

GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE
Environmental Field Advisor (EFA)
OCHA Response Partnerships Section (RPS)

Background

Within the context of humanitarian action, environmental factors (such as scarce natural resources) are often a root cause and driver/prolonger of crises and conflicts. The environment, among other local factors, has direct impact on vulnerability of affected communities and the quality of humanitarian action. Humanitarian actors need to take the environment into consideration in programming from the onset of a disaster so that opportunities to build back better and safer are captured, risk is reduced and resilience increased.

As part of the humanitarian reform agenda in 2005, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) established four cross-cutting issues: age, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS. Humanitarian coordinators and sector leads were mandated to ensure that these priority cross-cutting issues are paid attention to and integrated into humanitarian planning and response. By integrating these issues early on in response, gains of humanitarian action can be made more sustainable. As a cross-cutting issue, all humanitarian actors have a shared responsibility to integrate environmental considerations in their operations.

However, the IASC cluster approach evaluation from 2010 has found that cross-cutting and multidimensional issues often are neglected and that in reality there is little integration of cross-cutting issues. In November 2011, UNEP and OCHA agreed that its Joint Environment Unit would work with the UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch to implement and operationalize the integration of environment in humanitarian action.

Stand-by Technical Personnel

Field contexts in which OCHA operates are often fluid with peaks in workload induced by sudden and unpredictable ‘shocks’ in the humanitarian environment. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, or in the case of an escalating crisis, the use of gratis personnel to provide interim assistance can be authorised. In addition, experts may be used to perform very specialized functions where OCHA lacks the appropriate expertise and resources.

OCHA Country/Regional Office confronted with such a sudden and unforeseen need for carrying out specialised activities, may request the deployment of stand-by partnership technical experts. The Country Office and CRD Desk Officer will in such cases submit to SCS a completed Official Request Form for Stand-By Partner personnel, including the Terms of Reference (ToR) format. The CRD Desk Officer in New York and the Head of Office or the Deputy Head of office in the country are both responsible vis-à-vis SCS/EES for all aspects of the request.

Environmental Field Advisor (EFA)

The objective of deploying an Environmental Field Advisor (EFA) is to identify and conduct a general evaluation of the risks the crisis poses to humans, livelihoods and the environment - and through this, to long-term recovery. The EFA also plays a key role in kick-starting the work to implement mitigation measures. Having a dedicated person in country will ensure a cross-cutting approach and go a far way towards bridging the gap between humanitarian action and development activities. The main objectives of the deployment of an EFA are to:

- Address the underlying environmental issues that may have contributed to the crises or disaster in the first place as well as reducing the risk of reoccurrence.
- Prevent additional loss of lives and suffering; improve affected communities' health and safety
- Protect livelihoods by safeguarding natural resources upon which those livelihoods depend.

Proactively addressing environmental issues can slow or reverse trends that lead to deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, pollution, and conflicts, which negatively impacts community resilience, biodiversity, food security and socioeconomic development.

The EFA is expected to be deployed for a period of three months, with a possibility of extension, through the Stand by Partnership Programme (SBPP). The duty station of the EFA will be determined by the OCHA Country Office or the RC/HC depending on the situation and needs on the ground.

Responsibilities

Under the overall guidance of the Head of OCHA country/regional office and with the support from the UN Environment /OCHA Joint Unit (JEU) in Geneva, the Environmental Field Advisor (EFA) will support in planning, developing and supporting implementation of activities aimed at minimizing the adverse impacts to the environment from the protracted crisis or escalating situation.

The EFA is expected to interact with national and local authorities and stakeholders, international agencies, clusters and sectoral working groups present in the country to ensure that key environmental considerations are identified and addressed across clusters/sectors projects and programming.

Within delegated authority, the Environmental Field Advisor can provide expertise in the following areas:

1. Coordination with HCT and clusters on environment as a cross-cutting issue
2. Training and capacity building
3. Technical advice on environmental issues

4. Communication and reporting
5. Resource mobilization

1. Coordination of environment as a cross-cutting issue

- Identify key partners / stakeholders working on environmental issues and establish regular collaboration mechanisms (informal working group or similar, as relevant) – situation, needs and gaps
- Identify cross-cutting environmental concerns (particularly as they relate to the recovery objectives) and facilitate collaboration on these between national authorities / clusters / sectors / stakeholders
- Enhance information exchange between international and national and local actors, private actors and contractors involved in environment (who, where, what, when.)
- Support on integration of environment as a cross-cutting issue, ensuring that proposed recovery actions and projects reflect environmental concerns

2. Training and capacity building

- Identify technical and operational capacity needs related to environmental issues among national counterparts and international actors, NGOs, local organizations, national authorities (as relevant), clusters and other stakeholders.
- Plan and facilitate training/briefing sessions/workshops on key environmental concerns, potential hazards and their impacts, available tools, guidance and services for integration of environmental issues, environmental emergency preparedness, contingency planning and other relevant issues as identified.

3. Technical advice on environmental issues

- Review relevant documents and reports to identify environmental problems and to forecast potential environmental impacts; identification/specification of gaps/bottlenecks needing urgent attention
- Based on available data, and possibly through on-site assessments: Identify and assess environmental hazards and potential impacts of crisis, with emphasis on those that pose risks to humans (both local communities and humanitarian workers) health, livelihoods and life support functions and have the potential to hamper long-term recovery.
- Assessment of pre-existing institutional and legal governance systems and capacities related to environmental issues and extent to which it has been affected; Identify, where applicable, pre-existing contributing environmental factors to the disasters (e.g. deforestation, poor urban planning, lack of prevention and preparedness);
- Where applicable, work with clusters to fill unmet environmental needs through on-the-job-training, awareness raising and/or seeking technical advice (including the deployment of additional technical environmental experts if/when needed).
- Provide an overall support function on environmental issues to the clusters and humanitarian partners;

- Promote and advocate for the use of existing guidelines and guidance materials as for example found on
<http://www.eecentre.org/Resources.aspx>
<http://onerresponse.info/crosscutting/environment/Pages/Environment.aspx>
 and
http://postconflict.unep.ch/humanitarianaction/01_01.html

4. Communication and reporting

- Maintain close contact with national and local authorities and stakeholders, HCT, OCHA Country Office, clusters and JEU and other partners (as relevant) to ensure appropriate response and follow-up actions.
- Provide update to HCT, OCHA Country Office and JEU on a monthly basis (or as requested) and
- Prepare an end report with findings and recommendations

5. Resource mobilization

- Prepare an inventory of current capacity in the area of environment and determine how to track the environmental allocations (present potential-including from humanitarian actions) in the country.
- Review of resources available for country environmental needs such as through humanitarian financing (CERF-underfunded window, ERF or any other country based pooled funds).

Note: Contact with media, including interviews, will only be undertaken with consent of the OCHA Country Office.

Qualifications and skills

- Ability to integrate environmental considerations across disciplines/clusters, and specifically into disaster response, while prioritizing environmental impacts within the framework of humanitarian objectives;
- Ability to distinguish response actions –immediate, medium to long-term mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities;
- Familiarity with environmental assessment tools and frameworks and ability to conduct environmental assessments using well-established international tools and guidelines (environmental impact assessments, risk assessments, etc.)
- Knowledge of humanitarian standards, tools and guidelines, and their linkages to environment. These include SPHERE standards, IASC contingency planning guidelines, Multi Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Emergency Response Preparedness, Environmental Markers, cluster/Sector specific guidelines, disaster waste management guidelines, CAP guidelines, etc.
- Familiarity with management of operational support functions including telecommunications, logistics and basic field security;
- Ability to coordinate with international and local agencies involved in humanitarian context;
- Ability to assess basic needs and local capacities (for example women's local knowledge of environmental resources) of affected populations;

- High motivation, coupled with an ability to improvise effectively in rapidly changing situations with minimal guidance and support;
- Team skills required for working in a multi-disciplinary, multi-national team in field conditions of hardship with an ability to assume authority as and when needed;
- Availability for short-notice mobilization (within 6 to 48 hours) and must be able to stay in the field for up to 3 months with possible extension up to 6 months;
- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in natural sciences, engineering, disaster management (with an emphasis on environment), or other relevant field;
- Fluency in the English language (essential). French, Arabic, Spanish or other languages might be essential depending on the duty station; Knowledge of MS Windows and MS Office and ability to operate standard IT and communications equipment.
- A minimum of seven years of professional experience in the environment field, with at least two years' experience in developing countries. Experience of environmental work in a humanitarian/relief context and or post-crisis setting is a strong advantage.