



# Key Trends from the Inaugural Round of the GSMA Disaster Response Innovation Fund





The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting nearly 800 operators with more than 300 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as Mobile World Congress, Mobile World Congress Shanghai, Mobile World Congress Americas and the Mobile 360 Series of conferences.

For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at [www.gsma.com](http://www.gsma.com)

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This initiative is currently funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and supported by the GSMA and its members.

### GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation

The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation programme works to accelerate the delivery and impact of digital humanitarian assistance. This will be achieved by building a learning and research agenda to inform the future of digital humanitarian response, catalysing partnerships and innovation for new digital humanitarian services, advocating for enabling policy environments, monitoring and evaluating performance, disseminating insights and profiling achievements. The programme is supported by the UK Department for International Development.

Learn more at [www.gsma.com/m4h](http://www.gsma.com/m4h)

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In September 2017, with support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the GSMA launched the **Disaster Response Innovation Fund**. The Fund was designed to invest in innovative solutions that leverage mobile technologies to “save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur.”<sup>1</sup>

The Fund aims to catalyse partnerships that are driving innovations seeking to improve the interface between those affected by disaster and crises and those providing assistance, whether humanitarian agencies, NGOs, governments or private organisations.

In this first round, funding of up to £300,000 per project was available, as well as promotion and networking opportunities, for either Seed Projects to test new products or services, or Market Validation Projects to replicate proven products or services.

FIGURE 1

## Funding opportunity



As partnerships are critical to delivering sustainable impact, the call for applications requested proposals that represented a collaboration consisting of two or more mobile network operators, non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), humanitarian agencies, emergency/environmental bodies and/or private sector companies.

FIGURE 2

## Applicant partnership

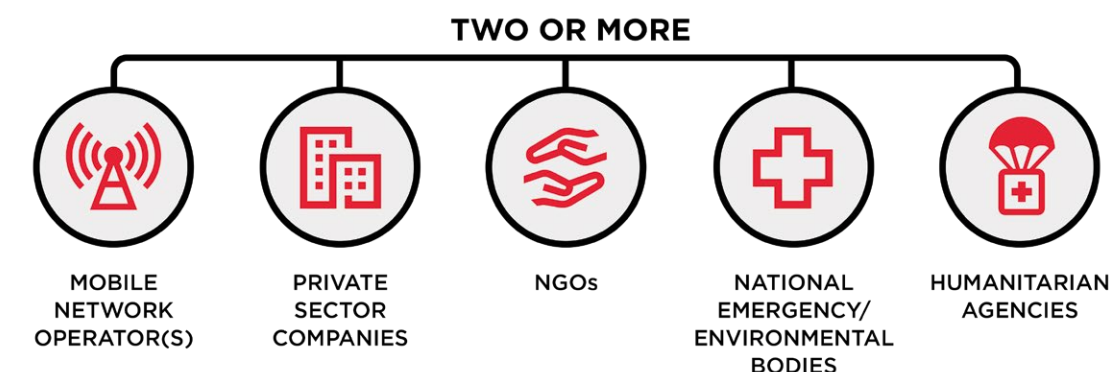
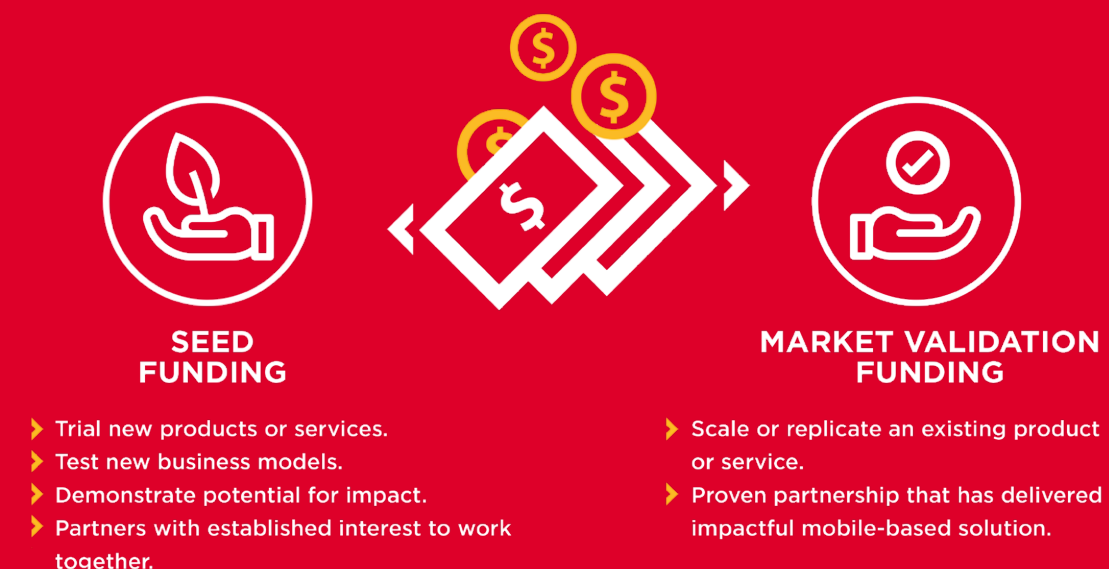


FIGURE 3

## Types of funding



Successful applicants will be announced in mid-2018. Key insights from the grantees will be captured and disseminated to enhance industry knowledge of innovative use cases. Subsequent rounds of the

Innovation Fund will be launched in 2018 and 2019. **In this report, we highlight key insights based on a primary analysis of concept note data received from applicants.**

<sup>1</sup> From <http://devinit.org/defining-humanitarian-assistance/>

## The scale of humanitarian needs is expanding.

According to UN research, in 2018, **more than 135 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection**<sup>2</sup>. The scale of response required in these situations is placing increasing pressure on the humanitarian sector to find more effective and efficient ways of meeting the needs of affected populations. The ubiquity and continued expansion of mobile technology offers a significant opportunity for use in humanitarian contexts.

**By 2025, the number of mobile connections will reach 9 billion** and by then **three out of four connections will operate on smartphones**, according to GSMA Intelligence.

New technology-enabled services have supported communities and increased resilience around the world. As natural and manmade disasters increase in their frequency and impact, MNOs, innovation labs and technology hubs around the globe are actively exploring the potential role of mobile technology in preparedness and response. The Disaster Response Innovation Fund provides an opportunity to unite

these efforts, linking initiatives which have mutual goals and bringing their innovative ideas to life.

Innovation is transforming how MNOs, humanitarian organisations and multi-sector stakeholders are responding to and preparing for humanitarian crises and disasters. From the development of innovative new technological solutions, to creating unique cross-sector partnerships and processes, public and private sector organisations are enhancing their capacity to respond to disasters and strengthen the resilience of affected populations.

FIGURE 4

### Mobile connectivity

By 2018, more than **135 million** people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection



By 2025, the number of connections will reach

**9 billion**



**3 out of 4**



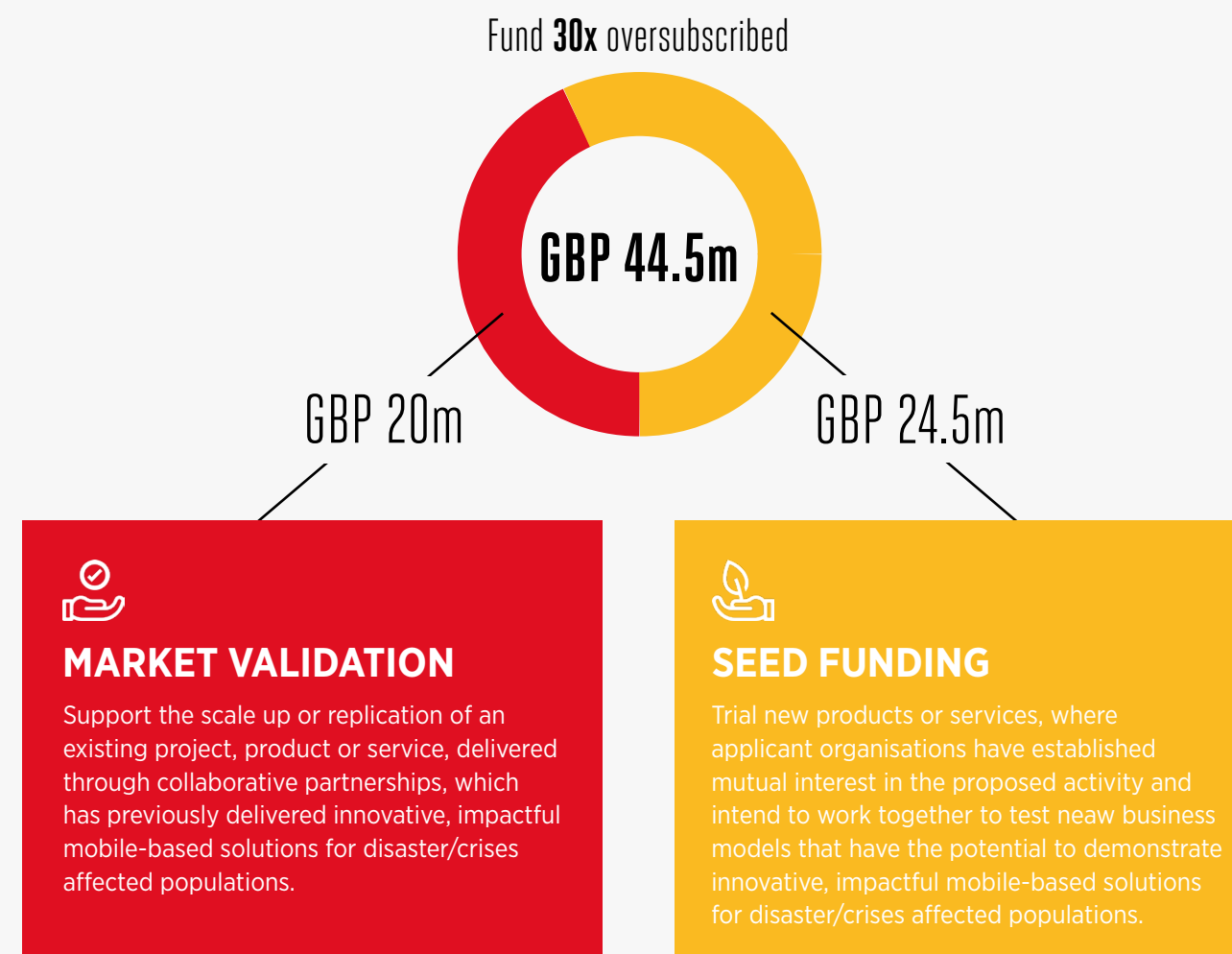
mobile connections will operate on smartphones

# Disaster Response Innovation Fund Trends

## 1. The amount of funding requested was 30 times the size of the fund

FIGURE 5

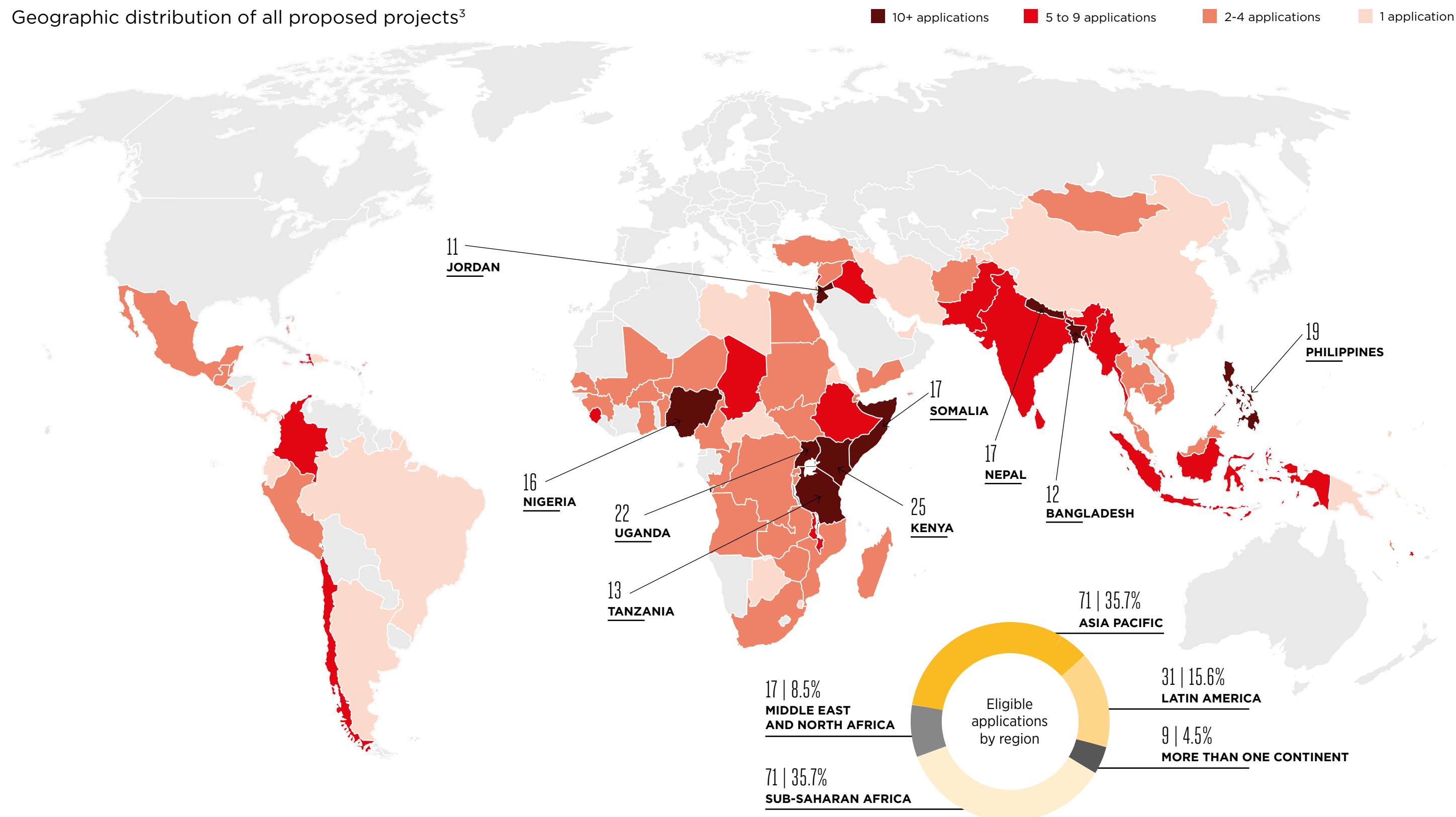
274 organisations applied for a total of GBP 44.5 million, which is approximately thirty times the available amount of funding. This shows the unprecedented need for funding to innovate disaster response and humanitarian assistance.



## 2. The Fund received 274 proposals seeking to implement projects in 97 countries

**FIGURE 6**

Geographic distribution of all proposed projects<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> This map portrays the geographic spread of all applications (eligible and non-eligible).

### 3. Mobile network operators were the lead or official partner in over one third of eligible proposals

As per the eligibility criteria, applications were required to represent a collaboration consisting of two or more mobile network

operators, NGOs, humanitarian agencies, emergency/environmental bodies and/or private sector companies.

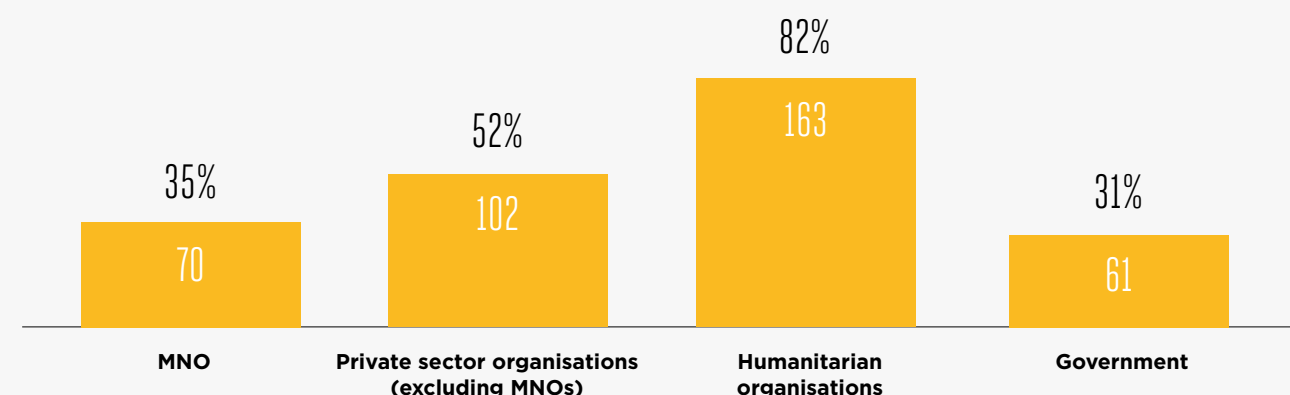


Mobile network operators were the lead or listed as an official partner in over one third of eligible proposed projects (35 per cent) and were the lead applicant for 8 per cent of all eligible proposals.<sup>4</sup>

**35%** Lead or partner  
**8%** Lead

FIGURE 7

#### Presence of various actors in eligible proposals



Humanitarian organisations dominated the proposal pool as the lead applicant, leading 63 per cent of applications. 82 per cent of eligible proposals included at least one humanitarian partner.

Private sector organisations (excluding MNOs) such as software/IT and consulting companies accounted

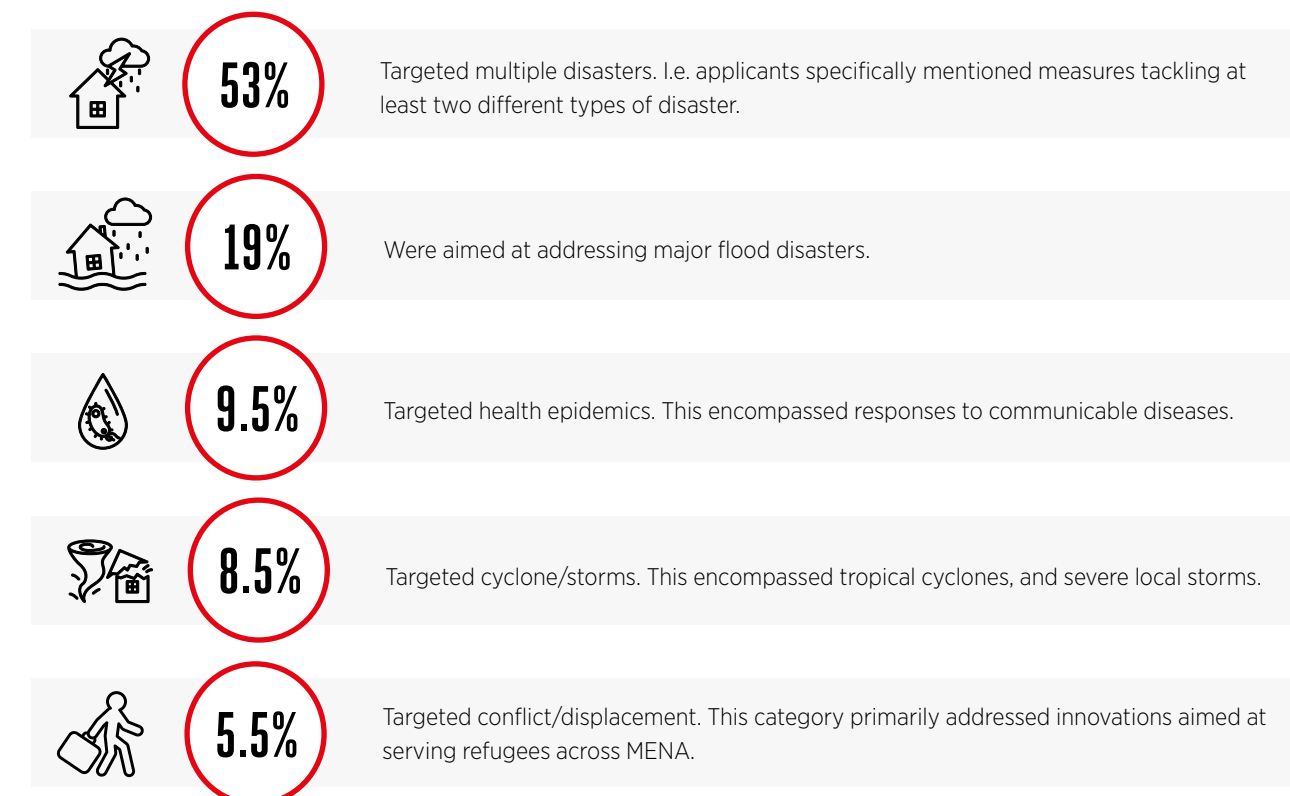
for 29 per cent of lead applicants and were a partner or lead in 52 per cent, providing the technology platforms and analysis capabilities for the projects.

In almost one third of the proposals, a Government Agency was involved in the project.

<sup>4</sup> This percentage does not capture instances where MNOs were involved in the proposal in some way but not listed as an official partner.

### 4. Proposals overwhelmingly addressed multi-disaster contexts<sup>5</sup>

FIGURE 8



### 5. The proposed socio-economic impact of the applications spanned across all 16 Sustainable Development Goals

Applicants were asked to identify up to three SDGs that their proposals were seeking to tackle. The top three SDGs addressed by the concept notes were:



<sup>5</sup> This analysis refers to all eligible applications





For further information please visit  
the GSMA website at [www.gsma.com](http://www.gsma.com)

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