ALERT

Emergency Preparedness Technology

ALERT is an innovative emergency preparedness system that improves disaster preparedness, helping humanitarian agencies to respond with greater speed, efficiency and effectiveness, before and immediately after a disaster strikes.

The ALERT System is a user-driven solution using technology as a tool to overcome the challenges of disaster preparedness and response faced by humanitarian agencies and donors. It aims to streamline the emergency preparedness and response process and enhance coordination and learning across humanitarian agencies and donors. The system is designed to enable donor agencies to quickly identify and fund response plans even before the onset of a disaster or immediately after one, thereby increasing the chances of saving lives.

ALERT is a unique, easy-to-use system designed for humanitarian agencies and donors, regardless of size or mandate. A key aspect of the project is the multi-sectoral collaboration between humanitarian agencies, donor agencies, international institutions, academia and the private sector (tech companies, risk management firms, law firms). The project brings together the collective knowledge and experience of these various sectors and draws on their different strengths in order to find innovative ways to improve emergency preparedness and response – and distil all of this into one system.

The ALERT project is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and led by the following consortium of organisations: CARE, Concern Worldwide, Handicap International, HelpAge International, Islamic Relief, Oxfam, and Coventry University. A software development company will be commissioned to develop the system. Several other companies, such as risk management companies and law firms, are providing pro bono technical support to the project.

ALERT includes features such as:

- Automation: suggested preparedness actions and indicators preloaded
- You can add, compile and review your own country specific tasks
- Automatic reminders– prompt individuals automatically when tasks have not been completed or have expired
- Traffic light indicators show the strengths and weaknesses in the level of preparedness
- Preparedness and response plans are developed online - this makes them quicker and easier to update
- Response plans can be pre-approved - no more waiting for approval from HQ

- Risk monitoring, linked to crisis/seasonal calendar and trigger indicators (track tipping points online)
- Go from minimum to advanced preparedness (MPAs to APAs) at the click of a button - If you have early warning ALERT will help you escalate your team into advanced preparedness mode
- Easy conversion of scenario plan (or contingency plan) into a response plan
- Supports budget planning for preparedness and response

Added Value & Benefits:

- **Funding before a disaster strikes** - Potential funders such as DFID, START network etc. will be able to see the agency response plan in the form of a proposal and fund activities before a disaster strikes
- Makes it **easier to develop proposals** for different donors (through master template system)
- ALERT promotes **easy coordination** across the sector; with data held in ALERT (For example, it is faster to share information with OCHA for what-where-who mapping)
- The ALERT multi-agency initiative is **greater than the sum of its parts** through its collaboration in this project between NGOS, local partners, academia, private companies, the UN and donor communities
- There are opportunities for **promoting debate, influencing the sector**, and using evidence to do so in a field where there is currently little information available on emergency preparedness at agency level
- ALERT can provide **greater clarity on the time and financial cost of preparedness** - through data captured in ALERT we can provide evidence on the cost of preparedness to increase donor investment in preparedness
- Promotes **transparency and accountability** throughout the disaster preparedness process
- Provides a **global and country-level overview** of disaster preparedness
- Promotes **cross-country and cross-agency learning** – learn about the preparedness process of other countries and agencies; adopt applicable actions and tasks from other offices; read the response plans from countries with similar hazards
- Built in **Self-Assessment** of the country office and individual team members helps you identify capacity gaps and training requirements

ALERT Testing and Next Steps

The ALERT prototype is currently undergoing testing and feedback. ALERT is planning to test the beta version of the software in six countries: **Mozambique, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kenya, DRC and Philippines.**

To find out more about the ALERT Project, go to www.alertpreparedness.org.
For any questions, please contact Vincent Henson at vhenson@helpage.org.