

# ENVIRONMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

## Increasing Effectiveness, Sustainability and Accountability



A STUDY UNDERTAKEN FOR THE JOINT UNEP/OCHA ENVIRONMENT UNIT

Version 1

2014



# Table of Contents

ACRONYMS . . . . .	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . .	4
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	6
1.1 Scope of study . . . . .	6
1.2 Methodology . . . . .	7
2. STATE OF ENVIRONMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION . . . . .	8
2.1 The evolution of environment in humanitarian action . . . . .	8
2.2 Humanitarian coordination and environment . . . . .	9
2.3 Towards strengthening environment in humanitarian action . . . . .	10
2.3.1 Recent initiatives . . . . .	10
2.3.2 Case Study: preserving livelihoods through environment in humanitarian action. . . . .	14
3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS . . . . .	16
4. ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MAINSTREAMING . . . . .	20
4.1 Benefits of mainstreaming . . . . .	20
4.2 The humanitarian perspective on environmental mainstreaming. . . . .	20
4.3 Mainstreaming lessons from development initiatives . . . . .	21
4.4 Lessons from mainstreaming gender. . . . .	21
4.5 Shortfalls in the current approach to environment and humanitarian action . . . . .	22
4.6 Barriers to environmental mainstreaming . . . . .	22
4.7 Opportunities for mainstreaming . . . . .	23
4.7.1 Influence and strengthen humanitarian programme cycle management. . . . .	24
5. TRACKING ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDING . . . . .	28
5.1 The OECD Creditor Reporting System. . . . .	28
5.2 The UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service. . . . .	30
5.3 Direct Environmental Funding by UN Agencies . . . . .	30
5.4 Donor Policies and Funding Methods . . . . .	32
5.4.1 The environment in donors' humanitarian strategies . . . . .	32
5.4.2 Environmental criteria in the funding decision process . . . . .	32
5.4.3 Environmental assessments of humanitarian operations . . . . .	34
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	36
6.1 System-wide accountability and responsibility . . . . .	37
6.2 Mainstreaming environment at system field level . . . . .	37
6.3 Advocacy and evidence . . . . .	38
6.4 Funding environment in humanitarian action . . . . .	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	40
ANNEX: Environment in Humanitarian Action Reference Group. . . . .	44

# Acronyms

CEAN	Climate and Environment Assessment Note (of DfID)
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EFA	Environmental Field Advisor
EHA	Environment and Humanitarian Action
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENVIRONET	Network on Environment and Development Cooperation (of the DAC)
ERP	Emergency response preparedness
FOI	Swedish Defence Research Agency
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
Groupe URD	Groupe Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JEU	Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit
HWP	Humanitarian Work Plan
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review
MIRA	Multi Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment
MSB	Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCDMB	Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (of UNEP)
RC	Resident Coordinator
REA	Rapid Environmental Assessment
SAFE	Safe Access to Fuel and Energy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSB	Soil Stabilised Block
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNEP)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USG/ERC	Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator

# Acknowledgments

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Government of Finland for providing financial support and encouragement to conduct this study.

ProAct Network and Groupe URD would in turn like to express their thanks to the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit for commissioning this study. Particular thanks to Wendy Cue (Chief, Environmental Emergencies Section), Rene Nijenhuis (Humanitarian Affairs Officer), Amanda George (Consultant), Florentina Debling (Programme Officer) and Dawit Yared (Administration).

Sincere thanks are also extended to the many people contacted during the course of this study – through questionnaires, by phone and in person: your comments have been most appreciated. Members of the Environment and Humanitarian Action Reference Group<sup>1</sup> provided additional input to this study which has been most appreciated.

---

<sup>1</sup>. Listed in Annex 1

# Executive Summary

Destruction of livelihoods and deforestation as a result of brick production for humanitarian operations in Darfur. Dried up wells due to over-drilling for water by humanitarian organisations in Afghanistan. Ruined livelihoods from an over-provision of fishing boats and consequent fishing stock depletion in post-Tsunami Sri Lanka. Failure to meet waste treatment standards leading to environmental contamination in Haiti and the largest outbreak of cholera in recent history. These examples illustrate how humanitarian or peacekeeping actors, by failing to take environmental issues into consideration, undermine their purpose: to save lives and preserve and restore human livelihoods.

Ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account at the earliest possible moment of humanitarian action can make a difference – for people and the environment.

Environmental stewardship during humanitarian action reduces conflict drivers and increases resilience. To be effective, however, what is needed is for the environment to be systematically integrated into humanitarian programmes and operations: this is a humanitarian responsibility, not a choice. Timely planning, identifying key needs and issues, together with cross-sectoral integration of environmental issues before and during humanitarian action can help make that difference.

This study commissioned by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, and with the financial support of the Government of Finland, is the first stage of a larger project that seeks to examine the current state of integration of environmental considerations in humanitarian operations and to recommend collective action to improve the effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability of humanitarian action. It examines some of the achievements to date and proposes—based on extensive consultations – how the future agenda might be defined.

This study comes at a time when questions are being asked about the effectiveness of humanitarian response, particularly in relation to sudden onset emergencies. Emergencies are times when life-saving priorities come to the fore. However, the many links between this fundamental objective and the environment are all too often overlooked or postponed until emergency needs have first been addressed. Sometimes this can be too late: for example, damage done by people cutting trees to cook their food, or a lowered water table due to over-extraction has had serious implications on the very people the humanitarian response is designed to support.

Through this study, lessons and experiences of what has and has not worked to integrate the environment in humanitarian operations are considered, building a

case to support timely and consistent mainstreaming of environmental considerations during humanitarian action. Specific entry points are suggested, including within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, primarily in the preparedness and assessment phases. Failure to integrate at such times will have negative impacts, causing environmental degradation and destruction, and ultimately worsening the survival and recovery prospects for the victims of conflict and disasters.

Donors have a critical role to play if a change is to happen. As this study shows, attention to environmental mainstreaming in humanitarian strategies varies greatly between donors. Moreover, there is no systematic correlation between the inclusion of environmental considerations in donor policies, the existence of environmental funding criteria and effective mainstreaming of the environment in programmes which they fund. The environment is never used as a restrictive criterion for gaining access to funding, leaving vagueness in how this is addressed relation to specific contexts and the level of emergency.

Based on a review of studies, evaluations and consultations with government, donors, UN agency staff, non-governmental organisations, field practitioners and technical specialists, the findings in this study represent a solid body of evidence for a need for change. A “business as usual” approach to planning and managing the environment in humanitarian action is no longer acceptable. Such change, however, needs to happen in a holistic manner, both at the systemic and policy level as well as on the ground. This requires learning from past experiences, firm commitments to affected communities and greater accountability.

Conclusions and recommendations are focused at the humanitarian system, including clusters and the donor community. Emphasis is given to a number of the overarching initiatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. It is also emphasised that this level of decision-making is one of the main vehicles through which accountability can and should be pursued in the humanitarian response.

There is a need to make humanitarian action fit for the future, anticipating risks and challenges such as increased vulnerability due to climate change. This requires a fundamental shift towards a model of humanitarian action that not only strengthens the response to crisis, but also learns and adapts in order to anticipate crises, act before they become disasters and prevent their recurrence<sup>2</sup>. Better attention to environmental stewardship, with its multiple and inextricable linkages with human livelihoods, is central to this.

---

<sup>2</sup>. Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises. [www.unocha.org/saving-lives](http://www.unocha.org/saving-lives)

## KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS STUDY

Key conclusions of the study can be summarised into four categories: system-wide accountability and responsibility; mainstreaming environment at system and field level; advocacy and evidence; and funding environment in humanitarian action. Conclusions and their respective recommendations are summarised here.

### I. SYSTEM-WIDE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Environment is still not systematically taken into account in global humanitarian action, despite being critical for effective, sustainable and accountable humanitarian response.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The UN, IASC, OCHA, humanitarian organisations and donors should address the lack of leadership and accountability for environment during humanitarian action as part of the Transformative Agenda and ensure that environment is taken into consideration in a timely consistent and routine manner in all operations and at all levels.
2. OCHA and UNEP, with support from donors, should increase the political commitment and human and financial resources dedicated to environment in humanitarian action.

### II. MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENT AT SYSTEM AND FIELD LEVEL

Mainstreaming the environment is an approach that is critical for and should contribute to a long-term vision of effective, principled and sustainable humanitarian action. It needs to be translated into clearly defined actions to achieve this vision, both at policy and field level.

#### **Recommendations:**

3. Develop a detailed proposal for action including a full analysis of at least five priority countries that actively engages all concerned humanitarian partners.
4. Existing mechanisms to promote environmental mainstreaming should be better analysed, their impacts documented, approaches adapted and strengthened and sustainability ensured.
5. Environment should be mainstreamed within every stage of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

### III. ADVOCACY AND EVIDENCE

There is a need for more understanding and strong evidence-base within the humanitarian system of the crucial benefits of mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action.

#### **Recommendations:**

6. Document detailed case studies built on field and management perspectives to provide evidence of what has and has not worked effectively in addressing environmental issues in humanitarian response.
7. Adopt and execute strong advocacy strategies targeted at humanitarian practitioners ensuring a broad-scale approach to, and understanding of, mainstreaming environment.

### IV. FUNDING ENVIRONMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

There is a chronic lack of funding for environment in humanitarian action.

#### **Recommendations:**

8. Donors should develop an environmental mainstreaming policy for humanitarian aid.
9. Donors should integrate environmental mainstreaming while analysing programme proposals.
10. Donors should make the consideration of environmental impacts explicit in their decisions, therefore driving practitioners to include these impact statements in funding proposals .
11. Donors should commit to longer-term funding.
12. Donors should strengthen knowledge of programme officers and operational partners at desk and country levels and establish a technical support helpdesk.

If the above recommendations are put into action, the aim is that by 2020, environmental considerations are factored into humanitarian action in preparedness and emergency response – in a timely, consistent and accountable manner – in at least ten priority countries, resulting in more effective, accountable and sustainable support to people in need of humanitarian assistance.

# 1. Introduction

The objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations (Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative 2003). However there are many examples of humanitarian or peacekeeping actors undermining these objectives by failing to take environmental issues into consideration in their operations. For example, the destruction of livelihoods and deforestation as a result of brick production for humanitarian operations in Darfur (UNEP, 2008); dried up wells due to excessive drilling for water by humanitarian organisations in Afghanistan (Weinthal et al 2014); ruined livelihoods from an over-provision of fishing boats and consequent fishing stock depletion in humanitarian recovery operations in post-tsunami Sri Lanka (Alexander, 2006); and failure to meet waste treatment standards leading to environmental contamination in Haiti and the largest outbreak of cholera in recent history (Cravioto et al 2011).

These examples highlight that despite the environment being recognised as an integral cross-cutting issue in the humanitarian cluster approach - as part of the 2005 Humanitarian Reform Agenda - and despite the rise in initiatives that consider the environment, environment is still not systematically mainstreamed in humanitarian response.

*“Recent evaluations have shown that cross-cutting issues, including the environment, are not sufficiently taken into account in humanitarian response.”*

*Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase 2.  
GPPI/Groupe URD. 2010.*

The environment is fundamental to effective humanitarian action for two primary reasons. First, environmental issues can be underlying and contributing factors to humanitarian crises, for example, conflicts over limited natural resources, while disasters and conflicts also cause direct damage to the environment. Humanitarian action can also cause negative impacts on the environment. Relief and recovery operations can aggravate underlying environmental problems and exacerbate risk and vulnerability if managed inadequately. Additionally, mass population displacements caused by crises can also have direct and extreme impacts on the environment. Environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts can thus threaten lives, health, livelihoods and security.

Based on these links, there is growing recognition that environment needs to be consistently and appropriately addressed in humanitarian preparedness and response. Failure to address environmental risks prior to or during an emergency, or postponing these to a later stage of programming, can seriously affect the relief and recovery process, cause further suffering and additional loss of life, undermine livelihood recovery and increase peoples' vulnerability.

## 1.1 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study, commissioned by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, and with the financial support of the Government of Finland, reviews the current state of integration of environmental considerations in humanitarian action and outlines a way forward on how environment should be consistently taken into account at all phases of humanitarian programming, leading towards improved effectiveness, accountability and sustainability of humanitarian action. As the first stage of a larger project, it examines some of the achievements to date and proposes, based on extensive consultations, how the future agenda might be defined. Findings indicate that despite recognition of the links between environment and humanitarian response among humanitarian practitioners and despite a host of quality initiatives, standards and guidelines, there is a wide gap between policy and practice and a clear lack of accountability and responsibility in ensuring that this gap is bridged and that theory is transformed into practical action.

The study builds the case and outlines a way forward on how environment should be consistently taken into account during humanitarian action. Recommendations are made on how environment might be strategically integrated, for example with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) as an entry point.

### Box 1. Definition of environment

*“The physical, chemical and biological surroundings in which disaster-affected and local communities live and develop their livelihoods. It provides the natural resources that sustain individuals, and determines the quality of the surroundings in which they live. It needs protection if these essential functions are to be maintained.”*

Sphere Project. 2011.



For the purpose of this study the Sphere definition of environment (Box 1) is adopted, given that this recognises the interface between community needs, livelihoods and ecosystem services. Every sector in a humanitarian response is linked to the environment – directly and indirectly. Understanding and appreciating these links is essential to improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action.

This study provides an independent perspective of past initiatives, though with a view to influencing future policy decisions and practical actions. Ultimately it seeks to serve as a stepping stone towards taking environmental mainstreaming to the next level, from both a policy and practice perspective, to assigning and endorsing responsibility for ensuring environmental mainstreaming and proposing steps for systematically integrating environment into humanitarian operations for the benefit of people affected by crisis, the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian programming, and the environment.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

Over 100 people were consulted as part of this study, representing government, the donor community, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individual consultants/experts. Primary data was gathered using a multi-level approach:

- an online survey completed by 34 respondents;
- 47 semi-structured interviews conducted via Skype or telephone with field practitioners, donors, OCHA heads of country/regional offices, key OCHA staff and others linked in some way with the IASC Cluster/sector approach; and
- 22 face-to-face interviews with field practitioners, project managers, government representatives, UN agencies, donors and decision-makers from 17 agencies in Khartoum, Sudan, during a one-week mission<sup>3</sup>.

Data from the interviews and surveys were triangulated with a literature review and desk research that included an analysis of past experience of environmental activities being considered as part of humanitarian response. A second component focused exclusively on the financial aspect required for environmental integration as part of the humanitarian process. Views were sought from

the donor community to determine the current thinking and the degree to which the environment features in selected donor's humanitarian policies, practices and contributions.

This study has focussed primarily on the global system level to address issues with environmental mainstreaming, with a particular focus on transparency and leadership. A proposal for action at country level is suggested as a next step to follow this study, that would address cluster and country specific issues and fully integrate the views of a wide cross-section of stakeholders.

---

<sup>3</sup>. Sudan was chosen as an additional source of potential information given the presence of an Environmental Field Advisor, at the time seconded to UN OCHA (see chapter 6.2)

## 2. State of Environment in Humanitarian Action

### 2.1 THE EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The links between environment and effective humanitarian action have evolved from a variety of perspectives and experiences. One of the most influential changes has resulted from greater focus on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the often inevitable causal links with environment, for example vulnerability caused by ecosystem degradation. Learning from DRR approaches, humanitarian actions are now increasingly starting to address the underlying causes of disasters in preparedness and planning and building community resilience into response actions.

Measures towards improving the quality of humanitarian response have developed in parallel to the evolution of DRR and addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability to disasters. The 1996 Rwandan genocide resulted in the Joint Evaluation (1996), which was a primary driver towards improving NGO performance and establishing means for accountability. A key result of this evaluation was the Sphere Handbook of Minimum Standards and wide adoption of the Red Cross Code of Conduct<sup>4</sup> (IFRC 1994).

Visible impacts of humanitarian operations on the environment came to the fore in Rwanda. For example, in 1994, some 524,000 people fled from Rwanda to the Benaco camps in Tanzania to escape the conflict. Six months after these camps were established, refugees were sourcing firewood within a five-kilometer radius of the camps. One year later, however, the distance was more than ten kilometers, a sign of rapid fuelwood depletion (Shepherd 1995). Despite this, interventions by the humanitarian community were slow to address peoples' needs for fuel, resulting in the requirement of a large-scale rehabilitation programme to address the degradation caused.

This led to the inclusion of a specific recommendation on environment and relief operations within the Joint Evaluation: "Standard operating policies and procedures should be prepared for donor organisations, UN agencies and NGOs that will help to minimise and mitigate adverse impacts of relief operations (whether refugee or internally displaced person (IDP) on surrounding populations and their environment" (ODI 1996). Although this is recognised in the Sphere Standards and the representation of environment, climate change and DRR were specifically strengthened in the recent (2011) Sphere revision process, there are still no standard operating procedures to minimise negative impacts of relief operations on affected people and their environment, despite the gap being

recognised and the existence of many tools created for this purpose (see chapter 2.3).

In addition to being raised as an issue central to the quality of humanitarian programme, environment is also recently more frequently being linked to quality and accountability approaches to humanitarian response. This is reflected in some standards initiatives, including, for example, the One World Trust Global Accountability Framework (Hammer and Lloyd 2011) and within some NGO accountability frameworks, such as Tearfund's quality standards for emergency response (2009). Within the UN system, current debates on a Core Humanitarian Standard are considering how to best ensure representation of the environment. There are also examples of the integration of environment responding to donor concerns, both directly, for example the European Union Humanitarian Consensus<sup>5</sup> and indirectly, for example in Principle 9 of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative 2003) that advocates for linking relief to development and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Evidence from this study, however, shows that despite this evolution of overarching policy on standards for humanitarian response and despite the documentation of evidence of the need for environmental integration in humanitarian action dating back 20 years, this is yet to lead to a systematic incorporation of environment in practical activity on the ground. Evaluations are continuously coming to the same conclusions: it is time to move beyond these and put recommendations into action.

#### Box 2. Proactive early warning

Conflict in Darfur resulted in unprecedented concentrations of people imposing high, localised demands on water resources. In a proactive move to managing a critical resource for human survival, research in Darfur identified 21 IDP camps that were potentially vulnerable to groundwater depletion in a dry year. Immediate analysis of the sources of recharge by monitoring was recommended to allow an evaluation of the actual, rather than potential vulnerability to be undertaken. Better analysis of the hydrogeological situation allowed this risk to be defined and contingency plans and mitigation measures to be designed.

Tearfund. 2007

<sup>4</sup>. Principle 8 of the *Code of Conduct of the Red Cross*: "Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities."

<sup>5</sup>.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. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf)

## 2.2 HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In an effort to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs commissioned the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review (OCHA 2005) as a direct outcome of the recognised inadequacy of humanitarian response in a number of situations, primarily in Darfur (conflict), Somalia (drought) and South Asia (post-tsunami). The Review's recommendations covered a number of issues including human resources, common humanitarian services, financing, the Humanitarian Coordination function and the idea of creating "clusters" in order to provide greater predictability in humanitarian response and accountability .

In July 2005, the IASC created these clusters as the sectoral coordination mechanism in humanitarian action. While the original focus of the clusters was on "gap-filling" in relation to the response to internally displaced persons (IDPs), the IASC decided to create 11 clusters.

The cluster approach, together with the 2012 IASC Transformative Agenda, were seen as opportunities to integrate what are commonly referred to as "cross-cutting issues", of which environment is one. However a recent independent study commissioned by OCHA found that there appears to be little if any consistency in approach, commitment and dedicated resources to these issues by the clusters, Humanitarian Country Teams and donors at the international and local levels. As this publication noted "...a growing body of evidence confirms that the subjects, themes and approaches generally termed cross-cutting... are not adequately – and often not at all – reflected in the way humanitarians plan and execute their operations" (Calvi-Parisetti, 2013).

Thus, although environment was singled out for priority attention as part of the 2005 Humanitarian Reform, there is little evidence of political and financial support to this at the global or operational level in any systematic way. There are, however, notable exceptions, for example in the Shelter and WASH clusters where needs assessments were conducted by CARE International and ProAct Network (2007-2010) to determine cluster members' needs in terms of technical guidance, tools and approaches which would enable and promote cluster-specific integration of priority environmental concerns . Corresponding training was then developed and, in the case of Emergency Shelter, a series of training events held for regional and national shelter experts. Similar assistance was provided through the

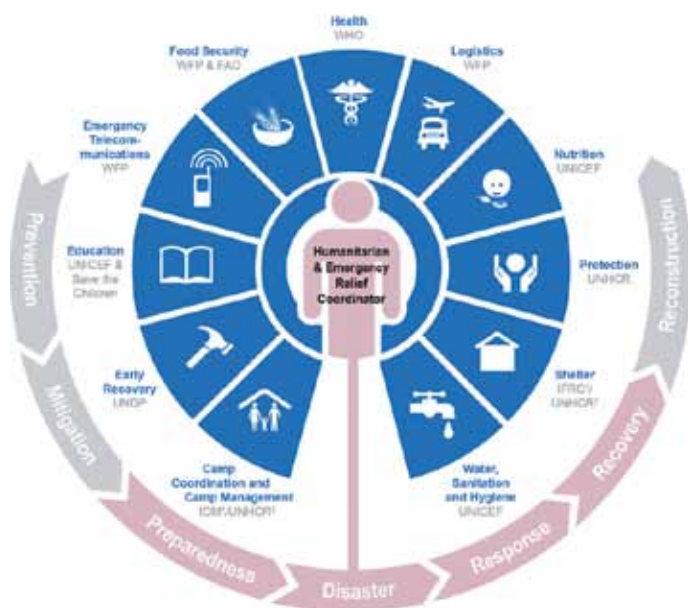
same channels – though to a lesser degree – with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster.

Even with these examples of good practice there are multiple challenges, for example how to address environmental concerns across the entire cluster system in a sustainable manner, beyond one-off training events. Standards also vary between clusters. In waste management for example, the Shelter and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) clusters advocate for different approaches in solid and liquid waste management.

In 2007, two years after the Cluster Approach was initiated, the UK Department for International Development (DfID) commissioned an "Exploration of Opportunities and Issues" to investigate environmental mainstreaming in humanitarian response (ERM, 2007). The study concluded that there was a need for:

- partnerships and coordinated action;
- information collection and sharing of good practices to increase awareness;
- an enabling policy, and monitoring and evaluation framework; and
- a need to refine, raise awareness of and train people in existing tools.

**Figure 1. Cluster coordination**



Source: OCHA

<sup>6</sup>. <http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/doc00001833.html>

<sup>7</sup>. This work was funded through the respective cluster arrangements.

Following a review of these conclusions, in consultation with a group of environmentally conscious NGOs, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) assumed responsibility for environmental issues within the IASC. In November 2011, UNEP asked the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) to support with implementing and operationalising cross cutting humanitarian issues of environment. UNEP and OCHA have now (2014) agreed to jointly implement a new environment in humanitarian action strategy based on this current study and a dedicated project document will be developed to support joint fundraising.

## 2.3 TOWARDS STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION: EXISTING TOOLS, INITIATIVES AND A CASE STUDY

In recent years recognition of the environment-disaster link and the implications for DRR has trickled down beyond academia as recognised by the response of various initiatives and organisations. Stemming from this a series of tools and approaches have been devised for the specific purpose of taking the environment into consideration in humanitarian action. An important development to note was the revision of the Sphere Standards in 2011 that included the integration of environment, climate change and DRR throughout the Handbook.

Some such tools and guidance were initially captured on the UNEP website and have subsequently migrated to the Humanitarian Response website<sup>8</sup>. These include environmental management tools for each cluster/sector as well as training resources such as the Environment in Humanitarian Action training module on the Environmental Emergencies Centre website<sup>9</sup>, the Green Recovery and Reconstruction Training Toolkit for Humanitarian Aid (WWFUS/ARC 2010) and the JEU/URD course on mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action<sup>10</sup>.

The recent DfID study “Mainstreaming environment into humanitarian interventions, a synopsis of key organisations, literature and experience” (Kelly 2013) offers a useful summary of 14 organisations currently involved in work on the environment-humanitarian nexus. The mere existence of this range of organisations with environmental mainstreaming initiatives highlights that at an international policy level the benefits of mainstreaming the environment are well recognised. However there is no tool that is universally accepted

by the humanitarian community and their use remains makeshift (Kelly 2007, 2013) - a conclusion also supported by the findings of this study.

### 2.3.1 Recent initiatives

A number of recent initiatives are worthy of note due to their contribution towards mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action.

#### Environment Marker

Building on prior experience with mainstreaming gender and the Gender Marker (IASC 2012), an “Environment Marker” was developed by UNEP and adapted by OCHA in an attempt to integrate key environmental considerations into project design for consolidated humanitarian appeals. Thus, projects within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle in certain countries are screened for environmental impact.

The Environment Marker is designed to code humanitarian projects depending on their potential negative impact on the environment and whether or not enhancement or mitigation measures to reduce this impact have been integrated into the project. The Marker serves as a proxy indicator to measure the extent to which environment is being considered during project design.

The Environment Marker is currently being implemented in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Sudan, coordinated by UNEP and OCHA. Specific guidance is available for activities that include camp/shelter management and site planning, construction/rehabilitation, water and sanitation, energy, medical and solid waste management and food security and livelihoods.

Figure 2 shows the results of the coding projects in Sudan’s 2014 HWP .

The data shows that while a considerable number of projects have the potential for medium environmental impact, those with the highest potential are in relation to recovery, return and re-integration.

What is expected in the long-term is to have no “B” or “C” projects without mitigation, which still represent 33 per cent of the 2014 HWP projects.

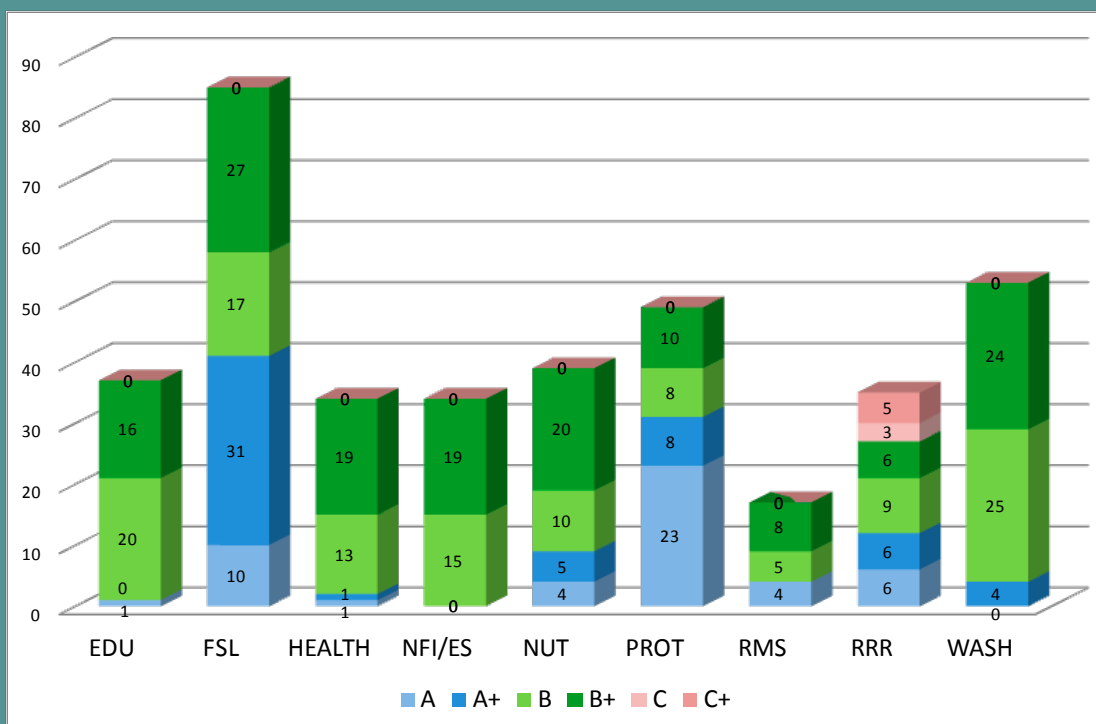
<sup>8</sup>. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/environment>

<sup>9</sup>. [www.eecentre.org](http://www.eecentre.org)

<sup>10</sup>. [www.urd.org/Course-Mainstreaming-the](http://www.urd.org/Course-Mainstreaming-the)

<sup>11</sup>. Data based on an analysis of environmental coding in the 2014 HWP conducted by the Environmental Field Advisor in Sudan and shared with different sector coordinators.

Figure 2. Environmental marker code per sector in Sudan's 2014 HWP

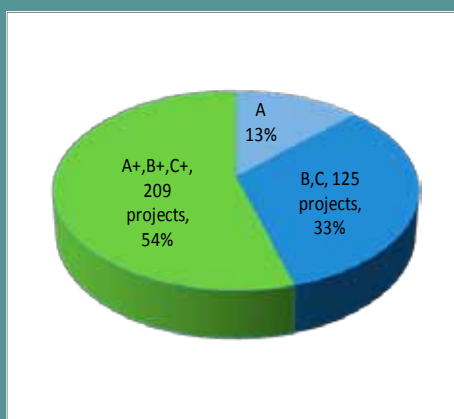


**Legend:**

A = neutral impact on the environment.  
 B = medium environmental impact.  
 C = high environmental impact.  
 The "+" sign indicates where adequate enhancement or mitigation measures are taken.

EDU (Education)  
 FSL (Food Security and Livelihoods)  
 Health (Health)  
 NFI/ES (Non Food Items and Emergency Shelter)  
 NUT (Nutrition)  
 PROT (Protection)  
 RMS (Refugee Multi-Sector)  
 RRR (Recovery, Return and Re-integration)  
 WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

Figure 3. Number of projects with and without environmental mitigation in Sudan's 2014 HWP



Source: Environment Marker Coding – Results HWP 2014

The purpose – awareness raising and to some degree helping ensure compliance – of this tool needs to be seen in relation to its actual impact on the ground, with communities and on natural resources. There is a risk that this tool could become a box ticking exercise that allows partner organisations get clearance for funding. This is not the purpose of the Environment Marker but it is likely to be viewed as such unless consistent technical follow-up assurance is given to monitoring application, reporting and impact assessment.

While this is important from a project perspective, it is also crucial at a broader programme level as no one agency is currently looking at the overall impacts of humanitarian aid programmes on a regional or catchment basis. Experience of the Marker in Afghanistan showed that while it helped identify sectors most at risk and in need of further attention and analysis, a major limitation was the fact that the corresponding database lacked any information on the magnitude or geographic location of each project making it difficult to understand which resources could be affected and what the cumulative effects could be (Bouma, 2013). One of the eventual lessons from this exercise was also the need for sustained political will to implement environmental safeguards for projects with potential impacts.

An important recent development in the use of the Environment Marker is that it has been included in OCHA's Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) 2014 in Sudan, South Sudan and Afghanistan. This is an important step towards ensuring that humanitarian projects consider the environment, as every project has to be coded with the Environment Marker to be able to be allocated CHF funds. This is discussed in chapter 5.3.

### **Environmental Field Advisors**

Responding to the need for timely assistance to field operations, technical deployments of Environmental Field Advisors (EFAs) have been initiated through OCHA's Standby Partnership Programme. Recent deployments to Sudan and the Philippines were made possible with assistance from Sweden's MSB. Secondments to an OCHA Country Office for three to nine months support the humanitarian community in strengthening the integration of environment in humanitarian response.

Deploying an expert for a fixed period of time is not, however, a long-term solution. In some situations it can also build a dependency on, for example OCHA or a cluster, to then constantly deploy environmental expertise in an emergency. Nonetheless technical

support at country level remains a critical need.

In future deployments it is suggested that a matching person is made available from a related national authority, for example the Ministry of Environment to work in partnership. While incorporating local knowledge and expertise, this capacity reinforcement approach would also contribute to a more sustainable solution. In addition, experience from such deployments needs to be assessed, together with similar deployments of Environmental Experts through the Shelter Cluster and UNHCR's placement of Environmental Focal Persons in priority locations.

### **SAFE Task Force**

The IASC Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings was established in 2007. Its main objectives were:

- to provide specific, practical guidance for the development of a co-ordinated fuel strategy in humanitarian settings, including outlining issues to be addressed and agency roles and responsibilities;
- to develop a practical coordination mechanism for ensuring accountability and that all relevant areas are effectively and sustainably addressed during implementation of the strategy;
- to identify partners to create a distinct, field-based, technically-oriented network on fuel to capitalise on fuel-related initiatives already underway, and to enhance and sustain the work of the Task Force to ensure continued relevance of the outputs of the Task Force after its completion; and
- to advocate for financial and technical support at global level to resolve identified fuel-related problems in the field, including through the development and promotion of new technologies.

Two outcomes of this initiative have been decision tree diagrams on factors affecting choice of fuel strategy in humanitarian settings and a matrix on agency roles and responsibilities for ensuring a coordinated multi-sectoral fuel strategy in humanitarian settings<sup>12</sup>.

SAFE – now renamed as Safe Access to Fuel and Energy – currently exists as a reference group with the following members: FAO, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves and Women's Refugee Commission. UNHCR has recently launched its Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) strategy 2014-2017 and is in the process of developing related country programme strategies in selected countries<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup>. <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=4942&type=pdf>

<sup>13</sup>. <http://www.unhcr.org/530f11ee6.pdf>

## Environment and Humanitarian Action Reference Groups

### *EHA Reference Group*

Established in April 2013, the Environment and Humanitarian Action (EHA) Reference Group, chaired by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, is an informal advocacy group which jointly identifies key issues in integrating the environment and prioritises joint actions for advocacy and capacity building on environmental emergencies. Its vision is that “The quality, effectiveness and long-term outcomes of humanitarian action are improved by environmentally responsible life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian action”.

The group is an important contribution to strengthening environment in humanitarian action because it provides a forum to facilitate communication among key humanitarian agencies and provides an effective platform to exchange knowledge, practice and ideas; support/strengthen ongoing initiatives by different

agencies; identify potential areas for further exploration/collaboration; and raise awareness of environmental issues in the wider community.

### *Francophone Humanitarian Environment Network*

Created in April 2012, the francophone Humanitarian Environment Network aims to promote environmental integration among member organisations and more widely throughout the humanitarian sector. In response to an initiative started by *Groupe URD* and a number of other organisations including *Action Contre la Faim*, the French Red Cross, *Médécins sans Frontières Suisse*, *Solidarités International*, *Médecins du Monde* and the Joint UNEP / OCHA Environment Unit, a growing number of NGOs now meet to share experiences and discuss priorities and expectations. A recent assessment showed that organisations’ environmental approaches have matured over the past few years and that there is a willingness to integrate the environment at the institutional level. This, however, is currently constrained by a lack of financial and technical capacity to do so.

<sup>14</sup>. <http://www.urd.org/A-network-of-NGOs-committed-to>



Credit: IRIN/ Guy Oliver

*Use of sustainable local materials to build camp shelter, Democratic Republic of Congo*

### 2.3.2 Case study: preserving livelihoods through environment in humanitarian action

A key finding of this study is that there is a need for more documented good practice, indicating a lack of evaluation and after-action learning reviews of environmental impacts and initiatives. There are, however, some examples of case studies that have been documented that show the importance of integrating the environment in humanitarian action. One such case study presenting both the positive and negative impacts of humanitarian operations on the environment, and therefore on the lives and livelihoods of affected people, is presented here.



Credit: IRIN/ Kate Holt

*Fuel efficient stoves, Somalia*



### CASE STUDY - Humanitarian operations in Darfur: destroying and preserving livelihoods through environment in humanitarian action

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan is closely linked with deforestation and desertification that is both affected by humanitarian operations and has direct and extreme impacts on human lives and livelihoods.

Humanitarian consequences of deforestation and subsequent desertification include protection issues, as women have to travel further for firewood. It also impacts on education, as women remove their daughters from school to help with the increased burden of gathering wood and water. The loss of fertile topsoil from deforestation eventually has a negative impact on agricultural activities, destroying livelihoods. This also contributes to the loss of ground water retention and ground water aquifers are depleted at a quicker rate, exacerbating the already serious water scarcity problem. Finally, as seen in other countries, large arid areas without vegetation can invoke negative health impacts, in particular respiratory diseases. Overall, the unsustainable use of scarce resources already depleted by conflict impacts negatively on the already fragile livelihoods of the millions affected and displaced by conflict.

This deforestation is to a large degree caused by the need for firewood for cooking and kilns to dry bricks used for construction. It takes approximately 27 trees (one hectare of forest) to produce one clamp of bricks. Humanitarian operations have been known to exacerbate this problem in Sudan where their construction needs created an unprecedented demand for construction. A UNEP report (2008) estimated that brick-making kilns were burning 52,000 trees a year with disastrous impacts on deforestation, an already critical consequence of the conflict. The manufacturing of bricks also meant soil extraction and the destruction of valuable agricultural land. The process also used water, in some places from supplies that had been treated for human consumption and in limited supply.

After these negative impacts of humanitarian operations were identified, humanitarian actors began to look for alternatives to red brick (burnt brick) making. Many projects are now using stabilised soil blocks (SSB) that have been known to provide a sustainable alternative in other contexts. SSBs are manufactured by compacting earth mixed with a stabiliser such as cement or lime. Because SSBs are cured in the sun, the need for firewood is eliminated, helping curb deforestation. The table below compares the use of burnt bricks and SSBs and shows the advantages of SSBs: they are approximately 30 per cent cheaper to produce and use no trees in the process.

Item	Stabilized Soil Blocks	Burnt Bricks
<b>Trees required</b>	0	14
<b>Estimated water required</b>	6,000 litres	6,000 litres
<b>Number of bricks needed for a 4 x 4 meter house</b>	1,664	13,824
<b>Cost per house (USD)</b>	\$832	\$1,105
<b>Construction labour (USD)</b>	\$200	\$400
<b>Total costs (USD)</b>	\$1,032	\$1,505
<b>Difference in cost</b>	\$473 (approx 30%)	

There are also simpler alternative construction options available in areas where authorities do not allow for the construction of permanent structures. Temporary and reusable shelters can be built to replicate traditional Darfuri grass shelters that normally rely on the use of wood. Metal frame shelters with bamboo or zinc roofs, for example, benefit the humanitarian response as IDPs forced to flee conflict or flooding can dismantle their housing and take it with them. Another advantage is that when IDPs return home, the metal frames can be reused for others in need of shelter.

Source: UNHABITAT 2009

Other initiatives with the same aim of reducing pressure on already dwindling natural resources include the use of fuel efficient stoves, using alternative construction techniques for latrines, for example with the use of concrete slabs instead of wood, and the inclusion of tree planting in early recovery projects.

Source: JEU

# 3. Environmental Considerations in

Humanitarian operations have a high risk of negatively impacting on the environment, the effects of which may be far reaching and long-lasting, affecting not only the physical environment but also the health, well-being and livelihoods of affected and host communities and increasing the risk for secondary or future disasters.

Different components of emergency and recovery programmes can be expected to have different environment-related impacts, both in scale and nature. As per the case study in chapter 2.3.2, one of the most visible and commonly recorded impacts of forced human displacement is deforestation and habitat degradation through cutting trees for construction wood for making charcoal and/or for direct use in household cooking. At the height of the 1994-1996 refugee crisis in Tanzania, for example, a total of 570km<sup>2</sup> of forest was affected by people cutting trees for shelter and fuel, of which 167 km<sup>2</sup> was severely deforested (UNHCR, 2001). In a comparable situation, an environmental impact assessment carried out in Zimbabwe in 1994, when Mozambican refugees had returned to their homelands, showed a reduction of 58 per cent in the woodland cover around camps (UNHCR, 2001).

Other examples of negative impacts from humanitarian crises include:

- depletion of groundwater by over-extraction which can lead to salt intrusion or a reduction of yield in previously existing wells and boreholes. For example, in 2006, in the Abu Shouk IDP camp in North Darfur, five of twelve boreholes had already run dry from over-extraction, indicating a substantial drop in the water table as the groundwater reserves could no longer match the 1,000m<sup>3</sup> being extracted each day (Tearfund 2007);
- pollution of ground water reservoirs and/or surface water bodies;
- rangeland degradation on account of increased livestock numbers that often exceed a region's carrying capacity;
- inappropriate disposal of accumulated solid and liquid waste. For example, initial post-tsunami clean-up operations in the Maldives frequently worsened conditions by piling debris – including demolition waste contaminated with asbestos, household

waste from former dumpsites, vegetation, metals, animal remains and hazardous compounds – on the beaches, where it would either wash off into the sea or threaten groundwater (UNEP, 2005).

- uncontrolled use of natural resources as a direct means of income generation and livelihood support, for example, charcoal making in Somalia where native woodland is now disappearing at an alarming rate (IRIN 2009) ; and
- excessive and/or inappropriate use or disposal of chemicals such as those used for vector control or in water treatment.

## Box 3. From wood to concrete – favouring the environment

An international NGO in Darfur was constructing around 5,000 latrines each year. The most commonly used model required about eight wooden poles for slab support and construction. These, however, also needed replacement approximately every two years when they broke or got infested with termites. The use of pre-fabricated concrete slabs is now being promoted as an alternative, offering a more environmentally friendly and durable solution.

NRC. Camp Management Toolkit. 2008.

A number of concerns are also often created or exacerbated by humanitarian organisations – and the related support programmes – by their presence and activities. In Darfur, for example, the relief economy has become a significant factor in the deforestation process (UNEP, 2007).

Some key, and often recurrent, issues which need to be highlighted and considered during emergency preparedness and response include:

- deforestation driven by a surge in brick making, often in energy inefficient kilns (see case study in chapter 2.3.2);
- altered economic incentives which impact natural resource use, for example through gravel extraction, brick making and timber provision for the construction of accommodation and office facilities for humanitarian organisations;

# Humanitarian Operations

- opening up remote areas by all-weather roads can attract businesses with negative environmental consequences, as seen, for example, in large-scale charcoal making in Sudanese refugee camps in South Sudan; and
- related changes in demographics – at least temporarily – as the presence of humanitarian organisations encourages an increase in population density around the facilities and services they provide. This, again, commonly puts pressure on often limited natural resources such as drinking water.

## Box 4. Poor water management risks health

In a rapid environmental assessment of the Kalma, Otash and Bajoum IDP camps, Darfur, poor wastewater management was observed where water from taps was not drained properly and pools of water were starting to collect. Such conditions attract disease-carrying vectors and could contribute to other illnesses. In addition to being an environmental health issue, this example also shows the irresponsible use of water in a region where water scarcity is a major problem.

Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. 2004.



Credit: UNEP/PCDMB

*Proper water installation in an IDP camp, Sudan*

Consideration of environmental impacts and their links with human health, livelihoods and survival must, however, be balanced with regard to the efficient delivery of emergency and recovery assistance. For this reason, it is useful to focus on some of the key and often recurring environmental concerns which relate to specific clusters or sectors and some of the possible solutions to these issues or risks.

This table presents some of the key environmental issues that can arise in emergencies and corresponding humanitarian activities that can minimise negative environmental impacts.

**Table 1. Key environmental issues and corresponding humanitarian activities**

Cluster/ Sector	Key issues linked to the environment	Humanitarian activities that can minimise negative environmental impact
<b>Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental degradation and sexual and gender based violence can occur during fuel wood collection for domestic energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce need for fuelwood for domestic energy by promoting alternatives sources of fuel, food that does not require cooking, or fuel-efficient stoves</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improper management of healthcare waste, expired medicines or chemicals required for health protection (e.g. water disinfection)</li> <li>Soil and water contamination, ash from incineration and the transmission of diseases from infected bandages or body tissues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure safe collection and disposal of health care waste, particularly from hospitals, mobile clinics and while transporting biological samples</li> </ul>
<b>Shelter, Non Food Items (NFI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsustainable or expensive supply of shelter construction materials</li> <li>Inappropriate shelter design and selection of site for a specific need, community or culture, leading to misuse or non-use</li> <li>Unsustainable use of timber in shelter construction leading to deforestation and soil erosion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelter location should be guided by an environmental assessment to avoid disaster prone locations. Local people must be consulted to ensure acceptance of shelter solutions</li> <li>Minimise the impacts on forest resources through sustainable sourcing and creation of community woodlots</li> </ul>
<b>Camp Coordination and Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land compacting and degradation, erosion and biodiversity loss</li> <li>Unsustainable supply of natural resources (e.g. timber, fuelwood sand, stones or gravel)</li> <li>Improper decommissioning of camps and pit latrines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) and implement Community Environmental Action Plan (CEAP) for all planned and existing camps</li> <li>When closing camps, take measures to address significant environmental damage that may have accrued during the lifespan of a camp – both within the immediate environs as well as the broader landscape of a camp, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- removing immediate and obvious hazards from the area;</li> <li>- repairing– to the extent possible – any serious level of environmental degradation that may have taken place;</li> <li>- leaving the site in a state that would allow local people to engage directly in subsequent activities, for example agriculture if that was the land's former use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Logistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate disposal of construction, packaging waste, fuel, waste oil and tires</li> <li>Procurement of goods produced through unsustainable practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where applicable, promote the use of oil spill kits and ensure proper hazardous materials management</li> <li>Ensure sustainable resource extraction for road and air strip construction</li> </ul>

Source: JEU and UNEP/PCDMB

## Environmental Considerations in Humanitarian Operations

Cluster/ Sector	Key issues linked to the environment	Humanitarian activities that can minimize negative environmental impact
<b>Early Recovery and Disaster Waste Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable use of natural resources for reconstruction and livelihoods</li> <li>• Improper land use and urban planning Inappropriate building designs or choices of reconstruction materials</li> <li>• Unequal access to natural resources and changes in tenure</li> <li>• Use of fired bricks contributes to deforestation through the need for trees to burn bricks</li> <li>• Improper management of disaster waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and livelihood considerations should be integrated into return and livelihood planning</li> <li>• Cash for work projects should focus on sustainable livelihoods to build resilience, e.g. agro forestry and sustainable management of water for irrigation</li> <li>• Key issues on which to focus could include water, sanitation, waste management, sustainable woodlots (fuel and shelter), soil conservation and rangeland management</li> <li>• Replace the use of fired bricks with SSBs or mud bricks</li> <li>• Involve communities in the construction of their own houses and/or create new income generating opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed opportunities to foster environmental stewardship as an integral part of education and training activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental education and awareness components should be integrated into community sensitisation programmes and school curricula in IDP and refugee camps. Components for inclusion should include: deforestation and sustainable use of natural resources; improved animal husbandry practices; water conservation management; and improved general environmental awareness</li> <li>• Environmentally sustainable construction and procurement should be ensured for the construction of schools and education facilities</li> <li>• Tree planting can be carried out in schools and garden spaces, areas of high erosion risk, coastal areas and riverbeds</li> </ul>
<b>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-pumping of groundwater aquifers</li> <li>• Improper rehabilitation and decommissioning of wells</li> <li>• Water contamination from sewage disposal</li> <li>• Improper disposal of solid waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct assessments of sustainable water yields before well drilling and carry out groundwater monitoring of wells to ensure natural recharge is not exceeded</li> <li>• Involve communities in the preparation and implementation of drought mitigation measures if there is a risk of groundwater depletion</li> <li>• Raise local awareness on importance of water conservation, and on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as a means to ensure sustainable water supply</li> <li>• Promote innovative approaches to water management such as rooftop rainwater harvesting, grey water re-use and eco sanitation</li> <li>• Avoid timber for latrine construction</li> <li>• Design and implement a community led solid waste collection, sorting and composting scheme – in camp and urban/peri-urban situations, waste collection, sorting and disposal can become an income-generating activity</li> </ul>
<b>Food Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper disposal of food packaging waste</li> <li>• Environmental degradation and possibly security risks through increased need for fuel wood/water collection for cooking due to the selection of food that may require long cooking time or large quantities of water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that assessment to determine food selection includes a fuel assessment to understand types of food that involve minimal cooking</li> <li>• Generally, food provided should not require long cooking time or large quantities of water</li> <li>• Include fuel-efficient cooking techniques (e.g. pre-soaking beans, sheltering cooking fires, etc.) in training and sensitisation activities</li> <li>• Food for work projects can incorporate simple environmental action plans developed by the communities and local authorities</li> </ul>

# 4. Analysis of Environmental Mainstreaming

Seven years after the initial DfID funded study (ERM, 2007) the present study found that all of the previously expressed needs and challenges to support the effective mainstreaming of environment were still relevant and were not being addressed in a consistent manner, although progress has been made in some areas. These included ensuring that cross-cutting themes like environment are effectively addressed and prioritised; the low environmental awareness of humanitarian practitioners; the lack of integration of environment into programme tools and processes; lack of awareness, understanding, standardisation and use of existing tools for environmental assessments and insufficient evidence of their successful application; and the lack accountability at agency level to ensure that humanitarian agencies fulfil their environmental mandates or requirements. This study also identified additional needs and challenges, as outlined in the following sections.

Mainstreaming should not be viewed as a short-term fix. It is a long-term institutional commitment which, to be effective, will require significant changes from the current status quo. In a humanitarian context – where funding is by nature often short-term – the concept of mainstreaming faces additional challenges in comparison with longer-term development initiatives.

The notion of “mainstreaming” or “integrating” the environment into humanitarian planning and response is not new. What is clear from the current study, however, is that these concepts evoke very different sentiments amongst different people and institutions. While significant resources have been devoted to supporting focused environmental mainstreaming in the development context – most often through government ministries – the same cannot be said of humanitarian operations.

Lessons can, however, be learned from mainstreaming attempts in the development context, some of which are highlighted in chapter 4.3.

## Box 5. Proposed definition of environmental mainstreaming

For the purpose of this study, environmental mainstreaming is defined as the active, timely and systematic inclusion of environmental concerns as an inter-sectoral issue at all stages of humanitarian action with the aim to protect lives, livelihoods, and sustainable resource management.

## 4.1 BENEFITS OF MAINSTREAMING

If environmental concerns are not considered in humanitarian response there can be serious impacts on the effectiveness of humanitarian programmes and well-being of affected communities. Policies for humanitarian assistance have by and large concentrated on the protection of affected victims of conflict and disasters and the provision of basic services such as health, food, shelter and education. Few such policies – or associated practices – take heed of the environment and the many services and resources it provides and the multiple negative impacts that not considering environment can have, for example on livelihoods and protection. As a consequence, serious environmental degradation and destruction has repeatedly occurred, bringing added negative and long-term impacts on affected and vulnerable populations. It can also become a serious impediment to recovery.

One of the most important but least appreciated links is that when environmental issues are integrated into humanitarian response both vulnerability and disaster risk and conflict can be reduced. This combination is key as it can:

- reduce the environmental drivers of conflict and competition over scarce and limited natural resources;
- enhance capacity to avoid and/or reduce disaster impacts through environmental management;
- enable physical, economic and human rehabilitation to be safer and more sustainable;
- increase resilience and reduce the risk of at least certain disasters; and
- link humanitarian assistance to immediate livelihood needs.

## 4.2 THE HUMANITARIAN PERSPECTIVE ON ENVIRONMENTAL MAINSTREAMING

Environmental mainstreaming is talked about as a general concept within the humanitarian community. There is, however, a gap between the understanding of the concept and how this should translate into practice at field level. For most people interviewed as part of this study, environmental mainstreaming seems to relate only to a specific sector or, more often, a specific activity or set of stand-alone activities, such as planting a tree or erecting a solar panel. This highlights the prevailing confusion over the definition of mainstreaming between individual environmental initiatives and the broader idea

that environment must be systematically considered at every stage of a response.

In general, there appears to be no clear vision among humanitarian practitioners, institutions and donors on how the environment – and its links with all sectors – should be addressed in a more consistent, holistic and strategic manner. Some donors contacted through this study expressed their confusion over what it meant to integrate the environment – “...it is not our mandate to have specific objectives focusing on such an issue [environment]” and that “it does not correspond to the timeframe of humanitarian action”.

#### Box 6. Addressing environment in a timely way

“The Liberia experience demonstrates that the Camp Co-ordination and Camp Management (CCCM) function extends beyond the establishment and management of camps. It also incorporates the managed closure of camps in a way that promotes environmental rehabilitation and minimises the potential for grievances and conflict... the extensive work on environmental rehabilitation serves as a model which may be drawn upon elsewhere.”

Real Time Evaluation of UNHCR’s IDP Operation in Liberia. 2007

### 4.3 MAINSTREAMING LESSONS FROM DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Mainstreaming has been a key mechanism advocated by international agencies for the effective adoption and implementation of sustainable development, environmental management and climate change adaptation objectives in a development context (Nunan et al 2012a). Lessons learned from mainstreaming in development initiatives include (Dalal-Clayton and Bass, 2009, Nunan et al 2012a, b):

- Environmental mainstreaming is a complex, multi-issue, multi-layered, context-specific subject in which effective approaches are those tailored to the local context and involving the right actors
- Environmental mainstreaming challenges are more due to understanding and handling institutional

needs and governance than they are about understanding environment

- Environmental mainstreaming can only happen with strong political drive and commitment
- A key reported challenge has been to secure inter-departmental co-operation and to have, for example, government department and ministries to take on agendas that may be seen as outside their core business
- The establishment of a dedicated Environment Unit within a ministry or across departments cannot alone deliver on environmental mainstreaming. Such structures might look good on paper but are not effective.
- These experiences highlight the need for institutional commitment and financial support as well as close collaboration between respective governments, development organisations, donors and qualified technical advisors.

### 4.4 LESSONS FROM MAINSTREAMING GENDER

A comparable situation for mainstreaming in the humanitarian context is that of gender which was also identified as an initial cross-cutting issue during the Humanitarian Reform.

Many of those consulted as part of this study referenced the comprehensive approach designed and implemented by the IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), which seeks to build capacity of humanitarian actors at country level to mainstream gender in all sectors of humanitarian response<sup>16</sup>. Two initiatives of note are Gender Advisors and the Gender Marker, which have both been replicated for environment. A recent evaluation of the GenCap project (2011) found that both initiatives have made effective contributions to raising awareness of gender with humanitarian actors. However, the evaluation team also concluded that there was “little evidence that this translated into concrete changes in the implementation of humanitarian projects on the ground” (Steets and Meier, 2011).

Environmental mainstreaming should learn from the experience of gender and focus efforts of integration on measures that will help to transcend this policy-practice divide.

<sup>16</sup>. Similar provisions are currently being made available through the Norwegian Refugee Council (which also funds the GenCap) on Protection and Capacity Assessments.

#### 4.5 SHORTFALLS IN THE CURRENT APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

This study highlighted a number of other prominent shortfalls in the current approach to environment and humanitarian action:

- lack of contact with, or capacity building for, environment-related host government institutions, sometimes to the extent of their total exclusion from decisions taken in relation to natural resource use and management;
- inadequate policy communication from management to project planners and field practitioners, meaning that established environmental policies are not reflected in programme design and project objectives and activities;
- limited institutional capacity for environmental integration, as seen in the lack of dedicated environmental expertise, limited access to technical expertise, and a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of environmental integration;
- lack of consistently supported, tailored capacity development systems to demonstrate how to effectively integrate key environmental issues into programmes and practices;
- weak evidence base on which to build a strong and lasting case for environmental issues to be factored into all planning and implementation stages of a humanitarian operation. This sentiment was also echoed by a recent DfID evidence-based study (Kelly, 2013);
- high turnover of project personnel, which is a recognised weakness in many humanitarian operations; and
- a consistent failure to translate environmental assessment or evaluation recommendations into action. This is seen as a major and recurrent blockage to frequently observed environmental impacts – ground water depletion, deforestation, pollution, rangeland degradation – which, if not addressed in an appropriate and timely manner could in many cases result in future problems for both affected people and humanitarian operations.

Reasons underpinning these shortcomings are expressed throughout this study but two important considerations stand out – ownership and accountability. Who actually requests studies such as environmental assessments to be undertaken? Who then ensures that follow-up actions are taken? The general lack

of ownership is often linked with the fact that many such studies in the past have not been connected with national strategic priorities, instead being stand-alone initiatives undertaken by a concerned agency. Effectively this then means that their findings receive only secondary attention when it comes to prioritising and funding project activities. Gaining support and being accountable for translating findings into practice is currently an essential missing step in the process.

*“Cases of environmental damage arising from humanitarian assistance are not well incorporated into the official literature, in part because they reflect poorly on the assistance providers.”*

*Irish Aid. 2007.*

#### 4.6 BARRIERS TO ENVIRONMENTAL MAINSTREAMING

Identifying possible or probable impediments is vital if the concept of environmental mainstreaming is to be pursued in humanitarian planning and response. While it is acknowledged that substantive documentation of past experiences is a gap, on the basis of consultations undertaken as a core part of this study the following barriers emerge:

- understanding the issue: practitioners are often not sure what “environment” really means and what sorts of impacts they should be considering as they design projects. This commonly leads to a lack of consideration of environmental issues before an emergency, both among agencies already present and with knowledge of the situation as well as co-ordinating bodies such as OCHA and the IASC;
- understanding the concept of environmental mainstreaming: despite its cross-sectoral relevance, there is a clear lack of vision on how environment should be addressed across programmes and it is often siloed into particular sectors or initiatives. For some, putting up a solar panel is enough to justify that environment has been mainstreamed into an operation. This results in scattered, stand-alone environmental projects which serve only to distract from the greater need;
- little recognition of environment as a life-saving priority, despite clearly recognising that people’s immediate survival after a disaster is often based on accessing natural resources such as water, wild foods, and wood for cooking heating and shelter construction;



- lack of institutional commitment at all levels, from implementing agencies to UN agencies and the donor community; and a total lack of accountability and seemingly no intention redress this situation – at all levels;
- difficulty identifying ‘environmental champions’ at the right level, within an institution or mechanism;
- lack of practical solutions: even if field practitioners are able to correctly identify environmental impacts, they lack practical ideas for cost-effective responses;
- chronic lack of funding for environmental initiatives at all stages of the programme cycle and limitations imposed by annual funding cycles;
- lack of metrics by which to compare and evaluate environmental impacts of field operations;
- competing pressures: practitioners are subject to numerous competing pressures, particularly during the proposal development and the integration of cross-cutting issues do not receive the same attention as core relief efforts;
- poor coordination at and between all levels, even among “traditional” humanitarian responders;
- exclusion of the host government’s involvement and consultations, primarily with respect to institutions responsible for natural resource management, which are often outside of the humanitarian sphere of contacts;
- expertise: those who screen proposals at the cluster level often lack environmental expertise and can do little more than confirm that something has determined to deal with probable environmental impacts, without verification or suggestions for a better response. Also, it is often difficult to access needed resources on time, in particular technical assistance, primarily during and immediately following a sudden onset emergency; and
- mandate: no agency has the mandate to enforce the principle of environmental mainstreaming.

*“Humanitarian field staff are over-inundated with mainstreamed concepts and initiatives. Environmental issues are likely to take a back seat to more immediate life-saving interventions.”*

*Interview response*

### Box 7. Pay due attention to governance

In a review of post-tsunami experiences among South Asian countries, many of the recognised short-comings were in relation to the lack of co-ordination. This included the lack of good practices to transition from relief to recovery and inappropriate spending on fishing boats and mangrove restoration. Poor governance was identified as a critical issue in this context together with the difficulty of adapting from the short-term needs of relief to the longer-term scope of development, as well as policies lacking scope, means of implementation and enforcement.

IUCN. 2009. Sharing Experiences and Lessons Learned in Disaster Risk Management

### 4.7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAINSTREAMING

Many highly vulnerable settings are at risk of disaster and conflict. For environmental issues to be consistently given the profile and consideration they need in humanitarian planning and response, the “business as usual” model needs to be revised.

This section discusses a two-fold approach to moving forward on EHA: first, mainstreaming and strengthening humanitarian programme cycle management including at country-level through cluster specific action plans and, second, strengthening existing EHA initiatives.

Under the current humanitarian coordination structure, the IASC would seem to offer the best opportunity to facilitate and accommodate environmental mainstreaming in planning and response through a range of entry points such as:

- directives and guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators and Cluster Lead Agencies;
- endorsement of a few core environmental standards which should be reflected in more than one sector;
- recognition and endorsement of specific and generic tools (e.g. a rapid environmental assessment);
- training and capacity building; and
- establishment of an accountability mechanism to ensure compliance and validation.

In an attempt to reverse the long-standing, top down, approach to humanitarian planning, the first step should be to influence preparedness through parallel needs assessments of all clusters/sectors to determine what, if any, additional technical guidance or operational manuals could support them with planning and integrating the environment in projects/programmes. This has already been done to some degree with, for example, the Shelter and WASH clusters but should be revisited to determine to what extent this guidance has been integrated into preparedness and response and with what effect.

One of the main entry points to influencing and enabling change possibly lies with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. This cycle refers to a series of actions that are planned and undertaken in support to international humanitarian response mechanisms. Clear links are established with national and local authorities during the response, though in the context of the present study, it should be highlighted that this often excludes contact with ministries and services responsible for natural resource management.

This study seeks to determine how precisely environment must be accorded higher attention in anticipatory emergency response planning and not only as a reactive. Particular challenges with this are seen with “Level 3” Emergencies<sup>17</sup>.

In addition to integration into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, another approach suggested to integrate environment into a response is to conduct a strategic environmental assessment of an emergency context, via the JEU or their partners for example, to define the core/key environmental priorities of the country or crisis and clearly lay out what each cluster or sector can do to address these needs. Clusters and humanitarian partners would need to reflect these priorities into their action plans. It is recommended that this approach be further developed and trialled as a complimentary approach to mainstreaming environment into the HPC tools and processes.

<sup>17</sup>. A Level 3 Emergency is defined as a “major, sudden onset humanitarian crisis triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilization”. Humanitarian System-wide Emergency Activation: Definition and Procedures. IASC WG Paper March 2012.

#### 4.7.1 Influence and strengthen humanitarian programme cycle management

There are five stages to the HPC with emergency preparedness underpinning the entire cycle:

- needs assessment and analysis;
- strategic planning;
- resource mobilisation;
- implementation and monitoring; and
- operational review and evaluation.

**Figure 4. The humanitarian programme cycle**



Source: OCHA

#### Preparedness

Emergency preparedness is a distinct element of, and underpins, the entire cycle. Preparedness refers to actions taken to enhance the readiness of humanitarian actors – national and international – to respond to a potential crisis. This is seen as the most important element of the cycle within which to highlight concerns over some of the most crucial environmental issues, including most commonly: groundwater availability and the need for informed management and monitoring; pollution, including salt intrusion and potential chemical leakages; and deforestation where links could be foreseen for meeting shelter or domestic cooking needs.

Equally important is the need for the humanitarian community to avoid establishing refugee and IDP camps in hazard areas such as floodplains, close to protected areas or sites of natural/historic importance, or to be aware of possible causes of local conflicts such as water scarcity or resource depletion.

## Box 8. The need for good planning

Crowded conditions, poor sanitation implementation and flooding soon caused further environmental damage and increased the risk of infectious disease in the post Port-au-Prince (Haiti) emergency response. Toilets and latrines, when present in shelter sites, were unhygienic and did not meet Sphere standards. In the absence of a clear co-ordination protocol, many agencies became involved in management, but without co-ordination. Infrastructure was lacking to treat sewage evacuated from toilets and latrines, the immediate plan being to discharge sewage at a landfill site and in other informal locations. By concentrating sewage disposal, however, the environmental impact could have been exacerbated, creating an anoxic dead zone.

Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment: Haiti  
Earthquake - January 12, 2010.  
Sun Mountain and CHF International.

The IASC's Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) initiative is an attempt to identify potential priority actions, identify gaps and possible constraints, strengthen readiness and ensure that coordination mechanisms are in place. The 2013 Guidance for Inter-Agency Emergency Response Preparedness refers to the environment but does not provide any practical steps on how to address this, for example as part of contingency planning.

A priority action recommended in this study is that practical entry/inclusion points be identified or created where environment can be factored into emergency preparedness and contingency planning, including baseline assessments. This will require coordination with Humanitarian Country Teams and Cluster Co-ordinators, but needs high-level endorsement and ownership in order to be effective.

## Needs Assessment and Analysis

Timely, coordinated assessments and analysis identify the needs of affected people and provide the evidence base for planning the response. The current problem identification tool used is the Multi-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), which is an IASC-endorsed approach to undertaking a joint, multi-sector assessment during the first two weeks of a new emergency or a rapid deterioration of an existing emergency.

It is intended to facilitate a common understanding of overall humanitarian needs and provide decision makers with adequate, accurate and reliable information.

Environmental issues do not feature prominently in the MIRA: there is no specific guidance provided on how to consider environment, although reference is made to the environment and cross-cutting issues in the overarching framework.

Some recent emergencies have benefitted from either a EIA or REA (see, for example, JEU, 2005; Sun Mountain and CHF International, 2010). External technical assistance may be required to initiate and co-ordinate this preliminary assessment, but it should be done in conjunction with government, partners and in consultation with community members.

## Strategic Planning

On the basis of information gleaned, coordinated planning allows for the formulation of strategic objectives, what needs to be done to meet them, and how much it will cost. During the strategic planning phase, environmental considerations should be integrated by ensuring they are well adapted to the context, well understood and shared, with the capacities of providing adequate orientation for the whole humanitarian community. Aggregation of environmental expertise and experience should be facilitated.

The response plan is coordinated by the Humanitarian Coordinator and guides the international response, informing sectoral/cluster/organisation planning and implementation. Gaps in the response should be identified and addressed. Here, again, the environment is mentioned in the available guidance as a cross-cutting issue, but with no specific instruction attached to this. In addition, current guidance on this phase specifies that a complete strategic response plan will contain inter alia "a limited number of cross-cutting strategic objectives (no more than three to five), each of which will require a coordinated multi-sector/cluster response", meaning that even amongst cross-cutting issues some prioritisation is expected/required.

One opportunity now available to help influence this process could be through the inclusion of an environment marker which is being used by UNEP and OCHA to help integrate environmental concerns into the HWP in specific countries (see chapter 2.3.1).

## Resource Mobilisation

During the resource mobilisation phase, a review of potential environmental impacts and opportunities – based on previous environmental assessments – should be conducted to ensure that projects and programmes that are funded have considered the implications of their activities on the environment – both directly and indirectly.

Specialist technical assistance might again be required at this point in time: knowing where to turn to for such help is therefore important. This can lead to discussion between donors and partners ensuring the operationalisation of issues as well as the raising of awareness.

Environmental projects are unlikely to receive dedicated funding from humanitarian aid budgets at this point in time. It therefore becomes all the more important that within each humanitarian sector/cluster environmental impacts are clearly appraised, understood, and monitored by the responsible organisations and agencies.

## Implementation and Monitoring

Monitoring of agreed output and outcome indicators and the tracking of financial information demonstrates results and informs decision-making about the plan. During the monitoring and accountability phase the risk of environmental impacts on programmes as well as risk of programmes on the environment should be considered. Monitoring teams should be well trained on identifying links between programme activities and the environment, not all of which will be immediately visible.

Both monitoring and accountability need to relate to baseline information from earlier assessments, need to be linked to clear indicators and need to result in practical feedback to all stakeholders – government, humanitarian organisations, partners and community members.

## Operational Review and Evaluation

In terms of lessons learned and practices which could be replicated, adapted or scaled up there is a significant gap when it comes to the environment. This sentiment is echoed throughout this study and was aired by a large number of people consulted.

Capturing information on the environment begins with peoples' understanding of this issue, as discussed in chapter 1.

Failing to see the many horizontal (sectoral) and vertical (institutional) links between humanitarian response and the environment implies that lessons will not be learned, nor duly recorded. This is an area which needs urgent attention so that a broader base of empirical evidence is documented by all parties as a baseline reference. Stronger evidence-based evaluation will inform and support decision-making and overall programme management.

### Box 9. Improving social and environmental management: sustainable development and the ICRC

In November 2011, the ICRC drew up a sustainable development framework which commits the organisation to integrating sustainable development into its humanitarian work. The aim is to minimise the negative impact of ICRC activities on the environment, while making best use of financial resources and being a socially responsible humanitarian agency.

The framework recognises that:

- the conflict environments in which the ICRC operates often lack the basic infrastructure on which to base environmental protection, and people affected by conflict may develop coping mechanisms that harm the environment, such as cutting down forests for firewood;
- the effects of behaviour on the environment are complex, and it is not always easy to see what behaviour will have what effect – perhaps at another time and in another place; and
- the effects of behaviour on the environment vary from one time and place to another.

In January 2012, the ICRC launched a pilot project in four delegations, with the task of improving social and environmental management in the field. A review of progress in 2012 noted that while progress has been made in relation to sustainable development and that the amount of initiatives put in place is encouraging, some key issues remain, which could jeopardize progress made. These included staff time (people volunteer for this work) and a need for technical training.

Sustainable Development at the ICRC 2013.  
<http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/2013/sustainable-development-2012-report.pdf>



Credit: UNEP PCDMB

*Woman carrying wood, Nigeria*

# 5. Tracking Environmental Funding

This chapter considers financial resources and funding policies related to environment and humanitarian action and the degree to which the environment features in selected donor's humanitarian policies and practices and contributions. The aim is to understand the current state of environmental humanitarian donorship, examine examples of good practice, identify gaps and consider possible criteria are for good environmental donorship that should be promoted to further the mainstreaming of environment in humanitarian action.

Through this study, the following main fund tracking systems were identified in the humanitarian context: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS). Each tracking system is examined below in more detail.

Funds allocated by two UN agencies – UNEP and UNHCR – were also reviewed given that both organisations routinely engage with environmental issues in crises contexts.

*“Good humanitarian assistance can improve current environmental conditions and reduce environmental damage in the future, thus reducing the risk of future crises.”*

*Irish Aid. 2007.*

## 5.1 THE OECD CREDITOR REPORTING SYSTEM

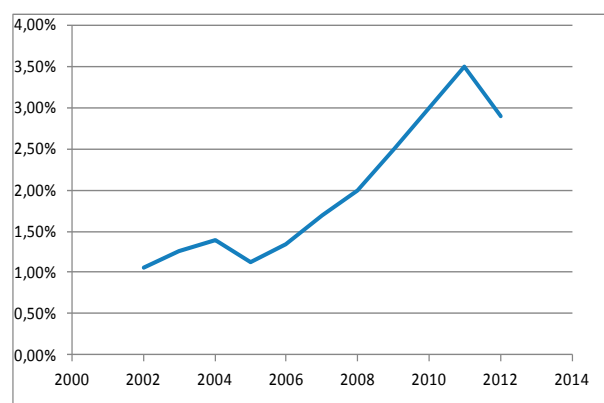
The OECD's DAC includes the European Commission and 23 government donors, each of whom has to report their Official Development Assistance (ODA) – which includes humanitarian aid – through the CRS: all countries have to use it in the same way and with the same codes. This system serves to assess how much aid each DAC donor is providing, how much goes to each sector and what country it goes to. Using the International Development Statistics online database, the amount of money spent on ODA by DAC countries was analysed (Figure 3) with respect to the environment and compared with the overall amount of money spent per year.

This analysis shows an increase in each of the following:

- the percentage of total ODA spending on environment, on average, over the last ten years (Figure 5);

- the amount of money spent on environmental protection activities or marked with the OECD Environment Marker (Figure 6); and
- humanitarian aid that includes an environmental component (Figure 7).

**Figure 5. Percentage of ODA money spent on the environment by DAC countries (2002-2012)**



Source: Groupe URD, from OECD Creditor Reporting System data

Figure 5 notes an increase in money spent on the environment from one per cent in 2002 to almost four per cent in 2010, with a dip to just under three per cent in 2012. The information presented in Figure 5, however, has limits as the data do not specifically concern humanitarian aid. Moreover, it only includes general environmental protection activities and does not take into account the environmental content included in the activities of other sectors. There is, nonetheless, a clear trend which shows that a greater percentage of funding is being spent on environmental protection activities compared with the start of the millennium.

In 1998, the DAC started to monitor aid with global environmental objectives – as defined in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification – through the CRS, using the so-called Environment and Rio markers.

In this context, in their reporting to the CRS, donors are requested to indicate for each activity whether or not it targets environment (one marker) and the Rio Conventions (four markers: climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and desertification).

Aid activities are then marked in relation to whether the environment or a Rio objective is the “principal objective”, a “significant objective” or is “not targeted”<sup>19</sup>.

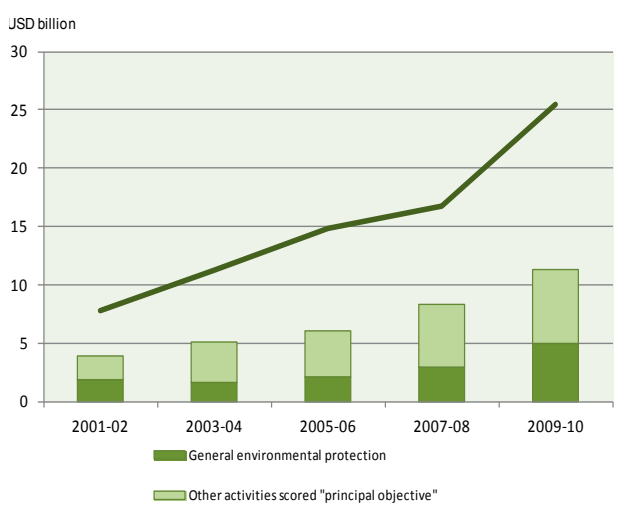
<sup>19</sup> Incorporating all environmental sub-sectors: general environmental protection; environmental policy and administrative management; biosphere protection; biodiversity; site preservation; flood protection/control; and environmental education/training.

The OECD Environment Marker<sup>20</sup> identifies activities that are defined as follows:

- intended to produce an improvement – or something that is diagnosed as an improvement – in the physical and/or biological environment of the recipient country, area or target group concerned; or
- including specific action to integrate environmental concerns with a range of development objectives through institution building and/or capacity development.

Typical activities related to the OECD Environment Marker are water resource policies and water management that take into account environmental and socio-economic constraints, waste management practices that bring environmental benefits, activities promoting sustainable use of energy resources such as power generation from renewable sources of energy and sustainable management of agricultural land<sup>21</sup>.

**Figure 6. Trends in aid to environment (US\$ billion) from DAC countries 2001-2010**



Source: *Aid to environment OCDE, 2012*

Figure 6 presents data on aid to environment from the DAC statistical method (the CRS - Creditor Reporting system) over the past decade. This comprises both general environmental protection activities and environment-focused aid where the environment was

<sup>19</sup>. "Principal" means the environment was an explicit objective of the activity and was fundamental in its design, "significant" means the environment was an important, but secondary, objective of the activity, "not targeted" means that the activity was screened, but was found not to target the environment.

<sup>20</sup>. Note: a different environment marker from the OCHA/UNEP Environment Marker reviewed in chapter 2.3.1.

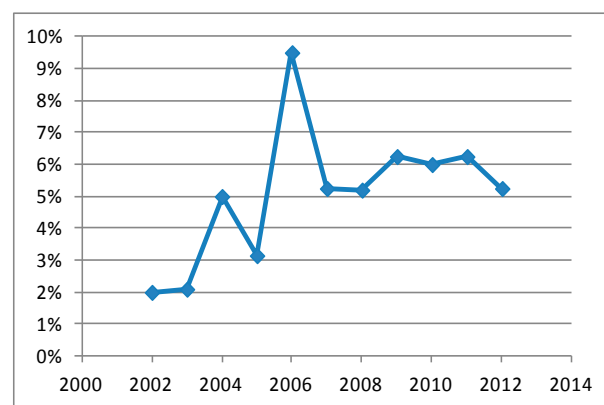
<sup>21</sup>. Converged statistical reporting directives for the creditor reporting system (CRS) and the annual DAC questionnaire – Appendix 2 – Annex 17, OECD, June 2013

a principal or significant objective through the OECD Environment Marker (in various economic sectors such as energy or water). The sum of the activities that have the environment as a principal or significant objective is referred to as the "upper-bound estimate" of environment-focused aid. Data in Figure 6 shows that there was a three-fold increase in environment-focused aid over this period, in excess of US\$25 billion in 2009-2010, representing a quarter of the bilateral sector's allocable ODA. An even greater increase took place in environment-focused aid that targeted environment as a significant objective, though not a principal objective. An analysis of the figures by individual donors thus indicates that there is a general increase in funding to the environment.

OECD Environment Marker data, however, do not provide the exact amount of aid allocated or spent. Instead, they give an indication – a best estimate – of aid flows and describe the extent to which donors address the marker's objectives in their respective aid programmes.

After reviewing environment marker data from the overall DAC reporting, Figure 7 examines the specific DAC humanitarian aid in the context of the OECD Environment Marker.

**Figure 7. Percentage among DAC members of total humanitarian aid marked as having a principal or a significant environmental objective over the past decade**



Source: *Groupe URD, from OECD Creditor Reporting System data*

Similar to Figure 7, when considering humanitarian aid the environment appears to be more frequently considered over the years. Humanitarian aid, however, remains at the margin of DAC members' sector of aid.

<sup>22</sup>. Aid to Environment Development Co-operation Report 2012, OECD, 2012

The CRS database has a number of strengths and weaknesses with regard to both the Environment and Rio markers, as summarised below:

- **strengths** – official definition, simple methodology, unique tool, granular, comprehensive, allows comparisons and is transparent; and
- **weaknesses** – differences in interpretation in the scoring system, definition and eligibility criteria are not precise enough, there is a need to set up a quality control and it does not measure effectiveness and results achieved.

#### Box 10. The DAC Network on Environment and Development Co-operation (ENVIRONET)

In November 2013, DAC members established the Joint ENVIRONET and WP-STAT Task Team to improve the Rio Markers, Environment and Development Finance Statistics. ENVIRONET aims to “promote and facilitate the integration of environment and climate change into all aspects of development co-operation”.

From the quality review, however, it appears that there is a challenge for reporting – there is a wide variation in applying the different scores of “principal”, “significant” or “not targeted” among members, and data can be imprecise: cost elements cannot be precisely separated.

However, even though some members still face difficulties in applying the methodology, reporting has improved in recent years. Available data give an indication of the extent to which donors address the environment in their aid programmes.

Markers thus help strengthen accountability and transparency of funding by donors. Moreover, beyond quantifying and tracking funds, markers could also possibly serve as an incentive for mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian response.

Groupe URD, from OECD website and participation in the First Experts’ Meeting of the ENVIRONET-WP-STAT Task Team on OECD Rio Markers, Environment and Development Finance Statistics, 20-21 March 2014, OECD, Paris

## 5.2 THE UNOCHA FINANCIAL TRACKING SERVICE

The UN OCHA FTS is a web-based database of humanitarian aid requirements and contributions. It focuses on consolidated and flash appeals. It is a voluntary system administered by OCHA and relies, unlike the DAC system, on reporting by donors and

organisations. The information is updated every day but as the system is based on a voluntary mechanism, it is not comprehensive. Moreover, there is a risk of double counting as some agencies and donors may report the same information at different times.

Funding is tracked according to donor countries, destination countries, years, recipient organisations, appeals and sectors. In this system, the different sectors are: agriculture, coordination and support services, economic recovery and infrastructure, education, food, health, mine action, protection/human rights/rule of law, safety and security of staff and operations, shelter and non-food items, and water and sanitation, as well as two others entitled “multi-sector” (usually used for refugee operations) and “sector not yet specified”. Funding can also be tracked according to an organisation.

The environment is not a specific sector in the FTS. Therefore, funding that relates to the environment could be included in any other sector depending on the project/donor perspective. This makes it impossible to monitor environmental funding, the problem being not the lack of information but the lack of a tool to track environmental financial flows.

Although the FTS does not allow an analysis of financial flows dedicated to environment in humanitarian action, the possibility to integrate a marker such as those developed by the CRS, or the Environment Marker<sup>23</sup>, should be considered. The sharing of experiences related to the CRS environment and Rio markers initiative would undoubtedly help integrate the environment more effectively into the FTS.

## 5.3 DIRECT ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDING BY UN AGENCIES

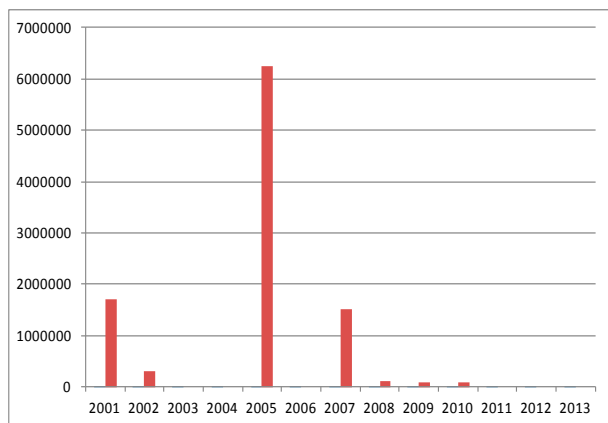
As neither of the two funding tracking systems mentioned above can give a clear picture of the amount of funding allocated to environment – and associated annual trends – data have been compiled from both UNEP and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on their respective support to environmental issues in crisis contexts.

Based on data from the FTS, Figure 8 shows the contributions to UNEP in the inter-agency appeal from 2001 to 2013, showing an inconsistent pattern over the years. As previously mentioned, however, this database does not allow funds dedicated purely to humanitarian actions to be identified.

<sup>23</sup>. Reviewed in Chapter 2



**Figure 8. Contributions to UNEP in the inter-agency appeal, 2001 - 2013**



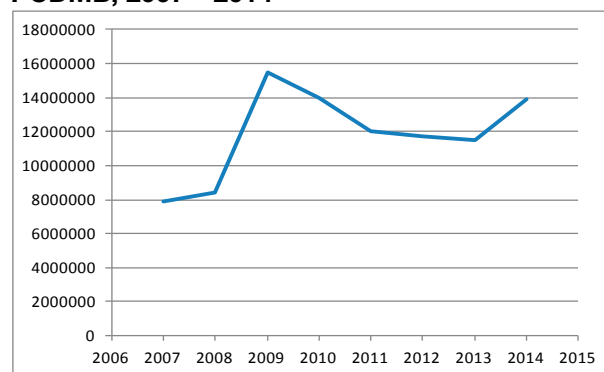
Source: Groupe URD, from Financial Tracking System data, OCHA

The nature of projects referred to in Figure 8 varies considerably. They include, for example, environmental consequences of the 2000 Kosovo conflict, an assessment of the collapse of a uranium mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2004), a regional REA after the Indian Ocean earthquake (2005), fuelwood resource security in Sudan (2007), the 2009 Darfur Timber and Energy Project and a Chemical Accident Prevention and Prep Programme in Tanzania (2013)<sup>24</sup>.

Focusing on crisis contexts where UNEP intervenes, data from its Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) presents more insight into funding allocations (Figure 9). Most of these funds are directed at early recovery and development. The PCDMB receives funding from the core budget of UNEP, which is called the Environment Fund. This fund provides core staff to PCDMB and funds some core functions such as consultancies, travel and operations. However PCDMB also secures a large percentage of overall funding by approaching donors directly. Funding from both sources has increased over the years. In addition, PCDMB receives funds from individual country framework agreements that UNEP signs with its donors, such as Norway. Figure 9 shows the evolution of global funding allocated to PCDMB from 2007 - 2014 from these three funding categories described.

<sup>24</sup>. A full list can be found at [http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=search-reporting\\_display&CQ=cq110414131428PK7VJ9PbHG&orderby=EmergencyYear&showDetails=](http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=search-reporting_display&CQ=cq110414131428PK7VJ9PbHG&orderby=EmergencyYear&showDetails=)

**Figure 9. Global funding (US\$) allocated to PCDMB, 2007 - 2014**



Note: data for 2014 may be incomplete.

Source: Groupe URD, from Financial Tracking System data, OCHA

As UNEP has limited country presence and is not a humanitarian organisation or a member of the IASC, UNEP has not been successful in mobilising funds through the consolidated appeal process. The only PCDMB submissions to date to the consolidated appeal process to receive funding was in 2010 when Ireland provided US\$135,000 to Haiti: a fraction of the overall global funding to PCDMB as seen in Figure 9.

Information on environmental funding within UNHCR is only available from 2012 (Table 2), as the previous budget system would not allow such a breakdown. In this instance, environmental data relate primarily to activities concerning natural resource management and energy. As part of its recently elaborated Global Strategy for Safe Access to Energy (2014-2017), UNHCR is now developing a database to improve the process of tracking funds for the environment.

**Table 2. Funding allocated to the environment (2012-2014)**

YEAR	AMOUNT (US\$ MILLION)
2012	24.3
2013	35.3
2014	27.3

Data presented in Table 2 are thought to be highly undervalued, as all environmental activities are not budgeted under the right objective, for example fuel-efficient stoves may be assigned to domestic items rather than the energy sector. With this caveat, in 2014, about two per cent of the total global budget is allocated for energy and the environment.

Within UNHCR, the environment is still very much considered as a long-term development issue and, despite having what is possibly the most thorough

environmental policy, supported by a wealth of technical resources, ensuring that the environment is considered in contingency planning and emergency response remains a challenge. Even in established programmes, environmental activities are constantly among the first to be cut when budgets need to be scaled back.

A further tool to note is the UNEP/OCHA Environment Marker (reviewed in chapter 2.3) that was designed to help humanitarian project managers to evaluate the environmental aspects of humanitarian projects and identify potential negative impacts on the environment resulting from their project or programme and also whether sufficient mitigation or enhancement measures were included. An important recent development in the use of the Environment Marker is that it has been included in OCHA's Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) 2014 in Sudan, South Sudan and Afghanistan. CHFs are country-based pooled funds that provide early and predictable funding to NGOs and UN agencies for their response to critical humanitarian needs and enable Humanitarian Country Teams to swiftly allocate resources where they are most needed, and to fund priority life-saving projects as identified in a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), or a similar humanitarian action plan. The inclusion of the Environment Marker in the CHF is an important step towards ensuring that humanitarian projects consider the environment, as every project has to be coded with the Environment Marker to be able to be allocated CHF funds.

In general, while there are difficulties in determining the level of funding being directed towards humanitarian response, having a system dedicated to tracking environmental funding in this sector would support overall accountability by the various actors, improve transparency and support awareness raising of this issue.

Based on this, the study will now examine how environmental considerations fare in the donor's decision-making process. For example, which donors ask for and fund environmental impact assessments? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that operational partners take the environment into consideration in their programmes? What are their selection criteria? What kinds of evaluations are carried out? These and related issues are examined below.

## 5.4 DONOR POLICIES AND FUNDING METHODS

The following section reviews the current representation of environment in donors' humanitarian strategies through an analysis of humanitarian funding guidelines to determine the extent to which environmental requirements are represented.

### 5.4.1 The environment in donors' humanitarian strategies

Environmental considerations are extensively addressed in the development sector. Specific policies for the integration of environmental issues in development co-operation have been produced by many donors. Since 1970, the National Environmental Policy Act requires all US government agencies to integrate environmental factors into their decision-making processes, including environmental assessment procedures for development assistance projects in developing countries. Similar examples include the Policy for Environmental and Climate Issues in Swedish Development Co-operation, (2010-2014), the DfID Approach to the Environment (2006), Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Policy for Environmental Sustainability (1992) and the European Consensus for Development (2006). Since 1970, the National Environmental Policy Act requires all US government agencies to integrate environmental factors into their decision-making processes, including environmental assessment procedures for development assistance projects in developing countries.

In contrast, the elaboration of such policies and guidelines focusing on the humanitarian sector is rare. One example is Irish Aid's 2007 *Environment and Humanitarian Assistance*<sup>25</sup> report, which is a practical tool for aid workers and accompanies its *Environmental Policy*. The former document explains why the environment is relevant to humanitarian action, describes the links between crises, poverty and environment and analyses opportunities for mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian assistance.

While many donors do not refer to environmental issues in their humanitarian strategy, others, such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), DfID and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have made positive advances. Sweden's *Humanitarian Strategy* (2008-2011), for example, mentions that "Sida's humanitarian assistance shall, as far as possible, consider environmental and climate aspects." A more recent document – *Saving Lives and Alleviating Suffering – Policy for Sweden's Humanitarian Assistance 2010-2016*<sup>26</sup> – specifies that Sweden seeks to ensure that:

- "humanitarian assistance helps reduce vulnerability to serious damage from natural disasters – including environment-related and climate-related disasters – to both individuals and societies"; and
- "humanitarian assistance considers environment

<sup>25</sup>. <http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/news-publications/publications/publicationsarchive/2007/november/env-and-humanitarian-assistance-irish-aid-sheet-12/>

<sup>26</sup>. <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/17/29/10/d4bb1993.pdf>

and climate aspects as far as possible, in both a short-term and a long-term perspective”.

DfID's *Saving Life, Preventing Suffering and Building Resilience: The UK government's Humanitarian Policy*, also mentions a policy goal to “ensure that our humanitarian responses do no harm and support long-term resilience and development work” and deliver the right results for affected people along with value for money for the UK taxpayer.

USAID's *Environmental Procedures*<sup>28</sup> includes a chapter on “Environmental Review in International Disaster Scenarios”, which describes the principles of environmental review as well as the procedure for invoking exemption.

While the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is not a donor, it is mentioned here as an example for donors in the humanitarian context. MSB's guideline on *Environmental Mainstreaming to Increase Quality and Effectiveness of MSB Operations (2011-2015)*, “recognises and values environment as a cross-cutting perspective to be integrated in all operations, but also as a branch of operations within humanitarian response and early recovery as well as within long-term capacity development operations within disaster risk reduction.” The MSB's approach to promoting environmental mainstreaming is guided by the following principles:

- people and the environment are interconnected;
- environmental mainstreaming is a measure to reduce vulnerability;
- an integrated environmental perspective is a damage control measure; and
- successful development co-operation is environmentally sustainable.

### Box 11. DfID – Climate and Environment Assessment Note

DfID's desire to focus on environmental issues early in the programme cycle and to take advantage of local opportunities is clear. For each programme submitted, a Climate and Environment Assessment Note (CEAN) is formalised by the environmental advisor in order to analyse the environmental implications of the programme. When necessary, partners are asked to make adjustments to improve the integration of environmental issues. DfID is currently reviewing this tool to focus even more on the process and outcomes and thus to ensure that there are genuine results and impact on aid effectiveness.

Groupe URD, from interviews with DfID representatives

### 5.4.2 Environmental criteria in the funding decision process

This analysis of funding guidelines for humanitarian organisations highlights that environmental requirements vary a great deal from one donor to another.

Most donors do not have specific environmental criteria in their funding application procedures, and programme officers do not analyse the potential environmental impact of programmes as part of the funding decision process. Some officers still consider that such an initiative would have a high cost and they would rather invest in contexts where they are unable to carry out operations due to a lack of funds. Promoting the “value for money” concept as well as the environment being part of a quality assurance process therefore still has some challenges to overcome.

Initiatives taken by partners to integrate the environment, such as environmental impact assessments are, however, rarely refused by some donors. In the case of ECHO, for example, a correspondent interviewed as part of this study commented that: “When an environmental activity is promoted by partners (in the context of a project with a specific humanitarian objective), ECHO never says no”.

Finland's *Guideline Concerning Humanitarian Assistance (2013)* states that cross-cutting issues and quality standards should be taken into account. There is, however, no further mention in this document of the environment in the funding decision process.

Other donors have more specific requirements. For example, in the DfID strategic funding framework for humanitarian emergencies and fragile states, *Humanitarian response funding guidelines for NGOs (2012)*<sup>29</sup>, there is a specific criterion on the environment. NGOs have to respond to a series of questions such as: How have environmental risks been minimised? Are any mitigation actions planned? How have opportunities for environmental improvement been exploited? How does this build on, harm or avoid harming existing capacities, systems or recovery prospects?

The *Canadian International Humanitarian Assistance Funding Application Guidelines for Non-governmental Organisations (2013)*<sup>30</sup> are even more demanding. Funding requests are analysed in relation to a number of criteria including the level of environmental analysis, the identification of effects and mitigation measures and the identification of expected environmental sustainability results and indicators. A requesting NGO also has to

<sup>29</sup>. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69774/Humanitarian-Response-Funding-Guidelines.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69774/Humanitarian-Response-Funding-Guidelines.pdf)

<sup>30</sup>. [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Funds/\\$file/funding-application-guidelines-for-non-governmental-organizations-eng.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Funds/$file/funding-application-guidelines-for-non-governmental-organizations-eng.pdf)

<sup>28</sup>. ADS Chapter 204, Environmental Procedures, USAID, 2013

demonstrate its institutional capacity for environmental management, providing specific documentation such as an environmental policy or an environmental strategy for project implementation.

In the same way, the organisation applying for funding should also indicate who is responsible for environmental monitoring, environmental training or other environmental capacity building within the organisation. During the submission process, environmental considerations are analysed by internal programme officers. The quality of their analysis depends on their individual understanding and capacity in this area, which is a weakness of the system, as they are not recruited on the basis of environmental competencies. More training is therefore needed to ensure a sufficient level of competence. When needed, they can refer to an environmental specialist within the overarching branch, who is responsible for providing advice to project officers and ensuring that humanitarian programming meets the requirements of Canada's environmental legislation and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development's environmental policies and procedures.

The environment appears to be given serious consideration by Sida in its funding decision process: see for example, Sida Grants to Non-governmental Organisations for Humanitarian Projects (2006)<sup>31</sup>. Among the selection criteria it uses are sustainability and long-term effects: "Assessment of the proposed project's expected and potential long-term effects and sustainability. An important issue for Sida is whether the project helps build local capacity for managing the present situation and future crises. An assessment is made of whether the project has taken into account any positive or negative effects on aspects such as the environment, conflict and equality. An assessment is also made of the project's ability to consider the transition from humanitarian assistance to more long-term development co-operation.

A recent change to the funding system within Sida means that humanitarian and development contributions are now managed in the same way. This has been an opportunity to improve the integration of cross-cutting issues, including environmental and climate change considerations, in humanitarian action. Thus, the environmental capacity of humanitarian organisations and programmes is now systematically analysed, which, in the opinion of this study, is a positive step forward.

<sup>31</sup>. [www.sida.se/Publications/Import/pdf/sv/Guidelines\\_1686.pdf](http://www.sida.se/Publications/Import/pdf/sv/Guidelines_1686.pdf)

### 5.4.3 Environmental assessments of humanitarian operations

As indicated in the previous sections, a number of donor approaches to help integrate the environment are promising in terms of encouraging change. It is therefore important to make the most of these initiatives and to learn from their application. While each organisation needs to take responsibility for taking the environment into account in its programmes and policies, the donor community in particular has a special role to play in helping to promote and enable change.

The Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) update (2013) is a type of assessment that follow progress made in relation to particular reform priorities agreed with DfID. This tool analyses the environmental and climate change capacities of organisations DfID works with and has already highlighted the weakness of the humanitarian sector on both issues, which are not properly integrated by most actors. This kind of tool is useful for raising awareness among partners. In this respect, DfID has noted that there has been progress on the issue of the environment in the past five years.

Other instruments of note are:

- strategic environmental assessment (SEA), which provides decision-makers and stakeholders with information on the environmental implications – both positive and negative – of a broader policy, plan or programme before major alternatives and directions have been chosen<sup>32</sup>;
- environmental impact assessment (EIA), which identifies existing or potential problem areas or concerns with specific regards to the use of natural resources, while also considering broader social and economic impacts; and
- rapid environmental assessment (REA), which is a version of a EIA adapted for emergency response and undertaken by gathering information from a range of sources, by completing a series of short descriptions, checklists and ranking matrixes, and by analysing, discussing and synthesising the findings (Benfield Hazard Research Centre and CARE International 2005b).

All of the above assessments have already been applied in emergency response, both from government, donor and humanitarian organisations' perspectives.

The SEA, for example, has been adopted by CIDA to supplement the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Projects that respond to an emergency are exempt from the SEA process, but SEAs are required

<sup>32</sup>. For example, see OECD 2006.

for non-emergency projects as well as for core funding of organisations such as the World Food Programme, UNHCR and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to ensure that environmental issues are addressed in a proactive way in policies and plans.

As an example of the current tendency to support environmental assessment, in March 2014 the World Bank approved a US\$20 million emergency project to provide food and agricultural inputs to the Central African Republic, in response to the recent conflict. This project has the particularity of integrating an environment and social screening and assessment framework, which is a prime example of the use of environmental monitoring procedures and tools in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In conclusion, in order to improve environmental performance, a process is necessary to ensure realistic targets. In addition to funding, incentives are a key issue, particularly for NGOs, many of which may still

not realise the benefits of incorporating environmental considerations in their work. A business model therefore needs to be created that takes environment into account. Donors may stimulate this process in a cost-efficient way by offering foreseeable return on investment for those willing to improve their practices.

It should be noted that there is very limited disaggregated data available for environmental mainstreaming and therefore there are limits to how much data on funding for the environment sector, including for UNEP, can be taken as an indicator of funding for environmental mainstreaming. However, data presented and analysed in this chapter has indicated trends, conclusions and recommendations that are relevant to environmental mainstreaming, although further research is recommended.

A full list of recommendations for ensuring good humanitarian environmental donorship are considered in the following chapter.



Credit: IRIN/Hanna McNeish

*Water management in a camp, South Sudan*

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

Few humanitarian practitioners contest the idea that the environment is important. This study demonstrates, however, that despite this recognition, there has been little progress in mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian action. For example, humanitarian crises are not analysed to understand the links between the environment and needs. There is a lack of systematic integration in humanitarian policy, practice and funding, without which change will not happen. Action on all three fronts is needed to create real change and there are examples of good practice of environmental mainstreaming that should be strengthened, replicated and promoted.

If environmental mainstreaming is to be pursued in the humanitarian context, some basic but essential adjustments need to happen, in particular:

- a) it should be a deliberate process in which institutional reform and behavioural change are prerequisites;
- b) multiple opportunities need to be considered on where and how to intervene, for example through policies, planning processes or legislation; and
- c) mainstreaming needs to take place at multiple levels and with different stakeholder groups. This involves a combination of what is referred to as “horizontal” (e.g. across sectors, in a humanitarian context) and “vertical” (involving all different levels of decision-making, from the community to highest institutional levels) mainstreaming. Both are essential.

### Box 12. Guiding principles for Environmental Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action

The following guiding principles are proposed to support environmental mainstreaming in humanitarian action.

1. Respect the principle of “Do No Harm”: all humanitarian action should respect this principle, which includes environmental considerations.
2. Ensure coherence with international frameworks and relevant agreements, e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals, International Humanitarian Law and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
3. Ensure quality assurance: the environment should be considered as part of the aid quality process and should become required criteria in order to be eligible for humanitarian certification.
4. Ensure a “Value for Money” approach, which, as defined by DfID, means “the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcome... Integrating environment as early as possible and throughout the programme cycle is not expensive.”
5. Integrate environment as part of a risk management approach: preventing or reducing environmental impacts such as pollution minimises occupational and sanitary risks for everyone – employees and the surrounding population.
6. Strengthen resilience and protection through ensuring the preservation of the natural productive capital of affected populations. This can help reduce the risk of disaster or conflict and build resilience within communities.

The following conclusions and recommendations build on existing good practices and aim to fill these gaps. Putting these recommendations into practice will take humanitarian action towards a vision where environment no longer has to be deliberately mainstreamed because it already forms an integral part of the fabric of humanitarian action.

## I. SYSTEM-WIDE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

This study has shown that environment is still not systematically taken into account in humanitarian action, despite being critical for effective, sustainable and accountable humanitarian response. Humanitarian partners have to date failed to operationalise environment as a cross-cutting issue within the global humanitarian architecture and no agency has the mandate to enforce the principles of environmental mainstreaming. Central to this is the lack of leadership and accountability for environment during humanitarian action: the fact that environment is everybody's responsibility, while at the same time no one is held accountable, has resulted in the "tragedy of the commons" of the humanitarian sector. The current lack of monitoring and accountability for environmental implications is a significant impediment to quality action delivery and learning. This should be urgently addressed and is the greatest requirement for change.

### Recommendations:

**1. The UN, IASC, OCHA, humanitarian organisations and donors should address the lack of leadership and accountability for environment during humanitarian action as part of the Transformative Agenda and ensure that environment is taken into consideration in a timely consistent and routine manner in all operations and at all levels.**

- 1a. The Emergency Relief Coordinator, the IASC, and Humanitarian Coordinators should take responsibility for mainstreaming environment in humanitarian operations. This should be an explicit part of their terms of reference and included in performance evaluation.
- 1b. Global Cluster Lead Agencies should agree on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the environment at field level and reflect this in policy and guidance.
- 1c. OCHA's responsibility for mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action should be formalised and the Joint Environment Unit designated to take the lead in operationalising this within the IASC.

**2. OCHA and UNEP, with support from donors, should increase the political commitment and human and financial resources dedicated to environment in humanitarian action. This is urgently required to leapfrog the years of neglect of environment as a cross-cutting issue.**

## I. MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENT AT SYSTEM AND FIELD LEVEL

Mainstreaming the environment is an approach that is critical for, and should contribute to, a long-term vision of effective, principled and sustainable humanitarian action. It needs to be translated into clearly defined actions to achieve this vision, both at the policy and field level. This study has highlighted the importance of a two-tier method to mainstreaming environment: at the systematic level, including into all phases of the HPC and, simultaneously, at the field level, providing country and context specific technical support at key stages to facilitate an understanding of the environmental context and propose practical solutions that benefit affected people and humanitarian programming. This approach should focus on integrating environment into existing systems, rather than creating additional tools and processes.

### Recommendations:

**3. Develop a detailed proposal for action including a full analysis of at least five priority countries that actively engages all concerned humanitarian partners.** Further analysis should be done of how best to mainstream environment in clusters and country action plans in collaboration with respective national authorities, NGOs and other humanitarian partners.

**4. Existing mechanisms to promote environmental mainstreaming should be better analysed, their impacts documented, approaches adapted and strengthened and sustainability ensured.** These include, but should not be restricted to, technical deployments such as Environmental Field Advisers, the Environment Marker and Environment and Humanitarian Action Reference Groups.

**5. Environment should be mainstreamed within every stage of the HPC.** This will require coordination with Humanitarian Country Teams, Cluster Coordinators and Inter-Cluster Coordinators, but first needs high-level endorsement and ownership in order to be effective. This should happen through:

5a. Increasing the prominence of environment within IASC and HPC guidance across all clusters/sectors and strengthening the role of Inter-Cluster Coordinators who are responsible for supporting cross-cutting issues.

5b. Humanitarian practitioners should be equipped with dedicated technical support to ensure environment is mainstreamed in all stages of humanitarian planning and response at the field level. This technical support should complement bottom-up solutions and foster innovation.

<sup>33</sup>. An economics theory published by Garrett Hardin in 1968 in the journal *Science*, according to which individuals, acting independently and rationally according to each one's self-interest, behave contrary to the whole group's long-term best interests by depleting some common resource.

### Recommendations for each stage of the HPC:

#### **Preparedness:**

- 5c. Give greater emphasis to considering environment in preparedness and early planning and identify practical entry points where environment can be factored into emergency preparedness and contingency planning, including baseline assessments.

#### **Needs assessment and analysis:**

- 5d. Provide timely environmental technical support to identify key environmental issues and assist practitioners to integrate these into country/cluster/sector action plans at the initial stage of a response. The Joint OCHA/ UNEP Environment Unit can co-ordinate such support through OCHA country offices.
- 5e. Involve local communities in environmental assessments and programme design: community participation will more accurately define environmental needs and allow for the collective design of sustainable solutions.

#### **Strategic planning:**

- 5f. Integrate environmental issues identified in assessments into the Strategic Response Plan across clusters and support this integration with awareness raising of the rationale behind these environmental links across the humanitarian community. Follow-up action to environmental assessments is essential to provide solutions to problems identified. Organisations undertaking or commissioning assessments should be accountable for ensuring actions is taken and followed up on.

#### **Resource mobilisation:**

- 5g. Each sector/cluster should conduct a review of potential environmental impacts and opportunities, based on previous environmental assessments, to ensure that projects funded have considered the environmental implications of their activities.

#### **Implementation and monitoring:**

- 5h. Integrate environment into monitoring plans based on baseline information from assessments and train monitoring teams to identify links between programme activities and the environment, including those not immediately visible.

### **Operational review and evaluation:**

- 5i. Integrate environmental considerations into evaluation practices. The environmental impacts of humanitarian programmes should be integrated into evaluation practices to ensure accountability. This will help raise awareness of the direct/indirect environmental impacts of humanitarian action and raise the question of responsibility for environmental damage caused by humanitarian programming.

### **III. ADVOCACY AND EVIDENCE**

There is a need for more understanding and strong evidence within the humanitarian system of the benefits of mainstreaming environment in humanitarian action. The current lack of convincing evidence needs to be urgently addressed.

#### Recommendations:

- 6. Document detailed case studies built on field and management perspectives to provide evidence of what has and has not worked effectively in addressing environmental issues in humanitarian response.** Case studies should cover a range of environmental issues impacting on humanitarian action, describe how these have been addressed, extract best practices for adoption and adaptation elsewhere and provide practical suggestions on how lessons can be applied for ongoing and future planning and programming.
- 7. Adopt and execute strong advocacy strategies targeted at humanitarian practitioners ensuring a broad-scale approach to, and understanding of, mainstreaming environment.** Strategies should focus on health and livelihood impacts that support the life-saving imperative of humanitarian action.



### IV. FUNDING ENVIRONMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

This study has identified a chronic lack of funding for environment in humanitarian action. Good environmental donorship is, however, a required and fundamental component of future fit humanitarian action. There is a unique opportunity for donors to lead by example and ensure that the environment is an integral part of their decision-making processes in allocating humanitarian funding.

#### Recommendations:

#### **8. Donors should develop an environmental mainstreaming policy for humanitarian aid.**

Integrating environmental issues in humanitarian donor policies is necessary to ensure institutional positioning, orientation and influence. The policy should be realistic, achievable and based on a participatory approach in order to raise awareness among actors involved. Efforts are also needed to ensure messages are well understood – including guidance on what respective donors are willing to fund, and under what conditions – and translated into practice.

#### **9. Donors should integrate environmental mainstreaming while analysing programme proposals.**

All proposals should be analysed from an environmental perspective. Potential impacts and opportunities should be noted and recommendations made to the applying organisation similar to the process currently applied by DfID through CEAN. Programmes should only be funded when conditions have been met.

#### **10. Donors should make the consideration of environmental impacts explicit in their decisions, therefore driving practitioners to include these impact statements in funding proposals.**

This has long been a standard practice for development projects, where environmental concerns are part of social responsibility, due diligence and liability consideration. These same considerations should also drive humanitarian funding.

#### **11. Donors should commit to longer-term funding.**

A conscious shift is required from single, stand-alone, ad hoc environmental activities to longer term funding commitments. This will enable more robust programme implementation, monitoring and learning.

#### **12. Donors should strengthen knowledge of programme officers and operational partners at desk and country levels and establish a technical support helpdesk.**

Tailored capacity building should be facilitated via training to ensure that programme officers and operational partners have more than a basic understanding of environmental issues and are able to implement their policies. Cooperation with other in-country organisations should also be strengthened. Technical support at headquarters will increase internal capacities and provide environmental feedback, for example while analysing programme submissions.

# Bibliography

- Alexander, R. 2006. *Tsunami - Build Back Better: Mantra Aside, An Aid Gone Wrong Story?* Bangalore: Development Consultancy Group
- Anderson, M. B. 1999. *Do No Harm. How aid can support peace. Or war.*
- Benfield Hazard Research Centre and CARE International. 2005a. Checklist-based guide to identifying critical environmental considerations in emergency shelter site selection, construction, management and decommissioning. CARE International, Geneva.
- Benfield Hazard Research Centre and CARE International. 2005b. Guidelines for rapid environmental impact assessment in disasters. CARE International, Geneva.
- Bouma, G. 2013. Challenges and Opportunities for Mainstreaming Environmental Assessment Tools in Post-Conflict Settings. In: *Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, Environmental Law Institute and UNEP.
- Bromwich, B. 2008. Environmental degradation and conflict in Darfur: implications for peace and recovery. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* 39: July.
- Brunnström, K, Hargbäck, H, Lagerstedt, P and Olsson, J. 2006. Integrating the environment? Environmental considerations in Sida's work. Sida Evaluation, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit.
- Calvi-Parisetti, P. 2013. Coordination and Funding of Cross-cutting Issues in Humanitarian Action, Commissioned by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva.
- Canadian International Development Agency. 1992, CIDA's Policy for Environmental Sustainability
- Canadian International Development Agency. *Environment Handbook for community development initiatives*, April 2005
- Canadian International Development Agency. *Additional Resources, Accompanying document of the Environment Handbook for community development initiatives*, April 2005
- Canadian International Development Agency. *Matrice des enjeux environnementaux*, February 2002
- Cannon, T. 2008 "Reducing people's vulnerability to natural hazards: communities and resilience" WIDER Research Paper 34, Helsinki
- CARE International. 2008. Integrating critical environmental issues into WASH cluster activities. CARE International, Geneva.
- CARE International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2007) *A compendium of lessons learned from Africa*. CARE International/IUCN/UNHCR, Geneva.
- CARE International and ProAct Network. 2008a. Shelter environment advisor terms of reference. CARE International/ProAct, Geneva.
- CARE International and ProAct Network. 2008b *Post-disaster livelihood environment assessment: rules of thumb*. CARE International/ProAct, Geneva.
- Cravioto A, Lanata CF, Lantagne DS, Nair GB. Final report of the independent panel of experts on the cholera outbreak in Haiti, September 2011
- Delrue Tom and Sexton Renard. 2009. *Mainstreaming the environment into humanitarian action, Humanitarian aid on the move*, Groupe URD.
- Department For International Development (DFID). *DFID's approach to the Environment*, February 2006
- DFID. *Saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience: The UK Government's Humanitarian Policy*, 2010
- DFID. *Humanitarian response funding guidelines for NGOs*, July 2012
- Dhakal Kumari Rita and Bevenssee Lynn Ashley. 2013. Integrating an environmental approach into humanitarian action – progress so far", *Special Issue Environment, Humanitarian Aid on the move*, n°12, Groupe URD.
- Environmental Resources Management Limited (ERM). (2007) *Mainstreaming the environment into humanitarian response: an exploration of opportunities and issues*. ERM, London.
- Environmental Resources Management Limited (ERM), 2007, *Mainstreaming the Environment into Humanitarian Response– an Exploration of Opportunities and Issues'*, Prepared by Barrett, E., Murfitt, S., and Venton, P
- EuropAid. 2006. *Manuel d'intégration de l'environnement pour la coopération au développement de la CE*, Bruxelles.

- European Commission - ECHO. Guidelines on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid in 2013, Commission staff working document, Brussels, November 2012
- European Commission - ECHO. Annual Strategy for Humanitarian Aid in 2014: General Guidelines on Operational Priorities, Brussels, December 2013
- European Commission - ECHO. Guidelines Single Form, November 2010
- Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, 2003, Principals and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship, Stockholm, <<http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org>>
- Groupe URD and GPPI, IASC Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase 2, April 2010
- IASC Principals Transformative Agenda – 2012 - <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc>
- Hammer, M and Lloyd, R, 2011, Pathways to Accountability II, The 2011 revised Global Accountability Framework
- Institute for Environmental Security (IES) and IUCN National Committee of The Netherlands. (2009) Dealing with energy needs in humanitarian crisis response operations: a quick scan of policies and best practices of humanitarian aid organisations and potential alternative energy sources and technologies. IES/IUCN, The Hague.
- IASC. 2009a. Matrix on agency roles and responsibilities for ensuring a coordinated, multi-sectoral fuel strategy in humanitarian settings. IASC, Geneva.
- IASC. 2009b. Decision tree diagrams on factors affecting choice of fuel strategy in humanitarian settings. IASC, Geneva.
- IASC, 2012, Gender Marker. IASC, Geneva.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). (1994).
- The code of conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in disaster relief. IFRC, Geneva.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). (2007) Tools for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: environmental assessment. IFRC, Geneva.
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). (2009b) The challenges of environmental mainstreaming: experience of integrating environment into development institutions and decisions. IIED, London.
- IRIN. 2009. 'SOMALIA: Seeking alternatives to charcoal in Somaliland.' IRIN Africa. 27 May <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/84568/somalia-seeking-alternatives-to-charcoal-in-somaliland>>
- IUCN. 2006. Ecosystems, livelihoods and disasters: an integrated approach to disaster risk management. IUCN, Geneva.
- IUCN. 2008. Integrating environmental safeguards into disaster management: a field manual, volume 1, 2 and 3. IUCN, Colombo.
- Irish Aid – Department of Foreign Affairs and International Institute for Environment and Development. 2007. Environment and Humanitarian Assistance - Irish Aid Key Sheet.
- Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. 2004. Darfur crisis rapid environmental assessment at the Kalma, Otash and Bajoum camps. Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, Geneva.
- Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. 2005. The flash environmental assessment tool (FEAT). Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, Geneva.
- Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. 2005. Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster of December 2004. UNDAC Rapid Environmental Assessment of Aceh, Indonesia.
- Kelly, Charles. 2013. Mainstreaming environment into humanitarian interventions, a synopsis of key organisations, literature and experience, Evidence on demand – Climate & environment infrastructure/livelihoods. DfID, UK
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Cross-cutting objectives in the Development Policy Programme of the Government of Finland, Guidelines, Department for Development Cooperation, August 2012
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Checklist for general environmental impacts, Comprehensive Environmental Assessment
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Finland's Humanitarian Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2012
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Guideline Concerning humanitarian assistance and the use of funding granted by the ministry for foreign affairs of Finland, Unit for Humanitarian Assistance, August 2013

# Bibliography

- MSB. 2011, Guidelines for environmental mainstreaming to increase quality and effectiveness of MSB operations 2011-2015
- Muñoz Miquel and Adll Najam. 2008. Tracking Global Environmental Financing, Global Environmental Governance Briefing Paper, International Institute for Sustainable Development.
- Norwegian Refugee Council. 2008. Camp management toolkit. NRC, Oslo.
- Nunan, F., A. Campbell and E. Foster. 2012a. Environmental Mainstreaming: The Organisational Challenges of Policy Integration. Public Administration and Development 32: 262-277.
- Nunan, F., A. Campbell and E. Foster. 2012b. Making Environmental Mainstreaming Happen. IDD Policy Brief. [www.birmingham.ac.uk/idd](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/idd)
- OCHA, 2005, Humanitarian Response Review
- OCHA. 2013. Reference Guide for developing the 2013 Consolidated Appeals, 2013.
- OCHA, IFRC & CARE International. 2009. Timber as a construction material in humanitarian operations. OCHA, Geneva.
- OCHA and UNEP. 2007. Humanitarian action and the environment. OCHA/UNEP, Geneva.
- ODI 1996, The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda: Study III Principal Findings and Recommendations, ODI, London, 16.
- OECD, 2006, DAC Guidelines and reference series, Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment
- ProAct Network. 2008. Assessing the effectiveness of fuel-efficient stove programming: a Darfur-wide review. ProAct, Nyon.
- Shepherd, G, 1995, The Impact of Refugees on the Environment and Appropriate Responses, Humanitarian Exchange Magazine 4, ODI
- Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. 2011. <http://www.sphereproject.org>
- Sida. Sida's Tool for Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Screening, 2010
- Sida. Save lives and relieve suffering, Policy for Sweden's Humanitarian Aid, 2010-2016
- Sida. Policy on environment and climate issues in Swedish development cooperation, 2010-2014
- Steets, Julia and Meier, Claudia, Evaluation of the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) and Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) Projects, GPPI, December 2011
- Sun Mountain and CHF International. 2010. Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment: Haiti Earthquake. USAID. <http://www.alnap.org/node/6541.aspx>
- Tearfund. 2007. Darfur: Water supply in a vulnerable environment. Tearfund, Teddington.
- Tearfund. 2008. Quality standards for emergency response. Tearfund. Teddington.
- Tearfund. 2009. Tearfund Quality Standards for Emergency Response: Field Guide: Practical guidelines for Tearfund staff and partners (pp. 164). Teddington: Tearfund. Last viewed on 16 December 2012 at: [http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Topics/DMT/Field%20Guides/Tearfund%20Quality%20Standards%20Field%20Guide%20-%20Jan%202010%20\(Read%20Only\).doc](http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Topics/DMT/Field%20Guides/Tearfund%20Quality%20Standards%20Field%20Guide%20-%20Jan%202010%20(Read%20Only).doc)
- UNDP. 2008. Generic guidelines for mainstreaming drylands issues into national development frameworks. UNDP, Nairobi.
- UNDP and UNEP. 2007. Guidance note on mainstreaming environment into national development planning. UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Facility, Nairobi.
- UNEP Resource Centre. Mainstreaming the environment into humanitarian action - <http://postconflict.unep.ch/humanitarianaction/purpose.html>
- UNEP – OCHA, Humanitarian action and the environment
- UNEP. 2007. Sudan post-conflict environmental assessment. UNEP, Nairobi.
- UNEP. 2008a. Destitution, distortion and deforestation: the impact of conflict on the timber and woodfuel trade in Darfur. UNEP, Geneva.
- UNEP. 2010b. Key things to know about environment as a “cross cutting” issue in early recovery. UNEP, Geneva.
- UN HABITAT, 2009, Darfur Early recovery, Stabilized soil blocks for sustainable urban growth

- UNHCR. 2001. Caring for Refugees, Caring for the Environment. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR. 2001. Practising and promoting sound environmental management in refugee/returnee operations. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR. 2005. UNHCR Environmental Guidelines. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR. 2007. Real Time Evaluation of UNHCR's IDP Operation in Liberia. PDES/2007/02-RTE2.
- UNHCR and CARE International and UNHCR. 2002. Livelihood options in refugee situations: a handbook for promoting sound agricultural practices. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR and IUCN. 2005a. Forest management in refugee and returnee situations: a handbook of sound practices. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR and IUCN. 2005b. Livestock-keeping and animal husbandry in refugee and returnee situations: a practical handbook for improved management. UNHCR, Geneva.
- UNHCR and CARE International. 2009. Framework for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the environment of refugee-related operations. UNHCR, Geneva.
- USAID. 2009. Environmental guidelines for small-scale activities in Africa (EGSSAA) – chapter 10: humanitarian response and natural disasters. USAID, Washington DC.
- USAID. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis, USAID Policy and Program Guidance, December 2012.
- USAID. Guidelines for proposal, USAID/OFDA Guidelines, October 2012
- Weinthal, E, Troell, J and Nakayama, M (2014), Water and Post-conflict Peace Building, Routledge
- WWF-US. 2001. The trampled grass: mitigating the impacts of armed conflict on the environment. WWF, Washington DC.
- WWF-US and American Red Cross. 2010. Green recovery and reconstruction toolkit. WWF-US/ARC, Washington DC.



Credit: UNEP, PCDMB

*IDP camp close to a national park buffer zone, Democratic Republic of Congo*

# Annex

## Environment in Humanitarian Action Reference Group

Name	Organisation
Thibault Laconde	Action Contre la Faim, France
Andreas Thulstrup	FAO
Annica Waleij	Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI)
Blanche Renaudin	Groupe URD
François Grunewald	Groupe URD
Alain Oppliger	ICRC
Katarina Runeberg	MSB
Anna Hjarne	OCHA, Sudan
Johanna Gosling	Oxfam, UK
Charles Kelly	ProAct Network
David Stone	ProAct Network
Jahal de Meritens	UNDP / BCPR
Tom Delrue	UNDP / BCPR
Asif Zaidi	UNEP
Muralee Thummarukudy	UNEP
Julia Ismar	UNEP, Sudan
Amare Gebre Egziabher	UNHCR
Renate Heileman	UNHCR
Anita van Breda	WWF US

---

**Secretariat: Wendy Cue, UNEP/OCHA**



[www.unocha.org/unep](http://www.unocha.org/unep)

[www.eecentre.org](http://www.eecentre.org)

[www.humanitarianresponse.info/environment](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/environment)



## Contact

Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit  
OCHA Emergency Services Branch  
Geneva, Switzerland

Email: [ochaunep@un.org](mailto:ochaunep@un.org)  
Phone: +41 22 917 2163

