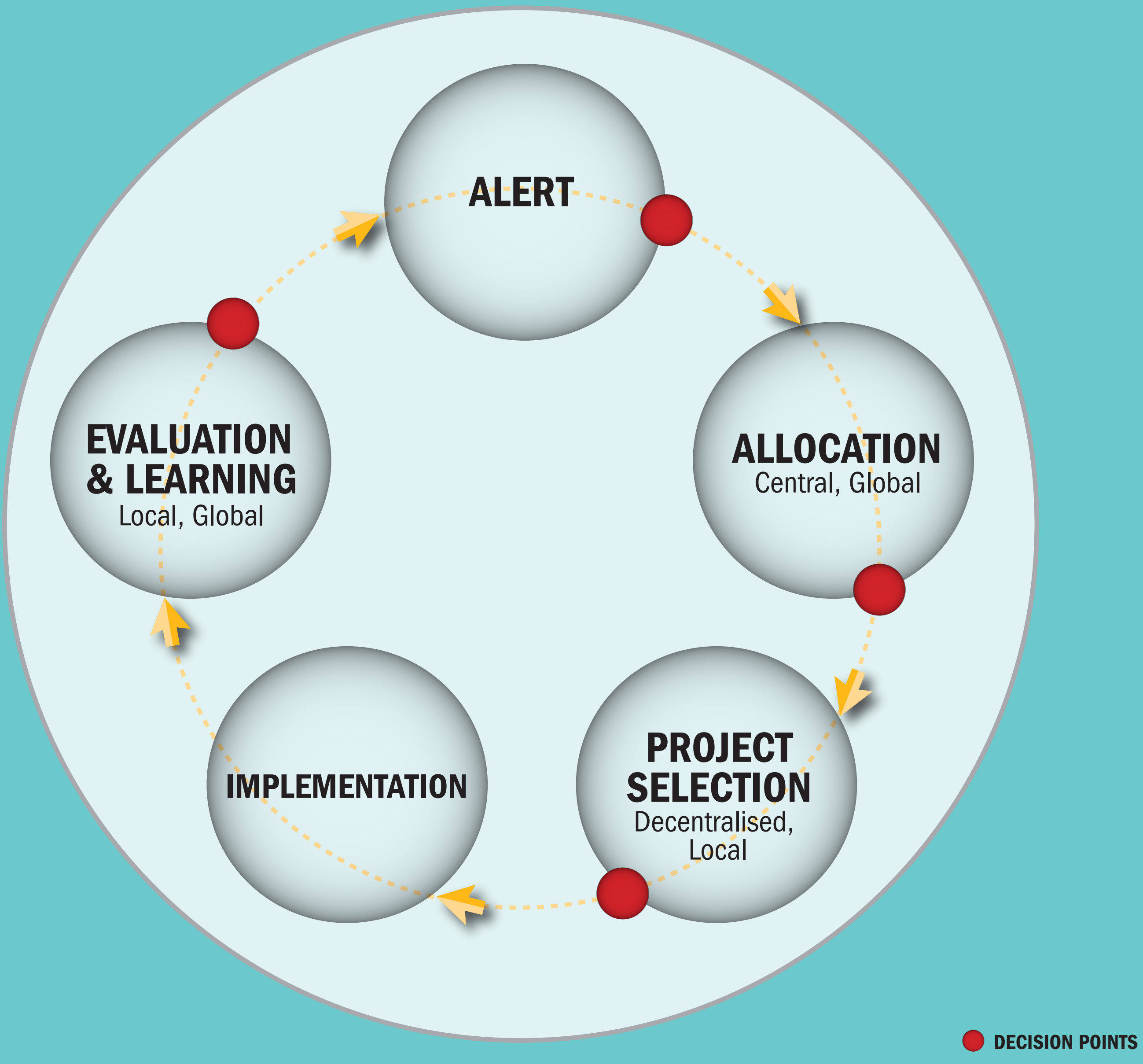
Participation in the Start Fund Committee.

The Committee manages the overall evolution and operation of the Fund – and each Committee representative either participates or delegates strategic decision-making in the allocation, project selection, and learning & evaluation stages of each alert to the Fund.

As such, your organisation will need to participate and contribute throughout the decision-making points of the Fund. Since September 2015, the Start Fund has introduced a **rota system** - where each agency has a main representative and up to two deputies to sit on the rotas which are responsible to make allocation decisions for each crisis. These rotas last 8 weeks in length and rotate through the year. More information will be sent directly to your agencies, and these representatives once they are nominated. Please see the latest **ToR** here for more information on the responsibilities of the Committee.

PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATING IN THE START FUND



The next few sections provide an overview of a Member's participation in the Fund – more in-depth briefings will be provided. For an overview of the Start Fund, please see this two page brief on **What is the Start Fund** or **The Start Fund Report** (long). An updated version of the 'Start Fund Handbook' (a full overview of the Fund) will be available in the final quarter of 2016.

HOW TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE

The Start Fund mechanism is built on "alerts" being raised to the Fund. This is simply when a Member or group of Members identify a crisis that they think is fit for Start Funds. From this point – an alert cycle begins – where information is shared and decisions are made on whether to release Funds, and if so, which projects to select. This all happens in 72 hours.

PRINCIPLES WHEN PARTICIPATING

- **The Start Fund was created so that NGOs could collectively make decisions on the basis of needs alone, and respond quickly to under the radar emergencies around the world.**
- **A defining principle held by all Members is that the collective long-term benefits should always outweigh short-term individual agency financial benefit.**
- **That means that Members participate in the Fund for the collective benefit of the humanitarian system - only those best able to respond do so. Members may not always access funding for a particular response. Yet there is trust within the Membership that by not competing and collaborating that everyone benefits from better responses – most importantly, those affected by crises.**
- **Part of this is ensuring that all decisions and actions are transparent. The Start Fund constantly learns and adapts – and needs the Membership to share its successes and failures to continually learn and improve.**

See Start Fund Principles **here**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN THE FUND FOR THE COLLECTIVE BENEFIT OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM - ONLY THOSE BEST ABLE TO RESPOND DO SO

ALERT TIMELINE

CRISIS ALERT

DAY 1

ANY MEMBER AGENCY CAN RAISE AN ALERT FOR A NEW CRISIS BY SUBMITTING AN ALERT NOTE

MEMBER AGENCY SURVEY

MEMBER AGENCIES FILL IN A SURVEY TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFO AND STATE WHETHER THEY SUPPORT OR OPPOSE A START FUND RESPONSE

ALLOCATION DECISION

AN ALLOCATION DECISION IS MADE ON WHETHER TO ACTIVATE THE FUND AND THE AMOUNT

24hrs

APPLICATION

DAY 2

AGENCIES ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT PROJECT PROPOSALS WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE DECISION

48hrs

PROJECT SELECTION

DAY 3

PROJECT PROPOSALS ARE CHOSEN USING PEER-REVIEW BY A LOCAL PROJECT SELECTION COMMITTEE WHERE POSSIBLE

FUNDS TRANSFERRED

SUCCESSFUL AGENCIES ARE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED AND FUNDS REACH THEM WITHIN 24 HOURS

72hrs

IMPLEMENTATION

PROJECTS BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN 7 DAYS AND FINISH IN 45 DAYS.

45 days

REPORTING

AGENCIES REPORT 15 DAYS AFTER THE PROJECT ENDS

60 days

LEARNING

ALL PROJECTS ARE PEER-REVIEWED TO IDENTIFY ACTIONABLE LEARNING. EACH PROJECT CAN ALSO ACCESS AN ADDITIONAL 1% OF THE PROJECT BUDGET TO CONDUCT LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

90 days

SHARING INFORMATION

PRE-ALERT INFORMATION SHARING

We are testing platforms for agencies to share information prior to alerting the Fund for a crisis. This is primarily used as information sharing in the early stages of a crisis, when agencies are unsure whether the crisis is fit for the Start Fund.

This currently takes place on **Skype** in two ways :

- A global skype group where crises are raised.
- If a number of agencies would like to discuss more in-depth an individual alert, the Start Fund Officer's start another separate group for people to join.

There is no timeframe for this stage, however, please keep in mind the timeliness of an alert to respond to a crisis – the Fund is a rapid response mechanism. Sharing information also happens at point of the survey, and it is not necessary to always put information on the platform before alerting the Fund.

The Start Fund can be alerted before a crisis hits (see page 13). The decision on whether to allocate funds will be influenced by the reliability of the forecasting information underpinning the risk analysis. Therefore, we encourage you to share information with the Network through the Skype group in order to triangulate and verify the information.

In the past, alerts have come in later than they could have been raised to have an early impact on a crisis. This is often because in-country staff do not have knowledge of the Start Fund to raise an alert earlier, or Members are hesitating due to imperfect information. We encourage you to reach out to your in-country staff to brief them on the Start Fund, preferably before or in the early stages of a crisis occurring. The information needed to raise an alert is just enough information to understand the value added of the Start Fund – what are the gaps and how are others responding.

Please let the Start Team know if you are considering raising an alert, as we can help guide in the timing of an alert: startfund@startnetwork.org

RAISING AN ALERT

ALERTING THE FUND

In the event of a crisis, any Start Network Member can alert the Start Fund and trigger an allocation decision. This is done by filling out an alert template, which is then sent to the Start Team (**startfund@startnetwork.org**). The main purpose of the alert note is to provide an overview of a crisis and the value added that the Start Fund might have by allocating funds. Using its experience over the last two years, the Start Fund Committee has developed a guiding list of considerations that aims to help those writing alert notes, as well as those making decisions, to establish if the information provided explains how the crisis is appropriate for a Start Fund response.

Members should be proactive in discussing and raising an alert to the Start Team quickly when they hear of disasters which the Start Fund is best suited.

The Fund is open 7 days a week. However, please note the time of the week when an alert is raised. To keep to the 72 hour deadline, if the Fund is alerted after Wednesday, this means that field teams will need to work on the weekends to either write proposals or participate in project selection. Please be timely with alerts so that, when possible, this can be avoided.

Someone from the Start Team is available at all times (Monday to Sunday) to answer questions on alerts and can help in the crafting or reviewing of alert notes. Members are encouraged to inform the Start Team when they are considering an alert to discuss details and timeframe of the alert.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- **Alert note template**
- **Example alert note templates**
- **Start Fund - Considerations for decision-making** (To be added shortly)

THE FUND IS OPEN
7 DAYS A WEEK

PARTICIPATING IN ALERT DECISION MAKING

PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY

After an alert is raised, all Network Members participate in a survey to feed information into the allocation decision for a crisis. This is an opportunity for all Members to i) add any relevant information an organisation has on a crisis ii) share their operational capacity for this crisis and iii) contribute to the strategic decision-making of the Fund (i.e. should the Fund be activated, for how much, and who should make the decision - Start Fund Committee Rota or Start Team?). Even if your agency is not present in a country, it is critical for each agency to participate in the survey to give a strategic steer to the decision makers.

The survey is also where agencies should nominate volunteers for taking part in the project selection process.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- **Survey questions**
  (Note responses can only be submitted online)
- **Example survey results**

PARTICIPATING IN ALERT DECISION MAKING

PARTICIPATING IN ALLOCATION DECISIONS

Allocation decisions determine whether a crisis fits the niche of the Start Fund and, if applicable, how much should be allocated. This is based on several information sources: the alert note, the survey responses, and third party briefing notes on the crisis and financing.

Allocation decisions will be made by at least five Start Fund Committee representatives. The Committee is divided into four rotas (increasing to 5 in August 2016) and each one is on duty for eight weeks at a time. Each Member needs to make their lead representative or their deputy(ies) available to participate in their designated rota.

These representatives participate in an individual capacity, and do not represent the views of their organisation, but provide input as a humanitarian expert. Decision making can also be delegated to the Start Team for decisions that are considered "uncomplicated" and lower risk, and therefore a lighter process can be used. There is not yet a defined criteria when this lighter process is used.

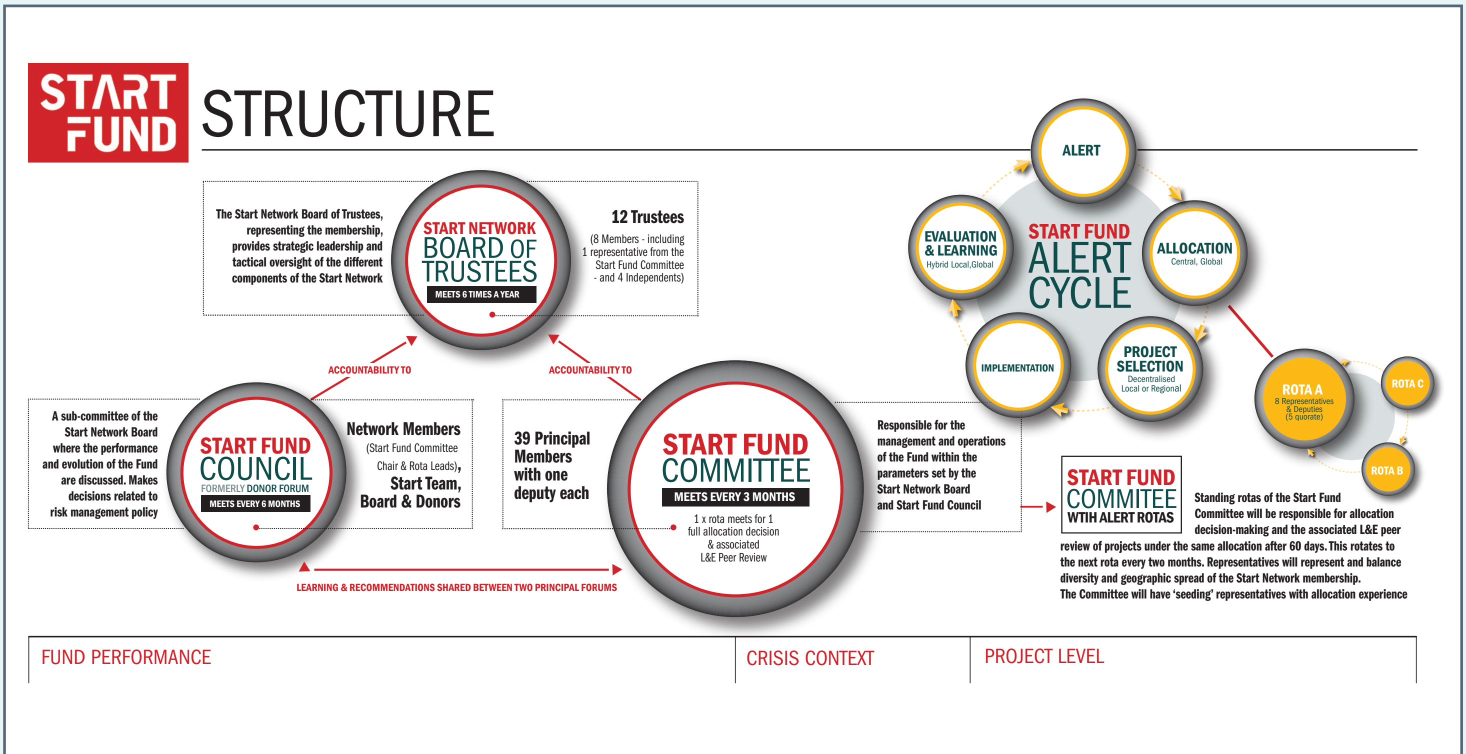
There is no set criteria for which crises are activated, and which are not. Each decision relies on the skills, experience and judgment of the peer decision makers to come to consensus on each alert.

This at times can mean there will be ambiguity and that outcomes of decisions across a series of alerts can seem uneven. While the Committee strives to use a consistent set of considerations during each decision, the circumstances of every crisis are different which may change the outcome for one alert over another. Through quarterly strategy meetings, Committee reps seek to build experience, learn from each decision and set strategic steer for the Fund in the coming quarter. The Committee's aim is maintain performance excellence of the Fund through continual improvement.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- **Past allocation decision documents** (including minutes, ACAPS briefings, and Development Initiatives)
- **ToR for Start Fund Committee**

START FUND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



WRITING PROPOSALS AND REPORTING

If the Fund is activated, all Members are able to apply to respond to the crisis with projects of 45 days. A short application is completed in 24 hours after an allocation decision – which are then selected by a local project selection committee.

If selected, projects begin implementation in 7 days. Reporting is required after 15 days.

We are currently testing lighter proposal and reporting formats over the next 6 months. The links in the box beside will update as these change. Please do provide any feedback you may have so these work for project leads, proposal writers and decision makers

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- Proposal template
- Proposal examples
- Project report template
- Project report examples

IF SELECTED, PROJECTS BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION IN 7 DAYS

PROJECT SELECTION

PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL PROJECT SELECTION

If an alert is activated, the selection of projects is delegated by the Start Fund Committee to Network Member staff who are closest to the location of the crisis, whenever this is possible.

After an allocation decision is made, a local project selection meeting is held in the country or region where a crisis has taken place. Whether submitting a proposal to the Start Fund or not, all Members can nominate volunteers to participate in project selection decisions locally.

Project selection nominees should work in the country or region, be at a senior level, equivalent to a Country Director or head of humanitarian team, and be able to review proposals and participate in project selection meetings within a 24 hour period. Nominees participate in an individual capacity, and do not represent the views of their organisation. Each organisation is required to brief these volunteers before the meeting.

STANDING DECISION MAKING GROUPS

In an effort to further embed decision making within the affected country, the Start Network is establishing standing decision-making groups in crisis-prone countries and regions. Groups are formed by senior-level Member representatives and their partners within the country. They are trained in project selection and can be quickly mobilised to select projects if an alert is raised in that country (or region). The aim is to create a system that enables fast, consistent and robust decision making by the appropriate people.

The first decision-making group swill be set up in 2016 in Nigeria, Kenya/Somalia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Senegal, DRC, Cameroon, Bolivia, Malawi, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.

Each agency will be asked to nominate colleagues to these groups, once an HQ induction has taken place.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- Project selection guidance note
- Project selection meeting documents
- What are standing decision making groups
- ToR for standing decision making group representatives

NOMINEES PARTICIPATE IN AN INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY, AND DO NOT REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THEIR ORGANISATION

LEARNING AND EVALUATION

The Start Fund constantly innovates and learns in order to meet the mandate of the Network. It does this through embedding learning processes in its cycle and finding new and creative ways to evolve and influence the humanitarian system. Our learning is systematic, continuous, decentralised and shared.1% of its annual budget specifically for member agencies to carry out learning activities either during or after implementing their projects.

All projects can apply and have a great deal of flexibility in how these funds are spent, whether it's to, for example, pilot a new technology or methodology that improves MEAL, strengthen accountability to crisis affected people, or run a joint inter-agency learning workshop, among many other possibilities.

The Start Fund also convenes learning discussions for every response that enables members to share lessons and recommendations on particular themes that cut across countries, contexts and agencies. In 2016, the Start Fund is revising its 'Learning Framework' to better meet the needs of its 39 members. New tools and approaches are now being tested ahead of the launch of a new learning framework in September 2016.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- Past learning and evaluation peer review minutes
- Questions for Accessing the Additional 1% Learning Budget
- Additional 1% Learning Budget Case Studies

Learning is critical to the Start Fund – the Fund is constantly seeking to be better

ANTICIPATORY ALERTS AND RESPONSE

The Start Fund can be alerted before a crisis hits. Agencies can use forecasts of an impending crisis to alert the Fund, and begin advanced preparedness activities before the crisis hits.

There will always be an element of uncertainty when acting on the basis of a forecast. To mitigate this, agencies can draw down £10,000 from the Start Fund in order to organise collaborative risk analysis to prepare an anticipation alert. If a forecasted event does not happen, there will be no requirement to pay funds used back.

The process for alerting the Fund is slightly amended. The same decision-making structure applies; however, there are different alert, proposal and reporting formats. The alert to project selection timeframe can either be shortened or lengthened depending on the lead-time ahead of a crisis. Take, for example, when raising an anticipation alert for an impending cyclone – an agency may decide that an allocation decision needs to happen within 6 hours, proposals submitted in 24 hours, and project selection in 12 – reducing the alert to selection timeline by nearly 24 hours. Likewise, the alert timeline can be lengthened for slow onset crises to allow more time for triangulation of forecasts (alert to survey) or to encourage innovation and coordination (allocation decision to proposal submission). The implementation of the intervention will still be 45 days.

FOREWARN

Start members are encouraged to contribute information and analysis to the Network as a whole to encourage collaboration and proactive management of humanitarian risk. At a global level, this is channelled through the Forewarn group, which meets on the first Thursday of the month to analyse risk and provide a technical advisory function for anticipation in the Start Network.

RESOURCES

- Anticipation guidance document
- Anticipation alert note template
- Anticipation proposal / report template
- Forewarn Group Terms of Reference

We are in the pilot phase for anticipation and expect to make significant changes to the resources above in the coming months. These links will be maintained with updated versions. If you have comments / suggestions for improvements, please contact Start Fund

ALERT THE FUND BEFORE CRISES HIT

HELP US GET BETTER

◆ ACT EARLIER

A proportion of the pot is available for Member agencies to innovate and generate learning on 'what works' to mitigate impact in anticipation of crises. For example, funds have been used to prioritise community preparedness activities in response to predicted flooding in Sri Lanka; coordinate messaging before a heatwave in Pakistan; and to carry out joint market and capacity assessments ahead of a planned cash programme in drought-hit Zambia.

◆ ALERT EARLY

Although we are fast once the Fund has been alerted, this does not always mean we are as fast to alert after a crisis occurs. The Start Fund Committee has encouraged Member agencies to be bolder, and to alert the Fund as early as possible after a crisis when there is enough information to make a decision. The Start Fund is flexible mechanism, so projects can adapt to respond to rapidly changing needs.

◆ GET MORE COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

Inherently, the Start Fund as a fast and flexible mechanism allows for it be responsive to the needs of crisis affected people. The Start Fund will be looking at ways to increase community influence in decision making. This may include designing a process by which agencies can access a second tranche of funding after implementation, if they are able to prove that communities influenced the decision to request further funding.

◆ ALERT THE FUND FOR SMALLER SCALE CRISES

The Start Fund was set up to reach small to medium crises that are under the radar of the international system. At this time, the Start Fund average activation is around £250,000 – with an alert being raised on average once every 12 days. Ideally, the Start Fund would be alerted more frequently – several times a week – for smaller crises (around £50,000) where the Network can evidence how a Start Fund allocation can influence the course of a crisis. We need our Members to better able to identify and alert for crises – and ensure processes are light to allow for more crises to be easily move through the alert cycle.

◆ LEARN AND GATHER EVIDENCE

The Start Fund is only as good as the evidence it produces. Gathering evidence of the Fund's impact at both the project and response level are critical to the Start Fund. Members can help by working together at the response level to understand this impact through the 1% learning and participating in Start Fund evaluations.

◆ LIGHTER PROCESSES

In January 2016, the Start Fund Committee approved a series of tests to lighten Start Fund processes. This is to ensure that as the Membership grows and alerts increase, the Start Fund can have low transaction costs while maintaining fast, quality responses. These tests will be carried out over the next year - therefore do ensure that you use the most up-to-date versions of documents which will be provided in each alert email.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

FOR EACH ALERT, YOU CAN EXPECT THREE EMAILS.

1	2	3
The first email is the first information on the alert – with the alert note and Member survey. It will include the time in which a survey must be completed (12 hours later).	**The second is an update on whether the Fund was activated and if so, what amount of funding was allocated. If applicable, it will include time when applications are due (24 hours later).**	**The third email will summarise the project selection decision. These emails are also forwarded to our donors and supporters.**

Please provide us the emails and mobile phone numbers of those that you think should be on this distribution list.

Start Fund Committee representatives will receive periodic **"Start Fund Updates"** which include recent news, documents to review, useful materials, a tracker on each agencies participation in the Start Fund, and stats on alerts so far. **For past updates, see here.**

GETTING SUPPORT

The Start Fund Team supports the Start Fund Committee in managing the processes and governance of the Start Fund.

There is a generic Start Fund email address, **startfund@startnetwork.org**, which is used, read and responded to by all of the Start Fund Team. Please do contact or reply to this email, and someone will promptly reply.

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Please feel free to contact any of the Start Fund Team should you have any questions

INDUCTING STAFF & LEARNING MORE

◆ INDUCTING STAFF

The Start Fund needs to reach scale to achieve a greater impact. Along with more donors, the Fund needs to be more international in its representation and have a greater reach in the countries in which our Members work. Outreach from Members is critical to this.

To induct your staff, there are resources in English, French, and Spanish which you can use and tailor for your own use. Please find induction materials here for more information:

◆ **Start Fund Training Materials**

We will be holding briefings over the coming months and will be regularly updating our website: **www.start-network.org.**

There are also some important documents that you should have to hand.

◆ **What is the Start Fund**

◆ **The Start Fund Annual Report 2015-2016**

◆ **The 2014 Start Fund Evaluation**

◆ **Alert Documents for New Members**

FURTHER INDUCTIONS

The Start Team will be organising several ways in which your organisation can learn more about the Start Network over the coming months.

INDIVIDUAL ORGANISATION INDUCTIONS

The Start Team is available for briefings tailored to each organisation, general to the Start Network or specific to the Start Fund or Start Build. These can either be virtual or face to face to face at your office.

IN-COUNTRY INDUCTIONS

Once central staff have been inducted, you will be invited to nominate senior staff in countries with standing decision making groups. These nominations will be invited to participate in an induction that focuses on project selection and how to alert the Fund. Please see more information here on these **groups**.

BUDDY SYSTEM

Each new Member will have the opportunity to pair up with an existing Member. Let us know if your organisation would like to be paired up with another Start Network Member. This will provide new Members with another line of communication to ask questions and learn more about the Start Network. It will also provide current Members the opportunity to learn more about your organisation and ways of working.

We have set loose timelines for these inductions, but do let us know your schedule and what would work best for your team to learn more.

START FUND

INDUCTION PACK 2016