

Topic 1:

How can we improve **solid waste** treatment and disposal?

What are the problems?

- Lack of accountability for solid waste treatment and disposal.
- Lack of local disposal/recycling infrastructure.
- Lack of internal capacity within the organization for treating and disposing waste.
- Need for more support and prioritisation from top management.
- Beneficiaries are not aware of good waste disposal practices.
- Accumulation of expired goods (e.g. bleach, soap, toothpaste, hygiene kits, detergents, etc.) that become waste.
- Lack of integration of waste disposal considerations in the procurement process (e.g. technical specifications).
- Difficulty in verifying disposal by contractors.
- Large transactional costs of moving goods (and waste) across boundaries.
- Lack of planning in the distribution network to account for holding times and other factors (to minimise expiration of goods and minimise waste, e.g. for pharmaceuticals).
- Need for guidance on how to effectively screen environmental and social performance of suppliers and their products.
- Accumulation of waste streams that are produced in high volume, have high toxicity and are difficult to transport.

Good practices/solutions

- Zerofly bags: a US based company that used to package GIK so the bags themselves can be reused.
- Packaging in blankets (blankets can be reused; avoids plastic waste generation).
- Engage shipping companies (air, land or sea) with better environmental footprint and performance.
- Reevaluate the sustainability of programs / projects and decide a best course of action: E.g. Cash transfers vs procurement.
- Government ban of plastic (e.g. in Kenya and East Timor) gives leverage to improve / invest in waste management.
- Engagement of local plastic recyclers in sub-Saharan Africa and South eastern Asia (emerging market for recyclable materials in countries like Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, India, Nepal, etc.).

Next steps/more info is needed?

- The Logistics Cluster has the capacity to coordinate joint efforts for improving waste management.
- Integrate in the mandate of humanitarian organisations to remove anything (waste) we bring in, and prepare the budget for it.
- Create a cluster for waste management.
- Establish a body to monitor and hold the international community accountable for waste disposal in humanitarian aid.
- Include in the country Logistics Capacity Assessment a list of local/regional licensed contractors.
- Set up a centralised recycling facility when local contractors are not available.
- Identify potential partners to develop joint strategies for waste management (e.g. local port and shipping authorities).
- Educate beneficiaries on waste value (i.e. to promote local initiatives on recycling).
- Liaise with programmatic areas in our organisations to promote livelihood projects with activities involving recycling materials.
- Liaise with local authorities, institutions and the private sector for support.

Next steps/more info is needed?

- Identify specific contexts (e.g. high value/high volume), where we could undertake a certification that can be shared across the sector.
- Include the cost of disposal to the procurement process (e.g. in technical requirements).
- For waste management, focus on one item at a time: Identify one item and define/improve environmental standards of that item within a specific area (i.e. make a pilot).
- Use donor framework agreement to engage further support from donors.
- Facilitate information sharing with the suppliers.
- Take into consideration local and international regulation for Transboundary movement of waste and local environmental regulations.
- Share best practices among Cluster members, through a stablished mechanism (e.g. a repository, portal, etc.)

Topic 2:

How can we improve the **procurement** process to minimise waste generation?

What are the problems

- Environmental aspects are not being considered in procurement specifications.
- Difficult to verify / assess suppliers' compliance in regards to environmental aspects.
- Need for more coordination between agencies, and between Logs and other functions:
 - Logisticians often have limited influence at decision-making stages: tends to be the program arms. How do we incorporate greening as part of the program design?
 - The smaller the NGO, the less space Logistics units have in project/response design.
 - Lack of liaison/common understanding between the clusters on environmental work.
 - A lot of our organisations don't have an environmental policy.
 - Competition with other corporate issues: e.g. safeguarding, fraud prevention, etc.
 - Lack of strategic leadership: Global Cluster coordination isn't seen as having capacity to help embed sustainable thinking.
- A need to involve suppliers in the design of appropriate solutions.
- A need to educate/work with our donors: multiple and sometimes competing donor requirements (e.g. environmental sustainability vs. cost-effectiveness in the short term or readiness).

What are the problems

- Need to reassess the benefits of local procurement: Buying locally can have social benefits but it may lead to environmental impacts (e.g. local products made with hazardous materials) or affect the local economy (e.g. bringing in goods that compete with local goods). There are issues of localisation vs global control/management and standards; lack of time; lack of local knowledge/workforce capacity – big investment required to beef up that capability. Local legislation may be less stringent and methods less efficient.
- Lip service only paid to environmental considerations in tendering processes.
- Lack of data/ info on what is genuinely a risk/what is preferable and lack of time to figure it out.
- Lack of planning for emergency supplier situations (or because a grant is about to expire) – need to embed it in preparedness activities.
- Some key goods that require attention: fertilizers, pesticides, construction materials (timber vs bricks, local vs imported; hollow blocks; transportation of staff; batteries; Vehicles and fleet management)
- Need of a strategy to communicate and convince Climate Change skeptics.

Good practices/solutions

- Local market studies performed before importing goods to minimize / control impacts in the local economy.
- Airfreight of goods - whenever feasible – is avoided by many organizations (Large carbon emissions).
- DFID value for money work: could easily have a ecological dimension as well as value for money.
- There used to be an early recovery cluster. A cross cutting approach is needed for environmental considerations.
- Shelter cluster has a cross cutting community of practice on environment although it hasn't made much progress.
- ECHO – Humanitarian procurement.
- Oxfam has 'greened up' its catalogue of 350 international items.
- Innovation in product availability; e.g. Logistic units reaching out to Aidex. Program units could reach out as well.

Next steps/more info is needed?

- Establish a coordinating body to lead standardisation of specifications of common goods across organisations, with proper mechanisms to avoid disruption of local market when importing goods (one item can be selected as a pilot to apply this process, and be a study case).
- Leverage pre-existing or common/shared solutions:
 - Define lists of pre-qualified suppliers,
 - Look for standards that companies/products can sign on to (identify the good ones),
 - Sources of potential solutions or ideas (UNEP/OCHA JEU; www.greeningtheblue.org; US AID)
 - Foster collaboration to “purchase in bulk” selected goods (make use of economies of scale).

Next steps/more info is needed?

- Procurement IS the gateway to a lot of environmental solutions that can be explored:
 - Comprehensive integration of economic, social and environmental considerations into the technical evaluation of goods and services.
 - Preparation of technical specifications in advance (including environmental specifications).
 - Inclusion of collection and recycling/disposal of packaging materials in the contracts.
 - Coordination with the suppliers to improve preparedness and innovation.
- Define a strategy to embed environment across ALL the clusters: Shelter, WASH, etc.
- Promote sharing of information on good practices in procurement, in policies, in case studies.
- The Cluster needs to provide access to the guidance and advocate with donors.
- Make a business case that sustainable products constitutes best value for money.
- Advocate for prepositioning and better preparedness initiatives.

Follow-up

- Contact your organisation's environmental team or focal point.
- Resources to explore:
 - [Global Compact](#)
 - [Sphere Standards](#)
 - [ECHO's resources](#)
 - [US AID resources](#)
 - [UN Greening the blue](#)
 - [UN Global Marketplace on sustainable procurement](#)
 - [Sustainable Procurement training \(UNOPS\)](#)
 - [Sustainable Procurement resources at CIPS](#)
 - [Environment in Emergencies center](#)
 - [UN Joint Environment Unit/Environment in Humanitarian Action group](#)
 - [IMG on Environment in Humanitarian Action](#)