

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW

ANNEX

Tips for developing an environmentally sensitive humanitarian needs overview

Integrating environmental considerations into the humanitarian programming cycle from the onset of the operation enables the prevention and mitigation of future environmental damage, increases the likelihood of humanitarians doing no harm, and helps to increase the resilience of (potentially) affected peoples.

Definition of the environment: “The environment is understood as 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” – the Sphere Project.

Step 1: Planning

- 1. Ensure basic understanding within analysis team:** The members of the analysis team should have a summary understanding of the relevance of the environment in the context of humanitarian response – for this, they should be aware of two common situations:
 - The environment being a driver of the humanitarian situation (e.g. conflict over resources), and/or
 - The local environment being impacted by humanitarian operations and the effect of this on local livelihoods (e.g. the water table – which also underpins local farmer’s livelihoods – being heavily drawn upon by humanitarians).
- 2. Identify and gather data/information sources:** Identify initial data/information sources specific to the context (i.e. is there a need for information on dams, farming or the water table?). Sources may include environmental authorities and NGOs, World Bank Country Profiles, as well as national/regional environmental indicators and strategies.
- 3. Identify key stakeholders with environmental knowledge:** In a given context, this could include local farmers in a drought, or the dams administration and related community groups in a dam-breach situation.

Step 2: Data consolidation and information gaps

- 1. Consolidate the existing data/information:** Identify the gaps relevant to the key environmental factors that the team has identified in Step 1 (e.g. if there is a conflict over grazing rights, the analysis team should consider it a priority to gather information on the issue).
- 2. Conduct dialogue with key stakeholders:** Ensure dialogue with affected people and key stakeholders. Present the team’s understanding of the situation and seek feedback – ensure the dialogue contributes to the analysis.

Step 3: Joint analysis

- 1. Include environmental experts:** Such as *Environmental Field Advisors* (similar to GenCap/ProCap) in the working sessions. As environment is a cross-cutting issue, several sectors could require its integration in their analysis and planning – e.g. in terms of *disaster waste management*, the pollution of an important water source could heavily impact on WASH, health and livelihoods.
- 2. Questions that can guide the analysis:**
 - Is the location of affected people subject to immediate hazards (including flooding, landslides, municipal waste dumps, mining areas, industrial storage)? What are these hazards? Who is affected, where and in what way? What groups of people are most affected?
 - What are the environmental drivers of the crisis? (E.g. conflict over natural resources – such as water, land, grazing), impacts of slow-onset climate-related disasters such as droughts or extreme weather events). Do these drivers relate to the humanitarian programming? How do they impact on affected peoples' livelihoods? What clusters do they impact? Is there an opportunity to link humanitarian and development programmes?
 - How has the people's access to natural resources (e.g. water, forest resources and agricultural land) for fuel, food, livelihoods and shelter been affected?
 - Is the rate of natural resource use sustainable (depletion versus replenishment)? Are the humanitarian programmes contributing to resource depletion or are they supporting replenishment?
- 3. Identify, frame and prioritise key factors:** Key considerations include:
 - Livelihoods; water use, agriculture, reliance on natural resources
 - Major environmental changes pre- and post-disaster/conflict, and
 - Longer term trends; droughts, extreme weather events, land degradation.

Step 4: Using the findings

- 1. Outline how environmental factors are affecting people:** These findings should delineate the the various population groups – the elderly, men, women, ethnic groups etc. – and how each has been affected.
- 2. Ensure that environmental factors are integrated into the next-steps:** This should include the strategic planning workshop and integration across the relevant sectors.

Additional tools and resources

- For practical guidance and tools on integrating environment across all stages and sectors/clusters of humanitarian response visit:
www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/environment
- The *Environmental Emergencies Centre* hosts various online training courses, including the 1.5 hour “Environment in Humanitarian Action” eLearning module which provides humanitarian actors with information on how to effectively integrate environmental issues into humanitarian response and early recovery strategies. <http://eecentre.org/Online-Learning.aspx/lan/en-US>
- The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit can provide additional technical support – contact: ochaunep@un.org.