

## COMMON DONOR GREENING PRIORITY ACTIONS



### PRIORITY ACTION 1

## Conduct environmental assessments of planned interventions and integrate mitigation measures.

February 2026

Conducting environmental assessments enables humanitarian actors to identify both anticipated and unforeseen climate and environmental risks and impacts linked to humanitarian response and early recovery interventions. An environmental assessment or screening should be undertaken **before a project starts, based on a clear understanding of the actions that are planned**, in order to inform project design and development.

Risks and impacts are identified and evaluated - taking the specific project type and context into account - and appropriate measures are proposed to avoid or reduce risks and negative impacts. These may include specific mitigation activities, or adjustments to ensure that certain project activities are implemented in a more environmentally sustainable way. Such assessments can also help to identify opportunities for positive environmental outcomes, for example the promotion of nature-based solutions, the creation of green spaces, or water conservation through rainwater harvesting.

Mitigation measures for the most significant unavoidable environmental impacts should be planned (including as specific project activities), budgeted for, and implemented at field level. The risks identified and mitigation measures proposed **must be context-specific to ensure their feasibility**, and monitoring should ideally be conducted at pre-determined intervals.

Depending on the results of the environmental assessment, it may also be necessary to conduct in-depth environmental assessments for certain aspects of the project (i.e. specific "sectoral" assessments). These may also be required for projects of a certain scale that are likely to have detrimental environmental impacts.



### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Make environmental assessment an integral part of the programme cycle rather than a one-off or stand-alone exercise.
- ✓ Ensure that all aspects of the implementation context are fully considered throughout the assessment, including the wider crisis or conflict setting, the local environmental context, and the organisation's own capacity and resources.
- ✓ Use assessments to identify climate and environmental "hot spots" on which to focus efforts and prioritise the implementation of mitigation measures that are most relevant to your context.

- ✓ Include these mitigation measures - as well as the budget needed to implement and monitor these - in your proposal.
- ✓ Carry out environmental assessments jointly with other organisations intervening in the same area and include local actors (authorities, environmental organisations etc.) to identify local environmental vulnerabilities to be considered by the project.



## KEY RESOURCES

### Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+)

- **Organisation responsible:** developed by the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit, USAID, UNHCR, NRC, IUCN<sup>1</sup>, WWF<sup>2</sup> with support from DG ECHO
- **Short description:** a rapid and simple project-level environmental assessment tool that allows humanitarian actors to identify issues of environmental concern before designing longer-term emergency or recovery interventions. The tool gathers data about the proposed project site and activities, and auto-generates summary reports providing a snapshot of potential environmental impacts (categorised as low, medium, or high) with recommended mitigation measures. The tool is composed of a sensitivity module (aimed at identifying local environmental vulnerabilities) as well as activity modules (specifically designed for WASH, Food Security and Shelter interventions)
- **Accessibility:** Data is gathered on the KoBo platform (on phones, tablets or computers) and produces an automatically generated report in Excel. It should be noted that the tool is currently undergoing work and a more user-friendly and effective version will be made available in 2026.
  - [In English](#)
  - [In French](#)
  - [In Spanish](#)

### Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on how to conduct an Environmental Screening

- **Organisation responsible:** Réseau Environnement Humanitaire (REH)
- **Short description:** This explains how to conduct an Environmental Screening (ES) at the project level, as well as how to implement an ES process within an organisation.
- **Accessibility:** Available in English, French, and Spanish.

### The Climate, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration Guidance (CEDRIG)

- **Organisation responsible:** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- **Short description:** A practical tool that helps integrate climate, disaster risk reduction, and environmental considerations into development and humanitarian work to strengthen community and system resilience. It includes two modules: CEDRIG Strategic, for strategies and frameworks, and CEDRIG Operational, for projects and programmes.
- **Accessibility:** [English](#), [French](#). Sign up to use tool via: [cde-network@eda.admin.ch](mailto:cde-network@eda.admin.ch)

### Environmental Stewardship Tool (EST)

- **Organisation responsible:** Catholic Relief Services
- **Short description:** A self-assessment framework designed to help projects evaluate and improve their environmental sustainability. It guides teams in identifying risks, integrating environmental best practices, and strengthening resilience across programme activities.

<sup>1</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Nature <https://iucn.org/fr>

<sup>2</sup> Worldwide life fund <https://www.worldwildlife.org/>

- **Accessibility:** English, French, and Spanish.

### **Multi-sectoral Environmental Risk Analysis (MERA)**

- **Organisation responsible:** Réseau Environnement Humanitaire
- **Short description:** The MERA matrix provides a selection of mitigation measures taken from existing environmental assessment and screening tools, guidelines and standards, selecting the most appropriate ones. Ultimately this will be used to update the NEAT+ when funding allows. For the moment, MERA can support organisations to develop proposals that include environmental mitigation measures. It acts as a database from which to select mitigation measures that are best adapted to the project in question. MERA differs to environmental screening or assessment tools in that it is not possible to include context-specific information. It is designed for project managers, coordinators, field officers, funding officers and technical staff – most importantly by those who have knowledge of the local context.
- **Accessibility:** Available in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#) in Excel.

### **Mapping of environmental screening tools, February 2025**

- **Organisation responsible:** Réseau Environnement Humanitaire (Working Group on Environmental Assessments)
- **Short description:** Comparative analysis of the use of different environmental assessment tools developed for the humanitarian sector. This analysis provides detailed information on when to use the tools, during which types of crises, as well as which sector is covered etc.
- **Accessibility:** English and French



## **PITFALLS TO AVOID**

- Do not use environmental assessments as a box ticking exercise but rather to feed into project and programme design and ensure environmental issues are mainstreamed.
- Avoid opting for generic mitigation measures or those that are not operationally feasible in the context you are working in.



## **GOOD PRACTICES**

- During the design phase or the inception phase of a project, organise a dedicated workshop with the project team and partners to jointly assess the relevance and feasibility of the mitigation measures proposed. This can also help to identify additional or alternative measures, whilst building consensus and motivation to implement these among all stakeholders.
- When conducting contextual analyses, leverage existing resources to avoid unnecessary workload and duplication. For example, content from previous environmental sensitivity modules (if the context has not changed) conducted in NEAT+.
- Share your findings with other projects, organisations and communities, where relevant to promote shared learning and resource optimisation for the sector.