European Commission

DG ECHO'S

MINIMUM ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CO_2	Carbon dioxide
CEDRIG	Climate, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration Guidance
CFS	Child-Friendly Spaces
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EOI	Expressions of Interest
FSM	Faecal Sludge Management
FSP	Financial Service Providers
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HCF	Healthcare Facility
LCA	Life Cycle Analysis
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
NEAT+	Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool +
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NFI	Non-Food Item
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RUTF	Ready to Use Therapeutic Food
RUSF	Ready to Use Supplementary Food
SOW	Statements of Work
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WGSS	Women and Girls' Safe Spaces
WHO	World Health Organisation

FOREWORD

As the climate and environmental crises deepen, more sectors are realising that they have a collective responsibility to reduce the impact of their actions on the planet. This is also true for the humanitarian community. Yet the motives for relief actors and aid agencies extend beyond the environment itself.

The duty of humanitarian actors is to save and protect lives. By minimising the impact of humanitarian aid operations on the environment, humanitarian actors will not only assist people in need who are reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and well-being; they will also contribute to safeguarding the planet we share for current and future generations.

The benefits of reducing the impact of humanitarian operations on the environment are numerous and wide-ranging: for example, by providing cleaner cooking fuels, we not only reduce our emissions but also provide a safer and healthier indoor environment and reduce the risk of gender-based violence, as beneficiaries do not need to collect fuelwood anymore. By managing our waste properly, we not only reduce pollution but also reduce the risk of infectious diseases in the world's most vulnerable communities. Preserving the ecosystems on which people rely for their livelihoods also enhances their resilience to climate shocks. Preventing deforestation also helps to reduce the risk of local disasters, including landslides, mudflows and floods among others.

DG ECHO has joined the EU's environmental journey. We are supporting the implementation of a greener humanitarian response and reducing the environmental footprint of EU humanitarian aid. Our goal is to reduce the impact of EU-funded humanitarian operations on local ecosystems while maintaining our ability to provide timely assistance to those in need.

The minimum environmental requirements and recommendations outlined in this publication are at the heart of this transition. We have taken an ambitious but realistic approach that will benefit not only the planet, but more importantly the people we serve and our future. Alongside setting requirements, DG ECHO is providing technical support on the ground, assisting with local capacity building and promoting innovation. All of this will benefit both the planet and the people we serve.

With these new requirements, it is my hope that we will encourage partners to re-think business-as-usual. I strongly believe we can deliver on our humanitarian mission without harming the environment.

We will continue cooperating with other donors on environmental issues, and further promote coordination on this front. Collective action is crucial if we are to see real change in the humanitarian sector.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the humanitarian organisations that contributed to the development of the minimum environmental requirements and recommendations.

I count on your good cooperation for their implementation.

Ms Paraskevi MICHOU

Director General
DG ECHO

INTRODUCTION

From climate change and disasters to conflicts and even pandemics, the environment lies at the very heart of some of the most complex and pressing issues of our time. Environmental degradation, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and pollution can also lead to significant and protracted humanitarian crises. Climate change and other socio-economic pressures will likely worsen the situation. However, proactively addressing environmental issues, starting from the early phases of emergency response through to the recovery phase, can reduce these risks and reduce vulnerability.

In October 2020, the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) released its approach to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid[1], DG ECHO's key contribution to the European Green Deal[2]. The approach states that as an overarching principle, negative impacts on the environment should be avoided, and where this is not possible, mitigating measures to reduce the potential negative environmental impact should be implemented, applying a precautionary approach. The commitment to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid now guides DG ECHO's own actions and cooperation with partners. Environmental impacts should be addressed at both the organisational and project-level. DG ECHO will apply a 'mainstreaming' approach, meaning that environmental impacts should be mitigated across projects, programmes and eventually, the organisations themselves to the extent possible.

As one of the key outputs of DG ECHO's approach to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid, DG ECHO, together with its partners, has developed project-level minimum environmental requirements for partners, covering priority areas. Even though this document tackles actions purely related to the project-level humanitarian response, DG ECHO encourages partners to already look at their organisational-level policies and understand their specific direct and indirect emissions.

The minimum environmental requirements are intended to signal to partners which measures DG ECHO will be looking for in project proposals and project monitoring due to their immediate potential to reduce the environmental impact of humanitarian aid. They are called "minimum" environmental requirements and recommendations because DG ECHO expects these measures to be reflected in project proposals in the applicable contexts as a *minimum*. The requirements are therefore not meant to be exhaustive. For this reason, recommendations are also included. Recommendations are good or even best practices that will be looked upon favourably but will not affect the overall project evaluation outcome.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The document first provides guiding environmental principles, reflecting the key areas identified in DG ECHO's approach to reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian aid. It then details minimum requirements and recommendations that should be crosscutting, which all staff developing and implementing projects should first refer to, as well as sector-specific requirements and recommendations which only concern projects covering that specific sector.

The document is addressed to both:

- ECHO partners' staff developing and implementing projects
- ECHO staff in headquarters and in the field selecting and monitoring projects.

1 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d0d3395d-1e51-11eb-b57e-01aa75ed71a1
2 https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en

APPLICABILITY

Humanitarian actors should follow the Do No Harm principle while maintaining their ability to provide timely and principled humanitarian assistance. The application of the requirements will always be context-specific: *"Policies in the different sectoral areas of humanitarian aid intervention [...] must be adapted to context and to recipients in order to have maximum impact. The 'do no harm principle' is the minimum requirement underlying such policies and aid approaches, which also means that environmental and other longer-term considerations must be taken into account from the outset even in short-term emergency interventions"* (European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, 2007[3]).

Different measures will be applicable depending on whether the action is implemented in a rural, urban or volatile displacement context and whether the humanitarian situation has stabilised. Exemptions to environmental requirements will be granted when high-risk, unstable contexts or context-specific conditions warrant them. Compliance with the requirements should not compromise the humanitarian imperative to save and preserve lives. The only other valid reason to forego environmental/social sustainability considerations should be the factor of time. In the early stages of an emergency (first few days/weeks) there may be no time to conduct environmental/social assessments and implement certain requirements. Therefore, DG ECHO would not set any requirements there. However, as soon as there is time to consider environmental/social requirements, they should be considered. Moreover, as soon as a needs assessment is being done, environmental considerations should be embedded within it.

Environmental protection and rehabilitation starts already in the emergency phase. Mainstreaming environmental considerations into emergency preparedness is a key mechanism for a more environmentally sustainable emergency response. To facilitate this, prepare or seek out existing environmental profiles (which are evidence-based and accurate) in peace or down times for easy reference and informed decision-making. DG ECHO will support the development of necessary knowledge, tools and means for a greener emergency response. This will include supporting better integration of environmental concerns into preparedness actions so that for example, more durable and recyclable relief items will be developed and already in stock when a disaster strikes, or the necessary procedures are in place for a better-planned emergency response which takes into account potential environmental impacts. Through the Enhanced Response Capacity tool, DG ECHO will continue to promote innovation and capacity building for the humanitarian community in the area of greening humanitarian aid.

The development and implementation of the following minimum environmental requirements is a first step in DG ECHO's long-term endeavour to make humanitarian response more environmentally sustainable. The requirements and recommendations reflect existing good practices in the area of greening humanitarian aid, and many partners are already implementing these measures in their projects. They will be reviewed and refined based on experience gained, the newest developments in terms of greening, and the evolution of the sector overall.

[3] OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p. 1–12

DG ECHO'S GUIDING ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin the implementation of the requirements and recommendations, and thus the implementation of environmentally sustainable humanitarian projects and programmes.

CO_2 emission mitigation

Principle: Assess and systematically monitor the emissions related to humanitarian projects through a carbon accounting exercise that includes all direct and indirect emissions

Principle: Implement carbon dioxide (CO_2) reduction strategies targeting largest reduction opportunities and cut down CO_2 emissions related to humanitarian projects throughout their life-cycle

Waste management

Principle: Ensure solid waste is collected and transferred in treatment and/or appropriate disposal facilities

Principle: Reduce the solid waste burden and promote reuse, re-purpose and recycling

Principle: Ensure sanitation and other liquid waste is managed, collected, transported and disposed without contaminating water bodies and natural areas

Water and wastewater management

Principle: Preserve water sources and avoid over-extraction

Principle: Ensure wastewater does not pose a health or environmental hazard and dispose it accordingly

Energy

Principle: Invest in clean energy solutions, based on renewable sources

Principle: Improve access to sustainable and clean energy

Principle: Limit overall energy consumption and improve energy efficiency

Supply chain and material efficiency

Principle: Promote the use of low carbon technologies and processes

Principle: Manage natural resources effectively and ensure sustainable supply chains

Principle: Avoid single use plastic and favour materials with a low carbon footprint

Biodiversity, natural habitat and land preservation

Principle: Rely and/or upgrade existing infrastructure, facilities and housing stock where feasible

Principle: Avoid uncontrolled deforestation and favour sustainably harvested and verified timber

Principle: Protect, restore and improve natural areas

Principle: Support low intensity, regenerative and sustainable agriculture

Localisation of resources

Principle: If their environmental sustainability and quality can be ensured, favour locally and nationally-produced items, including food

Principle: Encourage local actors taking ownership and driving efforts across policy and programmes

Principle: Promote the use of traditional and environmentally conscious techniques and locally sourced sustainable materials

CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Projects should be conceived with a longer term vision and encourage linkages with development actors

Requirements:

- Set the necessary foundations for the humanitarian-development nexus to ensure an access to services as early as possible and avoid environmental impacts associated with some of the temporary solutions implemented during the acute emergency phase. Humanitarian responses should be strategically linked to longer-term plans for handover to national institutions and development actors, and should contribute to addressing root causes of risks and vulnerabilities.
- Mainstream awareness on environmental impact mitigation and climate change adaptation across activities, including trainings, campaigns, project and stakeholder meetings, etc. Where possible, this should be a mutual learning process – an exchange with affected populations to understand how they understand environment, climate change and the link to livelihoods and environmental threats.

2. Projects should be risk-informed

Requirements:

- Ensure that activities are based on integrated risk analysis and planning. Do not aggravate risks or vulnerabilities and work towards reducing them to the extent possible.
- Acknowledge that environmental degradation is a key risk driver, together with natural hazards, climate change and conflict, and systematically integrate disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration into the project frameworks. Poor risk analysis can lead to further loss of lives and damage. The Resilience Marker and associated Guidance instruct on how to ensure that environmental considerations are mainstreamed and incorporated in all phases of the project cycle.

Recommendation:

- Prepare or seek out existing environmental profiles (which are evidence-based and accurate)[4] of the given site of intervention in peace or down times for easy reference and informed decision-making.

3. Projects should be implemented through a protection and gender lens

Requirements:

- Ensure that all environmental requirements are applied in line with protection mainstreaming principles to ensure that people who are most vulnerable to those consequences receive the support they need to protect themselves and their livelihoods. Avoid setting up programmes with environmental objectives in ways that put people's safety and dignity at risk.
- Protection actors should work with shelter and food assistance actors and development actors present in the area to facilitate access to alternative clean and safe cooking energy. The lack of access to which constitutes a major protection risk, especially in the context of firewood collection.

Recommendation:

- Mainstream environment consideration in Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS)/Child Safeguarding and Women and Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS)/Gender-Based Violence (GBV)/Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) risk mitigation audits.

[4] E.g. https://www.sheltercluster.org/ar/node/17317

4. Projects should promote localisation and participation of local stakeholders

Requirements:

- Ensure participation of the local community (including marginalised and traditionally side-lined groups), in the decision-making process and consult them throughout project implementation. Building on community ownership, endorsement and responsibility will enhance the sustainability of the projects in the longer term.
- Protect, preserve and promote the traditional knowledge, practices, customary sustainable use and expertise of indigenous and local communities. Acknowledge and learn from the environmental examples that encompass practical ways to ensure environmental sustainability.

5. Projects should promote sustainable management of solid waste and chemicals

Requirements:

- Plan supply chain and procurement taking into account waste management options for the waste produced and the related costs.
- When implementing any type of project, establish new or upgrade existing practices for environmentally sustainable waste management in collaboration with the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector, the Health sector, the local authorities and other stakeholders. Uncontrolled disposal is not acceptable, especially for contaminated and chemical waste, hazardous waste (including e-waste and vehicle waste), and human waste.
- Carry out an assessment based on public health risks on waste generated by households, institutions and existing practices. Assess capacities for local reuse, recycling, re-purposing (up and down-cycling) and composting and support the valorisation of waste material by the community through the setup of small-scale business activities.
- Based on the assessment outcomes, and following the waste hierarchy (prevent, minimise, reuse, repurpose, dispose) include an integrated waste management strategy in the design of the project, which covers both liquid and solid waste (including replaced old items), and explains why the chosen waste management options were opted for. Make a disposal plan at project level for the disposal of expired chemicals, drugs and end-of-life of electronic equipment, including used batteries. Low-quality incinerators are not acceptable as they produce toxic emissions and air pollutants.
- Provide clearly marked and fenced storage for waste generated in communal areas, especially market places, distribution and registration centres.
- Organise and maintain regular solid waste management practices at distribution and transit centres, which tend to be the areas with the most important volumes of different types of waste due to high volumes of visitor turnover. Make sure the distributed Non-Food Items (NFIs) and/or food meet real needs to prevent unnecessary waste. Ensure adequate information is provided to beneficiaries to ensure that they are aware of the available disposal mechanisms for packaging and NFIs once they have reached the end of their lifespan.
- Work with local authorities and service providers to integrate the waste management into already existing systems and infrastructure and make sure they are not overloaded, particularly in urban areas. Ensure the integrated waste management strategy is in line with local rules and regulations, unless the organisation has its own regulatory frameworks pertaining to waste management that are more stringent.
- Organise periodic or targeted sensitisation environmental campaigns with the beneficiary and host communities to raise awareness, with the goal of achieving positive change.
- Purchase and stockpiling of chemicals should be done according to a roll out plan, where the quantity of chemical products is accurately calculated taking into consideration the expiry date and the disposal options in the areas of delivery, to prevent expired chemicals building up in contexts where disposal is difficult. Develop and apply a use-tracker of chemicals.

- Separate all hazardous waste (including asbestos) which can harm people and the environment. Store hazardous waste securely until it is safely disposed.
- *For requirements related to the disposal of medical products and drugs, refer to the 'Health' section of this document.*
- *For requirements related to excreta and wastewater management refer to the 'Water, sanitation and hygiene' section of this document.*

Recommendations:

- Organise proper reverse logistics to support end-of-life management of items. This can be linked with an income generation activity for beneficiaries (collection of waste), which could be extended beyond the project cycle in cooperation with private enterprises, or linked to the national level.
- Organise a system to remove waste regularly from designated public collection points.
- Organise periodic or targeted solid waste clean-up activities in collaboration with the beneficiary community.
- Set up Memoranda of Understanding with local partners/Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or organisations which can revalorise (repair, repurpose, reuse) different types of unused or disposed items and materials.

6. Projects should ensure sustainable supply chains and optimise their logistics

Requirements:

- Plan transport to reduce air shipments (which are responsible for higher emissions than sea shipments and land transport).
- For projects with a logistics component, measure the movements, costs and maintenance of vehicles and means of transport to gather data about their use. Include maintenance of the vehicles in the project plan. Ensure the most sustainable and environmentally friendly performance of vehicles for the given context.
- Reduce and optimise secondary and tertiary packaging of food and NFIs. Reduce or eliminate single-use plastic bulk packaging, and no single-use plastic wrapping around individual NFIs (blankets, etc.), unless it is essential to the quality/sterility of the item. This can be achieved through ongoing collaboration with suppliers and updated product specifications. Encourage biodegradable packaging, if the integrity of the packaged item can be ensured.
- Avoid procuring single-use disposable items as much as possible, and favour products with greater durability and high recycled content.
- Ensure right-size procurement. Accurately calculate and plan the number of items needed, size and frequency of procurement and distribution in order to prevent unnecessary waste and environmental impacts from over-production and over-procurement. Take advantage of the virtual and/or white stocks agreements with suppliers, to minimise deterioration or related waste if not fully utilised in due time. In case of over-procurement, consider also reverse logistics. Consider if joint procurement approaches with other humanitarian actors may help avoid over-procurement.
- Only if their supply, durability, adequacy and environmental sustainability can be ensured, favour procurement of locally produced items. Local procurement of medicines and medical supplies can occur only on condition that local markets have been assessed and stringent quality assurance is in place to avoid procurement of sub-standard or counterfeit products, in line with the do no harm principle (to be read in combination with the Provisions on medical and food supplies applicable to actions funded under the EU Humanitarian Partnership Certificate 2021-2027).

Recommendations:

- Consider opportunities to build the capacity of local communities and markets to support professionalisation of local market actors and develop opportunities for local procurement, while considering the need to procure environmentally friendly humanitarian items.
- Consider the environmental impact of products throughout their full life cycle when similar products from different origins are compared, where such life cycle assessments are available.
- Where possible, plan for recovering packaging materials, recycling them locally or even returning them to the vendor for re-use.
- Explore pooling opportunities and consider joint procurement of goods and services in a team-effort with peer organisations on local, regional and global level. In a combined effort, partners can exert leverage on producers and suppliers to use more environmentally friendly approaches to production and transport of humanitarian items. Pooled efforts can also help optimise transport use and support right-size procurement.
- Include environmental requirements in suppliers'/vendors'/contractors' Expressions of Interest (EOIs), Statements of Work (SOWs), tender documents, and contracts. Create and apply selection criteria that match the environmental requirements.
- Enhance the sustainability of facilities and warehouses. Invest in solar or wind power sources and reduce energy consumption.

7. Projects with cash and voucher assistance should ensure environmental efficiency

Requirement:

- Include potential environmental and climate impacts as part of the Cash & Voucher Assistance (CVA) risk matrix assessment.

Recommendations:

- Include environmental considerations in programmatic tools used in cash and voucher assistance in order to anticipate indirect and negative impacts on the environment more effectively and analyse its potential contribution to environmental degradation (e.g. analysis of the energy supply in local markets and the types of energy used, selection of service providers and suppliers, etc.).
- Promote continued monitoring of the environmental impact of purchases made with multipurpose cash transfers (e.g. through beneficiary surveys) to detect any behaviours or choices incentivised by cash that may be environmentally damaging and then introduce mechanisms to manage these situations where feasible.
- Check declarations from Financial Service Providers (FSPs), and if needed ask for documentation, to see if they invest in environmentally harmful sectors (oil, gas, coal extraction; arms production) and prioritise those who do not.
- Promote complementary approaches outlining environmental considerations and risks, with market-based interventions: technical assistance, capacity building and awareness raising.
- Recognising energy needs (and the related costs when fuel is not taken directly from the natural environment) by taking them into account in the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) can limit the adoption of environmentally harmful practices (such as cutting trees or bushes), particularly in contexts of displacement.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Food assistance

Requirements:

- Prevent food waste by distributing culturally appropriate food and ensuring its proper food storage, handling and expiration date management.
- Organise a system to remove waste regularly from designated public collection points.
- In collaboration with suppliers, promote sustainable food value chains, which minimise ecological damage, the depletion of resources and production of solid waste. Favour locally produced products and discourage the use of single-use plastic items linked to packaging.
- Promote sustainable methods of consumption by favouring locally produced foods and the beneficiary self-reliance and self-sufficiency.
- Ensure distribution of clean cooking energy and energy efficient cooking stoves as standard items (through in-kind or cash based) and avoid establishing dependency on locally harvested biomass – or demonstrate that another project(s) exists which is covering these needs (see: Shelter). Give preference to clean cooking energy over firewood or other traditional solid fuels. For cooking energy needs, consider Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as a transitional, cleaner solution than unsustainable firewood/charcoal. Solar cookers (e.g. parabolic solar stoves) should be used with caution if at all, and a full community-based inclusive assessment undertaken before supplying (solar cookers are differentiated from electric cooking with a solar power source, which can be a very effective technology).

Recommendations:

- Ensure collaboration and coordination of efforts with development actors to address food insecurity issues in the longer term by promoting regenerative, durable, and economically adaptive food systems.
- Promote programmes of sustainable farming and discourage the use of water intensive practices by providing capacity building activities to promote the incorporation of biological as well as ecological processes into agricultural and food production practices.
- In projects with pesticide and fertiliser distribution, prioritise indigenous means and techniques over chemical-based products and avoid entirely the use of highly hazardous pesticides. Encourage the use of locally available, organic fertilisers and bio-pesticides/biological pest control.
- Incentivise a locally-led return system to ensure that packaging is collected and re-used – this can also be a source of income via the establishment of a local ‘plastic/packaging value chain’ (see: Livelihoods, Solid waste management).
- Include training and messaging on energy-efficient cooking habits as part of food distribution programmes, recognising that this is also dependent on the NFIs/kitchen kits that are distributed, which should also be familiar and acceptable to the community.
- Distribute already pre-processed food (e.g. milled grain, processed cassava, parboiled rice) or include pre-processing options (e.g. providing milling or other processing on site). Milling equipment or other pre-processing systems could be run on renewable energy.
- Repurpose organic waste as compost.

Shelter, settlements and infrastructure

Requirements:

- Conduct a disaster risk evaluation (see: DG ECHO Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note[5]) and a project-level environmental screening in coordination with fellow partners, using the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool + (NEAT+), the Climate, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration Guidance (CEDRIG) or a similar tool to identify negative environmental impacts of the planned interventions, considering also the impacts on the host populations' current and future needs for natural resources.
- Prepare an environmental report based on the findings of the environmental screening outlining the environmental risks associated to the project based on a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) approach and the measures that were taken into consideration to mitigate the risks.
- Include environmental parameters or mitigation measures in the Monitoring and Evaluation plans of projects and programmes, based on the environmental risks and potential negative impacts identified through the risk analysis / risk screening and in line with the environmental requirements applied for that context.
- Consider the impact of the intervention on the host populations' current and future needs for natural resources and identify mitigation measures. This is especially pertinent for fuel-wood / forest cover and water access.
- If new humanitarian settlements are planned, ensure they are linked to existing infrastructure, services and livelihoods. The integration of infrastructure and services and a well-planned network that serves a larger area will diminish the environmental impact and forge cooperation between communities. Design infrastructural improvements with a view to supporting national and sub-national development plans and priorities. If possible, use and upgrade existing buildings and facilities.
- During programme implementation, avoid areas of special scientific interest - areas of land and water considered to represent our natural heritage best in terms of their: flora, fauna, animals, geology, and geomorphology.
- Closely coordinate with national, and local planning authorities as well as existing and well-functioning coordination mechanisms, such as clusters throughout the settlement design process (including for assessments) to avoid overlapping of efforts and ensure long-term sustainability.
- Ensure hazard risk analysis and mapping of flooding, landslides (topography) and static water bodies in the site of intervention to avoid building in hazard-prone areas and prevent secondary displacements and cyclical humanitarian interventions.
- When conceiving the design of different structures (shelter solutions, communal facilities) favour the materials that do not deplete local natural resources or contribute to long-term environmental damage. Base your design choices on the LCA of the structures you are setting up and on careful cost-benefit analysis taking into consideration the lifespan of the structures, the covered usable/living area and the CO_2 emissions linked to the structure. Where feasible avoid use of materials that promote deforestation and environmental degradation.
- In urban or peri-urban areas and when the shelter response is delivered through renting accommodation, work with owners where possible to ensure the housing unit is properly insulated, including adaptation of windows, in order to save energy on cooling and heating. Support the owner where possible to introduce more environmentally sustainable measures, invest in clean energy sources and discontinue the use of fossil fuel.

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/document/download/13015e8b-acaf-4d8a-b665-d2aab142c97b_en

- Wherever possible, unused building materials can be sorted and stored so that they can be recycled, reused or repurposed. Reuse and recycling of tarpaulins and emergency tents should also be practiced if possible. If these items are not being reused, they should be disposed of appropriately.
- Prioritise local labour as much as possible for construction-related activities.
- When procuring timber, bamboo or any related products be aware of the environmental impact and ensure procurement from certified suppliers. If certification cannot be obtained, ensure mitigation actions in the form of reforestation and/or critical natural ecosystem restoration that can be carried out in areas adjacent to the project site or elsewhere in the region or country of intervention.
- Avoid deforestation and removal of vegetation as much as possible to maximise shading effects, protect from winds, and reduce erosion and flooding. To the maximum extent possible, avoid major land transformations. Maintain the existing groundcover and establish appropriate drainage and soil retention engineering techniques.
- Ensure distribution of clean cooking energy and energy efficient cooking stoves as standard items (through in-kind or cash based) and avoid establishing dependency on locally harvested biomass – or demonstrate that another project(s) exists which is covering these needs (see: Food assistance). Give preference to clean cooking energy over firewood or other traditional solid fuels. For cooking energy needs, consider LPG as a transitional, cleaner solution than unsustainable firewood/charcoal. Solar cookers (e.g. parabolic solar stoves) should be used with caution if at all, and a full community-based inclusive assessment undertaken before supplying (solar cookers are differentiated from electric cooking with a solar power source, which can be a very effective technology)
- Ensure that energy systems for cooking, lighting and heating are affordable, sustainable, safe and appropriate in the longer term. Consider energy needs at household level and at the settlement level covering a variety of activities (communal facilities, commercial activities and street lightning). Favour renewable energy sources as much as possible.
- Ensure distribution of clean heating energy and energy efficient heaters is facilitated in the provision of winterisation items, combined with safety training and heat insulation measures, as appropriate.
- Where national grids exist, advocate for the promotion of renewable energy power plants to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and decrease expenditure on electricity. Where national grids are distant or absent, promote access to decentralised clean electricity generation, such as mini-grids or home solar systems, if suitable.
- In the aftermath of a disaster or conflict, reconstruction efforts should be guided by 'building back better' principles and by promoting the rehabilitation and re-purposing of existing buildings and infrastructure as much as possible.

Recommendations:

- Coordinate with government, humanitarian, development and private sector actors to continually optimise the electricity options available to refugees and host communities by introducing technological innovations and new approaches to service delivery.
- Create a culture of energy efficiency by designing and upgrading community facilities to be energy efficient, choosing energy efficient appliances and providing energy efficiency trainings.
- Promote the salvaging of solid waste found in humanitarian setting for reuse and re-purposing in a safe and dignified manner. Humanitarian settings provide opportunities for inventive reuse of materials.
- Provide capacity-building activities for the local communities and make sure local labour is trained and sensitised on integration of both Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and environmentally-friendly practices in construction.
- Complement shelter programming with blue - green infrastructure networks and resilient farming and gardens.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

Requirements:

- Conduct a project-level environmental screening in coordination with fellow partners using NEAT+, CEDRIG or a similar tool to identify negative environmental impacts of the planned interventions, considering also the impacts on the host populations' current and future needs for natural resources.
- Prepare an environmental report based on the findings of the project-level environmental screening outlining the environmental risks associated to the project based on a based on principles of sustainable integrated water resource and excreta management and the measures that were taken into consideration to mitigate the risks.
- Include environmental parameters or mitigation measures in the Monitoring and Evaluation plans of projects and programmes, based on the environmental risks and potential negative impact identified through the risk analysis / risk screening and in line with the environmental requirements applied for that context.
- Calculate water balance (supply vs demand) based on principles of sustainable integrated water resource management at the catchment level taking into consideration demand from both displaced and host populations.
- Identify the most appropriate groundwater or surface water source taking into account possible environmental threats. Consider all water uses, domestic and water for livelihoods, the seasonal variations and mechanisms for accessing drinking water. Ensure information sharing and linkages between different sectors to estimate usage and capacity of water sources.
- Work with stakeholders to locate water points and establish a maintenance strategy with clear responsibilities and include future needs for sustainable access.
- Ensure appropriate water point drainage and look for sustainable opportunities to reuse water (irrigation, production of construction materials, etc.). If possible, ensure that greywater is separated from septic systems to facilitate its reuse.
- Boreholes should ensure water runoff/greywater from hand pumps and wells is used for irrigation.
- Favour rehabilitation of existing water sources with DRR-inclusive measures.
- Prioritise the use of renewable energy in the operation and maintenance of the provided water services. Provide trainings for follow up and for ensuring proper maintenance/small repairs of the renewable energy solutions. In cases where renewable energy is not suitable (this should be justified), ensure that the generators used for water pumping are of well-suited size and storage tanks, pumps and pipes used for water pumping are designed jointly to maximise energy and cost efficiency of the system.
- If water trucking is included in the programme, provide a justification. If accepted as justified, ensure that the renewal of the water source can be ensured (i.e. water is not being abstracted faster than it can be replenished). Ensure an exit strategy from the water trucking in the short to medium term.
- Link up the water extraction activities in humanitarian settlements to a groundwater monitoring initiative, if it exists or set up a new one, to ensure monitoring and recharge of the water sources.
- In urban contexts integrate water efficiency measures into programme design (water saving technologies). Monitor, repair or notify authorities regarding leaks. In cases where major re-investments in water network infrastructure is needed, liaise with development actors present in the area to seek the necessary funding if the political context allows.
- Prioritise treating water over bottled water. Exceptions for using bottled water can be made for the short term in specific contexts (people on the move). In this case, favour larger bottles over smaller ones and consider the use of reusable bottles. If bottled water is delivered, an appropriate waste management system for the bottles must be established.

- Where surface water is used and treated with chemicals (coagulants/flocculants), ensure that the residual sludge is properly disposed of, including in instances when filtration membranes are used.
- Ensure integrated vector management to avoid the use of pesticides, as much as possible.
- Design and build excreta management facilities based on risk assessment of potential contamination of any nearby surface or ground water source.
- Assess the local topography, ground conditions, and groundwater and surface water (including seasonal variations) to avoid contaminating water sources. Ensure that any water needed for excreta transport can be met from available water sources.
- Apply existing national standards end ensure that any extra load placed on existing systems does not affect the environment or the communities.
- In cases where Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) is required, ensure a risk based approach based on the most suitable disposal or reuse route of the liquid and solid components of the treated faecal sludge. Nature based treatment plants are preferred. Agree with local authorities and other stakeholders about the use of land for any off-site treatment and disposal. No FSM unit should be deployed without a suitable process-control laboratory that can measure, apart from operational parameters also basic public health parameters such as of organic load, total solids, nitrogen, phosphorus.
- Ensure that sanitation facilities include appropriate waste disposal options for the safe and discrete disposal and collection of menstrual products and other hygiene items. Ensure local practices are identified and taken into consideration, to avoid unnecessary waste. Where appropriate and available, include reusable menstrual products and ensure information is provided on how to use them. Provide the necessary equipment and appropriate facilities for the adequate washing and drying of menstrual products.
- In case landfills and wastewater treatment plants are necessary and justified, they should be controlled/sanitary. A systematic process of classification of project risk should be followed that takes into consideration parameters such as size, location, etc. Depending on the results of this classification, an Environmental Impact Assessment should precede their set up/construction done in coordination with local government and other relevant actors, including a management plan once the operation is over.

Recommendations:

- Wherever possible, water usage monitoring systems should be installed or good practices established in consultation with the local communities.
- Include activities to restore the traditional water sources or build environmentally friendly water extraction systems.

Public health

Requirements:

- Promote the collaboration of healthcare facility officials with health determining sectors, including water and sanitation, energy, food, supply and logistics, to develop integrated approaches in addressing health risks and to promote environmentally sustainable practices.
- In contexts where collection and disposal depend on external actors, at least ensure segregation and separate storage inside the healthcare facility (HCF), while working with the HCF managers to set up safe health waste disposal in or outside the HCF. In cases where waste is collected and transported to locations with a dedicated facility for the safe disposal of medical waste, safe transportation of contaminated waste should be ensured.

- Plan waste treatment in accordance with environmental laws and structures *de jure* and/or *de facto* ruling the territory to the extent possible, unless the organisation has its own regulatory frameworks pertaining to waste treatment that are more stringent. Where those are absent, use relevant international standards, guidelines and policies and/or the organisation's standards, guidelines and policies according to the most stringent requirements and link with local waste management (see also: Over-arching/cross-cutting: Solid and liquid waste management).
- Low-quality incinerators are not acceptable as they produce toxic emissions and air pollutants, and do not completely sterilise. Dispose of ash from incinerators safely. Instead, invest in improved, local incinerators, centralised treatment and ideally non-burn technologies.
- Use health facility safety assessment tools as an opportunity/entry point for looking at waste management.
- Ensure adequate drug management and supply to reduce expiration of medical products. Ensure appropriate destruction of expired drugs through local authorities. Medicines and other medical consumables that may expire or damage during deployment must be destroyed in accordance with national protocols and World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations.
- *For construction-related requirements refer to the 'Shelter, settlements and infrastructure' section of this document.*

Recommendations:

- Promote education and awareness programmes for professionals working in healthcare settings on the link between health and environment and effectively prepare for the additional health risks posed by climate change.
- Enhance the sustainability of facilities and warehouses. Invest in solar or wind power sources and manage power consumption. Establish a storage system and routine that ensure the use of medicine according to the 'First Expiring First Out' principle.
- Promote circular healthcare systems, by using less raw materials and minimising waste through up and down-cycling medical materials and developing sustainable procurement guidelines in collaboration with suppliers.

Nutrition

Requirement:

- When designing nutrition programmes encourage the collaboration with other sectors, including WASH, health, food, supply and logistics, to develop integrated approaches in addressing waste management.

Recommendations:

- When designing nutrition programmes encourage the collaboration with other sectors, including WASH, health, food, supply and logistics, to develop integrated approaches to setting up localised supply chains to promote environmentally sustainable practices.
- Introduce a bring-back system whereby beneficiaries receive new portions when bringing back used sachets of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and Ready to Use Supplementary Food (RUSF).
- Favour procurement of products from local and sustainable sources, with reduced or recyclable packaging.

Camp coordination and camp management

Requirements:

- Mainstream environmental considerations throughout the coordination and monitoring activities and ensure the assessment of environmental risks is carried out alongside wider assessments to avoid exacerbating local vulnerabilities.
- Ensure coordination and collaboration with national and local authorities, the settlement population and host communities and jointly lead programmes in addressing crucial environment challenges such as deforestation.
- Ensure that a decommissioning plan for the settlement is in place, which includes managing the waste leftover, including its safe treatment and disposal, and ensures that the previous condition of the site is restored.

Recommendations:

- Develop a community-based environmental management plan together with all the organisations operating in a camp as well as the community to spot opportunities, set up and manage activities linked to improving the environmental footprint of the settlement, including the waste management system.
- If the humanitarian settlement is located near a natural forest, support the development of a forest management plan in collaboration with the settlement community, the local authorities and other stakeholders in order to support a sustainable use of its resources, and reduce the environmental impact.
- Support capacity building activities with the settlement population and host communities to raise awareness and consciousness of the importance to reducing the environmental footprint and the consequences of climate change.

Livelihoods

Requirements:

- Promote environmentally sustainable job opportunities through the introduction of economic incentives and skill-building activities. Capacity-building and knowledge development projects should prioritise skills development grounded in ecological systems and 'green jobs' and discourage labour in environmentally harmful livelihood activities.
- Support community demand-driven green development and businesses that promote employment through natural resource management activities, sustainable agriculture and circular economy based livelihoods. Ensure that all value chain processes and activities adequately address environmental concerns while maintaining profit.
- Enhance the enabling environment for the economic inclusion of beneficiaries, rather than developing parallel systems that may generate waste, damage ecosystems and have a limited impact on livelihoods.
- Promote livelihoods and income-generating activities that are resource-efficient. Livelihoods and income-generating programmes that involve use of natural resources (wood, water, soil, sand, etc.) should include monitoring to ensure the renewal capacity of the natural resources, to avoid contributing to shortages and over-exploitation of resources.

- Ensure ongoing market assessment in order to map the potential for environmentally friendly businesses and economy.
- Ensure that environmental criteria are considered as part of sector selection when conducting value chain analysis and identifying viable income generating activities.
- Consult with development and local actors to identify nature based livelihood approaches that are complementary and collaborative for more cyclical and effective use of available natural resources.
- Avoid charcoal making as a livelihood or income generation activity as much as possible. Instead, favour alternative and more sustainable solutions that are context relevant and disaster risk and conflict sensitive.
- In agricultural programmes, promote agroforestry, climate smart agriculture and nature-based solutions. Work with communities to develop resource management plans, sustainable strategies, and to strengthen food security.
- Collaborate with local organisations and institutions that have knowledge and experience in environment conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Leverage traditional and nature based knowledge of the local community. Empower local communities, to assess and sustainably manage the ecosystems they depend upon.

Recommendations:

- Support the setup of savings and loan associations as a means towards organisational strengthening and contributing to their empowerment through environmentally sustainable economic activities.
- Provide renewable energy for businesses and support market-based long-term recovery energy interventions, in cooperation with development actors and the private sector.

Education in Emergencies

Requirements:

- Include environmental and climate change awareness, through a gender and age lens, as part of the education curriculum where this is under the control of the organisation.
- Integrate environmental and climate-friendly activities in day-to-day running of schools, such as waste reduction (including up-cycling and down-cycling), tree planting initiatives, invest in school vegetable gardens, which can promote environmental education, development of livelihood skills and improving children's nutrition and eating habits.
- Enhance the sustainability of educational facilities. Invest in renewable sources and manage power consumption. Support water conservation and water harvesting/greywater reuse systems.
- *For construction-related requirements refer to the 'Shelter, settlements and infrastructure' section of this document.*

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