Briefing and Q&A

Operationalizing and Scaling-up Donors’ Climate and Environmental Commitments: an analysis of progress, gaps and opportunities

Tuesday 23rd January 2024
15h-16h30 CET
House rules

• Please introduce yourself in the chat box at the start of the event

• Please mute your microphone unless you are speaking

• Please ask questions in the chat box or by raising your hand during the Q&A session

• The meeting will be recorded (please alert us if this poses a problem)

• Please make use of the captions option in Teams if you are having trouble following
Agenda for today

15h-16h30 (CET) / 9h- 10h30 (EST)

1. What is the report
2. Findings
3. Let's hear from the donors
4. Your experiences with greening
5. Q&A session
6. Wrap Up
What is the Climate Action Accelerator

Who are we?

The Climate Action Accelerator is a non-profit initiative based in Geneva that aims to mobilize a critical mass of community-based organizations around the world to scale up implementation of climate solutions within planetary boundaries, keep global warming well below 2°C and avoid the risk of dangerous drift.

The goal is to help move the aid, health and higher education sectors towards greater resilience and a radical transformation of their practices, pursuing emission reduction targets (~50% by 2030) and a 'net zero' trajectory, in line with the Paris Agreement, as well as operational resilience.

Our objectives

**EMPOWER**
Empower organizations to at least halve their emissions by 2030 and prepare for greater resilience through a hub of expertise and resources.

**CHAMPION**
Transform them into ambassadors of change within their networks, capable of influencing their peers.

**COMMUNITY**
Build a global community of action, sharing climate solutions as a universal common good, to scale up their deployment.
What is the Joint Initiative?

• A collaborative initiative among 26 humanitarian stakeholders (INGOs, UN agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, donors) with funding from USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

• Aim: to reduce the environmental footprint of humanitarian assistance (specific focus on packaging)

• Promotes knowledge-sharing across the sector, acts as a convener bringing humanitarian actors together to discuss common challenges and explore solutions
What is the report: scope

- A collaboration between Joint Initiative and Climate Action Accelerator building on previous donor mappings
- Analyzes how donors’ climate/environmental commitments are influencing:
  - the way they fund humanitarian assistance projects / programs
  - internal efforts to reduce climate/environmental footprint (travel, premises etc.)
- Focuses on efforts to reduce the climate and environmental impact of humanitarian assistance from a mitigation standpoint, does not look into climate change adaptation/resilience projects
- Is intended to be constructive: how can donors and humanitarian organizations better collaborate
- Is based on desk research, interviews with partner organizations and donors
What is the report: purpose

For humanitarian organizations:
• To inform and support humanitarian organizations to better anticipate / adapt to donors’ requirements and requests

For donors:
• To provide the donor community with information: hoped that donors can learn from each other
• To feed into donor coordination efforts on greening
Covers 14 donors
Findings

Donors are scaling up climate action beyond adaptation

• Increasing no. of donor policies; comprehensive focus (waste, emissions, biodiversity etc.)

• Increasing donor commitments:
  ○ Support to Climate & Environment Charter
    Commitment 2 “Maximize the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions”
  ○ Signing of Donor Declaration
    Commitment 4 “Foster the creation of the conditions required for international humanitarian organizations and local partners to adopt environmentally friendly practices…”
Collective efforts among donors are gaining traction

- Working groups, aimed at coordination on issues such as M&E, budgets (coordination group on greening, formal WG on Donor Declaration;)
- Striving towards a greater harmonization of approaches where possible
Donors’ approaches

- Attention to greening mainly when partner organizations respond to call for proposals (application form stage)

- Currently donors mainly request partners to provide information on greening from project perspective (some exceptions)

- Different approaches: donors may require partners to describe greening (narrative), or may conduct environmental screenings / risk assessments

- Generally, no specific score attributed for greening i.e. not decisive factor when assessing proposals (some exceptions)

- Overall, no plans for more prescriptive approaches

- Different mechanisms used for pooled funding and for funding to UN agencies vs (I)NGOs, more stringent approach for (I)NGOs.
Funding

• Efforts underway to try to accommodate greening costs within existing project budgets (e.g. creative use of budget lines, “flexible” budget lines)

• Donors are funding sector-wide initiatives on greening (WREC, NEAT +, Joint Initiative, Climate Action Accelerator, funding of Climate Charter Secretariat)

• However, current funding insufficient to cover organizational-level, long-term transformation costs (e.g. staffing, change-management) that go beyond project-related costs
A dialogue gap may be slowing down opportunities for change

• Currently few donors have policies / guidance on use of funding for greening.

• Result: humanitarian organizations may be reluctant to submit proposals for more expensive but more sustainable action/ items.

• Donors want to understand more about partner organizations’ plans/needs and the potential costs, in order to be able to discuss this with them.
A significant role to play, yet to be fully harnessed

• Donors stepping up efforts to be able to **better support their partners in “operationalizing”** commitments and to **monitor** environmental and climate efforts (e.g. ECHO MER voluntary indicators)

• Donors are working on ensuring that policies/commitments are more systematically and **consistently** applied across contexts/regions- learning from each other in this respect

• Donors want to “**walk the talk**” and internal greening efforts is an emerging priority (travel policies, sustainable procurement policies, a handful of donors have published specific emissions reduction targets etc.)
Conclusion

• Increasing awareness among donors of the need to reduce the climate and environmental impact of humanitarian assistance through integrated adaptation/resilience & mitigation approaches.

• Donors have a significant role to play in steering the sector, although reducing our climate and environmental footprint is a shared responsibility, and humanitarian organizations are elevating their ambitions in this respect.

• Building on existing coordination mechanisms, harmonization of approaches/standards and their operationalization in the field, and linking greening to localization, will help them achieve this.

Access the report https://tinyurl.com/JI-CAA-donors - French version will be published in coming days
Let’s hear from you!

Go to menti.com and enter the code 3354 7631

Which aspect of greening of humanitarian assistance is most challenging for you?
Waiting for responses ...

What do you require from donors to be able to effectively green your projects/programs?
Waiting for responses ...